Surmounting Contemporary Challenges to Humanitarian-Military Relations

A Report of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Humanitarian-military relations has emerged as an important and ever-expanding field of policy analysis and practice. However, this strand of literature, and the associated policy discourse, suffers from three overarching deficiencies. First, the field remains empirically sparse. Second, this field of policy discourse remains fragmented. It is largely based on case studies, with little social-scientific comparative analysis undertaken thus far. There has also been little to no effort made to incorporate theoretical and empirical insights from the broader field of social-scientific literature on civil-military relations, a rich strand of analysis that dates back at least to the middle of the 20th century. Third, this field has not been agile in its responsiveness to current events. This field of analysis remains largely stunted and disassociated in any useful way from the challenges of the real world.

This paper examines the state of this discourse and recommends steps toward correcting these deficiencies. The paper is based on an assessment of available primary and secondary literature, as well as 38 semi-structured interviews conducted with a wide array of professionals engaged in different dimensions of humanitarian-military relations.

I. The History of Humanitarian-Military Relations: A Story Yet to be Told

The history of militaries' involvement in humanitarian action, and how this engagement has evolved over time, remains murky. On the one hand, a great deal of literature in this field asserts that military involvement in humanitarian response has grown in recent decades, although empirical evidence to bolster this claim is sparse. On the other hand, this literature is quick to note that military involvement in this area is in no way new. The history of this domain has yet to be written. It is thus difficult to accurately contextualize contemporary developments. Are the challenges faced in recent humanitarian crises novel? If so, why? If not, what lessons can be learned from historical cases? Without a thorough mining of history, one cannot know the answers to these questions. This holds true for natural disasters, pandemics, armed conflicts, and situations of forced displacement.

The risks of leaving these questions unanswered are particularly acute given the very dire current state of international emergency response. Many more humanitarian organizations, international and local, seem to exist than ever before, and there are a multitude of armed actors—militaries, multilateral peacekeeping missions, non-state armed groups (NSAGs), private military and security companies, and urban gangs—who also impact the humanitarian sector. The nature of conflict has shifted, with non-international armed conflicts dominating the landscape of contemporary warfare, although efforts have begun to prepare for a return to great power conflict in the future. Climate change is already exacerbating humanitarian vulnerabilities. Urbanization is changing the nature of the world, and hence, of the humanitarian crises that emerge.

Humanitarian actors also perceive that humanitarian space is shrinking, that aid workers are increasingly being attacked, and that their work is more at risk of instrumentalization and politicization than ever before.

But how should one track progress in this field? Should one focus on the speed of the delivery of aid? The cost? Other aspects of effectiveness and/or efficiency? The perceptions of recipients of aid? More attention is needed on these questions. We are thus left with several important questions. What drives militaries to engage in emergency response? What factors shape fruitful and principled humanitarian engagement with armed actors? What has changed? Why has it changed? What has been the impact of these changes? These questions point toward a scholarly research agenda that researchers have begun to analyze. However, answers to these fairly basic questions remain elusive. This field has much left to explore.

II. What is Humanitarian-Military Relations? Into the Conceptual Morass

What is humanitarian-military relations? This question has no easy answer, as conceptualizations are fragmented across different organizations, with different terminology used by different actors. The term used by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "humanitarian civil-military coordination," is not entirely appropriate. First, the word "civil" is too expansive. This word is a shorthand for civilian entities engaged in humanitarian response. But what is the dividing line between a civilian organization that is humanitarian and one that is not? The answer is not clear and can be hotly contested. Second, the word "military" is too restrictive, as the field also includes non-military armed actors, such as police and NSAGs. Third, the past decade or so has seen a shift in how humanitarian actors conceptualize and define the term "coordination." It used to refer to military engagement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), which is widely recognized as the military term for humanitarian operations. Now it also encompasses interactions related to humanitarian access, security, and humanitarian protection.

The previously narrow conception of the field as limited to the use of military assets in HA/DR has shaped the conceptual frameworks that have been developed to inform policy thinking and planning, as well as training and capacity building activities. A framework sometimes known as the "Three C's" conceptualizes how military involvement in direct engagement, indirect engagement, and infrastructure support should vary across different context types. The particular insight of this framework is that military visibility in humanitarian assistance, and direct military engagement with humanitarian actors, can be higher in natural disaster settings but should be lower in conflict settings.

Figure 1: The Traditional View of "Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination" Across Context Types

Cooperation ———— Communication ———— Coexistence

Non-conflict Settings *Armed Conflicts*
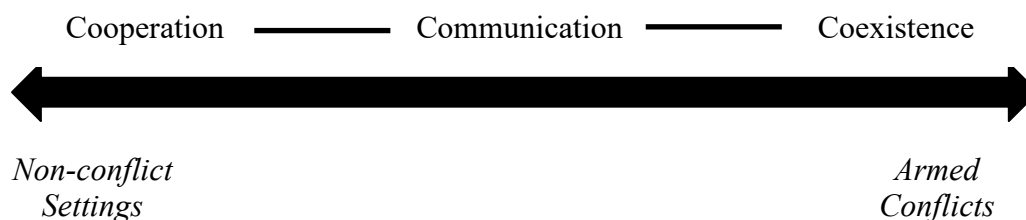
In light of the expanded definition of what "coordination" means (encompassing also access, security, and protection), and as we move from natural disaster settings to complex emergencies, the array of issues on which humanitarians and armed actors engage with one another does not decrease but rather increases, resembling the trends that the below figure details.

Figure 2: The Contemporary View of "Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination" Across Context Types
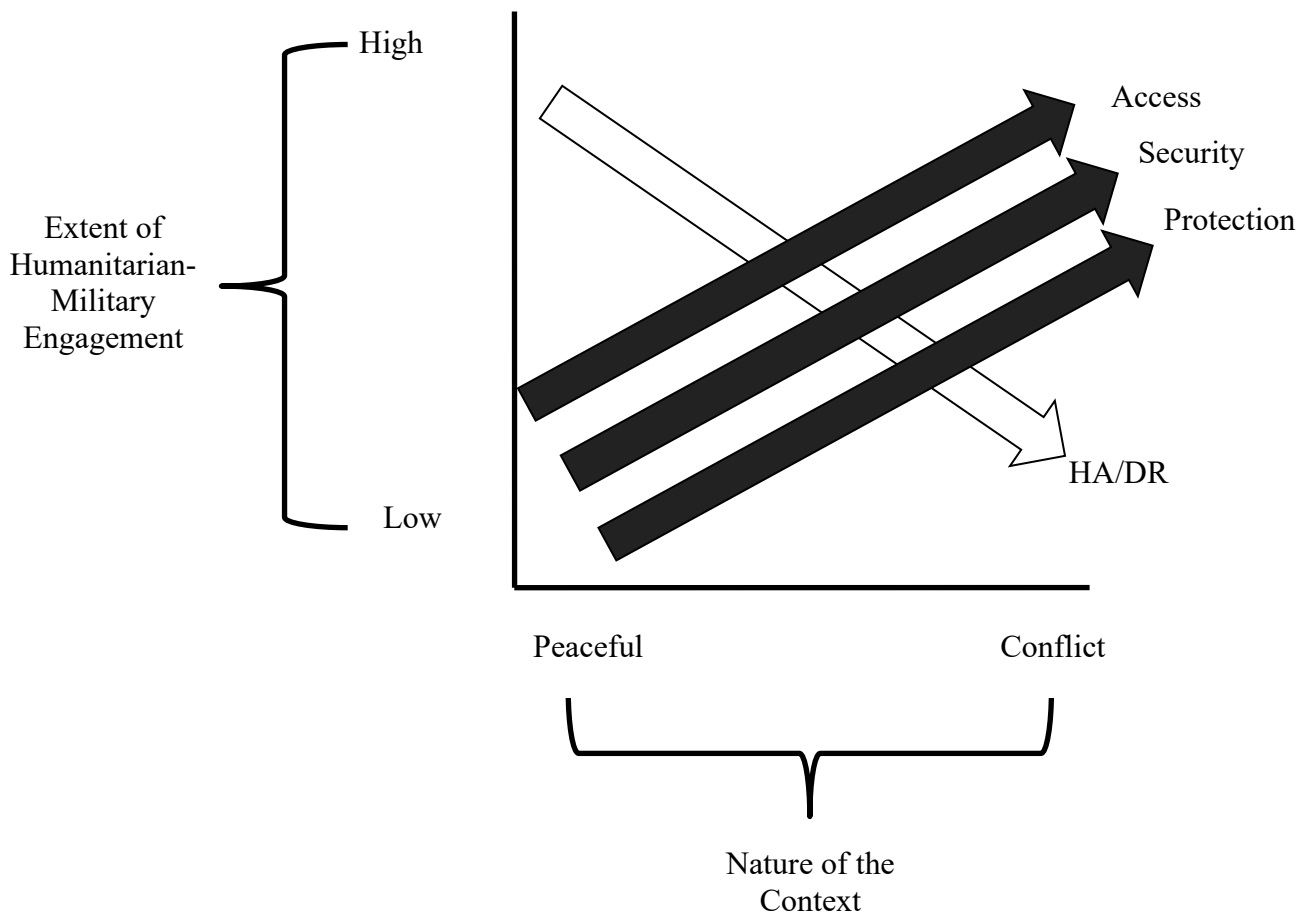
III. The Overarching Challenge: Two Different Types of Organizations

The common conception of this overarching challenge is as follows. The primary aim of militaries is warfighting. Consequently—although some militaries have developed specialized capacity to manage and respond to humanitarian crises, in particular, natural disasters—many militaries struggle to develop expertise in humanitarian response, and in general, have room to grow in terms of understanding the humanitarian impact of their activities. However, militaries wield great capacities—for example, supplies, personnel, unique transportation capabilities such as airlift and sealift, ability to build and repair infrastructure—that can be useful in humanitarian response. In

contrast, for a humanitarian organization, mitigating suffering during large-scale emergencies is the central organizational aim. Humanitarian organizations have the necessary expertise for needs assessments, project implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. However, humanitarian organizations tend to lack the capacity and assets to respond as quickly as is necessary. The resulting question is: how can humanitarians work with militaries to fill this capacity gap with military assets while mitigating the risks that come from the fact that, first, militaries might lack necessary training and competencies, and second, militaries are driven by political aims that may conflict with humanitarian principles?

However, there are important shortcomings for humanitarian organizations as well. First, humanitarians too can lose sight of what should be their overarching objectives, allowing themselves to prioritize bureaucratic or public relations considerations. Second, the fragmented nature of the humanitarian sector can lead to a lack of coherence even within the same organization. A final important point is that humanitarian organizations, just like militaries, can also do more to mitigate unintended adverse effects of their programming. Indeed, various analyses have noted that humanitarian efforts can feed into a war economy; fuel insecurity; and breed local dependence on international assistance, thus stymying development. In other words, despite best intentions, humanitarians can break the "do no harm" principle. Moreover, the question of how humanitarians can and should balance the potential benefits of humanitarian programming with the risks of potential knock-on effects is one of sometimes intense professional contestation.

Nevertheless, there is a cultural divide between military and humanitarian actors that can be challenging to bridge. It is important that both sides across the humanitarian-military divide invest more in understanding one another. Militaries face issues of breaking down prejudices, capacitating themselves to deepen their understanding of humanitarian organizations and humanitarian action more broadly, and directing sufficient resources toward these ends. The humanitarian sector also has insufficiently invested in capacitating aid workers to better understand military actors.

IV. Key Contemporary Challenges in Complex Emergencies

This section examines four particular contemporary challenges of humanitarian-military relations in complex emergencies. These issues are not unique to complex emergencies. Nevertheless, the four issues that this section examines are emblematic of the new world of humanitarian-military relations that has expanded beyond the formerly narrow conception of the field as limited to HA/DR.

1) <u>Navigating Access, Proximity, and Humanitarian Principles</u>. There are three core humanitarian-military relations access challenges. The first challenge is that armed actors sometimes inhibit access, aiming to control humanitarian action. The second challenge relates to how closely humanitarian actors should engage, coordinate, and operate in collaboration with state armed forces. This issue arose as pertinent during the Battle of Mosul (2016-2017). The third challenge is how to provide medical care in territories controlled by NSAGs, and even to wounded NSAG fighters themselves, while managing the resulting strain to relations with a government combating the NSAG in question. Furthermore, when discerning whether to engage with NSAGs listed as terrorist groups by national, regional, or international bodies, humanitarians must consider

potential consequences from the state (in terms of legal prosecution or being declared persona non grata, hence losing the ability to operate in the country), as well as from governmental donors (including legal risks inherent in domestic counterterrorism legislation and restrictive donor contract language proscribing engagement with listed groups).

2) <u>Humanitarian notification systems</u>. Humanitarian notification systems refer to humanitarians providing information to military actors about the locations of humanitarian activities, personnel, and objects in order to facilitate humanitarian security. There has been a debate about the appropriateness of the term "deconfliction" (previously a term of art) for these processes because it is a military term used to describe coordination between allied forces. "Deconfliction" has become a hot topic of debate across the humanitarian sector due to the widespread concern about the great number of attacks against humanitarian and health workers across various contemporary armed conflicts.

There are at least six key areas of concern with humanitarian notification systems. First, there is concern that handing over information to authorities about the location of humanitarian personnel, supplies, and facilities could have the opposite of the intended effect and actually facilitate the deliberate targeting of humanitarian or health facilities by militaries or NSAGs who fail to comply with international humanitarian law. Second, "deconfliction" can lead to the impression that combatants have no other obligations under international humanitarian law to ensure the military character of their targets. Third, the "deconfliction" process, if combatants delay or refrain from acknowledging receipt of notifications, can be used to control humanitarian actors. Other actors— for example, guards at checkpoints—in some contexts have required "deconfliction" paperwork in order to grant access. There is thus a risk that armed actors can use the "deconfliction" process as a clearance or approval mechanism to slow down or halt humanitarian movements. Fourth, there remains ambiguity about what types of people and facilities should be "deconflicted," and humanitarians in some context have interpreted the scope in increasingly expansive terms. Fifth, there is a lack of transparency regarding why the United Nations engages certain combatants but not others—for example, governments but not NSAGs—in the "deconfliction" process. Sixth, humanitarian practitioners lack guidance or direction on how to respond if something that has been "deconflicted" is subsequently struck in an armed attack by a combatant who had previously acknowledged receipt through the "deconfliction" process.

3) <u>Armed escorts</u>. There are at least four key implications at stake when humanitarian organizations decide whether or when to use armed escorts. First, the use of armed escorts can compromise humanitarians' adherence to the principle of neutrality, in terms of perceptions or reality. Local actors are likely to associate humanitarians with the armed actors upon whom they rely for security. If armed escorts do need to resort to the use of armed force, this can draw humanitarians directly into the conflict itself. Second, relatedly, the use of armed escorts can lead to fissures between humanitarians and the local population if it results in a loss of trust by local actors. Third, it can also be difficult to reverse the decision, meaning that any decision to use armed escorts has definitive long-term implications. Also, if one humanitarian organization accepts the use of armed escorts, it can make it difficult for other organizations to gain permission from authorities to operate without them. Fourth, relying on armed escorts means that humanitarians remain at the whim of military actors' availability. If an armed escort is not available, a humanitarian organization that has agreed to use an armed escort cannot operate.

Humanitarians have used armed escorts where they weren't actually needed, evidently because they did not know about available guidance on this issue or because they assessed the security situation incorrectly. It is important to involve people in the decision-making process who understand how using armed escorts can complicate acceptance-based approaches. Concerns exist about the UN Department of Safety and Security, which is involved in decisions about armed escorts, in this regard. It is also important to note that the use of armed escorts can be negotiated, although the political pressure to use armed escorts can be very high.

4) <u>Humanitarian protection</u>. According to the definition recognized by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, humanitarian protection includes activities aimed at ensuring full respect for individuals' rights in accordance with human rights, refugee, and international humanitarian law. The state of humanitarian-military engagement on humanitarian protection is a pertinent manifestation of the organizational and cultural divide between humanitarian and military actors. Militaries and humanitarians alike can do more to facilitate effective engagement on this issue. Indeed, the way that military and humanitarian actors discuss this topic can fuel tensions across the humanitarian-military divide in ways that are counterproductive.

The traditional view of humanitarian protection as a humanitarian-military relations challenge, at least from the humanitarian side, is that militaries lack a sufficient understanding of the humanitarian impacts of their activities, as well as humanitarian protection and international humanitarian law more broadly. However, humanitarians themselves have expressed a great deal of cynicism about humanitarians' poor track record in humanitarian protection. Just as military actors should foster an understanding of the humanitarian consequences of their actions, humanitarians should ensure that they understand the military dimensions of engaging in humanitarian protection. Humanitarian-military dialogue on humanitarian protection will not be productive if humanitarians do not approach the interaction with a sound understanding of measures the military has actually sought to put in place to mitigate harm to civilians and what measures can realistically be put in place moving forward.

V. Managing Humanitarian-Military Relations

To bridge the gap between humanitarian-military relations and the broader field of civil-military relations, this section presents a new framework adapted from this strand of scholarship: The Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity." In this framework, coordination interacts with two other factors: 1) effectiveness (i.e., having plans, structures and processes for formulating and implementing objectives, and devoting resources toward these ends), and 2) efficiency (meeting objectives in a cost-effective manner).

The insight that this conceptualization offers is that coordination facilitates effectiveness. However, coordination can exist in tension with efficiency. The reason is that coordination can be a costly endeavor. OCHA's decision in 2018 to disband the Civil-Military Coordination Section (CMCS) as a means of grappling with a budgetary shortfall is a pertinent reminder of this reality. Similarly, effectiveness can conflict with efficiency. A manifestation of this phenomenon would be using an aircraft carrier, which is potentially useful but incredibly expensive in humanitarian response, instead of a more effective and efficient naval capability, such as an amphibious ship.

Figure 3: The Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity"
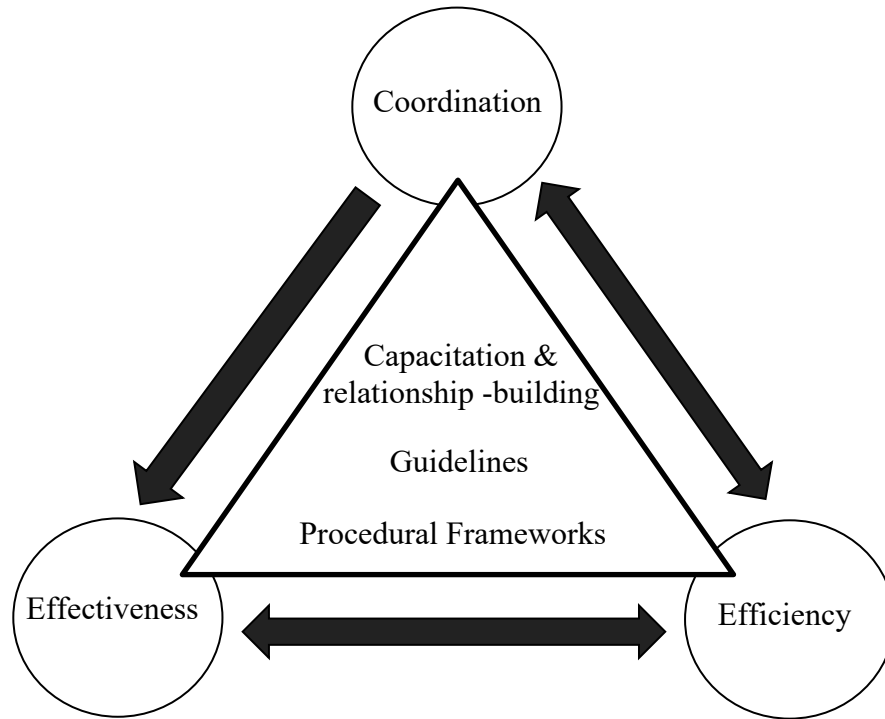
Conclusion

We have entered a new world of humanitarian-military relations. Whereas decades ago the field focused primarily, if not solely, on the use of military assets in HA/DR, the contemporary state of the field has expanded to encompass various dimensions of humanitarian access, security, and humanitarian protection. More work is needed to synthesize this field within the broader field of civil-military relations. This paper has taken a preliminary step by presenting a framework, adapted from the literature on civil-military relations, that describes the interaction between coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency. However, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners themselves will need to build more bridges and forge deeper synergies between their sometimes-disparate professional worlds. Indeed, pushing the research agenda and the policy discourse forward will require managing the academia-real world divide to produce work that is both scientifically rigorous and practical.

Introduction

Humanitarian-military relations has emerged as an important and ever-expanding field of policy analysis and practice. There is indeed a wealth of literature that examines the challenges inherent in military engagement in disaster relief activities, including in situations of natural and technological disasters, pandemics, complex emergencies, and forced displacement. This literature also addresses the concurrent efforts of humanitarian actors—such as United Nations (UN) agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement—to engage with military actors in these endeavors.

However, this strand of literature, and the associated policy discourse, suffers from three overarching deficiencies. First, despite decades of analytical energy directed toward this area, the field remains empirically sparse. Based on available data, little can actually be said with confidence about current trends in humanitarian-military relations, what has driven these trends, and what the future likely holds. Second, this field of policy discourse remains fragmented. It is largely case study based, with little social scientific comparative analysis undertaken thus far. There has also been little to no effort to incorporate theoretical and empirical insights from the broader field of social scientific literature on civil-military relations, a rich strand of analysis that dates back at least to the middle of the 20th century.[1] Third, this field has not been agile in its responsiveness to current events. As the nature of humanitarian crises evolves, so do the challenges of humanitarian-military relations, and so must this field of policy analysis. Instead, the result has been a field of analysis that—like the practical guidance available to practitioners in this domain, as this paper will later examine—remains largely stunted, not linked in a useful way to the challenges that the real world currently presents.

This paper will examine the state of this discourse and will recommend steps toward correcting these deficiencies. As this paper later explores, there are various terms that one could use to label this field, but this paper uses the term "humanitarian-military relations" in order to disassociate from any of the existing terms and definitions.[2] The term "humanitarian" refers to civilian entities (non-governmental, governmental, or intergovernmental) engaged in humanitarian assistance and protection. The term "military" is intended to broadly encompass any organized armed entity, including non-state armed groups (NSAGs), with whom civilian humanitarian organizations engage.[3]

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[1] See Huntington (1957), Janowitz (1960), and Finer (1962), which are among the core foundational scholarly texts in this field.

[2] See Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), pp. 1-2 for an overview of relevant terms and abbreviations.

[3] The term "military" in this field has become somewhat of a term of art in this regard, intended to more broadly encompass organized armed actors. For example, a field handbook produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2018 discusses engagements with "non-traditional armed actors," including police (in the context of UN peacekeeping operations), NSAGs, and private military and security companies. See OCHA (2018)a, pp. 93-104. There sometimes can be ambiguity about whether the term "military" is intended to encompass NSAGs. In other cases, the more expansive definition is made explicit. For example, the "Operational Guidance for Humanitarian Notification Systems for Deconfliction (HNS4D)," produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, asserts, "For the purpose of the HNS4D, military includes both armed forces of a state, as well as organized non-state armed groups." See OCHA (2018)b, p. 3.

The paper is based on an assessment of available primary and secondary literature, as well as 38 semi-structured interviews conducted with a wide array of professionals engaged in different dimensions of humanitarian-military relations.[4]

This paper proceeds in six parts. Part I examines the empirical gap regarding basic trends of humanitarian-military relations. Part II discusses the evolving nature of how this field has been defined and conceptualized. Part III probes the overarching tension inherent in the fact that this field entails coordination between two types of actors—humanitarian and military—that have different overarching aims, cultures, and organizational structures. Whereas these notions already feature prominently in the policy discourse in this area, the paper will emphasize the similarities between military and humanitarian organizations and will highlight various important critiques of humanitarian organizations that are relevant to understanding humanitarian-military interactions. Part IV probes various contemporary issues faced particularly in complex emergencies. Part V takes stock of efforts to bridge the humanitarian-military divide and enhance humanitarian-military relations through relationship-building and capacitation efforts, as well as initiatives to develop and disseminate relevant guidance. This section also draws links to the aforementioned strand of social scientific research on civil-military relations. Part VI provides concluding remarks.

I. The History of Humanitarian-Military Relations: A Story Yet to be Told

The history of militaries' involvement in humanitarian action, and how this engagement has evolved over time, remains murky. On the one hand, a great deal of literature in this field asserts that military involvement in humanitarian response has grown in recent decades. When exactly this trend gained traction appears to be an open question, and empirical evidence to bolster this claim is sparse. Perhaps Hurricane Mitch, which hit Central America in 1998 and killed over 20,000 people, represented a turning point in international military involvement in disaster response.[5] Or perhaps the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004—which entailed domestic and international military engagement in numerous countries—was the watershed moment.[6] Perhaps it was the massive international response, involving dozens of international militaries, to the 2010 Haiti earthquake.[7] In the post-Cold War era, the United States began directing more military assets toward military operations other than war, or MOOTW, but why exactly this trend arose, deepened, proliferated across the globe, and became increasingly formalized by military and

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[4] The annex to this paper includes additional details about the interviewee pool and the interview methodology.

[5] See Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), p. 15; Ferris (2012), p. 3; and Madiwale and Virk (2011), p. 1086, which are emblematic instances of works on humanitarian-military relations that mention the Hurricane Mitch response in passing. For more in-depth assessments of the humanitarian-military dimensions of the response, see McHugh (1999), Gunby (1999), and Lidy et al. (2001).

[6] See CRS (2005), which notes that the various countries affected included Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Myanmar, The Maldives, Diego Garcia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar, Mauritius, and South Africa.

[7] See Etienne, Powell, and Faux (2010); Cecchine et al. (2013); Greenburg (2013); Naor et al. (2018); and Grünewald (2011).

humanitarian actors alike is not entirely clear.[8] A precise narrative of the recent history of this field, moving beyond case studies of particular disaster responses, has yet to emerge.

On the other hand, literature in this field is quick to note that military involvement in this area is in no way new.[9] Relevant historical examples include the Berlin Airlift in 1948-1949, during which the U.S. and British air forces delivered 2.3 million tons of cargo to West Berlin amidst the Soviet-imposed blockade;[10] various U.S. Navy natural disaster responses in the early years of the post-World War II era;[11] and the United Kingdom's mobilization of military assets to contribute to the response to the Bhola cyclone in then-East Pakistan in 1970.[12] The scattered references to various historical cases throughout this policy literature, often mentioned in passing, indicates that the history of military involvement in humanitarian response has yet to be written. It is thus difficult to accurately contextualize contemporary developments in this domain. Are the challenges faced in recent humanitarian crises novel? If so, why? If not, what lessons can be learned from historical cases? Without a thorough mining of history, one cannot know the answers to these questions.

The same lack of empirics extends to pandemic response. The West African Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016—which primarily impacted Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, with over 20,000 reported cases[13]—raised questions about the role of militaries in preparing for and responding to pandemics.[14] The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), first declared in 2018, has brought forth even more vexing complexities in light of the securitized nature of the response in the context of an ongoing armed conflict.[15] But military pandemic response is also not new. A fact that emphasizes the central role that militaries have long played in halting the spread of pandemics is that Carl von Clausewitz—a giant in the field of military theory and strategy—died while on military duty not from warfare, but from cholera.[16] He was commanding the Prussian military's cordon sanitaire, which aimed to control population movements in response to a massive cholera outbreak on the European continent.[17]

Turning to situations of armed conflict, one can further discern that contemporary challenges and dilemmas echo those from an underexplored history. The story of Henry Dunant at the Battle of Solferino in 1859—the origin story of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement—is one of civil-military coordination, in which humanitarian actors filled militaries' capacity gap for treating

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[8] See Zegart (2020), which contextualizes the immediate post-Cold War period in terms of the evolution of U.S. foreign policymaking. Also see Ayers (1996); Vick et al. (1997); and Taw, Agmon, and Davis (1997).

[9] For example, see Ferris (2012), p. 3, which states, "The military has long played a role in responding to major disasters, and military involvement both at home and abroad has grown since the early 1990s."

[10] See Miller (1998).

[11] Arancibia (2016), p. 349.

[12] Thamestv (1970), at 14:00.

[13] BBC (2016).

[14] See Kamradt-Scott et al. (2016); Anderson and Nevin (2016); Davies and Rushton (2016); Lightsey (2016); Brett-Major (2016); Grunewald, Leon, and Greenwood (2017); Draper and Jenkins (2017); and Konyndyk (2019).

[15] See Evans (2019); Synder (2019); and Freudenthal (2019).

[16] The author thanks Ruben Stewart for bringing this fact to his attention.

[17] See Smith (2004), pp. 17-20; Evans (1998); and Ross (2015). For an examination of quarantines throughout history, see Rothstein (2015). Military engagement today is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, militaries can enhance monitoring abilities, while on the other hand, military actors can themselves act as agents who spread disease. See Chretien et al. (2007).

wounded soldiers.[18] Dunant, after witnessing wounded soldiers' suffering, began organizing medical relief efforts and later successfully lobbied European governments to erect standing relief organizations that could quickly be mobilized during wartime for this purpose.[19] Red Cross Societies sprouted up across Europe, a trend that later spread to the rest of the world, and governments adopted the First Geneva Convention of 1864.[20] However, these developments evoked pushback rooted in concerns that militaries and governments could instrumentalize these humanitarian impulses. Florence Nightingale, who had risen to prominence after organizing medical relief for soldiers during the Crimean War just a few years earlier, initially did not support Dunant's vision upon reading Dunant's popular book, *A Memory of Solferino.*. Her response to the idea of an international network of civilian organizations mandated to treat soldiers during wartime was that "such a Society would take upon itself duties which ought to be performed by the Government of each country and so would relieve them of responsibilities which really belong to them and which they only can properly discharge and being relieved of would make war more easy."[21] She believed that the more desirable route would be to build up militaries' own medical capacities.[22]

This same concern resonates in analyses of the trauma response during the Battle of Mosul in 2016-2017. In this context, certain civilian medical responders opted to be "co-located" with or "embedded" within divisions of the Iraqi army.[23] A widely praised case study published by the Johns Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health concluded, in words reminiscent of those of Florence Nightingale more than a century and a half earlier:

> [U]ltimately it is the obligation of the Iraqi government, and many would say the [U.S.-led] coalition, to provide protection and emergency health care to wounded civilians and combatants (Iraqis and ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]). Given the scale of resources expended on training and combat operations in Mosul, a greater commitment to train and support a stronger Iraqi medical capability would seem not only possible, but appropriate.[24]

There are also historical antecedents to humanitarian action in the context of counterinsurgency operations. In the post-9/11 era, humanitarian organizations struggled to maintain their independence while working alongside, and in collaboration with, predominantly military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and civilian PRTs embedded in U.S. military combat teams in Iraq.[25] The tensions inherent in this operating environment are particularly evident in remarks that then-Secretary of State Colin Powell delivered just a month and a half after the September 11 attacks. Powell, speaking to an NGO audience, highlighted that

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[18] Slim (2011) draws this connection between the more modern discourse on humanitarian-military relations and the events at the Battle of Solferino. For a firsthand account, see Dunant (1939).
[19] Moorehead (1998), pp. 10-50.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Nightengale, quoted in Moorehead (1998), p 30.
[22] Ibid.
[23] CIVIC and InterAction (2017); Spiegel et al. (2018); Fox et al. (2018); and Parry et al. (2019).
[24] Spiegel et al. (2018), p. 26.
[25] See McDonough (2007); Sovacool and Halfon (2007); Franke and Gutteri (2009); Howell and Lind (2009); Donini (2011); Williamson (2011); Naland (2011); Haysom and Jackson (2013); Leprince (2013); Morris (2015); Denn (2015); Malkasian and Meyerle (2009); and Petřík (2016).

"cooperation between governments and NGOs is not the same as co-opting you. Always, we must respect your independence. After all, it is the very fact of your being independent and not an arm of government that makes you so valuable, that permits you to do your essential work, and that gives you the flexibility that you need to do it."[26] However, in an oft-cited portion of this speech, Powell also asserted that "NGOs… are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team."[27] Meanwhile, similar issues played out forty years prior in the context of the Vietnam War.[28] Catholic Relief Services, for example, came under heavy criticism for aligning itself with U.S. foreign policy objectives in South Vietnam.[29]

One might surmise that one element that has changed in recent years is the increased devotion to humanitarian protection that many contemporary governments and militaries exhibit, especially since the end of the Cold War. But this trend dates back centuries, if not millennia. In the 19th century, European governments began multilateral discussions and debates about the value of exercising restraint in warfare to mitigate suffering.[30] Moreover, there is evidence that empires at least as far back as ancient Greece adopted measures to limit the use of certain indiscriminate weapons; spare the lives of non-combatants; protect the lives of detainees; refrain from attacking certain civilian objects (in particular, sacred religious sites); and ensure burial rites for fallen soldiers.[31] The "human security" paradigm that gained traction in the 1990s is the manifestation of a trend that stretches back more than two thousand years.[32]

Scholars have begun to sink their analytical teeth into the history of the humanitarian sector writ large. One seminal work is Michael Barnett's *Empire of Humanity*, which tells a historical tale of the humanitarian sector's evolution, beginning in the 18th century with a phenomenon that Barnett calls the "Humanitarian Big Bang." During this period, Barnett writes, there was a "revolution in moral sentiments and the emergence of a culture of compassion" through which "the alleviation of human suffering became a defining element of modern society."[33] These humanitarian impulses were institutionalized in charitable organizations that, once oriented towards particular identity groups, began to define their objectives in universal terms. One example is the Scots Society of Norwich, founded in 1775 to provide aid for Scottish natives living in England who did not qualify for public relief programs.[34] Within a decade of its founding, the organization expanded its reach and aims and rebranded itself as the Society of Universal Goodwill.[35] In 1835, the International Shipwreck Society—as one scholar describes it, "what may have been the first transnational

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[26] Powell (2001).
[27] Ibid.
[28] See Metcalfe and Haysom (2012), pp. 5-6, which, in discussing "the specific challenges posed by comprehensive or stabilisation approaches and counter-insurgency," notes, "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 or military objectives." See also de Montclos (2014), p. 234.
[29] See Flipse (2002).
[30] For example, for an analysis of the inter-governmental negotiations at the Brussels Peace Conference in 1874, see Dowdeswell (2017).
[31] Bederman (2001), pp. 242-263.
[32] For an overview of the concept of "human security," see OCHA (n.d.)a, which is, as the document notes on p. 2, "a guide for practitioners who wish to integrate the added value of the human security approach into their work…"
[33] Barnett (2011), p. 49.
[34] Moniz (2016), p. 67.
[35] Moniz (2016), pp. 74-75.

humanitarian organization to be 'international' in both name and structure"—was founded.[36] Dunant's experience at Solferino was just one manifestation of this trend.

What emerged from this time period is indeed something historically novel. One could reasonably assert that charitable organizations—like militaries—have existed since time immemorial.[37] But from this time period arose a professional sector devoted, at least in principle, to serving humankind regardless of politics or identity characteristics. The normative underpinning of contemporary professional humanitarian action consists of the principles of humanity (addressing suffering regardless of where it arises), neutrality (refraining from taking sides in conflicts), impartiality (implementing programming based on need alone), and independence (maintaining autonomy from political forces).[38] In the 20th century, humanitarian organizations made these principles (as well as others) official in the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 1965, the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief in 1994, as well as UN General Assembly resolutions 46/182 (1991) and 58/114 (2004).[39] The overarching tension in humanitarian-military relations—or at least, how this tension is usually conceived—relates to how humanitarian organizations devoted to these principles can constructively interact with militaries, which are inherently political entities.

As the nature of humanitarianism has evolved—and as humanitarian organizations' understandings of, and approaches to operationalizing, humanitarian principles have also morphed—the dynamics of humanitarian-military relations have shifted as well. Just as Barnett and others have crafted histories of humanitarianism, a similar history could be written, though has not been yet, about militaries' engagement in this domain. There are indeed through-lines that one can draw from Solferino to Mosul, from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq, from ancient Greece to the policy that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) adopted on the protection of civilians in 2016, to note just one example.[40] But absent a scholarly devotion to mining the history of this field, humanitarians and militaries alike will have a limited conception of how to historically contextualize these issues, will likely wind up continually surprised by the same recurrent challenges, and will remain prone to reinvent the wheel each time they grapple with these impediments.

These risks are particularly acute given the very dire current state of international emergency response, as numerous interviewees attested. Turning back to Barnett's notion of a "humanitarian big bang," it is worth recalling that, for most of the 20th century, scientists assumed that the expansion of the universe, which began at the moment of the actual big bang, was slowing down. In the 1990s, astronomers discovered evidence that the expansion of the universe was actually accelerating.[41] Similarly, the humanitarian universe—first launched in the "humanitarian big bang" in the 18th century—has definitively been accelerating, a trend that shows no sign of

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[36] Davies (2018), p. 465.
[37] For an early historical example, see de Montclos (2014), p. 238, which discusses the Order of Malta, initiated in 1113 as a charitable organization and over time became militarized.
[38] See OCHA (2012)a, p. 1.
[39] Schenkenberg van Mierop (2016), p. 297.
[40] See NATO (2016).
[41] Leibundgut and Sollerman (2001).

reversing. Many more humanitarian organizations, international and local, seem to exist than ever before, and there are a multitude of armed actors—militaries, multilateral peacekeeping missions, NSAGs, private military and security companies, and urban gangs—also involved within the humanitarian sector. The nature of conflict has shifted, with non-international armed conflicts dominating the landscape of contemporary warfare, although efforts have begun to prepare for a return to great power conflict in the future.[42] Climate change is already exacerbating humanitarian vulnerabilities.[43] Urbanization is changing the nature of the world, and hence, of the humanitarian crises that emerge.[44]

Humanitarian actors also perceive that humanitarian space is shrinking, that aid workers are increasingly being attacked, and that their work is more at risk of instrumentalization and politicization than ever before. One author, writing about humanitarian action in the context of the U.S.-led "war on terror," has stated:

> Everyone is a humanitarian now. A word once used to describe principled civilian assistance to people suffering in natural or manmade disasters now provides a reassuring gloss for the actions of politicians and the military. This has both compromised and endangered the work of aid workers who had believed that their independence and impartiality would be enough to protect them.[45]

There is a sometimes-fierce debate among analysts and practitioners about the veracity of the shrinking nature of humanitarian space, and even about whether humanitarian space is actually a useful concept at all.[46] Nevertheless, there is a widespread sense that the ever-accelerating "humanitarian big bang" continues to foist new and more vexing challenges onto professionals engaged in international emergency response.

But how should one track progress in this field? Herein lies another puzzle. On the one hand, there appears to be a widespread sense, even in spite of the aforementioned challenges, that humanitarian-military relations are improving. According to one interviewee, "I do think the situation is getting better. I think there has been improvement in the dialogue and coordination mechanisms." Another interviewee asserted, "Things are definitely better today than they were twenty years ago." On the other hand, there is a recognition, as another interviewee stated, that "It's still a space where there isn't a lot of hard empirical evidence on what works and what doesn't."

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[42] See Freedberg (2018); Mahanty and Shiel (2019); and Slim (2019), in which Hugo Slim asserts, "We need humanitarian multilateralism urgently today as geopolitics leans towards great power contest and competition once again and as new technology sees us on the cusp of a paradigm shift in new weapons and non-human combatants—a new arms race."

[43] See Walker, Glasser, and Kambli (2012); Nicoson and von Uexkull (2019); and Peters et al. (2019).

[44] Patel and Burke (2009); Duijsens (2010); Archer and Dodman (2017); and Archer (2017); ICRC and InterAction (2017).

[45] Gill (2016), p. 1.

[46] Colona (2017), p. 127 notes that humanitarian space might not be shrinking, but rather, "in fact, humanitarian organizations seem to be able to reach out more people in need and not less." Also, see de Montclos (2014), which critiques the notion of humanitarian space, as well as Weissman (2016), which critiques analyses of data on attacks against aid workers.

Indeed, there has not even been much reflection about how to gauge success. Should one focus on the speed of the delivery of aid? The cost? The perceptions of aid recipients? Several years ago, a literature review in this field concluded, "[P]erhaps 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."[47] This observation remains relevant today.

There is a growing pool of case studies in this field produced by individual practitioners reflecting on their own experiences and by researchers seeking to undertake methodologically rigorous and comprehensive assessments of particular disaster responses.[48] Nevertheless, interviewees expressed concern about the state of this research. One interviewee articulated a desire for more case study research that adopts "a 360-degree view, interviewing all participants, coming from their different perspectives." Another interviewee stated, "I would like to see a wider range of case studies. There's a danger that we keep mining the same cases from PRTs in Afghanistan and Ebola and we are talking to the same set of military actors. There are important exceptions in the literature, but I'd like to see more of them engaging in the perspectives of southern military actors." There is indeed a great deal of focus on large-scale disasters, but smaller-scale disasters suffer from analytical neglect.[49] Additionally, humanitarian-military relations are prevalent and important in contexts of forced displacement, but scarce literature exists that delves very deeply into the dynamics at play in such environments.[50]

We are thus left with several important questions. What drives militaries to engage in disaster response? What factors shape fruitful and principled humanitarian engagement with armed actors? What has changed? Why has it changed? What has been the impact of these changes? These questions point toward a scholarly research agenda that researchers have begun to analyze.[51] However, answers to these fairly basic questions remain elusive. This field has much left to explore.

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[47] Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), p. 29.

[48] For an example of a case study in which a practitioner offers his individual perspective on humanitarian-military relations issues on a context where he had personally worked, see Stewart (2018) on the Battle of Mosul.

[49] See Ferris (2012), p. 3, which quotes a senior UN humanitarian official as stating, "Most attention and media coverage focuses on mega-disasters—such as the Japan earthquake of 2011 or the Pakistan floods of 2010—but the fact is that 90 per cent of disasters cause fewer than 50 casualties."

[50] For an analysis that does touch upon these issues, see Terry (2002). Byman et al. (2000), pp. 34-37 provides information on U.S. military engagement in support for refugees and internally displaced persons. Lischer (2007), p. 99 and Heaslip and Barber (2016), p. 147 discuss NATO involvement in setting up refugee camps. Barber (2012) addresses U.S. military activities in support of people displaced due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Cook and Ne (2018) and Ahmed (2018) examine civil-military coordination related to Rohinga refugees in Bangladesh. See also Colona (2017), pp. 134-136; Townsend (2017); and NYT Editorial Board (2016), which discuss civil-military coordination in the European migration crisis.

[51] Two examples are Malešič (2015), which analyzes different arguments for why militaries would or would not have an interest in engaging in disaster response, and Ruffa and Vennesson (2014), which presents an argument that "domestic institutional configurations" shape the likely depth of engagement between militaries and NGOs from particular countries.

II. What is Humanitarian-Military Relations? Into the Conceptual Morass

What is humanitarian-military relations? This question too has no easy answer, as conceptualizations are fragmented across different organizations, with different terminology used by different actors.[52] The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) uses the term "humanitarian civil-military coordination," abbreviated as CMCoord.[53] The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement uses the broader term civil-military relations, abbreviated as CMR.[54] The World Food Programme refers to humanitarian-military interaction, or HMI.[55] Many military actors use the term civil-military coordination but use the abbreviation CIMIC.[56] The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations uses the abbreviation UN CIMIC.[57] Moreover, definitions have not been static over time. In the context of OCHA, humanitarians have bemoaned the fact that, as one humanitarian actor declared, the term "civil-military coordination no longer reflects what we do."[58] Indeed, each word in "civil-military coordination" does not seem to accurately describe what the term intends to mean.

First, the word "civil" is too expansive. This word is a shorthand for civilian entities engaged in humanitarian response. The typical conception includes:

- UN humanitarian agencies (for example: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, World Food Programme, Office for the High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children Fund)
- Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (including the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and national societies, including entities not officially recognized by the movement, such as the Kurdish Red Crescent)
- NGOs (including international and local organizations)
- Civilian governmental agencies (such as USAID/OFDA, DFID, and ECHO)

But what is the dividing line between a civilian organization that is humanitarian and one that is not? The answer is not clear and can be hotly contested.[59] The reason is that the definition is ordinarily linked to the extent to which an organization is guided by humanitarian principles (in particular, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence). But these principles are

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[52] For an overview of the terminology used by different organizations, see Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), pp. 1-2.

[53] See OCHA (2017)a.

[54] See Studer (2001).

[55] Comments offered by Colin Hourihan at a discussion panel as part of the Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination, Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, February 4, 2020.

[56] See CCOE (2012).

[57] See Peace Operations Training Institute (n.d.).

[58] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).

[59] On the evolving nature of the word "humanitarianism," see Calhoun (2008). See also Herman and Dijkzeul (2011).

interpreted differently by different organizations, and there is no consensus on when a compromise on humanitarian principles has gone too far.[60]

Second, the word "military" is too restrictive. When humanitarians discuss "humanitarian civil-military coordination," the term "military" can refer to:

- Foreign militaries
- Domestic militaries
- Police forces
- UN or regional missions (including military actors and police forces mandated as components of peacekeeping operations or monitoring missions)
- Intelligence agencies
- Private military and security companies
- NSAGs (including rebel groups, pro- or anti-government militias, or criminal gangs and encompassing groups' armed and political wings)

As the above list indicates, the field of "humanitarian civil-military coordination" now encompasses engagement with any sort of organized armed actor, including entities—namely, NSAGs and police—that do not fit squarely under the term "military." The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement uses the broader term "arms bearers" to capture these types of groups.[61] But this term is actually too expansive, as one could conceivably interpret the term to encompass individual civilians who carry weapons for their own personal use.

Third, the past decade (or so) has seen a shift in how humanitarian actors conceptualize and define the term "coordination." In the 1990s, "humanitarian civil-military coordination" took a big step in formalization with the creation of the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (commonly known as the Oslo Guidelines), which apply to natural disaster settings. The Oslo Guidelines were finalized in 1994 and later revised in 2007.[62] The Guidelines define "humanitarian civil-military coordination" as "[t]he essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals."[63]

Although the Oslo definition appears expansive, in actuality, the Oslo Guidelines propagated a narrow conception of "humanitarian civil-military coordination" as the use of military resources for humanitarian assistance or disaster relief (HA/DR). Many analysts and researchers have accepted this delineation.[64] The Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to

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[60] Colona (2017), p. 125 notes that humanitarian principles "are at the same time absolute, obligatory and aspirational, and often in tension with one another in their application."

[61] Evans (2016) notes that the ICRC defines "arms bearers" as "those individuals and organizations whose job it is to fight, either as part of national armed forces or as members of non-state armed groups, or who carry weapons to protect and police populations." The piece also discusses the ICRC's Armed and Security Forces Delegates, abbreviated as "FAS Delegates" due to the French language term: Forces Armées et de Sécurité.

[62] OCHA (2007).

[63] Ibid, pp. 8-9.

[64] Heaslip and Barber (2016) limit their examination of humanitarian-military relations to the topic of "humanitarian logistics." Barry and Jeffreys (2002), p.4 assert that there are three "areas of contact" between humanitarian and

Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (commonly known as the MCDA Guidelines)—created in 2003 and later revised in 2006 to offer guidelines for complex emergencies—articulates the same definition.[65]

This narrow conception of the field as limited to the use of military assets in HA/DR has shaped the conceptual frameworks that have been developed to inform policy thinking and planning, as well as training and capacity building activities. There are two key conceptual frameworks worth mentioning. First, the "cookie-truck-bridge" framework delineates different types of HA/DR engagements.[66] "Cookie" refers to direct assistance, meaning actual direct engagement with people receiving humanitarian assistance. "Truck" refers to indirect engagement in humanitarian assistance, for example, by providing transportation services. "Bridge" refers to infrastructure support.[67] Provision of security for humanitarian organizations sometimes makes its way into this conceptualization as well.[68]

Second, a framework sometimes known as the "Three C's" conceptualizes how military involvement in direct engagement, indirect engagement, and infrastructure support should vary across different context types. The particular insight of this framework is that military visibility in humanitarian assistance, and direct military engagement with humanitarian actors, can be higher in natural disaster settings but should be lower in conflict settings. Although different documents articulate this framework in somewhat distinct ways using different vocabulary, a common conceptualization envisages the relationship between humanitarian and military actors on a spectrum of cooperation, communication, and coexistence.[69] Cooperation (one end of the spectrum) can occur in non-conflict settings. Coexistence (the other end of the spectrum) can be desirable in conflict settings, as humanitarian actors seek to distance themselves from armed actors in order to maintain humanitarian principles.[70]

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military actors, those being: "the use of military assets such as aircraft to assist agencies in delivering relief; the use of military forces to protect relief supplies, convoys and staff against theft and attack; and information-sharing." Delmonteil (2017), p. 4 states, "CIMIC collaboration is justified due to the fact that NGOs, and more broadly civil relief actors, often have limited capabilities in two key areas: logistical and operational security. In contrast, military forces are recognised for their exceptional abilities in these two areas."

[65] OCHA (2006).

[66] For one explanation of the "cookie-truck-bridge" framework, see Northrup (2015).

[67] The "Oslo Guidelines" articulate this distinction between direct assistance, indirect assistance, and infrastructure support. See OCHA (2007), p. 7.

[68] For example, see Yuste et al. (2019), p. 4.

[69] See Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), p. 2. Heaslip and Barber (2014), p. 61 refer to "5C's," those being: "cooperation, coordination, collaboration, communication and compassion." Ruffa and Vennesson (2014), pp. 586-587 envisage an even broader spectrum that "ranges from public confrontation to cooperation," noting, "At one end of the spectrum, 'public confrontation' means an explicit conflict between NGOs and the military, hindering contacts and basic exchange of information. At the other end of the spectrum, 'cooperation' refers to the 'closest relationship that can exist between humanitarian and military actors' involving the exchange of information, joint planning, launching joint projects, and organizing activities 'around an agreed division of tasks.' In between these two extremes, NGOs and military organizations can 'coexist'; that is, they put in place the 'minimum level of coordination necessary to exchange critical information.'" (internal citations omitted)

[70] See OCHA (n.d.)b, pp. 46-47, a guidebook that OCHA produced for military actors, which articulates the distinction between direct assistance, indirect assistance, and infrastructure support, indicating that in armed conflicts infrastructure should be the only thing that military actors undertake.

Cooperation ———— Communication ———— Coexistence

Non-conflict Settings   *Armed Conflicts*
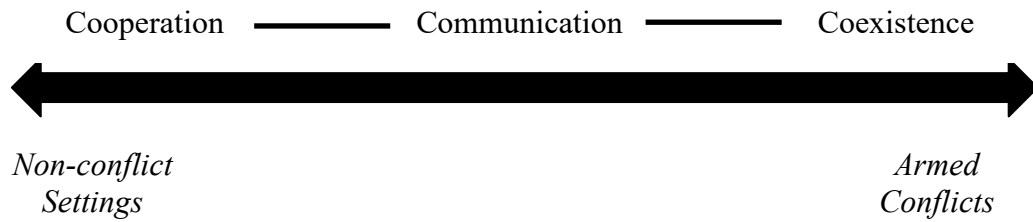
This framework has limitations. First, when natural disasters occur in contexts of protracted political stability where the level of conflict ebbs and flows over time—and varies across different geographic areas within the same country—there can be a lack of consensus about whether one should consider it to be a natural disaster or armed conflict setting. As a consequence, different actors might find themselves using different guidelines, and hence, adopting disparate approaches to understanding how deeply humanitarians should engage with, and allow themselves to be associated with, military actors.[72] Second, contexts can shift drastically over time. If humanitarian organizations cooperate closely with military actors in a natural disaster response in a peaceful setting, and then an armed conflict later erupts in the same context, the reputational association with the military forged through previous disaster relief activities can hinder humanitarians' ability to operate effectively. Third, there can be reputational bleeding across borders to other contexts. In Country A, perhaps close humanitarian cooperation with the military is not problematic at all. But in Country B, where the same organization also seeks to operate, local actors might perceive the association with the military in Country A to be problematic, hence making it difficult for the humanitarian organization to operate in Country B. Such issues are especially pertinent given the rapidity with which information can travel in the age of social media.

Additionally, the term "humanitarian civil-military coordination" has come to mean not only military engagement in HA/DR but also interactions between humanitarian and military actors on a wider range of issues related to access, humanitarian notification systems, the use of armed escorts for security, the protection of civilians, combatant compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), negotiating humanitarian corridors or pauses, and demining operations.[73]

[71] For an example from which this visual representation draws, see OCHA (n.d.)b, p. 44.

[72] See Madiwale and Virk (2011), p. 1099, which notes that in the response to the Pakistan floods in 2010, "Broadly speaking, it is possible to identify three distinct approaches taken by international organizations: 1. Those who saw themselves responding to a purely natural disaster tended to follow the Oslo guidelines; 2. Those who saw themselves responding to a complex emergency, in which both the Pakistan national military and NATO were perceived to be parties to a conflict, tended to follow the MCDA guidelines and to maintain an appropriate distance from the military where possible; 3. Those who saw themselves responding to a natural disaster within a complex emergency, for which there are no international guidelines and where neither the Oslo guidelines nor the MCDA guidelines provide guidance on civil–military relations with the national military, tended to have varying responses to civil–military issues."

[73] The spectrum of possible activities reflects the findings of a survey that OCHA conducted of OCHA CMCoord officers in 2019. See Agelou (2019).

There is also a strand of policy thinking focused on non-operational dimensions of humanitarian-military relations, in particular, in relation to innovation.[74]

In light of this expanded definition of what "coordination" means (encompassing also access, security, and protection), the "Three C's" framework no longer applies. Indeed, as we move from natural disaster settings to complex emergencies, the array of issues on which humanitarians and armed actors engage with one another does not decrease but rather increases, resembling the trends that the below figure details.[75]

*Figure 2: The Contemporary View of "Humanitarian
Civil-Military Coordination" Across Context Types*

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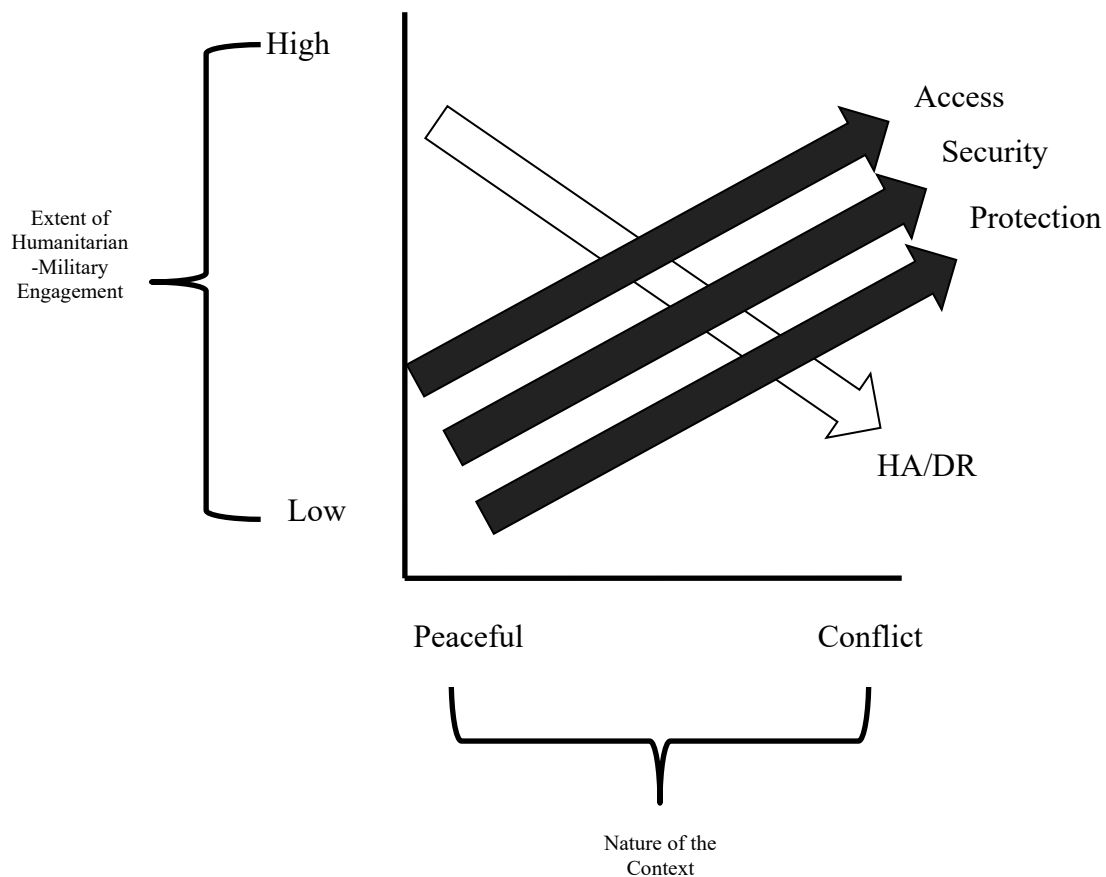
[74] See Kaplan and Easton-Calabria (2016). For a historical example, see Condon-Rall (1994), which examines U.S. and Allied military efforts to conduct research on malaria treatment during World War II.
[75] For one example, see Stewart and Zaidenwerg (2013), p. 18, which notes that after the initiation of Operation Cast Lead in Israel in 2009, "[I]t quickly became apparent that more regular and formal coordination between the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the humanitarian community was necessary. As a result, the UN deployed additional staff to Gaza and Jerusalem to manage engagement with the IDF. The IDF moved COGAT [Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories] staff from the West Bank and other locations to work within military units inside Gaza to coordinate humanitarian assistance. Ten days into the operation, the IDF established, under emergency orders, a Joint Humanitarian Coordination Centre (JHCC) which answered directly to IDF Headquarters."

Interviewees noted that the "Three C's" framework is no longer adequate for the contemporary state of this field. In the words of one interviewee, this framework is "binary and one-dimensional." He stated, "We need a three-dimensional, multi-layered way of thinking." A commonly articulated concern within the UN is that thinking about this topic is "stuck in the Oslo Guidelines," as one interviewee stated, and overly focused on natural disaster contexts. Another interviewee explained, "When you find these kinds of problems from hell where you have the convergence of fragility, conflict, natural disaster, and those emerging areas like pandemics, then you have a major gap in conceptual clarity about what to do."

One might conclude that this field should be rebranded. Indeed, the word "civil" is too broad, "military" is too narrow, and "coordination" has been fluid over time. One could certainly argue that this field would more accurately be called something to the effect of: Humanitarian Interactions with Organized Armed Entities. However, the appetite is low for yet another term, and another messy acronym, to further cloud the conceptual morass in which this field finds itself. Humanitarians have debated this question in the context of OCHA, with specific reference to what the OCHA Civil-Military Coordination Service (CMCS) should call itself and how OCHA CMCS should be reformed. As one participant in these discussions stated, "There's no sense in rebranding if we're just going to do the same old thing."[76] A humanitarian practitioner implored, "Don't just rebrand, reinvigorate."[77] Indeed, more important than what to call this field is the question of how facilitating more fruitful interactions between humanitarians and armed actors can yield more effective humanitarian assistance and protection programming.

III. The Overarching Challenge: Two Different Types of Organizations

This section delves more deeply into the overarching challenge that defines this field. Almost every difficulty in humanitarian-military relations arises from the fact that humanitarians and militaries are inherently different types of organizations. The common conception of this overarching challenge is as follows. The primary aim of militaries is national security, with a focus on warfighting. Consequently—although some militaries have developed specialized capacity to manage and respond to humanitarian crises, in particular, natural disasters—many militaries struggle to develop expertise in humanitarian response, and have room to grow in terms of understanding the humanitarian impact of their activities. However, militaries wield great capacities—such as supplies, personnel, unique transportation capabilities such as airlift and sealift, and the ability to build and repair infrastructure—that can be useful in humanitarian

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[76] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).
[77] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).

response.[78] In contrast, for a humanitarian organization, mitigating suffering during large-scale emergencies is the central organizational aim. Humanitarian organizations have the necessary expertise, including for needs assessments, project implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. However, humanitarian organizations tend to lack the capacity and assets to respond as quickly as is necessary. The resulting question is: how can humanitarians work with militaries to fill this capacity gap with military assets while mitigating the risks that come from the fact that, first, militaries might lack necessary training and competencies, and second, militaries are driven by political aims that conflict with humanitarian principles?

The portrait of the overarching tension painted above will likely resonate with many actors engaged in international emergency response. However, this is only part of the picture. This section will probe the nuances that tend to fall away in this dichotomous vision of militaries as problematic-but-capacity-rich and humanitarians as principled-but-capacity-scarce. The section is divided into three parts. The first part examines militaries. The second part turns to humanitarian organizations, highlighting the ways that the common critiques of militaries in this field can also apply to humanitarians. The third part probes the resulting cultural divide between military and humanitarian actors.

Militaries

Militaries—including organized forces of individual states, as well as multilateral operations, such as UN integrated peacekeeping missions—can have organizational mandates to engage in disaster relief and civilian protection activities. One interviewee highlighted the U.S. National Security Strategy of 2017, which mentions in a section outlining priority actions:

> The United States will continue to lead the world in humanitarian assistance. Even as we expect others to share responsibility, the United States will continue to catalyze international responses to man-made and natural disasters and provide our expertise and capabilities to those in need. We will support food security and health programs that save lives and address the root cause of hunger and disease. We will support displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home.[79]

Another interviewee discussed a context where he, as a humanitarian, had engaged with military actors that "had a mandate to improve the protection of civilians," and according to this interviewee, "In terms of what they wanted to achieve and what we wanted to achieve, in this specific and particular context and moment of time, we were, broadly speaking, in the same direction. It is of course not the case in every context. This is why I think we need to remain open, and nuanced, in our approach of militaries." The UN Security Council has provided numerous

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[78] For an overview of military logistics capacities that makes humanitarian-military relations desirable, see Heaslip and Barber (2014), pp. 67-68.

[79] "National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (2017), p. 42.

peacekeeping missions with mandates that encompass humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians.[80]

Nevertheless, a prominent theme in existing literature is that, even if militaries have such an explicit mandate, militaries' ultimate objective is inherently political. On the distinction between CMCoord (the OCHA abbreviation for civil-military coordination) and CIMIC (the military abbreviation for the same phrase), one literature review specifies, "CMCoord refers specifically to the interaction between humanitarian organisations and military actors for humanitarian purposes," while "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."[81] Another author mentions NATO's definition of CIMIC, which entails "co-ordination and cooperation, in support of the mission," that the definition "is frequently interpreted as emphasizing the primacy of the mission, rather than the maintenance of humanitarian space."[82]

Interviewee comments from both military and humanitarian interlocutors confirm the widespread nature of this notion that militaries are particularly prone to prioritize their own organizational objectives over humanitarian needs on the ground. One interviewee stated of military engagement in HA/DR, "A lot of people that are there think that they are there to show the flag. They think it's a PR [public relations] exercise. So if it's a PR exercise, you want to do the most public thing you possibly can, and you'll plan accordingly. You'll do direct assistance, for example… For military planners who know that this is not their mission, this is a diversion from their mission." Another interviewee with military and humanitarian experience elaborated on the limited applicability of humanitarian principles to militaries but emphasized the enduring relevance of the principle of humanity to military actors, stating:

> Out of the four humanitarian principles, I would only apply one of those principles to a military audience. I've witnessed it many, many times: huge amounts of humanity. However, you are a uniformed body of people. You wear flags on your arms. You cannot be neutral. You cannot be impartial. and you cannot be independent. But you can have huge amounts of humanity. As long as we all understand that, then we can work within those constraints and boundaries.[83]

There is certainly truth to the notion that military engagement in HA/DR ultimately cannot be apolitical. The increasing level of interaction between humanitarian and military actors, one author writes, "has led many senior Western soldiers to conclude that humanitarian assistance is not a

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[80] See Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), pp. 23-24.

[81] Ibid, p. 2.

[82] Gordon (2006), pp. 43-44.

[83] See Hayward (2017), p. 157, which reflects the notion that the principle of humanity drives military actors: "To me, the greatest gift you can give another human being is the gift of hope. This is why I joined the military and why I did the volunteer work. I wanted and still want to make the world a better place through giving people real hope for a better future." However, there is a genuine distinction between the ethics that drive military actors and those that drive humanitarians. As Eggleston (2017), p. 138 writes, "Humanitarian ethics struggles with how best to save the most lives; military ethics grapples with how to avoid unnecessary deaths." For works that examine military medical professionals, see Gabriel and Metz (1992); Pearn (2012); and De Rond (2017).

politically neutral activity. Rather, it is a tool for terminating conflict, cementing peace, relieving suffering, providing a constituency to which unspecified military responsibilities can be transferred and easing the military's departure from conflict zones."[84] The resulting concern from humanitarians is that, by engaging with military actors in disaster response, humanitarian organizations risk being instrumentalized for political or military ends.

Integrated UN peacekeeping missions can be particularly vexing for humanitarian organizations when the mission has a mandate for civilian protection and/or humanitarian assistance and also is a party to the conflict. The lines between a UN peacekeeping operation and humanitarian actors can be blurred when peacekeepers engage in Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), which are short-term development projects geared toward garnering local support. QIPs have been criticized for lacking adequate monitoring and accountability, insufficiently linking to longer-term assistance and development initiatives, ineffective due to military actor's lack of competence in implementation, and politicized due to the "winning hearts and minds" approach.[85] Interviewees also expressed concern about contingent funded projects in the context of integrated missions, which have an even lower degree of accountability.

Humanitarian Organizations

All of the issues described above—the temptation to prioritize organizational objectives over meeting the needs on the ground; the difficulty of truly being impartial, neutral, and independent; and the lack of adequate resources devoted to building competencies—apply to humanitarian organizations as well. Humanitarians too can lose sight of what should be their overarching objectives. One interviewee asserted, "There isn't a single military or a single humanitarian who doesn't want the best for the beneficiary." However, he said of the humanitarian sector:

> What I would like to see is for us to look at what the beneficiaries want. We always talk about what the agencies want and what the agency position is. I know that the agency's position is informed by what's best for the beneficiary. But I'm not sure that, when it comes to bringing the community together, that they really fundamentally stick to all of our morals.

Another interviewee concurred, stating, "Even though we talk about humanitarianism, we use the term humanitarianism, people forget that it's about humans. They really do. Humanitarianism, when people see the word, they think of the system. People lose sight of the fact that we're really talking about humanity." In the words of another interviewee, "At the end of the day, sometimes the goal is just to go on with their programs, whatever it takes. Every time there is a crisis, the priority is to go on with the program, to be relevant to the donors. The principles go away really fast." These comments echo insights from earlier research, including one publication that notes humanitarians' PR objectives:

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[84] Gordon (2006), p. 41.
[85] See Gordon (2006), pp. 42-43; and Gordon (2011), pp. 37-50.

In their drive for publicity, NGOs may seek a visible role in the relief effort even when their participation contributes relatively little. In the early days of a crisis, some NGOs show up to demonstrate to their donors that they are present and contributing—an image that makes it easier for them to secure funding.[86]

Moreover, as this paper has already mentioned, there is no consensus across the humanitarian sector about how to operationalize humanitarian principles, and there is debate about whether principled humanitarian action is possible, or even desirable, in some contexts.[87] In some cases, humanitarians prioritize maintaining a perceived operational distance from armed actors at the expense of transparency. For example, one interviewee stated, in order to maintain perceived adherence to humanitarian principles, "Even if we are using the military to do a logistical move, for the last mile, we would ask NGOs and humanitarian partners to take that aid forward so that we don't compromise the impartiality and neutrality of what we're trying to deliver." Another interviewee discussed working as a humanitarian in a context where aid agencies relied on the protection of military actors while simultaneously seeking to downplay or even hide the ways in which humanitarian and military were interacting with one another. This humanitarian stated, speaking of the refusal of humanitarians in this context to be seen speaking with military actors:

> NGOs are parking their cars within the UN compound at night. They seek protection for their goods and assets. People see their cars entering every evening and then leaving this military base. And then sitting with the military is a problem? This lack of consistency is a challenge when you dialogue with

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[86] Byman et al. (2000), p. 112. See also Byman et al. (2000), p. 47, which states of the political pressures for relief efforts, "Political requirements also may lead to pressures on the relief effort that planners should anticipate. Policymakers seeking to sustain support for an operation may need to show immediate results. Success may be measured by how impressive the operation appears on television rather than humanitarian measures of effectiveness, such as the number of refugees returned to their homes and drops in morbidity rates. Host country officials may prefer that foodstuffs and other visible evidence of a relief effort arrive before forklifts, K-loaders, and other items that would increase overall through-put and perhaps save more lives. Often, U.S. and allied governments seek immediate credit for alleviating a humanitarian disaster in order to reap political rewards." Similarly, see McIntosh (2017), p. 83, in which one military actor shares observations on his engagement with humanitarian NGOs as part of the Australian Medical Support Force in Rwanda in 1994: "[W]hen dealing with NGOs it would be wise to know that: NGOs often seek out publicity." See also Wheeler and Harmer (2006), p. 8, which discusses an example of USAID in Afghanistan: "In 2003, Andrew Natsios, the former head of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), told an InterAction forum that aid agencies on contract with USAID should identify themselves in the field as recipients of US funding in order to show stronger links with US foreign policy goals."

[87] Byman et al. (2000), p. 106 asserts, "NGOs themselves, however, often have trouble living up to their ideals of neutrality. Neutrality and the aim of remaining extraneous to a conflict are often unrealistic goals, perhaps particularly in contemporary conflicts. NGOs." See also McAvoy and Charny (2013), p. 5: "While many regularly cite humanitarian principles when trying to persuade US forces to modify their behaviour, their own compliance with the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence tends to be erratic." See also Haysom (2013), p. 4: "The humanitarian community also needs to recognise and address its own deficiencies when it comes to adherence to humanitarian principles. Organisations have a poor track record in following existing guidelines, while the proliferation of humanitarian agencies in recent years, with different mandates, philosophies and approaches, makes it very difficult to achieve a consensus view on the appropriate level and form of interaction with the military." Schenkenberg van Mierop (2016), p. 298 discusses the "heated debate on neutrality" that erupted over the course of devising a new Core Humanitarian Standard in 2014. Lischer (2007), p. 100 states, "Neutrality is an ideal, not a reality. When aid workers operate in close proximity to Western military forces, all sides will inevitably view the aid workers as political actors."

the military. You say, 'Humanitarian space, we need to make the distinction, be careful not to run activities that could look like ours. But still, could you please protect our cars in the evening? And also, could you please have a patrol around the area where we have our residence and offices?' Imagine a military listening to that. It feels like: you don't want me, but at the same time, you need me. It's very difficult for militaries to navigate what is seen as contradictory.

Much has also been written and said about the organizational differences between humanitarian organizations (which tend to be fragmented and reliant on consensus-based decision-making processes) and militaries (which are hierarchical, typified by top-down decision-making). One publication aptly describes this distinction:

> NGO organizational structure is very different from that of the military. Most NGOs are managed in a highly decentralized manner, with scope for initiative in the field. Typically, they prefer to work by consensus rather than responding to direction. Rather than being hierarchical, with a clear and orderly assignment of responsibility and authority, NGO structure is usually egalitarian, with much debate required before a consensus-based decision is reached. Accustomed to this autonomy, many NGO personnel have little patience with military hierarchies. They tend to resent military officers' typical question: 'who's in charge?'[88]

The converse frustration—from militaries bewildered by humanitarian organizations' fragmented nature—is another defining feature of humanitarian-military relations. One interviewee stated:

> My military colleagues, of course, find humanitarian support an extremely rewarding environment in which to play in, and they can deliver huge effect very swiftly. They bring scale. They bring expertise, professionalism, et cetera. And they also work in a very hierarchical environment, which is not the way that NGOs, and the humanitarian sector as a whole, operate. They do see themselves helping a lot of people who need help, but they also find it, at times, a very frustrating environment in which to play due to the perceived lack of coordination that the humanitarian sector has.

In the words of another interviewee, "I think the humanitarian community, as a whole, is a really difficult homogenous unit. We call it the humanitarian community, but each individually is so very different." One military actor has gone so far as to describe humanitarian-military relations as a "network of networks"[89] Humanitarian fragmentation can further exacerbate humanitarian-military tensions due to the fact that different organizations take disparate approaches to

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[88] Byman et al. (2000), p. 102. See also Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), p. 5: "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. This contrasts with militaries, which are characterised as hierarchical and output-driven." (internal citations omitted)

[89] Zalewski (2013), p. 11.

humanitarian principles. As a consequence, each humanitarian organization makes its own decisions about the extent to which they will engage, and how they will engage, with military actors. Humanitarian fragmentation can lead to a lack of coherence and even competition—for funding, for example—that can contribute to aid agencies succumbing to the temptation to serve their own organizational interests at the potential expense of the ability to meet humanitarian needs.[90]

There are even challenges of cultivating coherence within different branches of the same humanitarian organization. This holds true for OCHA—designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 1995 to be the UN's focal point on humanitarian civil-military coordination—especially as CMCS has engaged more deeply in armed conflict contexts, involving itself in issues of access, security, and protection.[91] As one interviewee described about OCHA's internal structural issues, "There are a couple of contexts where access and civ-mil [humanitarian civil-military coordination] were kept as two separate functions. If the access person is negotiating with an armed group, shouldn't the civ-mil team be involved and vice versa? This is within the same organization: OCHA." Another interviewee described that, on paper, the CMCoord officer, the protection officer, the access officer, and the security officer are supposed to be different people with their own separate Terms of Reference.[92] However, they explained, "In fact, it doesn't happen like that on the ground." Very often these roles bleed into one another. Another interviewee mentioned, "The interplay between CMCoord, access, and protection is essential. At the moment, there is a lack of clear guidance, within OCHA, at least." She further explained:

> What would be absolutely great would be for OCHA to have, at HQ [headquarters], one single section dealing with access, protection, IHL, security, and CMCoord: to avoid duplication and maximize efforts. Now, one week I'm talking to the UN-CMCoord Service. The other week, I'm seeking advice to the Access Unit. One is in New York, the other is in Geneva. It becomes complicated because the topics are really interlinked… What is really missing is to have a common platform… There is a lack of consistency across OCHA.

Some desire OCHA to play the role of a "one-stop shop" for humanitarian-military relations. However, not all humanitarian organizations desire this reality. As one interviewee said of the ICRC, "They just don't want to be coordinated." Another interviewee elaborated:

> The easy thing would be to have a single shop with everything inside. That simply cannot happen. You will have a UN pillar and an ICRC pillar… And you have a group of NGOs which are not UN, not ICRC or Red Cross, and they want to be separate also. From a military perspective—that's what I was when I was on the other side—it's very convenient to have a single point of contact for all the humanitarian problems. Military would be very happy to have this.

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[90] Cooley and Ron (2002).

[91] OCHA (2017)a.

[92] See OCHA (2017)b, which lays out the role of OCHA CMCoord officers and describes the ways in which CMCoord officers engage in access, security, and protection.

> That's what we are trying to explain to all the military that we see: no, that will not happen. The humanitarian community and the humanitarian world is very diverse.

A final important point is that humanitarian organizations, just like militaries, can also do more to mitigate unintended adverse effects of their programming. Various analyses have noted that humanitarian efforts can feed into a war economy; fuel insecurity; and breed local dependence on international assistance, thus stymying development.[93] Despite best intentions, humanitarians can break the "do no harm" principle. Moreover, the question of how humanitarians can and should balance the potential benefits of humanitarian programming with the risks of potential knock-on effects is one of sometimes intense professional contestation.[94]

The overarching challenge in humanitarian-military relations, as normally conceived, places emphasis on military shortcomings that stem from competency limitations, as well as the tension between militaries' overarching organizational aims and humanitarian needs. The full picture allows one to examine how humanitarians too are beset by these same issues.

The Cultural Humanitarian-Military Divide

As a consequence of the organizational differences explained above, there is a cultural divide between military and humanitarian actors that can be challenging to bridge.[95] A vignette relayed by an interviewee who transitioned from a military career to one as a humanitarian working for the UN illustrates this cultural chasm. The interviewee said, "The minute I came into the UN, I felt like I was defending the military. No one understood the military very well. I didn't meet many people at the beginning of me being at the UN who really understood the military. I felt like I was a chameleon. I felt like my role was to translate from military into humanitarian and humanitarian into military." In the UN context, when someone would introduce this interviewee as former

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[93] See Byman et al. (2000), pp. 1-2, which notes, "Relief operations to aid victims of man-made disasters are both organizationally and politically complex. If not conducted with great care, they may even increase human suffering by provisioning combatants and thus fueling a conflict. For example, the primary recipients of aid during Support Hope, the U.S. operation in Zaire (now Congo) following the Rwandan genocide, were Hutu refugees, many still organized and controlled by a genocidal leadership. This leadership intended to return to Rwanda by force and conducted bloody raids from refugee camps in Zaire but was crushed in a Tutsi- led invasion of eastern Zaire." de Montclos (2014), pp. 239-240 notes that aid can feed a war economy via: 1) violent predation (when armed actors steal food or supplies), 2) institutionalized predation (when NGOs dump money into local economy), and 3) locals investing more money in warfighting capacities (since NGOs fill a gap that would otherwise exist in local capacities and would thus require local resources. See also Lischer (2007), p. 100: "Two main insights emerge from the analysis of military and humanitarian interaction in recent interventions. The first is that humanitarian action undertaken in an insecure environment can actually intensify violence and endanger civilians. The identity of the aid givers—military or humanitarian—is less important than the need for security as a prerequisite to providing aid. This may be unpalatable to military planners who hope that reconstruction activity can create a secure environment. It cannot. The strategic use of humanitarian assistance cannot fill a security vacuum, and may well exacerbate insecurity."

[94] See Bonis-Charancle and Lucchi (2018) for an overview of efforts to operationalize the "do no harm" principle.

[95] See ACMC and ACFID (2012), p. 2, which notes, "These stakeholders—whether an international military or police force, a donor or an aid agency—all have critical and often complementary roles to play in disaster response and complex emergencies. Yet, it is often the case that a lack of mutual understanding, as well as confusion over roles, responsibilities, cultures and terminologies, impedes communication and overall effectiveness."

military, people would start telling about their "horror stories in engaging with militaries." Through these experiences, the interviewee said, "I realized that they heard military and saw a child soldier on drugs or someone popping celebratory fire and it ricocheting off the trees around them. That's what they saw me as. And I was initially actually very offended." Then when the interviewee would engage with their former military community, they would hear comments such as: "Oh, I heard you're a lentil-eating hippie now. How do you put up with it?"

Interviewees stressed the importance of both sides across the humanitarian-military divide investing more into understanding one another. There are certainly barriers in language and terminology.[96] One author has gone so far as to argue that the language spoken by cadets at West Point constitutes its own dialect of English.[97] The lexicon of the humanitarian sector, similar to that of militaries, is densely populated with acronyms obscure to outsiders.[98] Military and humanitarian actors are perpetually at risk of drowning in one another's alphabet soup.

Interviewees stressed the importance of breaking down prejudicial notions of military actors as "baby-killers" and humanitarians as "lentil-eating hippies."[99] Militaries indeed face issues of breaking down prejudices, capacitating themselves to deepen their understanding of humanitarian organizations and humanitarian action more broadly, and directing sufficient resources towards these ends. On the resources that militaries devote toward humanitarian ends, a U.S. military interviewee said of the 2017 National Security Strategy, which, as noted above, references humanitarian assistance as a national security strategy priority:

> That's our overarching guidance, and I don't think that we're meeting that… If that's our strategy, that's great, because we all think that that's a good thing for us to do in the world. But the U.S. military is certainly not training to be able to do that effectively. And USAID and Department of State are certainly not funded or manned with the enough people to do the work around the world that is needed in a comprehensive way. At least not for the current challenges facing the world.

The consequence, not just for the United States but for countries across the globe, is a dearth of military actors who understand how to wield military capabilities toward humanitarian ends without exacerbating the aforementioned tensions of instrumentalization and politicization and without causing extraneous harm. Nonetheless, it is important to note variations across militaries in this regard. Canada, for example, has notably invested heavily in humanitarian-military relations.[100] Interviewees also mentioned variations in understanding humanitarian action, and openness to engaging with humanitarian actors, across different units of the same military; for example, across various unified combatant commands of the United States Armed Forces.

Turning back to the humanitarian side, as one interviewee described, "Within the humanitarian system, there is extraordinarily poor understanding of how military actors think. It's almost as if

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[96] Heaslip and Barber (2014), p. 72.
[97] Glockler (2016). p. 11.
[98] *The New Humanitarian* (2018).
[99] See Anders (2013), which uses the terminology "tree-huggers" and "baby-killers" to describe this divide.
[100] See Shadwick (2018).

any military actor wielding force, engaging in force is a bad actor, and we can't be engaging with them." Furthermore, in the words of another interviewee, "There is little knowledge among humanitarian actors of the actual mandate of the military in general. There's this sense of hostility toward them, but in fact, little understanding of their mandate. that's something that a better dialogue can address." Humanitarians must also understand the distinctions between militaries of different countries, as an interviewee heighted, in particular reference to the work of ICRC delegates:

> Most of the delegates, if he has some military knowledge, he has military knowledge of his own country. So if I take a French delegate going into DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo], the picture he will have of the military will be the French military. An African military system is very different from a Western military system. If you don't have somebody talking to you about that when you arrive in the field, it will be very difficult for you to understand what is going on with the military and how to interact with them.

Elaborating on work in the humanitarian field, a different interviewee stated:

> One challenge is to overcome your own prejudices. For many humanitarians, the perception of the military, because of the lack of exposure to the military, is that they are not well intentioned. They would not be transparent in terms of what they want to achieve. More or less, we are the good ones, and they are the ones killing people. But to engage in a dialogue, you need to overcome those kinds of prejudices.

Nevertheless, the humanitarian sector has insufficiently invested in capacitating aid workers to understand military actors. An independent evaluation of OCHA CMCS conducted in 2012 concluded, despite finding ample evidence of positive perceptions in the field of CMCS activities, "Adequate and timely recruitment, deployment and retention of qualified and diverse UN-CMCoord staff remain key challenges for the organization."[101] One issue is that OCHA CMCoord officers have operated as surge staff, with positions that are short-term in nature.[102] CMCoord officers on the ground who are surged in have said that they are not taken seriously because of the short-term nature of the assignment. In order to establish trust with the other agencies and the military, let alone NSAGs, an interviewee noted that one needs to be there for a long period of time. Another interviewee stated pointedly, "Surge mechanisms are relied upon to fill these positions and this means a high turnover rate of personnel often as frequently as every three months. Effective CMCoord, particularly in complex and fluid environments, which is built upon trust and understanding cannot be conducted like this."

The first high-priority recommendation that the evaluation offered was that "OCHA should fully implement the policy instruction and should allocate sufficient resources to ensure that UN-

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[101] OCHA (2012)b, p. 20.

[102] Ibid, p. 32: "The factor most cited as a key constraint to the effectiveness of training was staff and military rotations in humanitarian settings, particularly in complex emergencies where staff deployments may last anywhere from six months to a year. The constant movement of staff at all levels was underlined as a barrier to sustained UN-CMCoord engagement, due to loss of trained personnel."

CMCoord becomes a core competency within OCHA."[103] Just six years later, in 2018, OCHA took the decision to dissolve CMCS. As an interviewee described, OCHA "decimated its civ-mil capacity by disintegrating the unit, completely decentralizing its functions, despite concerns expressed by the entire humanitarian system and by donor governments." OCHA reconstituted CMCS in 2019, and interviewees spoke favorably about this reversal,although it remains to be seen how CMCS will set its organizational priorities in light of limited resources.

In the wake of OCHA's shortcomings, various organizations have stepped up to the occasion with their own initiatives to promote more effective humanitarian-military relations.[104] Interviewees expressed concern that these different initiatives, arising from different organizations, might lead to a lack of coordinated efforts across different organizations, potentially causing different organizations to speak in fragmented voices as opposed to engaging with a cohesive, coordinated message to armed actors.

Just as militaries need to invest more in understanding humanitarians, the humanitarian sector needs to invest more in coordinating with militaries. More training and education is needed across all organizations who operate in this sector. Still, the point of this section has not been to claim that the commonly noted differences between militaries and humanitarian organizations are purely illusory. Rather, this section has sought to ensure that the discourse on the overarching challenge of humanitarian-military relations remains nuanced. Military actors and humanitarians share the flaws discussed throughout this section. But they do traverse distinct professional worlds. This examination of the overarching challenge of humanitarian-military relations points toward two additional research questions worthy of further analytical attention. First, under what circumstances does military engagement in HA/DR actually succeed in improving the military's image? If PR considerations drive military engagement in HA/DR, it would be useful to understand the circumstances under which it actually succeeds in meeting this end.[105] Second, under what circumstances does engagement with military actors cause reputational harm for humanitarian organizations?[106] This question is important as well, as it shapes the extent to which humanitarians engage with, or seek to hide their interactions and coordination with, militaries.

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[103] Ibid, p. 50.

[104] For example, see GPC (2018)a for the Global Protection Cluster and Arnö (2017) for Save the Children.

[105] For one example of such an analysis, see Lyall (2018). See also Das Manandhar et al. (2017), p. 6, which notes that public opinion data gathered in the wake of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, a context where the Nepalese army played a key role as first responders, suggest that the military's involvement in the response could have increased public trust in the army.

[106] Morales and Sandlin (2015)—which discusses the relationship between perceptions of performance, cost, and acceptability—will be useful to consider when framing future research on this issue.

IV. Key Contemporary Challenges in Complex Emergencies

This section examines four key contemporary challenges of humanitarian-military relations in complex emergencies. The first is humanitarian access. The second and third—humanitarian notification systems and the use of armed escorts—are security-related aspects of access. The fourth is humanitarian protection. These issues are not unique to complex emergencies. Indeed, interviewees discussed access difficulties in natural disaster response contexts. Humanitarian protection is also a key aspect of natural disaster preparedness and response.[107] However, in complex emergencies, these issues can require more in-depth and sustained engagement with armed actors. As such, these four issues are emblematic of the new world of humanitarian-military relations that has expanded beyond the formerly narrow conception of the field as limited to HA/DR.

Navigating Access, Proximity, and Humanitarian Principles

There are three core humanitarian-military relations access challenges. The first challenge is that armed actors sometimes inhibit or outright deny access, aiming to control humanitarian actors for various reasons - for instance, to direct programmatic resources to themselves or to control aid flow to benefit politically sympathetic communities and territories. Humanitarian organizations encountering such counterparts are faced with a dilemma between maintaining compromised access or withdrawing from the context but contravening the humanitarian imperative. Humanitarian actors have begun to devote a great deal of resources to cultivating humanitarian negotiation capacity and to developing organizational access strategies, efforts that overlap with the field of humanitarian-military relations when the interlocutors at hand are armed actors.[108] The field of humanitarian negotiation, similar to the field of humanitarian-military relations, suffers from a gap between scholarship and practice.[109] Indeed, the field of negotiation scholarship is quite developed but focuses on other types of negotiation contexts: legal, business, and international negotiations. Much more work needs to be done to bridge the humanitarian negotiation theory-practice gap.[110]

The second challenge relates to how closely humanitarian actors should engage, coordinate, and operate in collaboration with state armed forces. This issue arose as pertinent during the Battle of Mosul (2016-2017), when Iraqi forces, with the support of a U.S.-led international coalition, successfully wrested the Iraqi city of Mosul from ISIL control. The World Health Organization coordinated a trauma response in which, as noted earlier in this paper, civilian medical practitioners were "co-located" with or "embedded" within divisions of the Iraqi army. This choice to prioritize

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[107] GPC (n.d.)
[108] Grace (2020).
[109] Grace and Lempereur (2019).
[110] For one piece of scholarship that breaks valuable ground in this regard, see Clements (2020).

the principle of humanity and the humanitarian imperative over the principles of neutrality and independence was controversial.[111] As one report stated:

> [T]he compromise was especially striking in the Mosul case, as the response relied completely upon, and was a component of, the military operations. For some humanitarian actors, this also meant necessary and acceptable compromises to impartiality. For others, the short-term benefits of upholding the humanitarian imperative were outweighed by the longer-term consequences that would hurt the organisation's access to far greater numbers of people in need.[112]

Indeed, organizations including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the ICRC chose not to provide assistance under this model.

The third challenge is how to provide humanitarian assistance in territories controlled by NSAGs, and even to wounded NSAG fighters themselves, while managing the resulting strain to relations with a government combating the NSAG in question. Furthermore, when discerning whether to engage with NSAGs listed as terrorist groups by national, regional, or international bodies, humanitarians must consider potential consequences from the state (in terms of legal prosecution or being declared persona non grata, hence losing the ability to operate in the country), as well as from governmental donors (including legal risks inherent in domestic counterterrorism legislation and restrictive donor contract language proscribing engagement with listed groups).[113] One interviewee described the difficulties of humanitarian work in such a situation:

> On our side, we have a lot of work to do, understanding what it means to be neutral and not taking sides, being independent. More and more now we have contexts of asymmetric warfare and terrorism… You're not supposed to take sides. If there are people dying in a non-state armed group held area, you should be able to negotiate access and go there. If you are too close to the military, it is difficult… It's very difficult for us to work on both sides, telling [the government] we have to be neutral. [The government] tell[s] us, "No, this is our law. You're on our soil. We are a sovereign country. You have to adhere to our law and regulations.

Interviewees discussed the lack of guidance available to assist in navigating these issues. As one humanitarian interviewee described, "There is no consensus among humanitarian actors about whether we should engage with all parties to the conflict or not. Also, within different organizations, there is no clear guidance on that. For example, do we engage with groups that are listed as terrorists?" In the words of another interviewee who described working for a UN agency:

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[111] See Fox et al. (2018), p. 37.

[112] Ibid, p. 37.

[113] See Modirzadeh, Lewis, and Bruderlein (2011); Mackintosh and Duplat (2013); Burniske, Lewis, and Modirzadeh (2015); Lewis, Modirzadeh, and Blum (2015); Burniske and Modirzadeh (2017); and Modirzadeh (2017).

> [T]here isn't enough guidance for the tactical level to feel comfortable talking to non-state actors. The Member States say—in Syria, for example—who you can or cannot speak to. But at the tactical level, we know that non-state actor A or non-state actor B would be really good for us to speak to. But our Member States are saying no… Surely, the terrorists are the people we have to speak to the most. Who are we going to speak to? The good guys? And agree that we're all good guys?

These questions—how to grapple with an obstructive humanitarian negotiation counterpart, how to maintain humanitarian principles while operating closely with militaries, and how to navigate relationships to maintain access with opposing sides violently combatting one another—are as old as the modern humanitarian sector itself, dating back to the early days of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. However, the Mosul trauma response, in particular, and the rise in counterterrorism regulations and policies—as well as the political pressure that states bring to bear on humanitarians engaging with NSAGs—has brought these issues to the forefront of the contemporary humanitarian-military relations policy landscape.

Humanitarian Notification Systems

Humanitarian notification systems—or humanitarian "deconfliction," as it has previously been called—refers to "[t]he exchange of information and planning advisories by humanitarian actors with military actors in order to prevent or resolve conflicts between the two sets objectives, remove obstacles to humanitarian action, and avoid potential hazards for humanitarian personnel."[114] The same report that articulated this definition also states, "This may include the negotiation of military pauses, temporary cessation of hostilities or ceasefires, or safe corridors for aid delivery."[115]

There has been a debate about the appropriateness of the term "deconfliction" (previously a term of art) for these processes. The reason is that "deconfliction" is a military term used to describe "processes or coordination intended to ensure that various operations or activities do not interfere with each other."[116] Participants at the second annual retreat on international humanitarian law, an event organized in 2019 by the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations that included twenty-three United Nations delegations, unanimously concluded that the term "deconfliction" creates confusion, and several participants recommended an alternate phrase: "notification to the parties."[117] The phrase "humanitarian notification systems" appears to have replaced "deconfliction" as the preferred lexicon.

Humanitarian notification systems have become a hot topic of debate across the humanitarian sector for two reasons. First, as noted in Part I of this paper, there is widespread concern about the great number of attacks against humanitarian and health workers across various contemporary armed conflicts. Second, practitioners and policymakers have discussed and debated the merits and complications of the UN-instituted Humanitarian Notification System for Deconfliction

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[114] Egeland, Harmer, and Stoddard (2011), p. xiv
[115] Ibid.
[116] Wall (2011), p. 90.
[117] UNGA (2019).

(HNS4D), which facilitates the sharing of geographic locations of humanitarian personnel, supplies, and facilities with parties to armed conflicts.[118] HNS4D is an opt-in mechanism, meaning that NGOs can choose whether or not—and to what extent—they wish to participate. Due to various serious issues inherent in HNS4D, many organizations—MSF and the ICRC included—have opted not to participate in the mechanism. The rest of this section will focus on six of these issues.

First, there is concern that handing over information to authorities about the location of humanitarian personnel, supplies, and facilities could have the opposite of the intended effect. Instead of functioning as a means of ensuring the safe delivery of humanitarian aid, it is possible that the HNS4D mechanism could essentially be used as a list of potential targets by combatants with an interest in punishing the civilian population. Or it is possible that the HNS4D plays no role at all in combatants' targeting decisions. Syria, for example, is a context where these concerns have manifested.[119] Sharing this data could inadvertently provide information to governments about the locations and operations of rebel groups. Indeed, if a humanitarian organization is meeting with an armed group, it could lead the group to be targeted by sharing the information with another party to the conflict.[120] In this sense, there is a risk that the humanitarian notification system process could aid a party to the conflict. In the words of one interviewee, the HNS4D system constitutes "an area where we need to grow and involve both humanitarians and militaries. I think it's being instrumentalized as part of intel operations, perhaps too much. I think we need to be wary of where that is going. Everything is context specific. We need better leaders on the humanitarian side to really deeply understand the context to make these judgment calls about whether or not to trust the deconfliction system."

Second, it is possible that the HNS4D system can distort combatants' views of their obligations under IHL. According to one interviewee, the reason why some organizations refrain from engaging in the HNS4D system is that "they believe it relieves the parties to conflict from checking their responsibility under IHL. They should be assuming that everything is civilian until proven otherwise." The main concern is that the HNS4D system might seem to take some of this responsibility away. UN Member State participants in the aforementioned annual retreat on international humanitarian law shared this concern. The final report documenting discussions at this event stated:

> Finally, the main point highlighted was the problem of the reversal of international humanitarian law obligations. The popularization of humanitarian deconfliction has created the illusion that everything that is not subject to the notification system can be attacked. Humanitarian deconfliction should not be an excuse for shielding parties to armed conflict from their international humanitarian law obligations and responsibilities.[121]

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[118] See Parker (2018), which discusses the UN "deconfliction" process and also notes, specifically referring to engagements with the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in Yemen, "MSF the ICRC are exceptions to the deconfliction system; they communicate directly with the coalition." See also Capdevila (2019) and Debarre (2019).
[119] Lund (20190).
[120] For an example, see Vohra (2019).
[121] UNGA (2019), p. 3.

Third, there is a risk that combatants can use the HNS4D to control humanitarian actors. The intent of the system is for humanitarian actors to alert combatants of humanitarian activities so that combatants can plan their military activities accordingly to mitigate security risks for humanitarians. Given the way the system operates—humanitarians submitting information about their activities and combatants use the system to acknowledge receipts of that information— combatants can, in practice, withhold acknowledgement, leading to a delay in humanitarian operations. There are indeed contexts where combatants have effectively turned the HNS4D system into a system for approval or disapproval, using the mechanism to slow down or halt humanitarian movements. Humanitarian practitioners have discussed contexts where, at checkpoints, humanitarians are not able to move through unless they can present "deconfliction" paperwork.[122]

Fourth, there remains ambiguity about what types of people and facilities should be "deconflicted" through the HNS4D system and what should fall outside the scope of this mechanism. On the one hand, one interviewee stated, "Modern warfare moves at a fast pace, we can't deconflict everything that needs to be deconflicted." Due to the hectic nature of the field environment, as one interviewee stated, "People cannot always be reporting where they're moving, where they're going." On the other hand, the rapid nature of armed conflict contexts can also mean that locations might be put on the "deconfliction" list that do not belong there.[123] Moreover, there are contexts where humanitarians have placed on the list humanitarian objects over which humanitarians themselves have no ownership. For example, "deconfliction" has included electrical lines, a water treatment plant, pumping plants, and pipes. In besieged areas in Syria, bakeries were "deconflicted" where there were no other sources of food under the rationale that such establishments, despite being private economic enterprises, were essential for human survival. Diplomats and members of the media have also been included. This expansion of the HNS4D system to encompass civilian objects more broadly raises the question—one that has persisted for quite some time and is relevant in various contexts—of where the line should be drawn between what is appropriate to "deconflict" and what is not.[124] One interviewee asked, "Who are we to say that this is now a humanitarian facility and that striking it will be detrimental to the civilian population?" The question remains: why place some locations, but not others, on the list? There is concern that placing certain economic targets on the list can invalidate the whole list.[125]

Fifth, there is a lack of transparency regarding why the UN engages certain combatants, but not others, through the HNS4D. Indeed, humanitarians have discussed contexts where they have used the system for governments but not NSAGs, leading governments to question why this is the case and to criticize the mechanism for its one-sided manner.

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[122] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).
[123] An interviewee discussed a context where a civilian object was placed on the "deconfliction" list, but it was later found that the location was used for military purposes, and hence, would have actually constituted a legitimate military target under IHL.
[124] The independent evaluation of OCHA CMCS notes, "However, what constitutes humanitarian movement is not always clear. While the generic definition allows for flexibility in managing the air, sea and land space, a more specific definition would give more guidance to the military (e.g., which air movements to allow in the no fly zone and which ships can be exempted from hailing and boarding under the arms embargo)." See OCHA (2012)b, p. 41.
[125] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).

Sixth, humanitarian practitioners have mentioned that there is ambiguity about how to respond if something that has been "deconflicted" is subsequently struck in an armed attack by a combatant who had previously acknowledged receipt via the HNS4D system. One interviewee stated, "On deconfliction, there is little guidance, and none for when the deconfliction system fails, for example. What are civil-military coordination officers supposed to do? How to react to a situation like that? That's an area that will deserve more attention in the future."

Some humanitarian practitioners have highlighted positive aspects of the system despite the various issues mentioned throughout this section. Indeed, the humanitarian notification system process can and should be part of—and perhaps can spark—a broader dialogue between humanitarians and combatants about the protection of civilians and combatants' obligations under IHL.[126] Even with its flaws, the UN does not appear to be in a position to discard the HNS4D system. HNS4D enjoys support from senior humanitarian leadership, at least in part due to political pressure from UN Member States, including the United States, a major proponent of the system.[127] Indeed, HNS4D as it exists today is a risk management mechanism implemented with donor support and pressure, a means of ensuring that due diligence has been followed to shield organizations from litigation in the event of an attack against humanitarian assets. The question is whether the perceived or actual benefits of HNS4D are worthwhile in light of the plethora of unintended adverse effects.

Armed Escorts

The use of armed escorts is an issue for which, as one interviewee stated, there is "a lack of coherence on the humanitarian side." Indeed, organizations across the humanitarian sector make different choices about when the use of armed escorts for security is warranted. There are at least four key implications at stake in deciding whether or when to use armed escorts.[128] First, the use of armed escorts can compromise humanitarians' adherence to the principle of neutrality and independence, in terms of perceptions or in reality. In terms of perceptions, local actors are likely to associate humanitarians with the armed escorts—whether from the national military, an NSAG, a peacekeeping operation, or a private military and security company—on which they rely.[129] Reputational bleeding can cause any politicized perceptions of these actors to taint local actors' views of humanitarians as well. Regarding the actuality of sacrificing neutrality, if armed escorts do need to resort to the use of armed force, this can draw humanitarians directly into the conflict itself.

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[126] Comments offered by Rachel Agelou at the discussion panel, "Humanitarian-Military Interaction: What Future for Humanitarian Notification Mechanisms?" Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, February 4, 2020.

[127] Comments offered by a participant at the UN Humanitarian-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Workshop held in Sigriswil, Switzerland, October 2019 (convened under Chatham House rules).

[128] IASC (2013), p. 4 provides an overview that includes these, as well as other, implications.

[129] For literature on the role of private and military security companies in emergency response, see Olsson (2017); Eggleston (2017), pp. 149-150; Singer (2006); Wheeler and Harmer (2006), pp. 8-11; Anders (2013); and Anders (2014).

Second, the use of armed escorts can lead to fissures between humanitarians and the local population. One interviewee described a context where UN agencies once had a useful network of local contacts. After a security incident, the decision was made that UN agencies would henceforth use armed escorts, and as a consequence, they lost all of their valuable community-level contacts and connections. Whereas these UN agencies suffered, in the interviewee's words, from "self-inflicted wounds," in contrast, NGOs operating in the same context did not use armed escorts and maintained useful local contacts. Such a fissure between international humanitarians and locals can even lead to programmatic inadequacies, as the divide between humanitarians and the local population becomes a barrier for aid agencies to understand local actors' needs and capabilities.[130]

Third, if one humanitarian organization accepts the use of armed escorts, it can make it difficult for other organizations to gain permission from authorities to operate without them. It can also be difficult to reverse the decision, meaning that any decision to use armed escorts has definitive long-term implications. One interviewee spoke about this issue, highlighting the incomes it generates for several actors involved in the provision of armed escorts. He referenced a context where the local authorities issued a letter saying that all humanitarian organizations would need to use armed escorts in areas under the authorities' control or face sanctions. He believes the decision was not actually related to an increase in security incidents, but rather a means to secure additional income. He said, "This is very difficult to negotiate back. Once you've started to pay on the spot for any sort of security, it's very difficult." The interviewee mentioned that there have been some attempts to negotiate back this decision, but they have not tended to be successful.

Fourth, relying on armed escorts means that humanitarians remain at the whim of military actors' availability. An interviewee described a context where armed escorts were commonly used. He said, "One day, they told us that next week, they wouldn't be providing more armed escorts because they were preparing for a military operation. So what do you do? You rely on armed escorts to deliver food and health assistance, and water, to IDPs [internally displaced persons] and refugees, and for two weeks you have to stop, and you don't have any other alternatives. That's a big issue."

How should decisions be made about whether to use armed escorts? Interviewees described contexts where aid agencies used armed escorts where they weren't actually needed, evidently because they did not know about available guidance on this issue or because they assessed the security situation incorrectly, erroneously concluding that armed escorts were needed. These interviewees emphasized the importance of involving people in the decision-making process who understand how using armed escorts can complicate pursuing an acceptance-based approach.[131] In the context of the UN, some interviewees expressed wariness of the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) driving decisions on armed escorts. One interviewee noted in particular that some UNDSS staff are local ex-military and might still feel an affinity or association with the military, and hence, might be reluctant to go against a national government's decision that armed escorts are required. A lack of UNDSS on-the-ground presence can lead to ill-informed decisions. A different interviewee highlighted the importance of OCHA CMCoord officers' engagement in such decisions. They said, although circumstances vary across contexts, "If the CMCoord is not

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[130] See Tronc, Grace, and Nahikian (2018), which examines this phenomenon in relation to Somalia.
[131] For more on acceptance and how acceptance relates to other security management approaches (namely, "protection" and "deterrence"), see van Brabant et al. (2010), pp. 55-82.

involved in these discussions, we might find ourselves stuck with armed escorts. This happens in many countries."

There is also the question of guidance. One interviewee stated, "It would be very useful to have more guidance on that and to have more support from HQ on these questions." They said of the relevance of the MCDA guidelines, "In most contexts, it is no longer relevant. For example, a party to the conflict is not supposed to provide armed escorts. Here, it is happening all the time. Peacekeeping missions are not supposed to be providing escorts either, but it is happening all the time. There is no clear consensus among humanitarian actors on the notion of last resort."

A final important point is that the use of armed escorts can be negotiated. One interviewee said of negotiations with authorities on this issue, "Sometimes they say, 'There's no way we're going to allow you to go to that part of the country because we're responsible for your protection.' And you can find a compromise. You can say, 'Okay, can you drive two kilometers ahead of us, so we're not seen as embedded or co-located with you?' We find ways so that they can do their role and we can do ours." Another interviewee discussed a context where a governor tried to impose armed escorts on humanitarian organizations and place access constraints on them. The governor did not want NGOs to move without his consent. Through engaging with the governor, and convening a mixed workshop that brought military and civilian authorities together with humanitarian organizations, the humanitarians learned that the governor simply wanted, when new NGOs would enter his governorate, for them to meet with him and introduce themselves, as a measure of protocol. "It's a simple way to overcome this challenge," the interviewee said. "You get a group of people around the same table."

Humanitarian Protection

The state of humanitarian-military engagement on humanitarian protection is a pertinent manifestation of the overarching challenge that the Part III of this paper addressed.[132] Just as humanitarian access is a broad policy area with a certain degree of Venn diagram overlap with civil-military relations, the same is true for humanitarian protection. Militaries and humanitarians alike can do more to facilitate effective engagement on this issue. Additionally, the way that military and humanitarian actors discuss this topic can fuel tensions across the humanitarian-military divide in ways that are counterproductive.

There are many different ways to define and conceptualize humanitarian protection.[133] Generally, as one literature review on humanitarian-military relations notes, the term refers to "mitigating or reducing the threats facing them in armed conflict or other situations of violence."[134] In more legalistic terms, drawing from the IASC-adopted definition of protection of civilians, one can consider the definition to be: "all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the

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[132] See Metcalfe (2012), which offers an overview of humanitarian-military interaction for protection outcomes. See also GPC (2018)b.
[133] See Stevens (2013), which examines the ambiguities of the term "protection" with specific respect to refugees. Also see Gentile (2011); HPG and ICRC (2011); and Gordon (2013).
[134] Metcalfe, Haysom, and Gordon (2012), p. 21.

individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law."[135]

The traditional view of humanitarian protection as a humanitarian-military relations challenge, at least from the humanitarian side, is that militaries lack a sufficient understanding of the humanitarian impacts of their activities, as well as humanitarian protection and IHL more broadly. Indeed, interviewees discussed confronting a lack of understanding on civilian protection at all levels of certain militaries, as well as widespread ignorance of, or blatant disregard of, IHL.[136] Interviewees also discussed, for military and police actors working under UN peacekeeping mandates, the lack of consensus on the concept of the protection of civilians, as well as concerns about matching resources to mandates.[137] One interviewee stated of gaps on the military side in this area:

> There needs to be a broader, bigger recognition about their obligations in relation to the law of armed conflict. I'm not just talking about proportionality or is it a legitimate target to strike and so on. It's about: how are you shaping that environment? And they have obligations. They need to monitor. And they need to recognize the actual insecurity that they cause by being there. There needs to be a top-down discussion, a recognition of that, and policy and practice put in place. They can do these trainings all they want. But it really doesn't amount to anything at the end of the day.

However, as the same interviewee also stated, a similar inadequacy exists on the humanitarian side. This interviewee stated pointedly, "The centrality of protection is a total joke. It is dead. It means nothing. We see this over and over. Whether it's Myanmar, Syria, Iraq, or Nigeria. It's going nowhere. We have to be realistic, and there has to be agreement on how it should work." A different interviewee expressed a similar level of frustration. Despite the definitions and conceptualizations of protection that appear in policy documents, there is ambiguity about what constitutes humanitarian protection in practice. This interviewee asserted, "People need to get together and decide what protection is from a humanitarian point of view." Is it just monitoring? Is it just advocacy, requesting military force to take action to prevent or halt atrocities? He stated that, in practice, humanitarians tend to equate protection with advocacy, stating, "For me, no humanitarians are doing protection right now. I really feel so frustrated with what's going on."[138]

There are also issues with how humanitarians engage in advocacy with armed actors on humanitarian protection. One interviewee criticized humanitarians for ineptly bringing international law into the discourse of these interactions, stating:

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[135] Ibid, p. 22. See also Holt (2006), pp. 55-56, which identifies six potential approaches for military involvement in humanitarian protection, those being: 1) "Protection as an obligation within the conduct of war," 2) "Protection as a military mission to prevent mass killings," 3) "Protection as a task within a UN-mandated peace operation," 4) "Protection as providing area security for humanitarian action," 5) "Protection through assistance/operational design," and 6) "Protection as the use of traditional force."

[136] See also InterAction (2016).

[137] Rolfe (2011); Allen, Rosén, and Tarp (2016); and Sharland (2019).

[138] For an examination of humanitarian protection practices that echoes these sentiments, see Seymour (2019).

One more lesson that the humanitarian system writ large needs to come to terms with is that we, as a humanitarian community, use the word "violations" way too much. It kills the dialogue from the moment you say it. When we engage with people from DoD [Department of Defense], they say, "You say violations, and I want to stop the conversation until I can get a lawyer to come sit with me." The whole point of engaging in the dialogue is, whether it's a violation or not, too many are being killed. Too many people's lives are being destroyed. We want to bring that number down, and so do you. So let's talk about ways to make sure that that happens.

This interviewee referenced an example in which, in such an engagement, an interlocutor saying to a military actor that they want to discuss "war crimes" essentially caused the relationship to deteriorate. They continued:

The issue I would flag is that they frame their concerns almost solely in terms of IHL which will tend to fall on deaf ears. Simply repeating our call for IHL compliance is not going to bring about the changes in the conduct of military operations that we need… Not every instance of a civilian being killed is a violation of IHL. Typically, it is impossible to know if a violation has occurred until you do a proper investigation. We don't need to wait for a full and proper investigation in order to take action on the scale of harm that is already occurring. So deal with the practical outcomes as opposed to characterizing it in law.

Indeed, various interviewees discussed the fact that, just as military actors should foster an understanding of the humanitarian consequences of their actions, humanitarians should ensure that they understand the military dimensions of engaging in humanitarian protection. One interviewee stated:

Sometimes it's actually fair to criticize the military heavily. I'm just calling for a bit of fairness. There are cases where they have failed completely, and they should probably be investigated for not doing anything when they could have. There are also cases where they did not do something because they could not do something. We have to be careful, as humanitarians, to distinguish between both, and not systematically to come to them saying, 'This is your mandate. You are not doing your mandate.' Or if we do, then we also have to ask questions of ourselves. 'What about our own mandate? Do we accomplish it fully and always? There are a lot of commitments and promises we make. Do we honor them?'

Moreover, information sharing across the humanitarian-military divide has potentially enormous implications for humanitarian protection, as well as the ability of aid actors to adhere to

humanitarian principles.[139] There are a host of challenges and tensions in this area, including ones that are technical in nature (specifically, sharing information across organizations that use incompatible information sharing platforms) and those that are cultural and organizational (for example, humanitarian frustration with militaries' systems of classification, which can impede information sharing from militaries to humanitarians).[140] There is also a core dilemma regarding information sharing and humanitarian protection that humanitarians often confront. On the one hand, sharing information with military actors can be essential for bolstering civilian protection. One interviewee from the military side stated, "If I had one additional ask of the NGOs is to be willing to provide appropriate information that could prevent harm to civilians. This is specifically geared towards those operational NGOs. If the NGO community believes they have information of civilians trapped in specific locations where operations are conducted, to freely share that information with DoD to increase/enhance awareness." On the other hand, sharing information with military actors can fuel protection risks if the recipient uses the information for a military advantage, ostensibly constituting intelligence sharing, thus causing humanitarians to lose their status as neutral actors in situations of armed conflict.[141]

One interviewee stated on this topic that there have been instances when information has been shared with peacekeeping missions and then transferred to the military component of the mission and then even the government, which is a party to the conflict. This interviewee mentioned a particular context where the protection cluster has provided information on armed groups and their locations to the government. Under IHL, this could be perceived as being a party to the conflict, depending on the kind of information. This interviewee stated of the context where they work, "Non-state armed groups do not trust humanitarian organizations because some of them really do provide intelligence to the government."

V. Managing Humanitarian-Military Relations

How do policymakers and practitioners seek to manage relationships and activities across the humanitarian-military divide? This section mines insights from the broader field of civil-military relations, presenting a new framework: the Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity." The section then examines modes of bridging the gap between humanitarians and military actors.

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[139] As one humanitarian practitioner has asserted, "Information… can be as important as food and water." See Guttieri (2014), p. 1.

[140] For an overview of issues related to information and communication technologies and humanitarian-military relations, see Guttieri (2014); Brooks and Polatty (2015); Zyck (2013); and Morales & Sandlin (2015), p. 22. See also Byman et al. (2000), p. 103, which states: "NGOs are highly transparent organizations. They usually publicize their operations to attract funding from international, governmental, and private donors. As a result, they have little understanding for military secrecy and tend to resent the classification system."

[141] See ICRC (2018), p. 100, which discusses other factors that one should consider in the way of a protection incident: "preventing harm to populations affected; respecting the informed consent provided by sources of information; and protecting the security of staff."

The Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity"

One can glean a great deal of relevant insights from the broader literature on civil-military relations. This strand of scholarship has focused more expansively on relations between militaries and the societies in which they exist, with a particular focus on how civilians can exert democratic control over military actors. Three particular insights will resonate for the field of humanitarian-military relations. First, the overarching challenge is similar. As Peter Feaver writes, "The civil-military problematique is thus a simple paradox: the very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity."[142] In other words, the military, as an entity endowed with capacities for defense, can itself become a threat. Humanitarians face just one manifestation of this problematique: they want to draw upon the capacities and assets of militaries while ensuring that, in doing so, they will not be exploited toward the military's ends.

Second, this strand of literature has long acknowledged the structural and cultural differences between militaries and civilians. As Samuel Huntington wrote in 1957, discussing the fragmentation and diversity found on the civilian side of the divide:

> The military ethic is concrete, permanent, and universal. The term "civilian" on the other hand, merely refers to what is nonmilitary. No dichotomy exists between the "military mind" and the "civilian mind" because there is no single "civilian mind." There are many "civilian minds," and the difference between two civilian ethics may be greater than the difference between any one of them and the military ethic. Consequently, the military ethic can only be compared with particular civilian ethics.[143]

Third, this literature offers insights on how to manage tensions between civilian and military actors. For Huntington, the key to civilian control of the military is professionalization, a concept that for him encompasses cultivating: 1) specific expertise, 2) a sense of responsibility to society, and 3) a sense of cohesion among professionals that transcend organizational lines.[144] In more recent years, scholars have pushed back against Huntington's thesis that professionalization necessarily facilitates control and have injected other elements into the theoretical picture. In particular, Florina Cristina Matei has presented a new conceptualization of civil-military relations that she calls the civil-military relations "trinity." In this framework, "control" interacts with two other factors: effectiveness and efficiency. The below figure reimagines this framework specifically for humanitarian-military relations. The below framework replaces "control" with "coordination"—taken to mean, according to the dictionary definition, "the process of organizing people or groups so that they work together properly and well"—to better reflect how the field understands and discusses the issue.[145] Effectiveness, per Matei's conceptualization, entails having a plan, structures and processes for formulating and implementing plans, and devoting resources
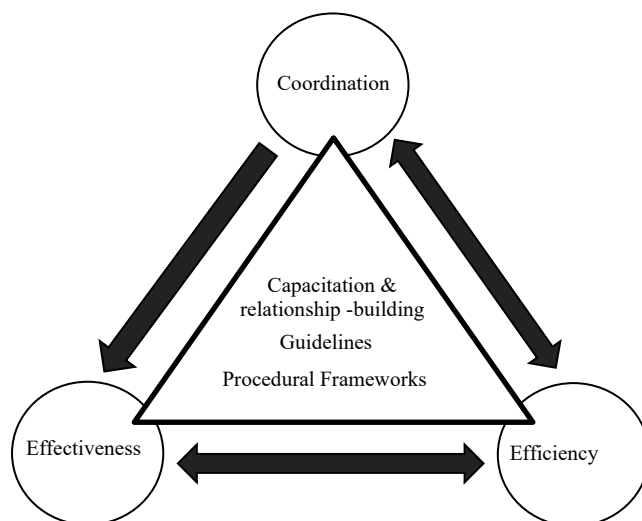
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[142] Feaver (2003), p. 4.
[143] Huntington (1957), p. 89.
[144] Huntington (1957), p. 8-10.
[145] Merriam-Webster (n.d.).

toward these ends.[146] Efficiency means, per Matei's definition, "the ability to fulfill assigned roles and missions at the optimum cost."[147]

Figure 3: The Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity"

The insight that this conceptualization offers is that coordination facilitates effectiveness.[148] However, coordination can exist in tension with efficiency. The reason is that coordination can be a costly endeavor.[149] OCHA's decision in 2018 to disband CMCS as a means of grappling with a budgetary shortfall is a pertinent reminder of this reality. Similarly, effectiveness can conflict with efficiency. Matei offers a military example to explain why: "Launching numerous expensive missiles at a single target and destroying it 'multiple times' is clearly effective but not an efficient use of resources."[150] A disaster response version of this phenomenon would be using an aircraft carrier, which is potentially useful but incredibly expensive in humanitarian response, instead of a more effective and efficient naval capability, such as an amphibious ship.[151]

The rest of this section examines three modes of managing humanitarian-military relations. The first is relationship building and capacitation, including through joint trainings and workshops, simulations, and forums for professional and policy discussions. The second is developing and disseminating guidance. The third is devising procedural frameworks. As this section will explain, there is widespread acknowledgement of the importance of these activities for humanitarian-military relations, although much room for improvement remains for how successfully militaries and humanitarians commit to and engage on these fronts. The section will also examine ways that

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[146] Matei (2013), p. 32.

[147] Matei (2013), p. 32. For a more in-depth examination of efficiency, see generally Bruneau (2013).

[148] See Matei (2013), p. 34, which states, "While too much direction and oversight obviously can hamper the security services' capabilities or compromise sources and methods in intelligence, implementing "good" control, i.e., instituting control and oversight in a way that provides top-level direction and general oversight guidance as opposed to malfeasance or cronyism, leads to improved effectiveness."

[149] Matei (2013), p. 34 states, "The reality is that direction and oversight are costly."

[150] Matei (2013), p. 35.

[151] See Brooks and Polatty (2017).

tensions between coordination and efficiency, as well as effectiveness and efficiency, have manifested.

Capacitation and Relationship-Building

Interviewees emphasized the importance, as one interviewee described it, of "building networks of trust" between humanitarians and militaries. In the words of another interviewee, "The last time you want to exchange business cards is on the tarmac during the next Ebola response. There needs to be people in the same positions for fixed terms to allow this community of practice to develop further." A different interviewee concurred, indicating the interrelated nature of capacitation and relationship-building, "Trust cannot be built if there is no knowledge, because you cannot trust what you do not know. In peacetime, when there are no problems, this is the moment when you should call a possible counterpart who will be needing your support and talk to them." Indeed, an interviewee stated of humanitarian-military relations: "It's all relational." This sentiment reflects a long-recognized reality in this domain. The independent evaluation of OCHA CMCS in 2012 concluded that UN CMCoord "depends more on strong personalities than clear systems and procedures."[152]

There is a plethora of training programs and capacitation efforts,[153] as well as numerous venues for discussion and exchange, including the Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination convened by OCHA, the Civil-Military Relations Platform established by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Regional Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia and the Pacific,[154] and the NGO-Military Contact Group established by the British Red Cross.[155] However, many have noted the shortcomings of these initiatives. One author has written about the British NGO-Military Contact Group, "Whilst valuable, military participation is generally confined to the authors of military doctrine, and there is only limited scope to directly shape specific operational responses."[156] The independent evaluation of OCHA CMCS noted that OCHA's Consultative Group "only meets once a year, which is seen as insufficient to fully engage politically on a number of key fronts. Those stakeholders involved in such meetings believe that more time is required to build greater political engagement on a number of issues…"[157] More generally, according to one humanitarian practitioner interviewed for this paper, "The humanitarian community and the military community, as far as I can tell, even though we sit on stages and deliver nice words and one-stars in their uniforms tell us how great we are, I don't see

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[152] OCHA (2012)b, p. 17.
[153] For an overview of training and capacitation programs, see Liaison Staff (2015), pp. 54-57; Wheeler and Harmer (2006), p. 17; Arancibia, (2016), p. 351; and Rollins (2001), p. 53, which states, "There must be greater mutual understanding of the mandates, cultures and modus operandi of organisations working in different functional areas. Much is already being done to improve this through seminars, exercises and training programmes. However, individual personalities continue to be pivotal, and civil organisations are frequently frustrated by the rapid turnover of the military personnel with whom they interface. There is a need to ensure greater continuity in post and return postings to a theatre." For information about the CIMIC Centre of Excellence, see Herkel (2013).
[154] See Flint et al. (2017) and Regional Consultative Group (n.d.).
[155] See British Red Cross and Chatham House (2018).
[156] Gordon (2006), p. 43.
[157] OCHA (2012)b, p. 17.

any positive movement between the two worlds. I don't see where they're crossing over for the good of the beneficiaries, on both sides. I still see people not coming together to play nicely." The view was widespread among interviewees that—although there has been a positive evolution of humanitarian-military relationships, especially over the course of the past decade and a half—a capacity gap persists on both sides of the humanitarian-military divide.

These efforts also suffer from insufficient inclusion. One interviewee emphasized that there is "a lack of inclusion of local perspectives. That often means the exclusion of national NGOs and national militaries. Militaries across the global south have very different perceptions of, and approaches to, humanitarian civil-military coordination, which very often are not incorporated into the discussion." There can thus be "conceptual blind spots," the interviewee stated. Indeed, as one publication notes, "Coordination meetings between representatives of humanitarian agencies are typically held in English, are run by people using a particular jargon, and are based on the assumption that the internationals will play the dominant role"[158] Interviewees expressed concern about the Western-oriented bias that humanitarians exhibit in civil-military coordination. "We tend to only talk to people who look like us," said one interviewee. Interviewees mentioned an institutional reluctance on the part of OCHA, for example, to more assertively engage with countries such as Russia, China, and Iran. These comments highlight that, even in spite of the developments discussed above, there is a need to expand the scope of engagement even further.

Devising and Disseminating Guidelines

Dissatisfaction is prevalent regarding the state of guidance for humanitarian-military relations. Indeed, the two foundational policy documents for civil-military coordination—the Oslo Guidelines (applicable in natural disaster settings) and the MCDA guidelines (relevant in complex emergencies)—seem to be of limited usefulness and relevance. A survey that OCHA CMCS conducted of UN CMCoord officers in 2019 found that only 20% of respondents have used the Oslo Guidelines, and 60% do not perceive the document to be useful.[159] For the MCDA guidelines, less than 30% reported using the document.[160] The interview findings support the notion that these two documents, the cornerstone of humanitarian-military relations guidance, are out of date. One interviewee stated that existing guidance is "clumsy, generic, and toothless," stating specifically of the Oslo Guidelines that they are "not appropriate for what we're doing today." The same is true for guidance developed by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In the words of one interviewee familiar with this guidance, as well as its impact, the "Red Cross put out guidance in 2005, but the world has changed a lot since then." Another interviewee pointedly stated, "We do not have adequate operational tools and guidelines for people on the ground."

Two key tensions are important to highlight. The first tension is a broader-deeper trade-off in the process of developing guidance documents. The trade-off is that, during such a process, including more people and organizations enhances the inclusiveness of the process but can lead to a diluted result. An example of a guidance document development process that evidently went awry is the

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[158] Ferris (2012), p. 7.
[159] Agelou (2019).
[160] Ibid.

"Recommended Practices for Effective Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination of Foreign Military Assets (FMA) in Natural and Man-Made Disasters," which OCHA published in 2018.[161] Various interviewees involved in the drafting described a process that became unwieldy, with a drafting committee that became too large, involving too many organizations. As one interviewee described, "The end result was a very choppy and less helpful document than some of the earlier versions." According to the OCHA survey of CMCoord officers, only approximately 15% of respondents reported that they had used the "Recommended Practices" document, and a majority of respondents to the OCHA survey (over 50%) did not perceive that the document has utility.[162]

The second tension, related to the substance of the guidance itself, is between principles and practicalities. On the one hand, various interviewees expressed a desire for guidance that articulates principles to shape decision-making processes. According to one interviewee, "What we need is a framework that allows for discussion but provides a framework. Not a set plan. A framework for discussion to occur around so that things do go through a process of consideration, and so that process can be expedited in high-tempo environments. It comes down to the agility and flexibility of people to make decisions, but give them a framework to do it." On the other hand, principles are useless if they are not actionable. One interviewee discussed the weaknesses he has found in principles, protocols, and guidelines, stating, "The problem is the relationships [between humanitarians and militaries] are supposed to be based on principles. Those principles are very weak on the ground. All the principles, every time there's a crisis, these principles go away." In particular, in relation to humanitarian access and protection of civilians, he said, "In both cases, all the guidelines tell you what to do, but none of the guidelines say that the political aspect will interfere at some points."[163]

One issue for which there is a definitive lack of clarity—and indeed, divergent practices—is the concept of last resort.[164] According to this concept, the use of military assets in humanitarian response should be used only if there are no other viable options. But what does this mean in practice? This principle can clash with on-the-ground realities. There are also many contexts where national militaries are first responders.[165] It is especially vexing for the resort to using armed escorts. At what point should humanitarians perceive that the threshold of "last resort" has been reached? There is no consensus on this issue, as Part IV of this paper addressed.

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[161] See OCHA (2018)c.

[162] Agelou (2019).

[163] Along the same lines, Colona (2017), p. 124 has written, "Humanitarian policy guidelines are often perceived as divorced from reality, and their impact is slow to materialize, indirect and inconsistent. This is especially true for policy frameworks aimed at ensuring coordination between humanitarian and military actors."

[164] See Madiwale and Virk (2011), p. 1097 which states of the response to the 2010 Pakistan floods, "Within the international humanitarian community, there were different interpretations of when the threshold of 'last resort' to use of military assets had been reached, while still others – including Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the ICRC – argued against the use of military assets in their own operations in order to safeguard perceptions." See also Svoboda (2014), p. 3, which states of the "last resort" principle, "Although in principle the concept is clear—that military assets and capabilities can only be used in humanitarian response in exceptional circumstances, and if no suitable civilian capability is available—in practice there is deep disagreement about when precisely these conditions apply, and implementation and compliance have been problematic." Additionally, see Hofmann and Hudson (2009), p. 30, which states, "The principle of last resort is key for the Red Cross. Perceived as a useful 'safeguard' from an operational perspective, it can, however, be hard to apply in practice."

[165] See Madiwale and Virk (2011), which notes that this is the case in Pakistan, for example. For a manifestation of this phenomenon in Latin America, see Morales and Sandlin (2015), p. 29.

How can effective guidance be created? This question is difficult to answer because there is a lack of empirics regarding every stage of the process of developing and disseminating guidance. No case study has been produced that examines the process of devising the Oslo or MCDA Guidelines. This is indeed the case for almost the entire field of humanitarian-military relations. Only one such analysis exists: an examination of the process of revising the IASC non-binding guidelines on the use of military and armed escorts.[166] There is little empirical evidence regarding the extent to which practitioners in the field know about existing guidance, find it useful, have the time to actually read it, or whether global or context-specific guidance is more desirable.[167]

Developing Procedural Frameworks

The field of humanitarian-military relations is rife with country-specific procedural frameworks developed to facilitate coordination between humanitarian and military actors in humanitarian response. Just to name one example, the Mission Tasking Matrix (MiTaM) is a process by which USAID/Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), when responding to requests made by governments affected by natural disaster, can request support from the DoD.[168] However, there are ways that this process can illustrate the aforementioned tension between effectiveness and efficiency. One interviewee asserted rather cynically that the functional role of OFDA is to make "sure that the U.S. doesn't overcommit or overspend. They are a deliberate bottleneck gatekeeper to the U.S. over-engaging in response." DoD receives reimbursement for the use of military assets for HA/DR but only after the request comes through the MiTaM process. Military assets can be pre-staged, meaning they can be moved before the affected state requests assistance. However, if ultimately the country doesn't ask for help, then the money spent to move those assets comes out of DoD's budget. In such a scenario, DoD must decide whether to pre-stage (potentially sacrificing efficiency for effectiveness) or refrain from doing so (potentially sacrificing effectiveness for efficiency).

Additionally, procedural frameworks can clash with reality. An example that illustrates such dynamics is the response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Despite domestic and international procedural frameworks in place, and even though the earthquake was predicted for years, with significant resources directed toward preparedness as a result, there were ambiguities about roles and responsibilities (including a lack of clarity about who should manage air traffic control), and the procedural framework was underfunded and not effectively enforced. During the response, communication and coordination among civilian governmental, local and international civilian non-governmental, and domestic and international military actors was generally poor.[169] This example illustrates that procedural frameworks, similar to guidelines, can suffer from a lack of

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[166] Frost (2013).

[167] For one example of such a study in the context of South Sudan, see Horne et al. (2019).

[168] Department of Defense (2011).

[169] Grunewald and Greenwood (n.d.); Das Manandhar et al. (2017); Cook, Shrestha, and Htet (2016); Wendelbo et al. (2016); and Cook, Shrestha, and Htet (2018).

practicality. Also, as with guidelines in this field, there is a dearth of analysis about when and why procedural frameworks succeed and when they fall short.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has presented a portrait of the new world of humanitarian-military relations. Whereas decades ago, the field focused primarily, if not solely, on the use of military assets in HA/DR, the contemporary state of the field has expanded to encompass various dimensions of humanitarian access, security, and humanitarian protection, including humanitarian notification systems and information sharing more broadly, armed escorts for security, and the provision of medical care to both sides of the conflict.

This paper has sketched out a research agenda that encompasses the following questions:

- What lessons can be gleaned from historical cases of humanitarian-military relations? In what ways do historical cases reveal similar challenges, dilemmas, and modes of managing humanitarian-military relations? In what ways are contemporary cases distinct?
- What explains the rise of this field in the late 20th century? Empirically, what exactly changed in the 1990s? In what ways do these developments constitute a continuation of preexisting historical trends, and in what ways was entirely new ground broken?
- Under what circumstances does military engagement in HA/DR actually enhance reputation? Under what circumstances does humanitarian coordination and association with militaries harm humanitarian organizations' reputations?
- Under what circumstances can humanitarian-military relations actually improve humanitarian delivery? How should effectiveness be conceptualized and measured?
- What best practices exist in terms of processes for developing guidelines or procedural frameworks? To what extent do relevant actors know about and understand existing guidelines and procedural frameworks? How can and should any gaps be filled?

Additionally, more work is needed to synthesize this field within the broader field of civil-military relations. This paper has taken a preliminary step by presenting a framework, adapted from the literature on civil-military relations, that describes the interaction between coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency. However, the Humanitarian-Military Relations "Trinity" is merely a first step. In the new world of humanitarian-military relations, old frameworks—for example, the "Three C's"—are less useful than they were in the past, and the rich body of civil-military relations literature should be further mined for relevant conceptual and theoretical insights.

Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners themselves will also need to build more bridges and forge deeper synergies between their sometimes-disparate professional worlds. Indeed, pushing the research agenda and the policy discourse forward will require managing the academia-real world divide to produce work that that is both scientifically rigorous and practical. As this paper has highlighted, the empirical and conceptual gaps in this field are immense. The efforts and resources required to close these gaps will be immense as well.

Annex

Interview Methodology

The research for this paper included 38 semi-structured interviews conducted with a wide array of professionals engaged in different dimensions of humanitarian-military relations. Interviewees were humanitarian practitioners (including actors associated with UN agencies, NGOs, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement); military actors (in particular, interviewees who discussed experiences with selected Western militaries: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Colombia); and governmental donor agencies (United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)). Interviewees discussed their experiences engaging in humanitarian-military relations in a wide array of contexts, including natural disasters, pandemics, armed conflicts, and situations of forced displacement. Interviews were conducted in the Greater Boston area; the Greater Washington, D.C. area; Geneva, Switzerland; and remotely via Skype and telephone. One interviewee opted to send in written comments via email.

The interviews were conducted under a protocol by which interviewee names and organizational affiliations would not be named. The protocol (#1812002293) was reviewed by the Internal Review Board at Brown University

The interviewee pool has at least two important limitations in that it: 1) is Western-centric, and 2) skews toward internationals and does not include local military actors in contexts beset by humanitarian crisis, national humanitarian actors, or local populations affected by humanitarian emergencies. As this paper will examine, these limitations reflect two deficiencies in this field— insufficient outreach by humanitarians to non-Western militaries and the lack of inclusion of local humanitarians into coordination systems and platforms—that have played a role in stultifying efforts to improve humanitarian-military relations. Future research will need to prominently capture and feature perspectives from these pools of actors. Nevertheless, the interviewee pool allows for an assessment of the state of the policy discourse and practice at the global level.

The below questions shaped the structure of the interviews conducted for this paper. Although, the interviews were semi-structured and conversational in nature so did not always exactly conform to the guide.

- In what contexts have you worked where civil-military coordination in humanitarian response was relevant?
- What was your role, and what were the issues at stake in these engagements?
- Based on your experiences, what are the top 3-5 challenges in civil-military coordination during humanitarian operations?
- When you faced these challenges, were any measures put in place to try to address them?
- If there were measures put in place, to what extent were they effective? To what extent did they fall short?
- If these measures fell short, what is your assessment of why?

- To your knowledge, have any measures been established since these experiences to address these challenges?
- What measures would you like to see established to establish more effective civil-military coordination?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

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