



HPG

HUMANITARIAN
POLICY GROUP

The Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute is Europe's leading team of independent policy researchers dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice in response to conflict, instability and disasters.

Report

Shifting sands:

**The search for 'coherence'
between political and
humanitarian responses to
complex emergencies**

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HPG Report 8
August 2000

Notes on the Authors:

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Acknowledgements:

This study treads on politically sensitive and conceptually challenging ground. Navigating our course has relied upon the input and openness of many individuals and organisations.

Rob Dixon provided research assistance to the study, helping to underpin the study in a broader interpretation of international relations.

Members of the study's Advisory Group (see Annex 1 for a listing) have provided important insights and advice during the course of the study, assisting in logistics, identifying key informants and documents and commenting on draft material.

OCHA Belgrade facilitated the Serbia case study, and particular thanks are due to Robert Dann and Robert Painter for their assistance, logistical and otherwise. In Macedonia, Oxfam UK provided logistical backup and advice, for which we are grateful.

The study was funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee, the Department for International Development, the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and ActionAid.

Finally, many thanks to our colleagues in HPG who shared their insights and commented extensively on drafts of this report and other related material.

While acknowledging these contributions, the authors emphasise that the report expresses only our views. We remain responsible for any errors of fact and interpretation.

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ISBN: 0-85003-493-0

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'To what extent do you justify sacrificing the humanitarian imperative to long-term political strategy? We are not debating this — it is in the "too difficult" tray. '

**Michael Moller, Department of Political Affairs
2 November 1999**

'The relationship between humanitarian aid and political action has always been ambiguous. The moment that political forces are absent or not coherent we ask for political action. The moment they get too involved, we ask them to stop.'

**Jacques de Milliano, former Director, MSF-Holland
8 December 1999**

'What we are seeing is the re-emergence of the concept of the just war, with good guys and bad guys. More and more we see aid as coming from the "right" side. But what we should do is analyse who is the good humanitarian actor through the eyes of beneficiaries. How do they see the conceptual elements of impartiality, neutrality and independence?'

**ICRC official, Geneva
22 November 1999**

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Acronyms

ASG	Afghanistan Support Group
BPRM	Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (DFID)
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPS	Executive Committee on Peace and Security
EfD	Energy for Democracy
EU	European Union
EMAD	Emergency Aid Department (ODA)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HEP	Humanitarian Evacuation Programme
HLWG	Humanitarian Liaison Working Group
HTP	Humanitarian Transfer Programme
IASC	Inter-agency Standing Committee
GA	General Assembly
GOM	Government of Macedonia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oda	official development assistance
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (UK)
OSGAP	Office of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Pakistan
PCP	Principled Common Programme
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (United Nations)
(UN)SC	United Nations Security Council
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSM	UN Special Mission in Afghanistan

Executive summary

The early 1990s have seen increasing calls to enhance the coherence of political and humanitarian action. These have stemmed from an increasing recognition of the essentially political nature of vulnerability in complex emergencies, and thus of the need for political (as opposed to relief) action to mitigate these disasters. The coherence agenda was given added momentum in 1996 by the conclusion of the *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to Rwanda* that aid cannot act as a substitute for political action, and has subsequently become a routine refrain in international public policy in this domain. However, the interpretation of the coherence agenda has not been uncontroversial. There is a growing sense from humanitarian and political actors of mutual distrust, with the former concerned at the apparent politicisation of aid, and the latter frustrated by the political naïveté of aid.

This report examines the origins and evolution of the concept of coherence and its implications in practice. As **Chapter One** explains, the report details the findings of a six-month study on the politics of coherence. It is particularly concerned to understand the precise character of the new relationship proposed between aid and politics in the post-Cold War era.

In particular, does the coherence agenda, imply closer *integration* of humanitarian policy with foreign policy objectives of donor governments? Or does it imply a looser arrangement that seeks to formalise the comparative advantages of aid and diplomatic actors, so enhancing their complementarity?

The study focused on two donor governments: the British and the Dutch. In addition, it analysed how the UN — the ultimate multi-mandate organisation — provided a means to operationalise and legitimise the coherence agenda. Finally, in order to understand the implications of coherence in practice, four mini-case studies were undertaken in recipient countries. These were: assistance to the energy sector in Serbia 1999–2000; the role of bilateral diplomacy in the negotiation of asylum for Kosovar refugees in spring 1999; the Afghanistan Support Group; and security and withdrawal of personnel in Afghanistan since 1996.

Chapter Two aims to put the arguments regarding coherence in their historical contexts. It outlines how in the post-Cold War era, a shifting interpretation of sovereignty, combined with the forces of globalisation, has forced a re-analysis of the legitimacy of international intervention in conflict-affected states. The 1990s also witnessed a widening in the definition of security to embrace economic and social determinants, alongside more traditional military and political components.

Combined, these trends have supported the reunification of aid and politics, legitimising and compelling aid actors not only to take account of the political environment in

determining the type and volume of aid flows, but also to claim a role in delivering the new security agenda. This has meant that aid policy actors can be seen to make decisions regarding whether to engage with particular countries at all, and on what terms, not as racist neo-colonialists, but as defenders of human rights, peace and prosperity. In order to play this role legitimately, aid actors have had to confront increasing allegations that their interventions are fuelling conflict. Thus aid agencies have been seeking ways to take greater account of the political contexts in which they work.

The mandate of aid agencies to engage politically in these environments is also being driven by the changing political economy of war at the periphery. Lacking the leverage that followed from superpower financing of Third World struggles, traditional forms of diplomacy are failing, forcing a search for new conflict management tools. In this context, aid looks like an attractive option to contain conflict.

Changes in the global political environment have also forced changes in the organisation of domestic policy in donor countries. Calls for 'joined-up' government have been driven by the need to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy in responding to complex problems of modern states.

While external conditions enabled aid actors to assume a more active, explicitly political, function in conflict resolution, three factors internal to the aid sphere forced them to do so. The decline in aid flows in the early 1990s forced aid actors to reassert a clear purpose, prompting new claims regarding aid's crucial role in conflict reduction. At the same time, the rising costs of conflict, and of humanitarian aid, also meant that aid responses to conflict were under unprecedented scrutiny. The need for a more coherent, politically informed aid response to conflict situations was driven by a mounting critique that aid fuelled wars.

The convergence of these geo-political, aid-specific and domestic contextual factors has encouraged the emergence of the coherence agenda and provided the space for its implementation. The definition of the coherence agenda that has emerged, however, suffers from a number of problems.

First, it assumes a shared understanding of the goals of peace and development. While the West appeals to universal values to underpin its claims to intervene legitimately in sovereign states, this is contested by many non-Western states, who associate conditional sovereignty with a new form of imperialism. Further, responsibility for conflict management continues to be placed at the level of individual states, while it is far from clear that states at the periphery have the capacity to deliver this. Increasingly, violence represents a

rational choice for state and non-state actors concerned to maintain power and accumulate wealth. Appeals to liberal values, including that of the need to respect international humanitarian law, therefore, hold little truck. Finally, the degree of leverage aid can exert in these environments remains unproven at best. Assuming that it can exert leverage immediately requires compromising humanitarian principles since it implies a shared understanding exists regarding the legitimacy of a particular conflict and its desired outcome.

The primary source of humanitarian aid resources is from donor governments, they are the only actors who can be 'coherent'. **Chapter Three** examines the changes that have been introduced by the British and Dutch governments in order to enhance the coherence of their humanitarian and political responses to complex emergencies. Comparative analysis of these two governments' policies reveals a number of important similarities.

In both the UK and the Netherlands, the search for greater coherence between humanitarian and political action has resulted in substantive change in the objectives and organisation of humanitarian policy. In both countries, the need to enhance the connectedness between these different dimensions of international policy has been driven by a redefinition of international relations in the post-Cold War era of globalisation, and by broader public policy pressures emphasising cost-effectiveness and accountability.

The original hopes of coherence laid out in policies such as *An Agenda for Peace*, the DFID White Paper and the Netherlands' *A World of Difference* have been quickly disappointed. Rather than aid playing a supportive role in a revived political strategy of conflict prevention and resolution, aid bodies are now primarily responsible for implementing a new form of international policy. The reunification of aid and politics has provided for a re-division of international political labour such that aid is no longer a *substitute* for political action (Eriksson 1996). Rather, it is the primary *form* of international policy at the geopolitical periphery (Macrae 1998).

The concentration of development aid to a tightly defined number of countries means that humanitarian assistance is the only aid/international policy instrument deployed in many of the most vulnerable, conflict-affected countries. Thus, humanitarian aid departments have been given considerable influence in shaping not only relief operations, but broader international responses to conflict. Adoption of this role has been encouraged both by the withdrawal of other diplomatic and developmental actors, and by an increasing awareness of the potential impact of humanitarian relief on conflict dynamics.

In the mid- to late-1990s, it was thought that humanitarian aid could exert significant leverage over the course of conflict, and that it was therefore legitimate

to calculate this potential net benefit and subsume humanitarian assistance into a wider political strategy. This 'new humanitarianism', as it was called in the UK, assumed an integrated model of coherence, with humanitarian aid a part of an agreed policy framework that included other foreign policy and military actors.

The UK pursued this integrated model through its bilaterally funded programme, developing new tools to improve links between aid and conflict-reduction objectives. These have included: selective funding; definition of humanitarian conditions; and the establishment of field offices. In contrast, the Netherlands appears to have turned more towards the UN and to diversifying the range of organisations it supports; its particular foreign policy culture appears to have militated against implementing an integrated approach where this would imply withholding humanitarian aid, instead it broadened the scope of the type of intervention it was willing to fund. These differences in tactics, combined with the different international positions of the two countries, have resulted in very different international perceptions of their respective policies. The UK's interpretation of humanitarian coherence has attracted the accusation of politicisation, while the Netherlands' stance, which is much more openly integrationist, has passed virtually without comment.

Interestingly, despite these different initial interpretations, in both countries, the complex and ambitious vision of coherence laid out by ministers initially has now been cut down to apparently more modest goals. Rather than promising to play an active role in conflict reduction, the current variant of humanitarianism is more concerned with aid effectiveness. Importantly, this more technocratic mode, with its emphasis upon accountability, will not necessarily dissipate accusations that humanitarianism is the fleece under which a more sinister Western wolf is hiding. It will not do so for two reasons.

First, the technical conditions required for effective humanitarian action have not been systematically distinguished from political conditionality. The ease with which they are confused has not been lost on belligerents in conflict situations, nor on Western policymakers. Selective scrutiny of conditions fuels suspicion that the accountability agenda is being co-opted to enhance control over humanitarian action and to justify cost-cutting.

Second, humanitarian actors, official and non-governmental, have as yet failed to define the type of politics in which they are engaging. This lack of clarity regarding the fundamental purpose of humanitarian aid, and in particular the extent to which it is or is not expected to contribute to developmental and conflict-reduction goals, provides significant room for manoeuvre for political actors at home and abroad. At a time when conventional diplomacy is weakened by the new political economy of war, the promise made

by aid agencies that aid can contribute to conflict reduction invites diplomatic co-option of these assets. At the same time, the casual renunciation of neutrality on the grounds that it implies complicity, has shifted the actual and perceived political position of aid actors in conflict zones. This, coupled with the proliferation of aid agencies, has contributed to the erosion of the security and scope of humanitarian space.

Chapter Four looks at how the coherence agenda has played out in the ultimate multi-mandate organisation: the United Nations. The rationale for including the UN in the study was twofold. First, the UN has proved an important mechanism for international legitimisation of emerging norms regarding aid–politics links. Second, the UN system remains a crucial mechanism for the coordination and implementation of humanitarian action. The ways in which donor governments interact with UN bodies have important implications in terms of the latter's legitimacy and operational effectiveness. This chapter describes the opportunities that have emerged for promoting the humanitarian agenda within the Security Council, although it also highlights the continued tensions between the UN as a guardian of sovereignty and of individual human rights. It notes the emergence of a number of mechanisms to facilitate cross-departmental and inter-agency working at global and country levels. These are seen to have facilitated increased information exchange, but are not yielding common programming strategies envisaged by the 1997 reforms. The Secretary-General continues to promote an integrationist interpretation of coherence, in particular advocating that his Special Representatives provide political direction to all UN programming. The validity of this approach has been challenged in a number of major operations, where the demands of conflict management have interfered with the need for impartial humanitarian access.

Bilateral donors, including the British and Dutch governments are relying increasingly on informal, *ad hoc* channels to send messages to the UN. 'Friends of...' groups, and individual *démarches*, for example, are becoming more important because of the weakness of formal mechanisms for consultation and decision-making. The risk of such strategies is that they reduce the transparency of decision-making and lead to the impression that UN humanitarian policy is 'owned' by a small number of countries with a particular political agenda. Sensitivity on this issue is particularly high in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the four mini-case studies in recipient countries. It examines the extent to which the theory of coherence has led to improved analysis of the political determinants of need in conflict-affected countries. It concludes that even at this most basic level of information sharing, the gains have been minimal, reflecting both the weakness of existing systems of information collection and analysis within the political strand, and that where such an analysis exists its objectivity is frequently compromised. This

implies a need to strengthen the quality and impartiality of political information systems. Correspondingly, humanitarian information systems need to be strengthened to ensure that they adequately capture need, so providing objective benchmarks against which response can be measured.

The case studies reveal a strong trend towards bilateralisation of humanitarian response, bringing bilateral donors nearer to operational decision-making. 'Bilateralisation' entails a number of tactics including: earmarking contributions to multilateral bodies; increased donor involvement in coordination and negotiation of humanitarian access; direct contracting of NGOs; and the deployment of field staff.

In some cases, these instruments were seen to have yielded important gains — mobilising political and military assets to which humanitarians would otherwise not have had access. International legal standards and informed media scrutiny can help to keep political engagement 'honest' in such contexts. Equally, ill-informed media pressure can provoke knee-jerk political reactions that negatively affect humanitarian space. This suggests the need for sustained advocacy and public information in order to generate a constituency for humanitarian action in donor countries.

Where bilateralisation entailed deploying humanitarian assets in order to achieve a particular purpose, this trend was seen to be eroding the independence of humanitarian action and undermining still further the functioning of multilateral institutions. It is important to note that, because of the difficult political conditions in many complex emergencies, donor governments continue to rely on multilateral channels for humanitarian action. Yet the effect of bilateralisation in selected emergencies is to weaken the global capacity of the multilateral system.

Disagreement between different donors regarding the appropriateness of particular strategies meant that bilateralisation did not necessarily yield greater coherence of decision-making. Nor does bilateralisation guarantee enhanced accountability—a key objective of earmarking, direct contracting and the deployment of field staff.

Finally, this section highlights the increasing conflation of the conditions required for effective humanitarian action with *de facto* political conditionality on humanitarian aid. It cautions that humanitarian aid is a weak tool as part of an overall strategy of conflict management, and that attempts to use it as such undermine its effectiveness in terms of relieving poverty and suffering.

Chapter Six concludes the report and outlines a number of recommendations to donors, the UN and non-governmental humanitarian agencies. It argues that the idea of good international citizenship is premised upon a shared global analysis of what constitutes a 'liberal

peace'. However, this model is ill-suited to dealing with the very countries most vulnerable to conflict and complex political emergencies. It is weak in explaining the origins of crisis, and its selective and conditional approach to engagement results in the exclusion of pariah states from international society, leaving few options to engage in their reform.

The integrationist interpretation of coherence has proved problematic in theory and in practice. A preferable approach to coherence would emphasise the distinctiveness of diplomatic and humanitarian action, but highlight their comparative advantages. In practice, this would require intensifying and reforming political engagement in conflict-affected countries, and defining a clearer, rule-based *modus vivendi* between diplomatic and humanitarian actors.

The report's recommendations include:

Recommendations to donor governments (in particular the UK and the Netherlands):

- Increase investment in political analysis and engagement in non-strategic areas.
- Codify in law their commitment to guarantee the principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian assistance. The OECD-DAC should promote consistent standards of definition across its membership.
- Urgently review the trend towards bilateralisation of humanitarian assistance. Its supposed advantages in terms of enhanced accountability remain unproven, while its costs to the independence of humanitarian action are significant.
- Further examine and develop a range of aid instruments for engaging in these environments, not just humanitarian assistance.

Recommendations to the UN:

- The Secretary-General should approve ECHA's recommendation regarding the relationship between SRSGs and Humanitarian Coordinators in situations of active conflict, preserving the independence of humanitarian action from political interference.
- The UN's capacity for producing independent political analysis and engagement should be strengthened. This would entail reviewing the current division of labour between DPA and DPKO; critical evaluation of past political performance; and facilitating exchange of political expertise between UN departments and agencies.

- The Strategic Framework initiative is widely seen to be flagging, this is regrettable. The initiative should be revived both globally and more specifically in relation to Afghanistan. This requires revitalising the political track and clarifying the terms of engagement between its humanitarian, peace-building and developmental components.

Recommendations to non-governmental humanitarian agencies (NGHAs):

- While NGHAs call for political action, they are uneasy regarding the 'politicisation' of humanitarian assistance. NGHAs therefore need to articulate more clearly and consistently their institutional relationships with, and understanding of, 'politics' in recipient and donor countries. Such a clarification implies recognition of the potential conflict between humanitarian principles and NGHAs' claims to contribute to peace-building and developmental objectives.
- Poor adherence to humanitarian principles by NGHAs undermines their claim for unconditional and unregulated access to public funds. These agencies should therefore review their commitment to these principles and agree mechanisms by which adherence to them can be enhanced.
- NGHAs should increase their investment in analysing global and country specific trends in relation to humanitarian policy in order to maintain a critical engagement with official donors and to develop an active constituency for humanitarian action in donor countries and elsewhere.

In addition to this report, the following documents are available reporting on the study's findings. These can be downloaded from the following web address: www.odi.org.uk/hpg/appp/forpol.html, or ordered from: hpgadmin@odi.org.uk.

Macrae, J. and Leader, N. (2000) *Shifting Sands: The search for coherence between political and humanitarian action*, *HPG Report No 8*, Overseas Development Institute, London.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The provision of humanitarian aid in conflict situations has always been a highly political activity. The strategies of contemporary conflict are often designed not simply to secure a military victory, but to disempower the opposition and deny its identity and its economic viability. Humanitarian action is designed to mitigate the effects of such strategies and therefore has an impact on the political economy of war. Belligerents are acutely aware of these impacts, as are those governments that finance humanitarian assistance. Thus, the provision of humanitarian assistance has always been influenced by political considerations on the part of donors and some NGOs. The degree to which political factors informed the provision of aid was determined by the geopolitical significance of the conflict, as well as its visibility.

The tendency towards using political criteria to determine the allocation of humanitarian assistance was constrained to some extent by appeal to the conventional principles of humanitarian action: neutrality and impartiality. These principles reflected a shared understanding between humanitarian organisations, politicians and the military of the political function of aid in conflict situations, and can be seen as part of a deal between these different actors, whereby the potential strategic costs of facilitating humanitarian access are offset against the strategic and political benefits of granting it (Leader 1999).

At a global level, these principles of impartiality and neutrality were reflected in the special rules that were developed to guide the allocation and delivery of relief supplies. In contrast to development aid, humanitarian assistance was not subject to political conditionality and did not imply political legitimisation of the government in the recipient country (Macrae 2000). Indeed, relief often remained the only instrument for international aid engagement when development aid relations were suspended on political grounds by donor powers. Channelling resources through international organisations, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and more recently through international NGOs, secured political distance between donor and recipient countries in practice as well as in theory.

The end of the Cold War signalled a series of profound changes in the relationship between humanitarian and political action. This report is about these changes in the aid-politics relationship and their impact on humanitarian operations.

It is particularly concerned to examine the concept of 'coherence' of international responses to conflict and related emergencies, which gained increasing prominence during the early 1990s. This concept of coherence reflected an analysis that relief programmes were insufficiently cognisant of the political origins of

vulnerability in many so-called complex emergencies, were unable to design appropriate responses, and were inadvertently fuelling conflict. It also signalled an awareness of the limitations of humanitarian actors in confronting these threats to human security and the need for intervention from other political actors.

The absence of such political intervention was starkly revealed by the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and its aftermath. *The Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Conflict and Genocide in Rwanda* (Eriksson 1996) famously concluded that humanitarian action cannot substitute for political action. The report recommended increasing the coherence between the political and humanitarian domains. Beneath this headline is a more specific articulation of the problem:

The underlying problem has been and continues to be political. But the international community failed to come to grips directly with the political problem. Thus it has in effect, and by default, left both the political and the humanitarian problem generated by the Rwanda crisis in the hands of the humanitarian community. This is untenable. It puts burdens on the latter that it cannot and should not assume (Eriksson 1996: 47).

In other words, the problem was less that international political and humanitarian responses were incoherent, than that there was an absence of any significant and effective political intervention.

Some six years on from the tragedy in Rwanda the calls for enhanced coherence between political and humanitarian action have become routinised. The study reported here aimed to understand the meaning and practice of this coherence. In particular, it sought to analyse the precise relationship between aid and politics implied by the coherence agenda.

Did it mean, for example, integrating humanitarian aid within a political framework for conflict reduction? This model implies incorporating humanitarian assistance into the toolbox of political intervention, alongside sanctions, *démarches* and threats or use of military force. If so, who was in charge of this unified approach: humanitarian or foreign policy actors?

Or, did coherence imply humanitarian and political actors sitting down together to agree a common plan, maintaining distinctive objectives and management hierarchies, but highlighting where their roles were complementary?

The particular choice of model is of more than academic importance. If the integrationist model of coherence is adopted by official bodies, this implies compromising

the principles of neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian action, as the overall objective is conflict management, not the relief of suffering. It implies providing assistance on the basis of its political utility, not according to need.

Alternatively, the complementarity model of coherence assumes that the extent and effectiveness of intervention by political actors has increased significantly. While this model anticipates that there are likely to be important gains to be made from political and humanitarian actors working together, it does not assume that they will always be pursuing exactly the same objectives at all times. Put more crudely, the study was concerned to examine what kind of politics was informing humanitarian action, and whether and how changes in the quality of politics were influencing populations' access to assistance.

In addition to a theoretical component, the study comprised three empirical components. The first focused on two donor governments: the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. It examined the evolution of their global policy frameworks to respond to complex political emergencies and their efforts to enhance the coherence of public policy in this area.

A second, comparatively small, element of the study looked at the UN, and how it has approached the issue of coherence between political and humanitarian responses to complex emergencies. The reason for this additional focus was twofold. First, the UN is the ultimate multi-mandate organisation, and as such was likely to provide insights into both the conceptualisation and the realisation of the shifting aid-politics relationship. Second, the UN is also an important vehicle through which governments seek to influence the course of conflict and to mitigate its effects. Analysing how the two case study governments interacted with the UN, politically and in relation to humanitarian issues, provided insights into the coherence of their representation, and into the mechanics of bilateral influence over multilateral humanitarian and political action.

In order to try to understand the impact of these policy innovations on humanitarian practice, the global policy perspective was supplemented by a number of small case studies. In the Balkans, there were two studies. The first examined the political and humanitarian interventions put in place to address the energy shortages in Serbia during the winter of 1999/2000. The second focused on the role of the two donor

governments in negotiating for asylum for Kosovar refugees into Macedonia in the spring of 1999. In Afghanistan, the focus was on the donor coordination body, the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG), and the related Strategic Framework initiative. In addition, the issue of conditions of humanitarian action was looked at, focusing on security and withdrawal of personnel. These case studies were selected as they were illustrative of the processes under study (see Chapter 5 for a fuller explanation).

Over the course of the six-month study, more than 150 people were interviewed in London, the Hague, Amsterdam, New York, Geneva, Skopje, Belgrade, Islamabad and Kabul (see Annex 1 for a list of interviews). More than 400 documents were collected during the course of the study. The study was funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC); the Department for International Development (DFID); the Henry Dunant Centre; and ActionAid. These funding organisations, together with officials from the UN system, the ICRC, the Dutch government, other NGOs and a number of academics contributed to an Advisory Group (see Annex 2). The role of this group has been threefold:

- to facilitate the implementation of the research by identifying relevant informants and documentation;
- to ensure the accuracy and independence of the research findings; and
- to promote dissemination of these findings.

It is important to emphasise that the role of the group has been advisory rather than managerial. The authors remain ultimately responsible for the research and its findings.

The remainder of the report comprises five chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the geopolitical and domestic contexts against which the rethinking of the humanitarian/political interface has taken place. Chapter 3 reports on bilateral approaches to coherence, charting the evolution of British and Dutch foreign and humanitarian policy in relation to complex emergencies. Chapter 4 focuses on the UN and how it has sought to harmonise the political and humanitarian aspects of its mandate. Chapter 5 looks at how the concept of coherence has worked in practice, reporting on the case study material from the Balkans and Afghanistan. Chapter 6 concludes the report, outlining issues and implications arising, and proposing a number of recommendations for action.

Chapter 2

'Coherence' in context: Geopolitical and domestic influences on the humanitarian–politics relationship

2.1 Introduction

The ending of the Cold War was an incremental process. The beginning of the thaw occurred at the geopolitical periphery, particularly in Africa (Clough 1992), and coincided with a more intense period of globalisation. From the early 1980s onwards, important shifts were taking place in the geopolitical landscape—shaped by, and shaping—the domestic political context in donor countries. These shifts were to alter fundamentally the demands placed on humanitarian actors and their relationship with political actors.

This chapter maps the key features of this changing geopolitical context and of changes within the aid policy arena in order to explain the emergence of the coherence agenda. As such it is concerned to analyse how in the 1990s, international political relations were reshaped by changing interpretations of sovereignty, security and the economics of war. It also examines the internal changes within the aid domain that have forced a rethinking of its relations with 'politics'.

2.2 Geopolitical humanitarianism: an overview of trends

2.2.1 Sovereignty and globalisation

The concept of sovereignty, a central pillar of international relations, has been shaken by the end of the Cold War.¹ Jackson (1990) argues that the concept of sovereignty comprises two components. The first — the juridical element — derives from the right to independence and self-determination. This denotes the legal status of a territory, embodied in its government, and its corresponding right to freedom from interference in its internal affairs: so-called 'negative sovereignty'. This element of sovereignty is unconditional and enfranchises all states as equal members of international society.

The second element of sovereignty is empirical. It describes the extent to which the legally recognised state can in fact act as a state. In other words, its ability to defend its own borders, maintain law and order and provide basic services to its population. It was this approach to sovereignty that was used by Europeans to justify the establishment and maintenance of empire, arguing that indigenous societies did not possess the capabilities required for positive sovereignty.

In the years after World War II, the rejection of the conditional approach to sovereignty adopted by the colonialists meant that the basis for international relations was to emphasise the imperative of absolute and

unconditional respect for sovereignty. In the context of the Cold War, this respect for sovereignty was functional (Clapham 1996). By placing a premium on non-intervention in the internal affairs of another state, the risk of direct confrontation between the two superpowers was reduced.

What this model of sovereignty did not preclude, however, was investment by the superpowers in order to strengthen, or threaten, the empirical sovereignty of their allies in the newly independent states. This investment, in the form of military assistance and development aid, shaped the political and economic dynamics of proxy conflicts across the Third World during the Cold War. As Section 2.2.2 makes clear, the withdrawal of international funding to sustain these conflicts has had a major impact on political economy of war since the mid-1980s. Equally, the withdrawal of the political incentive of Western governments to invest in bolstering Third World states has also had dramatic effects on the volume and conditions of aid flows (see Section 2.2.3 for a more detailed analysis of this).

Unconditional respect for negative sovereignty was sustainable neither economically nor politically. Economically, during the 1980s the wave to deregulate international trade and the adoption of monetarist policies limited the ability of states to control production and access to markets. Globalisation of trade, albeit moderated through increasingly differentiated regional economic blocs, tested the meaningfulness of state boundaries.

Politically, absolute respect for sovereignty was tested by a number of factors. The demise of superpower confrontation meant that such respect no longer served a political function. In this context, the validity of the crude aphorism — 'They may be bastards, but at least they're our bastards' — used to justify support to weak and violent regimes, rang increasingly hollow.

Strategically, the need to support such regimes as part of global super power confrontation also declined, a number of conflicts, previously of concern as part of global power politics, became increasingly irrelevant to long-term strategic calculations. Often conflicts, such as that in Afghanistan, mutated into self-sustaining 'war economies' (see Section 2.2.2). This new strategic hierarchy was well expressed by the Administrator of USAID:

There are four categories of country in her [i.e. Secretary of State Albright's] world-view: those that participate actively in international affairs and the global economy and abide by mutually

agreed rules; those emerging democracies that seek to participate positively in international affairs because they accept that course as in the best interests of their people; rogue states that reject the benefits of positive participation in international affairs, suppress their people and often support terrorism; and states that have failed and are unable to provide the basic requirements of life and physical security for their people (Atwood & Rogers 1997a).

Many conflicts that produce the worst suffering are of course in the latter two categories of what might be called ‘un-strategic’ conflicts, where intervention has become a matter of choice rather than necessity.

Under growing scrutiny from both human rights advocates and, in the US, increasingly isolationist politicians, unconditional support for states solely because they were allied states became increasingly hard to justify (Clapham 1996). As detailed in Section 2.3, this weakening of sovereignty was reflected in tougher conditions on development aid throughout the 1980s.

Initially primarily a policy by omission, in other words, the withholding of support for regimes perceived to deviate from international norms, by the early 1990s, this approach to conditional sovereignty had evolved into active (albeit selective) interventionism. The 1990s saw the establishment of a number of precedents to do with intervention in internal conflicts, implemented variously by regional and international bodies. The forms of intervention ranged from the imposition of sanctions, military protection of civilians (for example in Iraq, the enforcement of no-fly zones), military protection of humanitarian assistance (e.g. in Somalia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Bosnia,) and punitive bombardment (of the Republika Srpska after Srebrenica). What distinguished the military aspects of these interventions from those during the Cold War was that they were undertaken without the consent of the warring parties. This meant the international community, as a community, taking sides, *de facto* becoming a belligerent.

They also signalled the emergence, however tentative, of a consensus that international political, economic and military assets could and should be deployed in order to promote peace and stability. The publication in 1992 of *An Agenda for Peace* by the Secretary-General of the UN distilled this consensus (Boutros-Ghali 1992). The report followed the first meeting of the Security Council at Head of State level on 31 January that year. In the context of this study, it constituted a significant step in three ways.

First, it redefined security to embrace not simply military threats, but threats to stability posed by ecological damage, poverty, population growth and inequality. Responsibility for the maintenance of this expanded concept of international peace and security — known

as human security — was seen to lie primarily with the Security Council. This paved the way for opening the council to a broad range of concerns and interest groups, including humanitarian actors, in the latter half of the decade (see Chapter 4). The redefinition of the problem of security, therefore demanded coordinated intervention from a corresponding array of actors: political, military and economic.

Second, then *Agenda* rationalised the idea of limiting sovereignty. Thus it argued:

The foundation-stone of this work is and must remain the State. Respect for its fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress. The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality. It is the task of leaders in States today to understand this and to find a balance of the needs of good internal governance and the demands of global interdependence (Paragraph 17).

This meant that aid policy actors could be seen to make decisions regarding whether to engage with particular countries at all, and on what terms, not as racist neo-colonialists, but as defenders of human rights, peace and prosperity.

Third, as detailed in Section 2.3, it broke down the barriers that had divided aid instruments from the political and military dimensions of international relations for three decades. The political function and impact of aid in addressing the root causes of conflict was acknowledged. In this way politics became a legitimate, technical concern for aid policymakers.

The weakening of sovereignty was a necessary condition for expanding the scope of security. It implied the political strand of the UN, in particular the Security Council, involving itself in areas such as the environment, population and social exclusion. Previous international involvement in these domains had been justified on technical, largely economic, grounds and subject to the political control of the sovereign power. Thus, the end of the Cold War allowed for the convenient, but mythical, distinction between political and economic interventionism to be quietly forgotten (Adelman 1996).

By the end of the 1990s, the parallel processes that reunited political and economic interventions, and the softening of sovereignty, meant that much of the rule book which had governed international relations for nearly half a century required rewriting. The central, unspoken question was: In the absence of a state's consent, who decides, and on the basis of what criteria, the legitimacy of international intervention (economic, political and military) in the internal affairs of a sovereign state?

Until NATO's intervention in Kosovo, international experiments in military intervention in conflict zones were largely sanctioned by the UN Security Council (UNSC). The legality and legitimacy of the use of force without a UNSC Resolution has been widely debated (Blair 1999; Roberts 1999). Important in these debates are not only the specifics of the origins of the Kosovo crisis and of the tactics used by NATO to prosecute the war, but also the principles at stake.

Juxtaposed are two international responsibilities. The first is the protection of the right of self-determination of peoples, embodied in the notion of the equality of sovereign states. According to this view, while imperfect, the system of sovereign states safeguards political pluralism, since it provides for equality of nations whatever their ideology. Thus, Inyataullah (1995) goes so far as to suggest that:

an international society based on the principle of sovereignty may be seen as a type of decentralized democracy where ideological difference can be discussed and discussed and debated without degenerating into the habitual use of force.

The antithesis of this view is that sovereignty is really a veil behind which rogue regimes can hide with impunity. To allow major violations of human rights to occur without intervening is to be complicit, and is indeed illegal under international law which obliges states to intervene in cases of genocide and violations of international humanitarian law. Furthermore, in many circumstances systematic violations of human rights cannot be regarded as a purely internal matter, but also constitute a threat to international peace and security. In an era of globalisation, it is also possible to argue that states' interests no longer stop at their borders: as described in further detail in Chapter 3, domestic policy has become internationalised. For example, containment of refugee flows to the West has been a clear goal of the redefinition of the human security agenda since the early 1980s (Hathaway 1995; Suhrke 1994).

It is important to note that while the NATO bombardment of Serbia in 1999 was the most forceful intervention undertaken by the West to respond to a perceived threat to human rights and international security, it was not an isolated event. Rather, it can be seen as part of a continuum of political and military sanctions that ranges from increasingly tough conditionality on official aid to trade sanctions to military intervention — that may or may not be debated and regulated by global bodies, such as the UN.

Arguably, little is new in these contested positions regarding the legitimacy of intervention. They re-state the collective versus individual rights debates that raged back and forth across the East–West divide in the post-war years. What is different, however, is that the debate about the legitimacy of intervention has moved off the

page of academic textbooks and competing UN resolutions, and into the domain of political, military and aid action.

These interventions have been undertaken by Western states seeking to legitimise their actions by appealing to universal values, particularly those of human rights and humanitarianism, but also those of free trade and democracy. These apparently uncontroversial elements of what Dillon and Reid (2000) have described as the values of 'liberal peace', have become associated with a Western political project. The ability of the West to deploy the economic resources and military assets required to implement this project,² gives the appearance of a mono-polar world. This appearance is reinforced by the lack of explicit rules codifying not only the rights, but also the responsibilities of those intervening without UN endorsement.

Paradoxically, however, what is revealing is the persistence of pluralism despite, and in part because of, attempts to appeal to universal values. While those opposing 'liberal peace' may be caricatured as the enemies of rights, such a caricature does not dispose of the problem of regimes that flout what are portrayed as international norms of behaviour. Instead, there is increasing confrontation between advocates and opponents of the liberal peace model, with many of the latter increasingly marginalised from the mainstream of international economic and political relations. These 'pariahs on the periphery' remain formidable threats to international peace and security. Arguably part of the reason they remain so is because the strategies to contain them are based on a misunderstanding of the origins of such movements and what sustains them. Understanding the nature and dynamics of such forces is critical for humanitarian actors, since the same forces are responsible for the creation of humanitarian crises and able to determine the quality and scope of humanitarian space. This is the subject of Section 2.2.2.

2.2.2 The changing nature of war

An interview with a senior UN official put it concisely:

The old, Cold War, rules don't apply any more, it is no longer a case of Security Council members phoning up their allies and telling them to behave. Traditionally we relied upon political leverage, and in particular on pressure from the Security Council. Peacekeepers were usually deployed when the superpowers had scared themselves so much that they decided they had to do something. If we cannot rely on this anymore, then we need to look for other entry points.

The dependence of Third World belligerents for supplies of weaponry and budgetary support, meant that during the Cold War the respective superpowers had both the incentives and the means to influence the nature of proxy conflicts. With important exceptions, the

withdrawal of extensive external financing, combined with extreme strain on public financing, has meant that warring parties have had to find new sources of income to sustain their conflicts. The emergence of what have become known as ‘war economies’ — the extraction of wealth as much as an end in itself as a means to sustain military activity — became a marked trend in contemporary conflicts from the mid-1980s onwards. The focus of these economies has ranged from trade in natural resources such as oil, diamonds and forest products (for example, Angola, Sierra Leone and Cambodia); production of narcotics (Colombia, Afghanistan and Peru); to violent asset stripping (Sudan, Bosnia and Kosovo); to massive manipulation of markets, particularly in food (Sudan, Somalia).

Le Billon (2000) provides a detailed review of the dynamics and impacts of war economies. Here there are two key points to note regarding the changing nature of war and its implications for the aid–politics relationship.

First, the tactics of contemporary conflict are inherently more dangerous for civilian populations. Civilians represent an important source of labour and assets for armed movements, and have thus become incorporated into the conflict dynamic. The subsequent blurring of the distinction between civilian and military groups is not a new feature of conflict, and was common to the guerrilla wars after 1945. What is new, however, is that in contrast to the liberation and secessionist movements that characterised the conflicts between the 1950s and 1980s, in the post-Cold War era, the reciprocal links between military forces and the civilians living in areas under their control appear to have been severed in many areas of the world. In the process, the distinction between combatant and non-combatant is not simply blurred, but rather dismantled by predatory military groups (Leader 2000).

It is important to recognise that historically belligerent–civilian relationships were not safeguarded by superpower interest in the legitimacy of their Third World allies. Military and civil support to allied regimes was not contingent upon their internal legitimacy. However, an ability to demonstrate some legitimacy was functional in the context of the Cold War, which was as much a war of demonstrating the merits of competing ideologies as one concerned with control of territory. In the context of international disengagement and internal political and economic crisis, establishing legitimacy with a domestic audience became an increasing luxury for military movements concerned to ensure their own survival.

These trends have had major implications for humanitarian action, which has been premised on the existence of reciprocity between politico-military groups and the civilians under their control. In particular, it has signalled the breakdown of the ‘deal’ between armed

groups and humanitarians (Leader 2000). This deal, grounded in principles of impartiality and neutrality, provided for the relief of suffering of civilians and military personnel *hors de combat* on both sides, without providing military advantage to either side. Its enforcement, in other words, securing humanitarian access, is contingent upon warring parties having an interest in the protection of the health and security of civilians. In an environment where reciprocity between military and civilian populations seems to have become more contingent and unpredictable, so it has become more difficult and dangerous to secure humanitarian access and violations of humanitarian law are apparently routinised.

Thus, in the face of widespread violation of international humanitarian law, the international community has been seeking new ways to influence the behaviour of warring parties and to secure humanitarian access.

A second important implication of the changing political economy of war is that the conventional tools of international diplomacy are proving of limited value in engaging with increasingly factionalised armed movements which draw significant financial benefits from sustained violence.

In the search for new points of leverage in conflicts a number of strategies have emerged. These have included the increasing use of sanctions and selective use of armed intervention, the choice of instruments reflecting the strategic significance of the particular country. Widespread in those countries on the geopolitical periphery is the use of aid, including humanitarian aid, as a tool in international efforts for conflict reduction. As described in further detail in Section 2.3, international aid is no longer seen primarily as a tool for economic intervention, it is now legitimate to use it as a tool for political intervention and as part of a coherent strategy for conflict reduction.

2.3 The crisis in aid: the search for new purpose

As outlined above, the context of globalisation, post-Cold War realignment and the rethinking of sovereignty all forced a re-examination of the relationship between aid and politics, fuelling demands for coherence. At the same time, a number of changes within the aid sphere itself forced a re-examination of its role in conflict management (Macrae 1999). First, the decline in political and financial support for official development assistance (oda). Second, an increasingly robust critique of the dominant response to conflict relief assistance. Finally, increasing scrutiny of the relationship between different elements of the aid system, and between the aid system and foreign and security policy. Each of these factors driving the ‘new’ aid paradigm are described briefly below.

2.3.1 The financial bottom line: reversing the fortunes of aid

In the introduction to his *Agenda for Development*, the former Secretary-General of the UN argued that:

During the Cold War, competition for influence had stimulated interest in development, but that competition to bring development to the poorest has ended. Many donors have grown weary of the task. Many of the poor are dispirited. Development is in crisis (Boutros-Ghali 1994).

The trends in oda flows suggested that concern regarding declining support for the aid project was justified. The 1990s witnessed a decline in oda flows from OECD countries unprecedented since the 1960s. These figures signalled an absolute decline in oda, they also represented a sustained fall in the value of oda relative to the GNP of donor countries. By mid-1996, aid provided by member states of the OECD had fallen to an average of 0.27 per cent of GNP, compared with the UN target of 0.7 per cent.

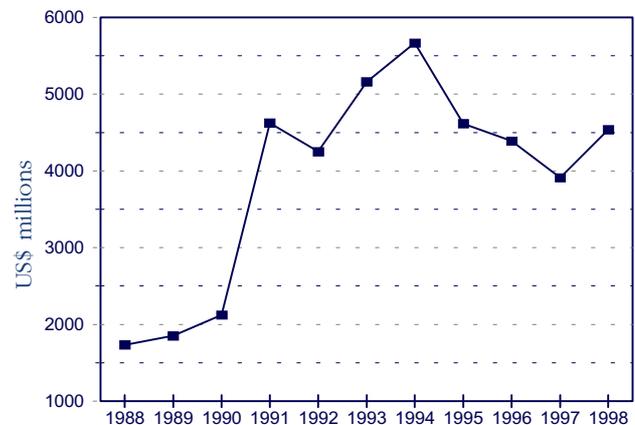
It was against this backdrop that increased attention began to be paid to the costs of conflict to the development process (see, for example, Olsen 1998; UNICEF 1987). At the same time, the international costs of conflict and its aftermath were also being felt. The peace and stability that had been promised by the ending of the Cold War did yield important settlements in a number of countries, facilitated by superpower intervention and underwritten by the UN. This wave of settlements required extensive military input to secure the transition to peace, in addition to the costs of the civilian rehabilitation components. While optimism for peace grew, however, the international community confronted a significant number of new crises in the early post-Cold War years, including Iraq (1991), Somalia (1991/2 onwards) and the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Combined, these processes of war and peace placed new financial demands on the international community, with the costs of UN peacekeeping operations doubling between 1990 and 1994 from US\$2.4 billion to \$5.7 billion. These escalating costs were seen by many as a direct threat to international support for aid which, in contrast to peacekeeping, is financed largely through voluntary contributions (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Netherlands 1993).

2.3.2 Relief: an emerging critique

The rising costs of conflict were also reflected in trends in relief expenditure which increased significantly in absolute and relative terms from the mid-1980s onwards. Figure 2.1 shows the increase in oda allocated to emergency relief between 1988 and 1998. Figure 2.2 shows this as a percentage of total oda.

Figure 2.1

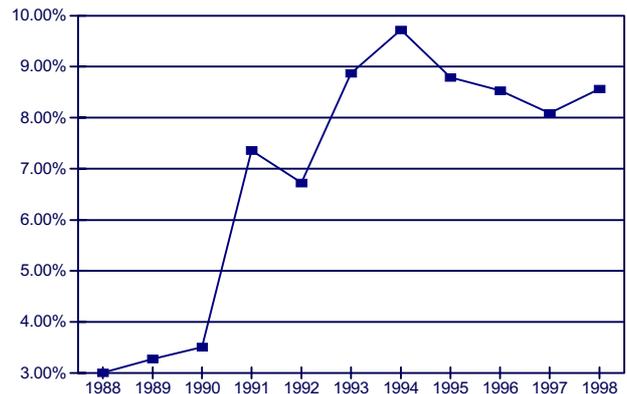
Total oda spent on emergency and distress relief (real terms) 1988–1998



Source: Randel & German (2000)

Figure 2.2

Oda to humanitarian assistance (real terms) as share of total oda 1988–1998



Source: Randel & German (2000)

Much of the increase in emergency relief in the early 1990s was accounted for by an increase in the response to conflict-related emergencies.³

The rise in relief expenditure can be explained not only in terms of a rise in humanitarian need, but in relation to the growing scope for humanitarian intervention, enabled by the softening in the international position regarding sovereignty, particularly that of Western members of the UNSC. This was reflected, for example, in UN Resolution 46/182, which created DHA, and argued that:

The sovereign, territorial integrity and national unity of states must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the UN. In this context, humanitarian assistance *should* be provided with the consent of the affected countries, and *in principle* on the basis of an appeal by the affected country (emphases added).

The inclusion of the terms ‘should’ and in ‘principle’ set a precedent for violation of sovereignty if the international community justified intervention on humanitarian grounds (Overseas Development Institute 1993).

The financial and geographical expansion of humanitarian operations attracted considerable attention from within the aid community and more broadly. No longer associated purely with the logistics of moving emergency food aid to the victims of flood and drought, nor with the secretive workings of the ICRC, humanitarian assistance entered the realm of high politics and media coverage. As relief aid came under increasing scrutiny during the 1990s, so it attracted increasing criticism from an apparently diverse range of sources (Macrae 1998). Two major themes have emerged from nearly a decade of intense evaluation, academic analysis and practice in this field.

First, it has been argued that while it provides the temporary palliative of relieving the symptoms of disasters, emergency aid does little to reduce people’s vulnerability and enable them to re-establish their lives and livelihoods. Initially, the appeal for more developmental approaches to relief was made with respect to the potential socio-economic gains (Buchanan-Smith & Maxwell 1994). Such an appeal was particularly pertinent in conflict-related emergencies which did not conform to the short time frame envisaged by conventional disaster relief.

This body of work on relief-to-development links quickly converged with a second strand of debate on humanitarian policy in the early 1990s. This highlighted the fact that the provision of relief resources may influence significantly the dynamics of conflict. Evidence has emerged from a diverse range of conflicts indicating massive manipulation of relief supplies by warring parties and allied commercial and political interest groups. The effect of these manipulations had been to make worse off more vulnerable civilians already in considerable distress (see, for example, African Rights 1994; de Waal 1997; Duffield 1994; Duffield & Prendergast 1994; Keen 1991; Keen 1994). This raised the question of how relief might be better managed to minimise these negative effects.

It also raised the tantalising proposition that if aid in wartime might have negative effects, might the converse also be true. Could aid be used to influence more positively the course of the conflict (Anderson 1996; Keen & Wilson 1994)?

Thus, the relatively esoteric discourse of relief-development aid links was elevated to a mechanism for conflict reduction (Macrae 1996). By identifying the causes of conflict as largely internal to the country and as associated with the processes of underdevelopment, so a role for aid in conflict prevention and resolution emerged. If conflict was the result of poverty and environmental decline, for

example, aid-supported poverty alleviation and environmental-protection measures would address the root causes of conflict. Adopting developmental approaches to relief would thus serve multiple purposes — not only reducing dependency, but also reducing the scope for conflict.

The reappraisal of the impact of relief in conflict situations had important implications not only for the relationship between different aspects of the aid system (relief and development), but between aid actors and their counterparts in ministries of foreign affairs and defence. Events in Rwanda in 1994 served to propel these debates out of the margins of academic debate into the forefront of international policy. Interviews conducted during the course of this study demonstrated a wide degree of variation regarding the interpretation of these events, and in particular whether the primary problem was a failure of aid, or a failure of politics. It is the answer to this question that informs operational choices between the two models of coherence outlined in Chapter 1: integration or complementarity.

Answering the question, in other words, allocating blame, is complicated by the fact that, in the 1990s, the distinction between aid and politics has broken down. Section 2.3.3 argues aid is a form of international policy, with official aid agencies taking responsibility for political labour in non-strategic parts of the world. This suggests that what is at issue is less the division of labour and coordinating mechanisms *between* ministries and departments responsible for aid and those responsible for foreign policy, than an assessment of the mandate *within* aid bodies to formulate and execute political policy.

2.3.3 Aid and politics: a re-analysis of the international division of political labour

Adelman (1996) argues that during the 1980s a process was started by which aid and ‘politics’ were reunited. During the 1960s and 1970s the aid system had sought to protect its operational space from overt political interference by couching its engagement in technical and particularly economic language (Griffin 1991). During the 1980s, there was a new convergence of interests between the aid (economic) domain and that of politics (foreign policy). Specifically, the neo-liberal economic tradition advocated the stripping away of state involvement in production and economic regulation, while also becoming aware of the constraints posed by poor governance to the achievement of economic reform. Particularly in the US, these interests coincided with the political interests of the foreign policy establishment, concerned to protect and promote free trade and ensure stability of states. The mechanism to achieve these changes in Third World policy was no longer seen as only or primarily the transfer of resources, but internal political reform.

The ending of the Cold War added further impetus to this ‘reunification’ of aid and politics. There were

increasing appeals to use the end of superpower confrontation to harness political will to achieve peaceful resolution to conflict. There was thus an assumption that in the post-Cold War era there was sufficient consensus within and between major power blocs, including Europe and the US, to be able to define common foreign policy goals. Further, the importance of coherence between the different facets of international relations — trade, aid and diplomacy — was increasingly emphasised (see, for example, Boutros-Ghali 1992; Boutros-Ghali 1994; Development Assistance Committee 1997a; European Commission 1996; United Kingdom 1997).

The reunification of aid and politics was initially conceptual. The firewall between aid and foreign policy, cherished by non-aligned countries in particular (Adelman 1996), was being dismantled, albeit in terms of a revival of the liberal internationalist ideals of the UN founders (Miller 1992; Netherlands 1993; Sida 1999).

Elsewhere, the bid for greater 'coherence' was achieved through institutional innovation and re-fashioning of the relationship between aid, trade and foreign policy ministries. For example, in 1997 changes were introduced that meant that the Administrator of USAID no longer reported directly to the president, but to the Secretary of State. In 1992, the Office of Transition Initiatives was formed which also signalled a new *modus operandi*. Drawing on both relief and development assistance budget lines, it was jointly managed by the State Department and by USAID, thus achieving in institutional terms the coherence between humanitarian and developmental policy, and between aid and politics implied by the new orthodoxy. By 1999, the very architecture of US disaster response was up for review: with options including its incorporation into the Department of State. The architectural changes in British and Dutch international relations, and their implications for humanitarian policy, are the focus of Chapter 3.

These shifts in the analysis of aid and politics, buttressed by broader changes in the geopolitical landscape, provided the aid establishment with a mandate not only to claim a role in conflict management, but to define ways of implementing it. In this respect, the paradigm which was to emerge during this decade was a continuation of an earlier trend in aid policy. From the mid-1980s onwards, as the US and France in particular disengaged from Africa, aid agencies were left as the primary means for political engagement by the West (Ellis 1996). In the face of the 'politics of abandonment', Ellis suggests that:

it is the Bretton Woods institutions, and especially the World Bank, which are left in occupation of the field. It is they which articulate most clearly the policy of the industrialised world toward Africa, based on free trade and liberal policy (ibid: 15.).

By the 1990s, however, the essentially economic and technocratic paradigms of conventional development assistance were proving unable to demonstrate significant impact in sustaining the political support of donors. Something new was required.

It is against this background that aid agencies were incorporated into the wider vision of 'human security' outlined in *An Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali 1992). This mandated all UN agencies to take an active interest in conflict. A key assumption of *The Agenda for Peace*, and related successor documents,⁴ is that they assumed that aid would form a part of a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy for conflict reduction that would include: political, military, environmental and trade interventions.

Similarly, the Development Assistance Committee (1997) in its *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development* states:

conflict prevention and peace-building approaches must be coherent, comprehensive, integrated and aimed at helping address the root causes of conflicts. The close cooperation of all policy instruments (diplomacy, military, trade and development cooperation) based on their respective comparative advantages [is required].

What the analysis underpinning the calls for coherent action assumes, however, is that the objectives of aid, foreign and diplomatic policy are necessarily compatible. By conflating these objectives into a single policy framework, the assumption is that foreign policy is humanitarian, and by extension, that humanitarian action serves a foreign policy function. This serves to obscure the potential conflicts of interest between humanitarian goals and states' interests. This problem of specificity of mandate of government departments reflects a broader conundrum of public policymaking in modern democracies. How can competing objectives be reconciled, particularly where they straddle different ministerial turf?

2.4 'Joined-upness': the *sine qua non* of modern democracy

This assumption of consensus between different strands of public policy is not peculiar to the development sphere. As Hoebink (1997) points out, the goal of coherence has attained the level of general principle in modern government because policy incoherence might frustrate the implementation and effectiveness of policy, produce adverse reactions and ultimately lead to the questionable legitimacy of government. The paradox, of course, is that the complexity of modern government, and by extension of international bodies such as the EU, makes achieving such coherence inherently difficult. Thus, governments and international bodies seek to

develop new methods to manage such complexity, in particular, by establishing new mechanisms for inter-departmental and inter-agency coordination.

Thus, in the UK, for example, the current Government prepared a White Paper on the Modernisation of Government emphasising the importance of 'joined-up' government, and encouraging the formation of cross-departmental task forces. By early 2000, some 13 such task forces had been established covering issues as diverse as employment, crime and conflict prevention in Africa.

In the case of the EU, the basis for coherence is even stronger. Under the Maastricht Treaty, the EU has a statutory obligation to achieve policy coherence between member states and between different departments within the Commission. In the case of development cooperation, these responsibilities were underlined by the adoption of a European Council Resolution on Coherence of Development Cooperation (Visman & Brusset 1998). In line with the model of human security outlined above, this emphasised the need for a coherent approach to development, which embraced aid, trade, security and foreign policy aspects of the EU's work.

As Robinson (1997) points out, implicit in such approaches to the issue of coherence, is the assumption that current policy in coherence is essentially the result of poor management and implementation. By strengthening systems for policy management, for example, by establishing improved mechanisms for coordination, policy coherence can be achieved. A second assumption is that such coherence is necessarily desirable from the point of view of the object of policy reform. Robinson cautions, for example, that increased coherence between donor governments on policy conditionality might not be in the interests of developing countries if it leaves them with little option than to apply policy prescriptions of which they remain sceptical.

In other words, a potential problem is that idea that just because a policy is coherent, its content is necessarily 'right'. The political economy of coherent policymaking by modern governments is therefore an interesting — but open — question. What remains missing in a managerial approach to defining coherent public policy is an analysis of who should make that policy, and in particular, according to what criteria should competing public policy objectives be regulated. It is these

questions as they apply to the humanitarian sphere that are at the centre of this study.

2.5 Chapter summary

The search for coherence between political and humanitarian responses to complex political emergencies has been driven by global factors, as well as by more parochial trends in aid policy and within donor countries. Globally, the end of the Cold War, the softening of respect for states' sovereignty and the emergence of new forms of conflict have driven a redefinition of security and provided space for new interventions to respond to conflict.

Against this backdrop, the crisis in aid and an emerging critique of relief aid in particular, has prompted new claims regarding the role of official development cooperation in conflict management. Political disengagement of the West from non-strategic countries at the global periphery has left aid actors as the primary representatives of international policy. The reunification of aid and politics in the early 1980s has enabled aid actors to claim that they have a legitimate role in the internal affairs of recipient countries to ensure the technical efficiency and accountability of aid programming. The distinction between foreign policy and aid policy is therefore being dismantled: what is emerging is a new structure to manage international policy, with aid agencies taking the lead in non-strategic countries.

As in other areas of public policy, where the drive to joined-up government is evident, it is unclear what rules should be used to prioritise and reconcile numerous and competing policy objectives, and who should be responsible for doing this.

The diverse motivations behind the search for coherence mean that it is unsurprising that its practical meaning remains ill-defined and elusive. While the arguments in favour of coherence have been important in shaping institutional reform, their implications for humanitarian policy have not been widely examined. In particular, the promotion of coherence assumes that political, military and humanitarian actors within and across particular countries and institutions have congruent goals. It further assumes both the accuracy and the moral 'rightness' of this agenda and the assumptions upon which it is founded. As subsequent chapters show, in practice, many of these assumptions have proved flawed.

Chapter 3

Bilateral approaches to coherence: an analysis of policy trends in the UK and The Netherlands

3.1 Introduction and chapter overview

'Coherence', as a way of addressing conflict, is something only governments can achieve. The primary source of humanitarian aid resources is official aid, and in addition to large aid programmes, donor governments also have diplomatic, trade and military assets that can be variously deployed to influence the course and conduct of conflicts worldwide. This chapter examines three key questions:

- Why have donor governments thought it important to enhance the coherence of this aspect of public policy?
- To what extent have institutional and managerial changes been introduced in order to achieve greater coherence?
- What impact, if any, have these changes had on humanitarian policy?

This chapter examines these questions in relation to two case study governments: the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. There were three main reasons for choosing these cases:

- The institutional framework for coherence is markedly different in the two countries. In the UK, there has been institutional separation between ministries responsible for foreign affairs and development, with the opposite being the case in the Netherlands.
- The UK is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while the Netherlands is currently a non-permanent member. This situates them differently on the geopolitical stage.
- Both countries have been in the fore of debates regarding the role of aid in conflict management for at least five years. This meant that there was a body of policy and practice to analyse.

The remainder of the chapter comprises three sections. Section 3.2 maps out the evolution of UK foreign policy since the 1997 general election. Section 3.3 charts the development, and revision, of DFID's 'new humanitarianism'. Similarly, Section 3.4 analyses the approach to delivering a coherent international policy framework for conflict reduction that has been developed in the Netherlands. These trends are then analysed comparatively in Section 3.5.

3.2 The UK: new Labour and Third Way foreign policy

3.2.1 Good international citizenship and Third Way foreign policy

Labour's election victory in May 1997 signalled important changes in UK aid and foreign policy, and thus served as a backcloth for the emergence of what was to become known as the 'new humanitarianism' (Foulkes 1998).

The first was the emergence of 'Third Way' thinking in the foreign policy sphere. This approach to foreign policy echoed the idea of 'good international citizenship' put forward by Gareth Evans, the former Australian foreign minister. This approach dispenses with the simplistic division between realist and liberal internationalist schools of foreign policy, arguing that in an era of globalisation, concern about human rights, democratisation and the eradication of global poverty is in nations' best interests. Evans argued that the pursuit of a strong international order, secured by multilateral action within the UN and wider international society was not purely altruistic, but represented enlightened self-interest.

In common with the vision outlined in *An Agenda for Peace*, the new UK government believed that in the post-Cold War era the key to security lay not only in traditional domains of defence and diplomacy, but in promoting sustainable development and the universal commitment to uphold human rights (see, for example, Cook 1997a). The ethical dimension to foreign policy mapped out by the new Government appeals to the universality of human rights. Thus the new Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, made the connection between respect for human rights and membership of the international community. In the new era of conditional sovereignty, juridical statehood was no longer a sufficient condition for membership of the international community. Thus, Cook argued:

if every country is a member of the international community, then it is reasonable to require every government to abide by her rules (Cook 1997b).

The clear implication is that states that abuse human rights forfeit the right to be treated as a legitimate member of the international community and should become the subject of international scrutiny and censure (Wheeler & Dunne 1999).

The worsening human rights situation in Kosovo throughout 1998 and into 1999 were to prove a major test of this framework for foreign policy. The British government was among the staunchest advocates of military intervention in the crisis, arguing that it was legitimate to use force without a UNSC resolution on the grounds of overwhelming humanitarian necessity.⁵ A key speech by Prime Minister Blair in Chicago situated this humanitarian rationale for intervention alongside the more traditional foreign policy consideration that national interests should be at stake.

This new doctrine of 'Third Way' foreign policy raises the questions of who decides the criteria according to which membership of the international community is granted, and when are sanctions applied against those who have forfeited their membership? The Prime Minister clearly recognised the dilemma in a speech in South Africa saying:

People say you can't be the self-appointed guardians of what's right and wrong. True, but when the international community agrees to certain objectives and then fails to implement them, those who can act, must.

It is too early to judge the robustness of claims that the UK is pursuing an ethical dimension to foreign policy, or to analyse the extent to which clear rules are emerging to mediate when conflicts of interest emerge between ethical imperatives of human rights, and those of trade and threats to security. To date, the record is clearly uneven, and this unevenness itself weakens the Government's claims regarding the legitimacy to judge who does and who does not merit full rights of sovereignty.

This selectivity of emphasis on human rights issues to guide foreign and ultimately defence policy, has clear implications in the context of this study. If foreign policy interests were unambiguously humanitarian in their motivation, then the potential for conflict between foreign policy and humanitarian action would disappear. If, however, as is necessarily the case, foreign policy actors are weighing numerous considerations in determining the UK position in relation to a particular conflict, then potential conflicts will emerge.

The framework of Third Way politics, sets out the conditions under which the UK engages with other states in the diplomatic sphere. Peter Hain, the junior Foreign Office minister for Africa, thus emphasised that:

Where African leaders show a real commitment to their people, we show a real commitment to them. But the reverse is true as well. We will not support corrupt governments. We will not subsidise economic mismanagement. We will not fund repression or bankroll dictatorships ... So good governance means good international relations. More reform means more aid. Clean government means extra investment. With such

a renaissance based upon such principles, and with tangible support from the EU, the US and the rest of the industrially advanced world, Africa has a bright future (Hain 1999a).

An interesting feature of Hain's speech is that in mapping out the elements of UK foreign policy in Africa, the primary emphasis is on issues conventionally seen as lying in the domain of aid. HIV/AIDS and debt relief, hardly the conventional bread and butter of career diplomats, figure at the top of the minister's list of the problems facing the continent. Thus, as the concept of human security is extended beyond the boundaries of conventional diplomacy, so the conceptual distinction between 'development' and foreign policy portfolios becomes harder to discern, at least in non-strategic countries.

3.2.2 The changing architecture of international policy: from ODA to DFID

A second key contextual factor for the realisation of the coherence agenda was the separation of foreign policy and aid portfolios, and the subsequent elevation of the ministerial status of the aid department to cabinet rank. This institutional separation did not imply a conceptual distinction between the aims and objectives of aid and foreign policy, rather they remain unified under the concept of government having an 'international' policy. Although based on the argument that development assistance should be given free of foreign policy considerations, in the context of Third Way foreign policy, the conceptual unity between aid and foreign policy has probably never been greater, as Hain's speech stresses. Despite the institutional separation, the distinction between aid and foreign policy portfolios was blurred, quite deliberately, in the Government's White Paper on international development, which states:

'This is not just a White Paper about aid. It is a White Paper about development and a secure future for our planet and its people. The new Department for International Development has the aim of ... contributing to the elimination of poverty in poorer countries, not just through its bilateral and multilateral programmes, but through working collaboratively with other departments to promote consistency and coherence in policies affecting development (United Kingdom 1997).

The new-found independence and status of the department, and the definition of its role not just as a provider of aid, but as political activist and partner for development within the UK and overseas, combined with its increasing financial base enhanced the profile and power of development portfolio. It has also meant a more active and explicit interpretation of the political pre-conditions for development, and a corresponding analysis that it is legitimate for aid actors to act 'politically'.

The political goals of the new department are laid out in the White Paper as follows:

- Particular attention [shall be given to] human rights, transparent and accountable government and core labour standards, building on the Government's ethical approach to international relations.
- Resources will be used proactively to promote political stability and social cohesion and to respond effectively to conflict (United Kingdom 1997).

In the bilateral programme, the mechanism for translating these principles into practice is through the idea of 'partnership'. This approach recognises the historical failure of punitive conditionality to achieve its objective (Killick 1997). Instead, it relies upon securing political commitment from the recipient government to poverty alleviation and a joint process of negotiating a plan to realise this commitment in practice. An important element in this process will be to encourage 'stronger inter-donor coordination ... to strengthen [the recipient government's] commitment to the implementation of pro-poor policies' (United Kingdom, 1997).

De facto this approach implies a narrowing of the scope of the bilateral programme to those countries where pre-conditions are judged to exist for development. In those countries where the establishment of bilateral partnership with government is judged to be neither feasible nor desirable, the strategy is to maintain multilateral contributions and to use 'alternative channels' such as 'the institutions of civil society, voluntary agencies and local government ... tightly focussed on the victims of neglect and oppression' (United Kingdom, 1997).

Thus, in common with the government's foreign policy strategy, the new aid strategy adopted by DFID and others, including the Dutch government, implies a two-tier system of international aid relations. The first tier is characterised by full, bilateral relations where partnership with the recipient government has been successfully negotiated and the aid tap turned on fully. In the second tier are governments that are unable or unwilling to effect the conditions required for effective development partnership. These countries are subject to a 'continuum' of conditionality that ranges from the withholding of bilateral assistance to the suspension of all forms of developmental aid. For those at the latter end of the spectrum, UK inputs are confined to humanitarian assistance.

The institutional separation of DFID from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) raises an interesting conundrum. If foreign policy goals are identical with those of international development, and if the role of DFID is no longer confined simply to the allocation of

aid resources but rather embraces wider political functions, then the rationale for institutional division of aid and foreign policy is far from clear. This institutional separation maintains its logic only if there remain significant *differences* in the goals and mandates of the two departments, or if the FCO proves unable to realise the expectations of other departments in relation to international policy. In other words, in theory Third Way foreign policy would logically lead to closer *integration* of all aspects of international policy, including aid.

Evidence collected by this study suggests that practical (as well as political) considerations mean that arguments are likely to remain for institutional separation, despite its inherent contradictions. It also suggests that some of the apparent inconsistencies in the approach to separation disappear, if, as appears possible, a new division of labour between the two departments is established. As the distinction between aid and politics disappears, so a new categorisation of division of labour is required.

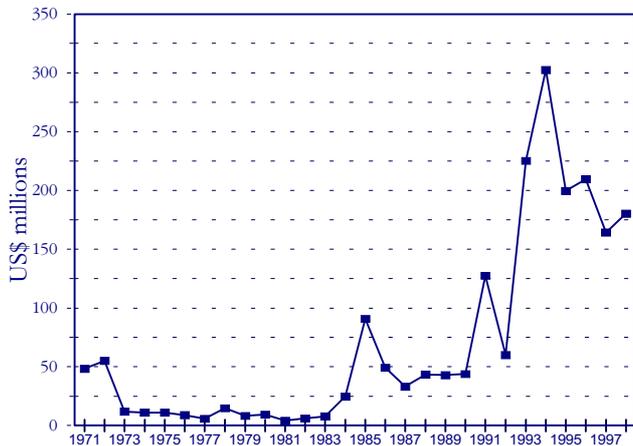
Within this re-division of international political labour, DFID is assuming primary responsibility for the design and implementation of the UK's international policy in non-strategic areas, while FCO maintains its responsibility for traditional diplomacy with key allies and for more conventional threats to UK security and trade interests, such as those in the Middle East, Far East and former Soviet Union. Within this emerging division of political labour, aid is no longer a substitute for political action, it *is* political action. Under this model, aid bureaucrats are not simply technocrats obliged unconditionally to accept sovereignty, but are rather required to reflect a political analysis of regimes' legitimacy, and mandated to scrutinise every aspect of recipient governments' policy — from economic, to gender, to the security sector. Such a model recognises the political economy of aid itself; in other words, that aid itself legitimises the recipient regime, boosting its political credibility as well as its capacity to act as a state.

The question that then emerges is what strategies should be adopted if the UK does not wish to strengthen regimes guilty of poor governance and human rights abuses? In these second-tier countries, where developmental space is limited by poor governance, human rights abuses and widespread violence, humanitarian assistance becomes a key plank of international policy. As political and aid responsibilities for non-strategic countries converge in, and become operationalised by, DFID bilateral programmes, so within DFID, in relation to conflict-affected areas, these responsibilities have become increasingly concentrated in the humanitarian domain, and more specifically in the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD).

3.3 Aid and war: from relief to the new, new humanitarianism

3.3.1 Putting conflict on the aid agenda

Figure 3.1
UK emergency aid spending 1977–1998 (real terms)



Source: Randel and German (2000)

Conflict was finally acknowledged as an aid policy issue in the dying days of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Figure 3.1 shows the growth in emergency expenditure in UK in the 1990s, much of this related to conflict.

As a department within the FCO, ODA had to tread carefully in claiming a role in preventing, containing and mitigating the effects of conflict. In 1995, officials within what was then the Emergency Aid Department (EMAD) began to define a niche for aid in conflict management. Working within the confines of the FCO, aid officials had to be careful to emphasise two key points.

- The development and aid implications of conflict. So, for example, the impact of conflict on development, and the contribution of existing aid programmes to addressing the root causes of conflict and mitigating its effects.
- The distinctiveness of ODA's mandate and interests from those of the FCO. Thus a distinction was made between aid interventions that had a political impact in the recipient country, and foreign policy interventions that serve the UK domestic political interest.⁶

The submission to the Minister advocating an expanded role for ODA in conflict handling was approved in September 1995, and in January 1996, an 'Approach paper on conflict handling' (Overseas Development Administration 1996) was published. This paper developed further the rationale for including conflict

on the aid policy agenda, and specified how ODA would translate its new mandate in this area into practice.

The paper was ground-breaking in two related respects. First, in acknowledging conflict as a problem at all broke the taboo that had surrounded the issue during the Cold War. Second it argued that the problem of conflict could not be addressed only through emergency aid programmes; rather it has to be seen as 'an integral part' of bilateral and multilateral programming, including development programming. Thus, it proposed, a 'mainstreaming' of conflict within ODA.

While important in placing conflict on the whole of the aid policy agenda, because of the sensitivity regarding the division of labour between aid (ODA) and politics (FCO), the proposals for action were relatively modest. The primary planks of the approach laid out in the paper were:

- Improved analysis of the dynamics of conflict in aid programming.
- Professionalisation of emergency aid, and in particular the adoption of more developmental strategies.
- Conflict prevention and resolution work at the community level (with national-level engagement firmly remaining in the diplomatic domain).

The new approach was not seen to require any fundamental adjustment of ODA's approach to development aid programming. What was called for was to ensure that the ability of ODA's typical programme interventions in the spheres of poverty alleviation, food security, environmental management and service provision, were targeted in a way such as to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution (Overseas Development Administration 1996). However, as the then Minister pointed out:

For the most part, we need not invent new wheels ... current development instruments are adequate, but need to be better deployed with more explicit conflict management objectives .(Chalker 1996)

3.3.2 The new humanitarianism

The creation of DFID, the publication of the White Paper, as well as changes among senior staff in 1997, prompted a number of fundamental conceptual and organisational shifts in British humanitarian policy. The granting of DFID's independence from the FCO was the *sine qua non* of this evolution. This immediately increased the scope for DFID engagement in conflict from the micro-level of project-based community interventions, as FCO had previously insisted, enabling more systematic engagement at national and

international policy levels in relation to specific complex political emergencies. DFID was able to establish direct contacts with parts of government previously denied it,⁷ and with missions in key international centres such as New York and Geneva. With regard to the latter, interviews conducted with diplomatic staff made it clear that policy briefs in relation to specialised humanitarian agencies of the UN, and with regard to the humanitarian aspects of the UNSC's work were being formulated directly by DFID, and copied to — not drafted by — the UN department of the FCO. DFID's new autonomy gave it the ability to establish direct contacts with key international political bodies, such as the UN departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations (see Chapter 4 for further details of this).

The framework for the 'new humanitarianism' was laid out first in the 1997 White Paper (United Kingdom 1997). This developed further the rationale for including conflict reduction on the aid policy agenda, while also emphasising DFID's catalytic role in mobilising political and military resources. It argues (paragraph 3.48) that:

Political stability, both within and between states, is a necessary pre-condition for the elimination of poverty ... we shall deploy our diplomatic, development assistance and military instruments in a coherent manner to:

- spread the values of civil liberties and democracy, rule of law and good governance and foster the growth of a vibrant and secure civil society;
- strengthen social cohesion, promote mediation efforts and encourage the regeneration of societies' recovery from conflict;
- protect and promote the full enjoyment of all human rights;
- help solve political and other problems because they cause conflict;
- advocate measures to control the means of waging war;
- provide humanitarian assistance for victims of conflict and persecution;
- contribute to international peace-keeping.

Realising this ambitious vision required organisational change.

During the early 1990s, ODA had begun to adapt its procedures to accommodate the changing context for development assistance in situations of chronic conflict. In particular, with respect to the Horn of Africa, responsibility for humanitarian aid spending had been delegated from EMAD to the geographical desks. This approach had the advantages of releasing capacity

within EMAD to focus on rapid-onset disasters, the acute phases of complex political emergencies and chronic emergencies where there was no geographical desk (as was the case for Iraq and Bosnia). It also promoted a more strategic approach to providing humanitarian aid, the geographical desks benefited from extensive country knowledge and an ability to 'link' relief programming with a broader development vision.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this approach of strengthening the emergency response capacity of geographical desks obviated the need for a centralised, specialist department. The departure of the head of EMAD in 1997, prompted a re-analysis of the role and function of the department (Mosselmans 1998). The conclusion of this exercise was the reshaping of EMAD from a department responsible primarily for relief management, to a policy-oriented group responsible for both humanitarian and conflict-related issues. While in theory, the approach of 'mainstreaming' responsibility for humanitarian programming to geographical desks was reaffirmed in the new structure, in practice the newly created Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), retained significant programmatic responsibilities, acting as the *de facto* desks for major emergencies in Sierra Leone, the Balkans and Afghanistan.

In March 1998, George Foulkes, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at DFID, made a speech outlining the British policy on conflict and humanitarian assistance. The speech was important in laying out answers to questions that had dogged the sector, particularly since the Sierra Leonean crisis. Appealing to more than a decade of experience and evaluation of crises such as those in Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia, it suggested the need for a 'radical reappraisal of the humanitarian idea', and sought commitment to the new humanitarianism.

The elements of this 'new humanitarianism' included:

- Recognition of the risk that aid could do more harm than good.
- A shift from needs-based humanitarianism to rights-based humanitarianism, to include political advocacy in which the UK public could be asked to play an important role.
- A more active humanitarianism requires taking sides with the oppressed against the oppressor.
- Humanitarian assistance is now expected to contribute to conflict resolution and peace building. This implies the application of conditionality.

In April 1998, the Secretary of State made a speech laying out in more detail the principles that would be used to guide DFID's 'new humanitarianism'. These principles are laid out in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 DFID principles of the new humanitarianism

- 1 We will seek always to uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law
- 2 We will seek to promote a more universal approach in addressing humanitarian needs. People in need, wherever they are, should have equal status and rights to assistance
- 3 We will seek to work with others whose efforts are also aimed at tackling the underlying causes of the crisis and building peace and stability
- 4 We will seek to work with other committed members of the international community, and in particular seek partnership across the North/South divide to secure better international systems and mechanisms for timely joint humanitarian action
- 5 We will agree ground rules that prevent diversion of humanitarian goods and collusion with unconstitutional armed groups
- 6 We will be impartial — our help will seek to relieve civilian suffering without discrimination on political or other grounds, with priority given to the most urgent cases of distress
- 7 We will seek the best possible assessment of needs and a clear framework of standards and accountability for those who work to deliver DFID's assistance
- 8 We will encourage the participation of people and communities affected by crises to help them find long-lasting solutions which respect their rights and dignity
- 9 We will, where possible, seek to rebuild livelihoods and communities, and build capacity so that communities will be less vulnerable to future crises
- 10 We recognise that humanitarian intervention in conflict situations often poses genuine moral dilemmas. We will base our decisions on explicit analyses of the choices open to us and the ethical considerations involved, and communicate our conclusions openly to our partners

Source: Short, C. (1998) 'Principles for a New Humanitarianism', keynote speech delivered at the ODI/ECHO conference, Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World, London, 8 April

Importantly, within this broad-ranging set of principles there is scope for some of these principles to conflict with each other, or at least for there to be differing interpretations of them, as DFID's first 'experiment' in the new humanitarianism was to demonstrate.

3.3.3 Sierra Leone: an experiment in the 'new humanitarianism'

The statement of the new humanitarian policy was preceded by a policy 'experiment' that was to prove controversial and to define subsequent interpretations of coherence. The chronology of events is potentially confusing because of the inevitable time lag between the definition and implementation of policy and its evaluation. Thus, in the case of DFID, the key experiment in the new humanitarianism took place in 1997, while the policy framework was not articulated until 1998.

Thus, the 'new humanitarianism' was controversial even before its official start. The first signs of controversy were apparent within DFID's humanitarian policy on Sierra Leone in 1997, thus also pre-dating the formal establishment of CHAD. DFID's response to Sierra Leone after the March 1997 coup which ousted the elected government has been the subject of intense and public scrutiny (see, for example, ActionAid 1998; Hoffman 1999; International Development Committee 1999a; 1999b) and remains a sensitive episode within the department, the British NGO community and to an extent among other donors and international organisations.⁸

At issue was whether the UK was withholding humanitarian assistance from NGOs on political grounds or those of aid effectiveness. DFID argued variously that humanitarian need was unproven; that to provide humanitarian aid would have legitimised and reinforced the military junta; and that NGOs lacked the security and monitoring capacity to enable effective delivery of humanitarian aid. Many NGOs rejected these arguments and argued that DFID was placing political conditionalities on humanitarian assistance, thus violating humanitarian principles.

There are a number of generic aspects of its response to Sierra Leone that continued to be raised with regard to DFID's humanitarian policy throughout 1998 and 1999. One is the extent to which humanitarian assistance is seen as an integral part of the UK's international policy to conflict management. In other words, whether British humanitarian assistance is subject to political conditionalities, so compromising the principle of impartiality.

The Conflict Reduction and Humanitarian Assistance: Policy Statement published in February 1999, seemed to cement the new humanitarian commitment to integrate humanitarian aid within a wider international policy response to conflict.

Conflict presents many complex challenges. Clearly we have a responsibility to do what we can to help the victims of war. We cannot stand aside and allow people to starve or be subjected to abuse. At the same time, it is essential that the humanitarian response takes into account the wider context. In some circumstances, intervention may not help resolve the problem or may even prolong conflicts. When considering its humanitarian response, DFID's policy is to look at the conditions that have brought about the conflict, and assess what can be done to reduce violence and build lasting peace (United Kingdom 1999:2).

As such it expanded on the earlier statement of principles (in particular 3, 5 and 9) and, in line with the White Paper emphasises that DFID's role in responding to conflict is not confined simply to the provision of aid. Instead, DFID's role is increasingly in defining and implementing a much broader international policy. While the objectives of DFID's international policy may differ from those of its diplomatic sister, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, the 'new humanitarianism' does not distinguish between aid and politics, and indeed actively challenges those who claim that such a distinction is meaningful.

This approach draws on a critique of 'old' humanitarianism (often known by the more banal term of 'relief'), that has been made by academics, NGOs and UN agencies and has come to form what might be described as a new orthodoxy whereby it is both legitimate and desirable for humanitarian aid to contribute to conflict reduction and development goals (Macrae 1998).⁹ In other words, rather than being an end in itself, humanitarian assistance is a means to developmental and peace-building ends. The formation of CHAD and the policy statements that have cemented DFID's humanitarian approach were contingent upon collapsing the aid-politics distinction, and that between developmental and relief goals. In principle, the new humanitarianism appealed to an orthodoxy shared by many of its partners. In practice, it has strained DFID's relations with them.¹⁰

The second generic point raised by the Sierra Leonean controversy was the extent to which it is desirable and legitimate for a donor government to involve itself in detailed decision-making regarding humanitarian operations in conflict-related emergencies. In particular, the question has been raised whether a bilateral government should seek to prevent NGOs and UN agencies from operating in a particular country? The 'bilateralisation' of humanitarian response is seen by many to threaten the independence and neutrality of humanitarian action. Chapter 5 examines in further detail these issues in relation to British (and Dutch) strategies in the recipient country case studies.

3.3.4 A new, new humanitarianism?

The strains put on DFID's relations with its donor government partners, the UN and British NGOs¹¹ by events in Sierra Leone and subsequently in Afghanistan have resulted not so much in a re-analysis of the relationship between aid and politics, but of the presentation of that relationship. Thus, for example, almost coinciding with the publication of *Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Policy Statement* (United Kingdom 1999) — which had emphasised that humanitarian aid, like all aid, was a political process — at a meeting convened with the chief executives of British humanitarian NGOs, the Secretary of State sought to establish clearer, bluer water between aid and politics.

In her opening statement, Ms Short emphasised that:

The dangers of the humanitarian response being perceived as part of, or linked to, the overall political agenda must not be overlooked. This would directly and disastrously compromise the impartiality and universality of humanitarian aid. ... Whilst humanitarian aid must always take account of the political context in which it is given, it should never be used (through withholding or granting it) as a lever in an attempt to achieve political aims or manage a conflict. There is a clear need for an open, ongoing and constructive dialogue between ourselves (and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and NGOs to explore the potential of policy coherence, and the respective boundaries of, and differences between, humanitarian and foreign policy objectives (Department for International Development 1999: 3).

The approach where humanitarian aid is integrated into conflict management, has thus been replaced by one concerned to establish the conditions for effective humanitarian assistance. The conflict-handling part of the department has been separated out from the humanitarian response function, which concentrates on funding and providing relief according to DFID's 10 principles. Thus, in a sense the department has gone full circle.¹²

But this apparent return to an approach that emphasises separation rather than coherence in fact retains a significant political edge. This 'new, new' humanitarianism focuses on increasing access and increasing accountability. In a move that parallels evolutions in the development aid sphere, the use of conditionality is replaced by selective engagement. Rather than withhold resources in an attempt to force the authorities to alter the conditions for humanitarian action, no assistance is provided until the political and economic conditions are in place. However, as with development assistance, deciding whether and if the

conditions for humanitarian effective engagement are in place is in fact a highly political process. Given the considerable scope for interpretation of the rules, i.e. the 10 principles, decisions are dependent not only upon a ‘technical’ assessment of project viability, but also a broader judgement of the legitimacy and competence of the incumbent authorities. Decision-making about humanitarian action in a particular context is thus still open to factors other than the purely humanitarian.

Although the humanitarian principles should provide a framework for consistent decision-making, in practice they do not. As outlined above, and in common with the NGO/Red Cross Code of Conduct, there is considerable scope for conflict between the different principles. More profoundly, there appear to be different interpretations between DFID departments in terms of their implementation. For example, CHAD emphasises its role in securing humanitarian access. It argues that such a role in political advocacy is necessary in part because conventional diplomatic tracks (bilateral and multilateral) are as yet not sufficiently engaged in the humanitarian agenda, and by default aid actors are therefore required to create their own political space. DFID’s objectives thus become, in the words of one official:

to meet the criteria to enable conditions for aid delivery to be met, not to give financial assistance *per se*. For example, in Sierra Leone, if the peace process is going down the pan, we have to catalyse concern.

There remain differences of opinion between different departments within DFID regarding the division of aid/politics labour, with some advocating a more conventional split between DFID and the FCO — i.e. a model of complementarity not integration — than others.

In short, there are questions about the consistency of the application of principles across departments, and therefore between different complex emergencies. In particular, there appear to be no rules, and even no standing forum,¹³ within DFID for resolving the question raised by the Secretary of State as a more public debate, namely the scope and limitations for coherence of humanitarian action with political action.

These differences between several departments in terms of strategy are reflected in their different tactics. Reflecting its concern for accountability, as well as access, CHAD has pioneered the development of DFID field offices.¹⁴ The emergency resource teams that staff these offices have a range of roles that extend from logistics, to small grant giving to partner NGOs, to monitoring to representational roles in humanitarian coordination bodies.

The increased operationality of DFID is seen by some to be an encroachment by a governmental actor into the space previously occupied by independent humanitarian actors, and thus constitutes part of the

‘politicisation’ of humanitarian space. The findings of this study (see Chapter 5) suggest that, in the cases of both Afghanistan and Macedonia, at least at present, there is no evidence that the field offices provided a means of exerting political leverage through influencing funding decisions or participating in negotiations regarding access or conditionality. Rather, the terms of reference and management structures deployed in these two cases confined these offices to a surprisingly narrow and managerial interpretation of humanitarian action. This is not to suggest that field offices might not present difficulties of perception in terms of the proximity of a government to particular complex emergencies, only that this remains an empirical question to be verified by further research and evaluation across a larger number of cases.¹⁵

Increased operationality does take on significance when it is seen as only one aspect of a broader phenomenon of so-called ‘bilateralisation’. This means, rather than devolving full responsibility for operational decision-making to partner UN agencies and NGOs, bilateral donors take a more proactive approach to analysing the context in which humanitarian aid is being delivered, and define the conditions and procedures according to which DFID funding must be used. In terms of the latter, CHAD has also initiated Institutional Strategy Papers (ISPs) with key humanitarian partners, as does other parts of DFID with its partners. These are designed to govern the use of unearmarked, ‘core’ funds to key partner organisations, such as those in the Red Cross Movement, WFP, UNHCR and OCHA. ISPs are essentially contracts between DFID and a partner agency born of a lengthy and intense process of negotiation and evaluation. They lay out mutual obligations, mechanisms for review and indicators of performance. Like the field offices, they indicate a more proactive stance towards ensuring the accountability of recipient agencies.

Raynard (2000) has analysed why the accountability agenda has gained increasing prominence in the humanitarian sphere in recent years, identifying a combination of external and internal pressures within humanitarian agencies to demonstrate effective performance. He also highlights the link between accountability and principles; by enhancing mechanisms of accountability, adherence to stated principles can be monitored and assessed. Arguably, what this leaves out is the peculiar political economy of the accountability agenda, in other words, the issue of how legitimate mechanisms to improve accountability might also become a means of exerting political influence.

For example, a real question emerges as to the capacity of DFID to measure the quality of humanitarian space in any particular emergency. As the head of CHAD pointed out, there are efforts under way to move towards more rule-based, objective methodologies for measuring access in order to inform such decisions. However, while the application of existing methodologies appears selective, and in particular is applied to those countries

where the British government's political strategy obviously complements the humanitarian position, there is a degree of suspicion that arguments about accountability are re-bottling the previous integrationist humanitarian policy of 1997–8.

3.3.5 DFID, the new humanitarianism and the UK NGO community

The ability of operational agencies to challenge these aspects of the government's humanitarian policy is diminished by their own weaknesses in a number of areas. One observer has noted, for example, that while the British government's withholding of funds to NGOs working in Afghanistan on security grounds may constitute little more than a thinly veiled political conditionality, the fact that NGO security arrangements were so weak meant that these concerns were not unfounded. Similarly, widespread poor practice regarding monitoring of food aid distributions globally (Leader 1999), means that it is not difficult to argue that in some cases, the withholding of aid might be the principled thing to do.

Equally striking is that while humanitarian corridors echo to whispers that humanitarianism is being 'politicised', with important exceptions humanitarian agencies themselves have invested relatively little time and effort in documenting and analysing these trends to provide concrete evidence to support advocacy with DFID. This problem is reinforced by the lack of inter-agency standing fora to discuss such issues.¹⁶ Furthermore, as implied above, British agencies have been among the leading advocates for a more politically informed and developmental approach to humanitarian assistance. In addition to commissioning path-breaking research in this area (see, for example Duffield 1991), UK NGOs have been active in hosting conferences that have influenced international debates on aid–conflict links (see, for example, Hendrickson 1998), and in establishing international networks for discussion of the humanitarian and aid/conflict interface (e.g., CODEP).

As the evidence of a number of NGOs sent to the International Development Committee clearly demonstrates, many currently involved in relief do not subscribe to conventional definitions of humanitarian principles, eschewing the concept of neutrality in particular, and arguing for a more politically shrewd and developmental approach to relief. Many of those who raised concerns regarding the politicisation of DFID's humanitarian assistance also found it difficult to distinguish between the 'right' and 'wrong' type of 'political humanitarianism' in terms of their own programming. One agency reported, for example:

To be frank, we are all over the place around relief–development aid relationships. Our starting-point is that it is artificial to distinguish between the two, but we have adopted humanitarian principles. [Country X] is an appalling example of where we were mixing

political and humanitarian stuff. London was pressing for an impartial approach, but [local staff] were much more pragmatic, and many came from the same, ethnic, [capital]-city based culture as [one side], so they were supporting a political line.

High levels of dependence on official aid funding was also seen by many to circumscribe their willingness to scrutinise donor policy.

3.4 The Netherlands: merchants, priests and coherence

3.4.1 The framework of foreign policy

The concept of 'good international citizenship' (see section 3.2.1) is a familiar one in Dutch international relations. The synthesis between realism and liberal internationalism is embodied in the idea of '*dut Koopman dominee*' — Dutch society abroad as both merchant and priest. As a relatively small trading nation, the Netherlands has a strong interest in the creation and maintenance of a stable world order, underpinned by strong institutions to uphold international law (Netherlands 1995).

Thus, Dutch foreign policy, and by extension its development cooperation policy, have combined concern with maintaining liberal economies and trade regimes with that for human rights and adherence to international norms of behaviour. The 1995 review of foreign policy (Netherlands 1995), known as '*Heriking*', articulated the core values that were to guide Dutch international policy in relation to developing countries as follows: promotion of a mixed economy; support for welfare systems to create a safety net; promotion of pluralist democratic system.

Promotion of these values was not uncontroversial; in other words globalisation did not imply the adoption of a 'monopolitical' culture (Pronk 1991). In advocating the diffusion of Western values, maintaining a self-critical eye was therefore encouraged (ibid). This meant being aware of the Netherlands' geo-political position, and in particular its close relationship with both the US and the EU. The realist 'merchant' accepted the compromises that this entailed in terms of the independence of Dutch foreign policy.

In the 1990s, a sophisticated analysis was put forward by the Dutch government of the implications of globalisation and the end of the Cold War and its implications for the conceptualisation and management of foreign policy (Netherlands 1995). This analysis identified three broad areas of international policy (op. cit.:46–7):

- internationalised domestic policy — for example, refugees, narcotics etc.;

- policy on international organisations, for example with regard to international legislation emanating from EU and UN fora; and
- activities abroad.

Disaggregating these different dimensions of international policy implied a rethinking of the strategies used for its management. In particular, it meant overcoming the traditional boundaries that had defined ministerial and inter-ministerial structures. This meant in particular:

that a greater amount of coordination and integration is needed, both in policy terms and in an organisational sense. Policy instruments can no longer be grouped along the conceptual dividing lines of the Cold War. In some ways new instruments are needed, but old instruments are frequently deployed in fresh ways (Netherlands 1995).

Examples of these 'fresh ways' included the deployment of military assets in humanitarian emergencies, and the use of aid to underpin the Middle East peace process. The report emphasises that what is at issue is less the variety of instruments available, but 'to a greater degree than hitherto on the correlation between them'. This need for coherence between different aspects of international policy is emphasised particularly in relation to the perceived growing number of conflicts inspired by ethnic and other differences (Netherlands 1995).

Significantly, the government recognises that:

the desire to increase cohesion in policy does not mean ... the disparity or tension which can exist between different policy aims and the different interests and values that they express are being passed over. ... This conflict can no longer be avoided as was formerly done by strictly separating policy fields and instruments ... cohesion must be achieved through team work (Netherlands 1995:42).

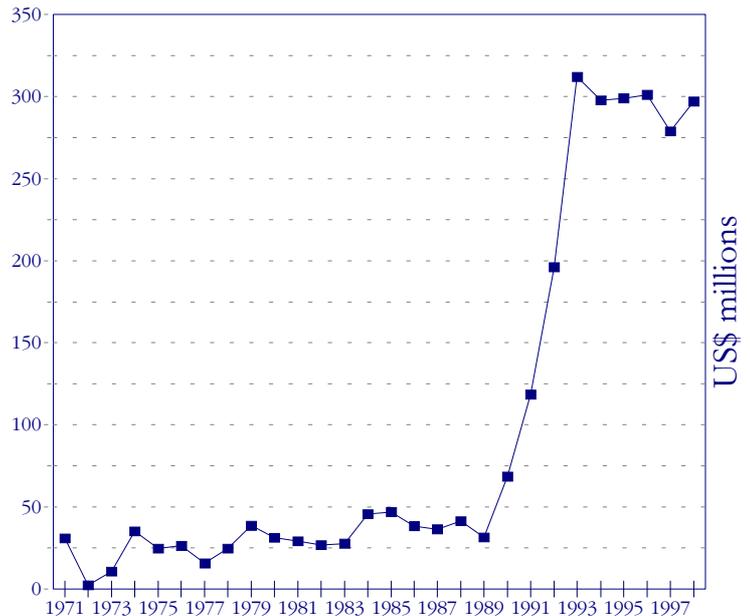
Alongside conceptual reasons, important pragmatic arguments were also put forward in favour of coherence. In addition to ensuring value for money — an important factor driving the pursuit of joined-up government in Western democracies — the implication is also that, as a small country, the Netherlands' ability to influence policy will be conditional upon its efficiency as an international public policy advocate.

This re-analysis of the nature of international policy shaped the reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995/6. In the context of this study, it was particularly significant that the new structure absorbed the Development Cooperation (aid), foreign affairs (diplomatic) and Economic Affairs regional sections into consolidated regional structures. In other words, aid and politics were reunited.

A second important strand of these reforms was the delegation of responsibility for the implementation of much of the Dutch aid programme to the embassies. Humanitarian assistance alone was retained as a central function in The Hague.

Figure 3.2 shows the growth in emergency aid spending from 1971 to 1988.

Figure 3.2
Dutch emergency aid spend 1971-1988 (real terms)



Source: Randel and German (2000)

3.4.2 'Decomartmentalisation' : war, politics and relief

Under the leadership of Jan Pronk, during the 1990s, the Dutch government was at the fore of international policy developments that sought to enhance the links between aid and conflict reduction. It is hard not to be struck by the weight (literal and metaphorical) of the documents designed to guide development policy during the early 1990s. The publication of *A World of Difference* (Netherlands 1991), was followed by *A World of Dispute* (Netherlands 1993) and *Aid in Progress* (Netherlands 1995). The first of these documents set the stage for later developments, arguing in particular for the 'decomartmentalisation' of Dutch policy in relation to developing countries. Initially drawing largely on arguments regarding economic and environmental management, by 1993 such decompartmentalisation was seen to be a *sine qua non* for responding to the threat of continued instability in the Third World (Netherlands 1993).¹⁷

Decompartmentalisation meant a redefinition of poverty to include its social and political determinants, alongside more traditional economic indicators. It therefore implied a broadening of ministerial responsibility from one of technocratic management to embrace a new set

of political responsibilities. There was widespread consensus among those interviewed for this study that *de facto* Minister Pronk assumed the responsibilities of a Minister of Foreign Affairs for non-strategic countries, particularly in Africa.

The minister's ability to deliver on the complex agenda outlined in successive policy documents was critically determined by the instruments at his disposal. These were limited by two factors. The first was the process of concentration of development assistance, particularly bilateral assistance, which had started in the mid-1980s (Netherlands 1991).¹⁸ This made it difficult to provide bilateral aid to some of the very countries where conflict prevention and resolution interventions were most urgently required.¹⁹ Second, the devolution of responsibility for aid management to the embassies meant that from 1996 onwards, officials in The Hague had relatively little ability to direct the use of funds. In this context, the humanitarian aid budget became an increasingly important source of funds to support conflict-management initiatives developed by Pronk.²⁰ Thus, for bureaucratic reasons there was a reworking of the coherence anticipated in *A World of Dispute* from one that anticipated development assistance contributing to a process of conflict prevention, to the use of humanitarian assistance in peace building.

What can be seen as bureaucratic pragmatism was given a conceptual underpinning by a concern, first voiced in 1983, that humanitarian aid could reinforce regimes and authorities responsible for widespread violations of human rights (Schoo 1983). This had led to the government identifying the conditions required for the delivery of effective humanitarian assistance,²¹ and in particular a preference for using non-governmental channels for delivering relief. A decade later, a policy paper went further, posing the question as to whether, rather than just not doing harm, relief might be used actively to influence the course of conflict (Netherlands 1993).

The paper explores the scope for greater integration of relief within the scope of broader peacekeeping as proposed in *An Agenda for Peace* (see Chapter 2). The Dutch government during its EC presidency proposed the resolution creating DHA which, among other things, had argued that disaster prevention measures must be coupled with a coherent policy on economic growth and sustainable development. In this way, it was actively supporting the integrationist interpretation of coherence emerging within the UN in the early 1990s.

At the same time, the potential costs of this model were also recognised. Thus, the 1993 policy paper on humanitarian aid outlined the concerns raised by organisations such as MSF and ICRC regarding the blurring of the boundaries between relief, military and political interventions. The paper concluded that resisting the politicisation of humanitarian assistance implied by integration may be desirable, but that it may not always be achievable. This ambiguous position

provided for case-by-case analysis of the interpretation of the rules according to which humanitarian assistance is allocated.

The genocide in Rwanda prompted much soul-searching in the Netherlands' development cooperation circles, as it did elsewhere. In its aftermath, and after the *Joint Evaluation* (Eriksson 1996) published in early 1996, any doubts regarding the integrationist interpretation of coherence appear to have receded. Speeches at Princeton University in July 1996, and to the UN Second Committee in October that year, called for a new form of development cooperation that could be deployed while conflict was ongoing to sustain conflict prevention and peace-building measures of a more political nature (Pronk 1996a; Pronk 1996b).²²

The realisation of this integrationist strategy, however, has not been unproblematic.

The expansion of the remit of the humanitarian aid department throughout the 1990s to include conflict-management objectives has relied upon a corresponding expansion in the type of agencies and activities it has funded, not on integrating political action within the confines of relief programming *per se*. While at the level of policy the Dutch government has been a leading advocate of an integrationist agenda, it is striking that those opposed to the integration of UN operations, such as MSF, remain sanguine that Dutch humanitarian aid programming has not become 'politicised'.

This may be explained by the fact that Dutch aid planners have respected the independence of humanitarian organisations, recognising the value of neutral and impartial action in situations of open conflict. Defence of these principles is seen as part of the wider Dutch concern to respect international legal standards. While this works at the level of individual projects, less clear is whether the overall policy framework and programme portfolio of the humanitarian aid department actually enables a comfortable reconciliation between the objectives of conflict management and adherence to humanitarian principles.

This tension was highlighted in the controversial report by the Advisory Council on International Affairs, published in 1999. This concluded that the wide range of projects managed by the Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department, funded from a unified humanitarian aid budget, was diluting the concept of humanitarian action. The report recommended a narrowing of the definition of humanitarian aid to exclude conflict reduction and rehabilitation interventions, and so protect humanitarian principles.

This recommendation was rejected by the government and the majority of Dutch NGOs on a number of grounds, not least the weakness of evidence on which it was based. Whatever the limitations of AIV's methodology and technical capacity, it raises an important question. The report suggests, and this study

would concur, that one cannot have one's integrationist cake and eat it. Either humanitarian objectives are being subsumed within a wider political strategy, in which case humanitarian principles will be compromised;²³ or what is emerging is a strategy that relies upon distinct strands of intervention, implemented by different types of organisations in conflict situations, including humanitarian, political and human rights. These distinct strategies may (or may not) be complementary, but they do not constitute the integrated approach to conflict management envisaged by earlier policy documents.

3.4.3 From integration to managerialism?

The change of minister in mid-1998 has not ended the ambiguity regarding which model of coherence — integration or complementarity — guides Dutch policy in this area. Government officials and NGOs alike seem comfortable with this ambiguity because at the level of projects it has not given rise to major conflicts, unlike the integrationist experiments of the British government in countries like Sierra Leone.²⁴ This ease stems in part from an assumption regarding the essentially benign nature of Dutch foreign policy: Holland's lack of a geo-political agenda is seen to protect the aid programme from politicisation.

This assumes, however, that because the Dutch foreign policy framework represents a liberal set of Western values these are shared globally. As *A World of Difference* cautioned such an assumption is problematic not only because of emerging pluralism of world values, but because it is also often adopted uncritically. Two senior Dutch diplomats expressed concern that from a global, as opposed to the project perspective, the incorporation of humanitarian aid into a more integrated foreign policy framework was compromising the humanitarian agenda. They stated:

We are worried by the perception of non-Western countries. There is an idealism built into Dutch foreign policy, but it is also guided by realism and pragmatism and relies upon international alliances, such as that with the US. Sometimes you have the feeling in the US that there is a double agenda. There is a risk that we will be associated with this view.

The arrival of Minister Hefkens has signalled a redefinition of the political quality of humanitarian action away from a grand vision of conflict reduction to one more concerned with accountability and performance issues. This has happened for three main reasons.

First, the new minister comes with a primary goal to promote aid effectiveness. This personal concern, has been amplified by the coming into play of new legislation that demands greater transparency of public expenditure. This context militates against the almost infinitely flexible interpretation of what constitutes humanitarian aid spending adopted by her predecessor. While the previous Minister was widely regarded for

his innovation, in terms of accounting and accountability it was very difficult to track funding and impact. Stricter and more numerous budget lines have been brought in that distinguish between humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and conflict-management items.²⁵

A second key factor influencing the interpretation of coherence since mid-1998 is the intensification of the trend towards selectivity and concentration of the Dutch aid programme. The new minister has introduced tougher conditions for countries to qualify for bilateral assistance, limiting its scope from 80 countries in 1998 to 20. While the Netherlands continues to provide support to a broad range of countries through its multilateral programme, the sharp reduction in the number of countries qualifying for bilateral programming, and the fact that by definition those most affected by conflict are largely excluded, limits the scope for connectedness between both relief and development programmes. Because humanitarian aid programmes are run by a thematic department, rather than through the integrated regional desk system, the links between aid and political engagement are also weakened.

Finally, the trend towards an emphasis on aid effectiveness has resulted in a more modest set of objectives regarding humanitarian aid–politics links. In particular, within the humanitarian aid department there is seen to be a concentration on ensuring accountability. In addition to rigorous attention to financial reporting and the specification of the policy frameworks (Netherlands 1999), in recent years the emphasis appears to be on advocating adherence to codes of conduct, soliciting views of beneficiaries and support for international accountability initiatives (Pauwels 1999)²⁶, all of which variously contribute to aid doing less harm, but are not geared to an active programme of conflict reduction.

3.5 A comparative analysis of trends

In both the UK and the Netherlands, the search for greater coherence between humanitarian and political action has resulted in substantive change in the objectives and organisation of humanitarian policy. In both countries, the need to enhance the connectedness between these different dimensions of international policy has been driven by a redefinition of international relations in the post-Cold War era of globalisation, and by broader public policy pressures emphasising cost-effectiveness and accountability.

However, the original conception of coherence laid out in policies such as *An Agenda for Peace*, the DFID White Paper and the Dutch *A World of Difference* does not appear to have been realised. Rather than aid playing a supportive role in a new integrated political strategy of conflict prevention and resolution, aid bodies are now primarily responsible for implementing a new form of international policy. The reunification of aid and politics has provided for a re-division of international

political labour, such that aid is no longer a *substitute* for political action (Eriksson 1996), it is the primary *form* of international policy at the geo-political periphery (Macrae 1998).

The concentration of development aid to a tightly defined number of countries means that humanitarian is the only aid or international policy instrument deployed in many of the most vulnerable, conflict-affected countries. Thus, humanitarian aid departments have been given considerable influence in shaping not relief operations, but broader international responses to conflict. Adoption of this role has been encouraged both by the withdrawal of other diplomatic and developmental actors, and by an increasing awareness of the potential impact of humanitarian relief on conflict dynamics.

In the mid-late 1990s, it was thought by many policy-makers and academics that humanitarian aid could exert significant leverage over the course of conflict, it was therefore legitimate to calculate this potential net benefit and to subsume humanitarian assistance into a wider political strategy. This 'new humanitarianism', as it was called in the UK, assumed an integrated model of coherence, with humanitarian aid a part of an agreed policy framework that included other foreign policy and military actors.

By virtue of its greater resources and international political clout, the UK has been able to pursue this integrated model both multilaterally, notably through support to OCHA, but also by developing tools for increased bilateralisation. In contrast, the Netherlands appears to have turned more to diversifying the range of organisations it supports. Its particular foreign policy culture appears to have militated against an integrated approach where this would imply withholding humanitarian aid and in principle resists the trend towards bilateralisation. These differences in tactics, combined with the different international positions of the two countries, have resulted in very different international perceptions of their respective policies. The UK's interpretation of humanitarian coherence has attracted the accusation of politicisation, while the

Netherlands' stance, which on paper at least is much more openly integrationist, has passed virtually without comment.

Interestingly, despite these different initial interpretations, in both countries, the complex and ambitious vision of coherence laid out by ministers initially has now been cut down to more modest goals. Rather than promising to play an active role in conflict reduction, the new new humanitarianism is more concerned with aid effectiveness. Importantly, this more technocratic mode, with its emphasis upon accountability, will not necessarily dissipate accusations that humanitarianism is the fleece under which a more sinister Western wolf is hidden. It will not do so for two reasons.

First, the distinction between the technical conditions required for effective humanitarian action has not been systematically distinguished from political conditionality. The ease with which they are confused has not been lost on belligerents in conflict situations, nor on Western policymakers. Selective scrutiny of conditions fuels suspicion that the accountability agenda is being co-opted to enhance control over humanitarian action and to justify cost-cutting.

Second, humanitarian actors, official and non-governmental, have as yet failed to define the type of politics in which they are engaging. This lack of clarity regarding the fundamental purpose of humanitarian aid, and in particular the extent to which it is or is not expected to contribute to developmental and conflict-reduction goals, provides significant room for manoeuvre for political actors at home and abroad. At a time when conventional diplomacy is weakened by the new political economy of war, the promise made by aid agencies that aid can contribute to conflict reduction invites diplomatic co-option of these assets. At the same time, the casual renunciation of neutrality on the grounds that it implies complicity, has shifted the actual and perceived political position of aid actors in conflict zones. This, coupled with the proliferation of aid agencies, has contributed to the erosion of the security and scope of humanitarian space.

Chapter 4

Coherence and the ultimate multi-mandate organisation: the case of the United Nations

4.1 Introduction and chapter overview

The rationale for examining how the UN conceptualises and realises the concept of coherence between humanitarian and political action was twofold.

First, the UN has proved an important mechanism for international legitimisation of emerging norms regarding aid–politics links. Starting with *An Agenda for Peace*, a number of key initiatives have taken place within the Security Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly as well as within the UN Secretariat and specialised agencies that have informed the basis for the new orthodoxy which has emerged regarding aid–politics links, particularly in conflict-affected countries. These debates have been particularly important since they are global (rather than national or regional) in scope, and take place within the context of a UN governed both by its Charter, which commits the organisation to uphold human rights, and its status as an international organisation that must also uphold the principle of equality of sovereignty. The inevitable tensions that have emerged also mean that the UN has been the place where dissent regarding how to reconcile these often competing priorities has been most evident.

Second, UN channels remain the key mechanism through which donor governments support political humanitarian action. The interactions between donor governments and multilateral actors are thus revealing in terms of the coherence of member states' representation.

It is important to note that the study's focus on the UN was very much secondary, and the findings reported here therefore necessarily more tentative than those for other aspects of the research.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into four substantive parts. Section 4.2 focuses on the Security Council and its increased involvement in humanitarian issues. Section 4.3 examines the 1997 reforms put forward by Kofi Annan and their implications for the coherence agenda. Section 4.4 looks at the way in which the British and Dutch governments articulate their dealings with the UN. Section 4.5 concludes the chapter, highlighting a series of issues emerging from the preceding analysis.

4.2 The 'human' Security Council?

Until 1991, the Security Council (UNSC) interpreted its mandate within the confines of traditional diplomatic and military concerns for the maintenance of international peace and security. As outlined in Chapter

2, this relied upon the permanent members of the UNSC using their influence with their respective allies, and where necessary drawing upon international peacekeeping forces to police political agreements. The ending of the Cold War radically altered the leverage permanent members of the UNSC could secure over warring parties. This left the UNSC in the position of having responsibility for the maintenance of security, but with relatively few levers to exert its influence over 'new' security threats.

Resolution 688 in relation to Iraq in April 1991 marked a watershed in that, for the first time, the UNSC recognised massive and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law as a threat to international peace and security, and therefore as within its domain of concern (Annan 1999). This and subsequent resolutions²⁷ signalled two related shifts: one, a softening of respect for state sovereignty; and two, the protection of the rights of civilians.

These shifts in the scope of the UNSC's work to a much broader definition of what constitutes 'security' were underpinned by *The Agenda for Peace* (see Chapter 2). In common with the trend seen in bilateral governments, within the UN the revised model of security has effectively broken down the divisions between the political aspects of the organisation's work and those that were the traditional concern of other departments. The UNSC began to host debates on topics as diverse as HIV, the environment and, of course, humanitarian assistance. This has meant a re-division of labour between the different organs of the UN, with the UNSC increasingly treading into territory that had been the traditional preserve of ECOSOC and the General Assembly. Some countries interpret this as an over-concentration of power in the UNSC.²⁸

At the same time, the UNSC's new-found interests have seen important changes in its working methods, and in particular increasing exchanges with non-state and non-diplomatic actors. Thus, for example, since 1996 the UNSC has received an increasing number of briefings from NGOs, ICRC and specialised agencies.²⁹ These changes in the content of the UNSC agenda, and its style of executing this agenda have required changes too in the way which its members prepare and respond to briefs, and in particular, their ability to link traditional diplomatic concerns with broader international policy (see, Section 4.4).

Throughout the 1990s, a series of precedents were set regarding the UNSC's interpretation of the difficult balance between respect for sovereignty and the upholding of civilians' rights on the grounds of peace

and security. By 1997, these had reached sufficient critical mass to have promoted a systematic debate regarding the role of the UN in the protection of humanitarian assistance for refugees and others in conflict situations (United Nations 1997a). In February 1999, the agenda took a more radical turn. Under the Canadian presidency of the UNSC, the emphasis shifted from the protection of aid to the protection of people. Just over month before NATO began its bombardment of Serbia in order to protect the civilians of Kosovo, the president issued a statement that signalled a new willingness to go beyond its role in affirming international norms, and to operationalise this concern (United Nations 1999a). It stated:

The Security Council expresses its willingness to respond, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to situations in which civilians, as such, have been targeted or humanitarian assistance to civilians has been deliberately obstructed.

It concluded by calling on the Secretary-General to report back to the UNSC outlining ways in which the UN's capacity to protect civilians might be enhanced. This report, submitted to the UNSC in September 1999 (Annan 1999), had to tread carefully along the line that divided its members: namely the conditions under which the international use of force was legitimate to protect human rights. China and Russia, in particular, argued that while it was important to protect these rights, it was more important to maintain the stability of the international system; in other words conserving the principle of respect for sovereignty (United Nations 1999b). This view was adamantly opposed by the Canadians and the Dutch (both non-permanent members) and the UK. The US took a notably measured stance, reflecting its own, Congressional divisions on the issue (see, for example, Albright 1999 for the US view on humanitarian intervention).

The Secretary-General's report of September 1999 (Annan 1999), was endorsed by the UNSC in its resolution (1999b). It might be described as a 'business-as-usual-plus' approach. It maintains the traditional UN balance between sovereignty and rights. However, it provides scope for closer integration of humanitarian issues in the political domains of the UNSC and peacekeeping operations, and affirms the legitimacy of UN involvement to enforce adherence to human rights and IHL standards. The humanitarian circle is squared with sovereignty by mapping out criteria that would determine this legitimacy.³⁰ These criteria are important in that they aim to prevent selective intervention on 'humanitarian' grounds.

This remains the rub. The majority of Western countries remain resistant to codification of criteria that would trigger 'humanitarian' intervention, cautious of the costs (political and financial) that this might entail. Failure

to codify means sustained allegations of selective and politically motivated intervention. The degree of dissent remains such that as of November 1999 at least, agreement could not be reached on how even to discuss the redefinition of sovereignty and the legitimacy or otherwise of 'humanitarian' intervention. Thus, within the General Assembly and ECOSOC the issue remains extremely sensitive, characterised by mutual suspicion. Inevitably, as intervention becomes packaged in humanitarian terms, so the broader humanitarian agenda has become the subject of increasingly close scrutiny and dissent.³¹

Thus, far from being the focus for universal values, as the humanitarian agenda has become incorporated into the political agenda of the post-Cold War era, so it has become associated with an interventionist agenda, based upon particular values and interests that are not shared across the UN.

In some instances, the UNSC's increased interest in humanitarian issues has proved a double-edged sword. On the one hand it has provided new opportunities to mobilise political and military resources to defend humanitarian space. On the other hand, as the label 'humanitarian' becomes incorporated into the UNSC's lexicon, so its meaning is becoming obscured amid 'high' political debates regarding the conduct of international relations in the post-Cold War era.

4.3 One UN: the 1997 reforms

If Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* provided the conceptual framework for a coherent UN approach to conflict management, the 1997 *Programme for Reform* laid out by his successor provided the management strategy to realise it (Annan 1997). Three aspects of these reforms are of relevance to this study:

- The unification of all UN agencies under a common flag and under the Resident Coordinator or the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG);
- The reform of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and the creation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; (OCHA).
- The establishment of executive committees to facilitate cross-departmental, cross-agency work on common themes. Most important in the context of this study are the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), chaired by OCHA, and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS), chaired by DPA.

Each of these is discussed in turn.

4.3.1 One UN – but whose?: SRSGs and humanitarian operations

In a paper prepared for the Secretary-General in the lead up to the 1997 reforms, Margaret Anstee, the former SRSG to Angola, wrote:

The process of peace-building is in fundamental ways different from the kind of activities subsumed under the heading 'development', although these form a highly important component. The main distinction is that development activities naturally have to operate in a political context, this is not their primary purpose, whereas in the case of peace-building political considerations take centre stage. In such situations, developmental and humanitarian programmes must contribute to the overall purpose of consolidating peace and preventing renewed conflict, as well as serve their normal function of improving conditions of life and relieving hardship. Thus, the political objectives should always prevail (Anstee 1996).

The 1997 reforms codified and consolidated the trend towards an integration of aid and politics, recommended Anstee. Most importantly, they consolidated the role of SRSGs in the field where multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations were under way. As the UN expands the number of SRSGs, with between 20 and 30 deployed at any one time, so their relationship with aid actors — and particularly humanitarian aid actors — has become more pressing. At issue is the extent to which humanitarian assets are subject to the authority of the SRSG. The relationship between aid and politics is particularly pressing in situations of active conflict, and where the UN has become a belligerent in the conflict under a Chapter VII enforcement. It is in these contexts that the UN's neutrality is most obviously questioned.

The tensions arising between humanitarian and conflict-resolution measures have become very real. In relation to the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, humanitarian agencies were deeply concerned that the 1999 Lusaka accords, negotiated in part by the SRSG, implied deploying humanitarian field staff who would serve multiple mandates, and that it committed the UN including humanitarian agencies to certain activities without any prior consultation with them. There have been similar tensions between humanitarian agencies and SRSGs in relation to Burundi, Sierra Leone and Timor, to name only three examples.³²

These tensions have been recognised and debated for at least three years. A paper for the IASC dating back to 1997 (United Nations 1997), for example, argued for maintaining a certain degree of independence from UN-authorised political or military activities. The issue was reopened by a forum on the role of SRSG's in peace implementation, the findings of which were reported in the delightfully titled 'Command from the Saddle'

(Fafu Peace Implementation Network 1999). Given the predominance of SRSGs at the conference, it is perhaps unsurprising that it concluded by recommending that:

Given the inevitability that disagreements will arise between an SRSG and UN agencies, from time to time the Secretary-General will need to intervene with the heads of agencies in support of the SRSG. Such interventions should reinforce the priorities of the organisation in the mission area, *particularly when agencies are pursuing objectives that are at odds with or risk undermining efforts to achieve the political goal of the mission* (recommendation xviii, emphasis added).

In other words, the SRSGs promoted an integrationist view of coherence, one in which humanitarian agencies were subjugated to the UN's political mandate. The debate continued to simmer throughout the latter half of 1999, culminating in a paper prepared by ECHA, based on earlier discussions of the IASC. In common with the earlier IASC paper, the note of guidance agreed by ECHA, and submitted to the Secretary-General, clearly advocates an approach in which the political and humanitarian are mutually informed, but ensures that humanitarian responses are not driven by political objectives (United Nations 1999c). It distinguishes between two models. The first has the Humanitarian Coordinator structurally independent of SRSG, but reporting to the SRSG as well as to the RC. The second has the Humanitarian Coordinator in charge of humanitarian coordination in the office or operation headed by the SRSG and may also perform the deputy head of mission function as appropriate. Critically, this note argues that the choice of model should be determined by the context: in situations of active conflict, where operational neutrality and impartiality are priorities for humanitarian organisations, the looser model should prevail. Where there is a peace agreement in place to which parties have acceded, the more integrated model may be more feasible and desirable.

This more context-specific approach to the management and objectives of the aid-politics relationship would seem to offer important insights for other multi-mandated bodies, including bilateral governments. It overcomes the simplistic aphorism³³ that all actors are working for the same ends and should therefore be subsumed under one structure. At the time of writing, the Secretary-General has not endorsed ECHA's recommendation and the UNSC continues to press for integrating humanitarian components into peacekeeping (United Nations 2000).

4.3.2 DHA to OCHA: not just old wine?

The 1997 reforms provided for the creation of a 'leaner and meaner' Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), focusing on three core functions: policy development and coordination, including coordination with DPKO and DPA; advocacy of humanitarian issues

within the UNSC; and coordination of humanitarian response at field level. To enable it to do so, many of the operational roles played by DHA, such as de-mining and disaster prevention and mitigation were transferred to UNDP. This change of mandate was reinforced by changes in leadership. Sergio di Mello was appointed Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in late 1997, and in guiding the redefinition of DHA's mandate sought to promote the department's political role, strengthening its hand in negotiating with warring parties in specific conflicts, and in advocating humanitarian issues in key political fora. These new roles were to be performed by the new Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) created in January 1998, which replaced DHA.

Without the benefit of a detailed evaluation it is difficult to assess the impact of these reforms on both the definition of humanitarianism within the UN and its relationship with 'politics', and on coordination structures on the ground. The task is made more difficult still by the fact that the implementation coincided so closely with a change in leadership, seen by many as the primary determinant of OCHA's more recent successes. The most important of these successes has been the re-establishment of confidence in OCHA as a coordination body, and as a humanitarian advocate, particularly among donor countries. Diplomats in New York look to OCHA to provide not only or primarily operational leadership in complex emergencies, but as a source of political briefing, often superior to that provided by sister departments such as DPKO and DPA.

An internal UN memo (Bakhet et al. 1998) that sketches out the roles of different departments in conflict situations quickly indicates why it is that OCHA is enjoying unprecedented access to the UNSC and other international diplomatic fora. While OCHA has been able to innovate in terms of its strategy — at field level and internationally — DPA and DPKO have remained relatively constrained in their scope for action. Lacking field presence, DPA has only limited capacity for intelligence gathering and, within the UN framework of respect for sovereignty, only limited ability to formulate independent political analyses to guide decision-making. DPKO is only engaged when a peacekeeping operation has been agreed by the UNSC. This current and rather awkward division of labour means that OCHA has unparalleled access in chronic conflicts where other bodies of the Secretariat remain under-represented and under-resourced.³⁴

This access means that OCHA and operational humanitarian agencies are much closer to the conflict and engage more routinely with belligerent parties. In the era of human security it is unclear what is expected from such engagement. In a recent statement to the UNSC, the Secretary-General argued that humanitarian assistance had a role in contributing to peace and security (Annan 2000). This raises the question of whether OCHA's role is to contribute to peace and security, or whether it has a more traditional

humanitarian objective — to relieve suffering and distress. In other words, what are the objectives of OCHA's new-found political clout, and according to what principles will it realise these objectives?

At present, the model put forward by the Secretary-General refuses to concede a distinction between political and humanitarian objectives and mandates; instead it sees both as necessary in order to achieve peace and security. Once again, this assumes rather than proves, the consistent complementarity between the demands of humanitarian action and those of conflict resolution. Experience to date suggests that in fact the demands of political and humanitarian action have conflicted in important ways. It suggests further (and see Chapter 5 for further details) that while current models of coherence within the UN imply a hierarchy, with political actors nominally responsible for directing the whole of the UN's operation, in practice these actors are the least well resourced and have least access to the conflict.

Furthermore, neither the humanitarian nor the diplomatic department seems to have reached a consensus within or between themselves regarding the potential trade-offs between principles of impartiality and neutrality, and situating humanitarian action firmly within a political framework of conflict management. This becomes particularly problematic when, by default, humanitarian actors constitute the major UN presence on the ground, or when military and diplomatic interventions remain circumscribed by convention in terms of their analysis and scope for action. The appointment of the head of OCHA as his SRSG in East Timor by the SG further confuses the picture. The revision in the concept of security has not resulted in a dramatic shift in the conceptual or operational basis of DPA or DPKO³⁵, instead it has given them theoretical authority over a tool (humanitarian assistance) whose finer workings and principles they seem disinclined to understand.

4.3.3 The Executive Committees

The Executive Committees established by the 1997 reforms represent one potential set of fora for fostering greater mutual understanding between the disparate traditions of aid and diplomacy both generically and in relation to specific conflicts. Of the five committees established under the reforms, the two of most relevance here are: ECHA and ECPS.³⁶ ECHA meets monthly for two hours, and is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs. ECPS meets fortnightly for one and one-half hours, and is chaired by the USG for Political Affairs.

The precise relationship between ECHA and the IASC remains an issue of debate within the UN. Membership of the two committees does not overlap precisely,³⁷ unsurprisingly the agendas do, however, and there have been questions as to how the two fora interconnect. In order to facilitate closer working, the same small group

in OCHA provides the secretariat for both committees. On occasion, as for example, with the issue of the relationship between SRSG and Humanitarian Coordinators, positions developed through the IASC have been tabled at ECHA, which has a more direct line to the Secretary-General.

The chairmanship of ECPS was given to DPA in recognition of its role as lead agency in post-conflict peace building. ECPS was seen to provide a mechanism for the:

review of humanitarian, economic, social and development imperatives and actions in order to ensure consistency with political and security strategies aimed at ending hostilities and establishing a favourable environment for reconciliation and recovery (United Nations Department of Political Affairs 1997).

The original design of the Executive Committees seems to have assumed a continuum of responsibility with a clear division of labour between the Development Group, ECHA and ECPS taking account of different country as they proceed along the peace-war-peace-building-peace continuum. In practice, this division of labour does not appear to have been realised, and there are no criteria to indicate when a country becomes the concern of a different group. Furthermore, there is considerable diversity in the working styles and emphases of the committees such that overlap in terms of countries would not necessarily be problematic.

Interviews with UN staff indicated that there was consensus that the Executive Committees had made a significant contribution to breaking down the barriers that previously existed between different agencies. As one informant explained, previously heads of agencies saw each other relatively rarely, now such meetings are routine. The culture of more regular information exchanges across agencies and departments is 'trickling down' through the system, encouraging greater cooperation between staff working for different agencies on the same issues and countries. This in itself was seen as an important outcome of the reform process.

In terms of the contribution to decision-making, however, the verdict among UN staff consulted seems to be more mixed. On occasion both ECHA and ECPS had lived up to the vision of UN cabinet committees, bringing together key agencies and enabling them to table proposals for the Secretary-General to consider.³⁸ On the whole, however, there was a sense that the committees were primarily mechanisms for information sharing, rather than strategic decision-making bodies.

The reasons for this minimalist reality of the executive committees are undoubtedly complex, but seem in part to be explained by the sheer overload of meetings within the system, which makes it difficult for substantive preparation to be dedicated to any single one. Really joined-up thinking, let alone action, requires a lot of

time and work. Interestingly there appeared a particular barrier with respect to humanitarian issues — namely that they were not seen to be high ranking in the international pecking order.

It was striking in this respect that one senior OCHA official argued that an important benefit of ECHA was that it placed the office on the same level as DPA and DPKO. Another senior DPA official could not recall whether or not his department was in fact a member of ECHA. This seemed to reflect a more general rule that 'political discussion and stature float above humanitarian concerns'. In other words, while humanitarian actors may be more welcome in political fora, their presence remains conditional upon political actors defining a problem in humanitarian terms.

4.4 Realising coherent multilateralism: The UK, the Dutch and the UN

Definition of a political problem in humanitarian terms is of itself an important innovation in international relations. As described Chapters 2 and 3, this reflects a wider process whereby political interest is being redefined in the post-Cold War era. Of interest in this section are mechanisms through which the case study donor governments seek to operationalise this agenda in the multilateral fora of the UN. In other words, how this new form of politics is represented by donor governments. Again, resources prohibited an exhaustive enquiry into this area of the study, however, the limited number of interviews the team was able to conduct did yield a number of insights.

Most important of these is perhaps that the paradigmatic shift in the definition of security has not been accompanied by a fundamental change in the division of labour responsible for implementing it. As one informant put it, in the permanent missions in New York and Geneva, as well as at headquarters level, the sense remained that:

Within the Mission we fail to bring together the humanitarian and the political. The structure is that the Security Council team deals with DPA and the Security Council. On humanitarian issues, the line comes from the humanitarian aid department. ...the political and Security Council team here do not really know about OCHA (interview, diplomat, New York, 1 November 1999).

What has changed is that aid officials have more direct contact with 'political' fora, such as the UNSC and political departments such as DPKO and DPA. In the case of the UK, these direct contacts had been facilitated by its separation from FCO, which has meant that 'humanitarian messages' could be sent more directly from DFID to relevant UN fora and officials, than had been the case under ODA. Indeed, CHAD has recently appointed a humanitarian specialist to the UK mission

in New York. However, there remains little optimism that the increased involvement of humanitarians in these international political fora is necessarily an indication of its increased priority on the diplomatic agenda. As two Dutch officials explained:

‘On the one hand, humanitarian aid is politically driven. On the other hand, it is provided where otherwise there is political disengagement (interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1999).

In both case study countries there was a sense that it was precisely because the humanitarian agenda was considered ‘low politics’, that those responsible for aid management were entrusted with policymaking in this area. Thus, in the case of the UK, the UN department in the FCO was seen to play a very limited role in providing policy briefs to diplomatic missions on humanitarian issues, with this coming instead from DFID. Thus, it was not so much a case of the UK developing a cross-departmental strategy with respect to a particular conflict that embraced political and humanitarian issues, than DFID taking the lead in formulating positions in relation to both these aspects of policy. A similar logic appeared to apply in relation to the Netherlands.³⁹ Instead, the new division of political labour outlined in Section 3 was replicated at international level. For example, in relation to Sierra Leone, DPA reported that:

The UK is extremely interested in Sierra Leone. But it is a one-man crusade by ... DFID, not by FCO. When DPA talks to the UK it talks to DFID, not to the FCO (interview, DPA, New York, 2 November 1999).

This re-division of labour is reflected in new ways of working. In the case of the UK it was reported to be becoming more common for DFID to send its own staff to represent the UK position on humanitarian issues, rather than relying exclusively on the diplomatic staff in the mission. This begs the question of the appropriate composition of permanent mission staff: in the era of globalisation, where portfolios from agriculture to aid all have an international dimension, organising representation that can accurately reflect technical detail relies on specialists, not generalists. Potentially this suggests that missions and embassies become the skeleton upon which different departments in the home country then contribute specialist representation. In effect, this is what the Dutch structure of decentralisation of aid decision-making to embassies has sought to achieve in those countries where it has bilateral programmes. In relation to humanitarian issues, which remain centralised in The Hague, however, this pattern is not replicated.

More generally, a number of mission staff recognised the need to adjust the skills base within missions to allow more effective representation of humanitarian

issues within key political fora. A number of informants commented positively, for example, on the Canadian government’s strength in this respect and how its dedicated humanitarian capacity enabled it to progress effectively the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict.

A second key issue that emerged from a review of UN policy in this area was the importance of informal and bilateral mechanisms in governing relations between bilateral donor governments and the UN. Formal, multilateral fora, such as the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (HLWG) meeting in New York and Geneva, attracted near universal criticism. The group’s size and its inclusion of representatives of countries that were not major donors, and the fact that those attending the meetings often lacked any experience of humanitarian issues, combined to lead one informant to describe the group somewhat undiplomatically as: ‘pretty gormless’, while others emphasised that the HLWG had no role in policymaking, rather representing a forum for information exchange.⁴⁰

The perception that fora such as the HLWG no longer act as effective fora for the communication of key messages between donor governments and UN humanitarian agencies has resulted in the emergence of a number of informal coalitions that have formed around particular institutions, issues and countries. These ‘Friends of...’ and ‘Support’ groups have been very important in driving particular reforms. For example, the ‘Friends of DHA Group’ wanted to secure a more service-oriented DHA and to prove the added value of an additional layer of coordination in the humanitarian sphere. The Swiss, Swedish and British governments were central, not only in sustaining funding for DHA at a difficult time, but also in adding to the design of the reforms that were to result in the creation of OCHA (interview, OCHA, Geneva, 23 November 1999).

What is striking about these groups is that it is here, rather than in the formal bodies such as ECOSOC and the executive boards, that real bargains about real money are tabled. As one diplomat argued:

We need the informal structures, as the formal structures can’t be trusted to get it right.

This process necessarily places multilateral organisations in a difficult position. On the one hand, they are to be held accountable to all member states. On the other, these governance mechanisms have proved problematic in reaching a working consensus, and have not always yielded fundable decisions. The existence of parallel informal mechanisms of consultation with donor governments becomes problematic if it brings into question the legitimacy of the UN institutions concerned, and in particular if the messages that are sent to them are not purely humanitarian, but rather are concerned

with domestic state interests. It is this scenario that has been highlighted by some in relation to the decision of UNHCR to work with NATO in Macedonia in response to the refugee influx, and the rationale and impact of the Afghanistan Support Group, both cases are reviewed in further detail in Chapter 5.

4.5 Chapter summary

For nearly a decade, the UN has been a crucial force defining and legitimising the coherence agenda. It has advocated and sought to implement an integrationist interpretation of this agenda, embodied in the concept of human security. In this it has met with mixed success.

The UN has always struggled to balance the demands of its political function as an organisation comprising governments with its role in defending human rights. These tensions between the UN's political and humanitarian role have become more pronounced since the advent of the post-Cold War era. Efforts by UN agencies to clarify these tensions, and in particular to protect humanitarian action from undue political interference, have not received adequate support from the UN leadership or its political bodies. In this context, there is a risk that the UNSC's new-found interest in humanitarian issues is misunderstood by the wider international community, and that SRSGs are given inappropriate control over humanitarian assets.

Bureaucratic politics have prevented the full realisation of the integrationist vision. While the 1997 reforms did institutionalise the process of increased cross-departmental working, on the whole this remains confined to the level of information exchange, not common programming. At present, there is insufficient capacity within the UN, and in particular in DPA and DPKO, to provide adequate political analysis to inform common programming, even were bureaucratic culture to encourage it. As was remarked with regard to donor governments, there is the appearance that humanitarian organisations, and in particular OCHA, are carrying a large share of the burden of international policy in relation to conflict-affected countries at the periphery. This is raising a question with regard to their primary mandate: is it alleviation of poverty and suffering or is it a broader function of conflict resolution?

Finally, there is a widely held view that donor countries are seeking greater influence over the organisation of humanitarian operations than has been so in the past. This 'bilateralisation' of policy is evident not only in the increased earmarking of donor contributions to UN bodies, but also in the proliferation of informal lobbying mechanisms with regard to particular countries and issues. Reflecting the division of international political labour in their home countries, these engagements appear to be driven largely by humanitarian aid departments, rather than reflecting a coordinated, inter-departmental view in donor capitals.

Chapter 5

Coherence in practice

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the four case studies conducted to examine how the issue of 'coherence' was translated into field practice. These four mini-studies were:

- The international assistance to the energy sector in Serbia during the winter of 1999/2000.
- The negotiation of asylum for Kosovar refugees into Macedonia in April 1999.
- The Afghanistan Support Group and its links with the Strategic Framework.
- Security and withdrawal of international humanitarian workers from Afghanistan.

A brief overview of each case study is provided below.

5.1.1 Energy in Serbia⁴¹

The winter months are harsh in Serbia, with temperatures below zero for an average of 63 days between October and April. Meeting the country's energy needs has become increasingly difficult in recent years. The economic crisis in the country makes it difficult to procure the necessary electricity, gas and oil from outside, and to maintain the energy infrastructure. NATO bombing during March–June 1999 damaged the energy infrastructure, particularly transmission lines and some generating capacity. In addition, the majority of OECD countries have applied sanctions that prohibit them from exporting to Serbia, with the exception of consignments designated as required for 'humanitarian' purposes. In the summer and early autumn of 1999, there was an emerging consensus within the international community that a potentially serious shortage of energy could emerge, with potentially significant consequences for the civilian population.⁴²

For the international community, the question was whether the energy crisis was likely to be serious enough to qualify as a humanitarian problem, indicated by excess mortality and morbidity. If so, then there was an immediate operational problem: how to provide assistance without strengthening the Milosevic regime. This was particularly difficult since the energy sector in FRY is nationalised and intimately linked to the current political hierarchy. If the situation was not considered sufficiently serious to constitute a humanitarian crisis, did this preclude there being a significant energy need? The question then became: What obligation if any did the international community have to meet this energy need, and how could it be met without violating the sanctions regime?

The answers to these questions by donor governments have been determined less by independent assessment of energy need than by international politics. While the US was unequivocal in rejecting the case for the provision of 'humanitarian' energy; the views of EU member states varied widely between those, such as the Greeks, who argued against maintaining sanctions on oil imports and in favour of allowing humanitarian intervention in the energy sector, and those such as the British and Dutch who argued for maintaining sanctions and against the provision of 'humanitarian' energy. These differing positions resulted in a twin-track approach that embraced humanitarian and political interventions in the energy sector.⁴³

The Swiss government was alone among Western donors in arguing both that the crisis in the energy sector was sufficiently serious to constitute a potential humanitarian disaster and in intervening in the electricity sector — the primary source of energy for domestic and industrial use. It sought to overcome the problem of direct engagement with the FRY authorities by channelling support for the rehabilitation of the electricity infrastructure through the UN. Other donor governments concluded that the energy crisis could have humanitarian effects, but were reluctant to provide any support that could be seen to constitute rehabilitation and thus reinforce the regime. Those taking this position provided support through multilateral organisations such as the UN agencies, ECHO and NGOs to provide oil to specially targeted institutions, such as refugee reception centres, maternity hospitals and orphanages.

The second, political track was initiated by the EU through its Energy for Democracy (EfD) programme. Proposed by the Dutch and Greek governments⁴⁴ as a political compromise between EU member states, EfD was designed to mitigate the effects of sanctions, and to provide a basis for EU engagement with the opposition in Serbia. The rationale for the project was that, by providing heating oil direct to municipalities run by opposition parties, the population would recognise the benefits of closer proximity to the West and so be convinced of the advantages of a change of regime. The project suffered from a number of setbacks, initially because of delays in identifying a source of funds that could be disbursed at a sufficiently rapid rate, and then as the Serb authorities held up the first shipment of oil at the Macedonian-FRY border in November 1999.⁴⁵

Initially, the European Commission had made considerable efforts to maintain a clear distinction between EfD and the humanitarian energy supplies it was funding. For example, rather than relying on the humanitarian exemption to the embargo on the export of EU oil to Serbia, a special amendment to the sanctions

regime was adopted exempting EfD oil.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the EfD shipments were to be treated as commercial shipments, with no request made for the FRY authorities to exempt them from commercial taxes. Significantly, the project was not funded by ECHO, but by a special fund for the rehabilitation of Yugoslavia: the Obnova fund.

It is significant that in the UK, DFID resisted FCO pressure to provide additional contributions to EfD, arguing that it failed to meet the technical standards required to justify using humanitarian assistance budgets.⁴⁷ However, it proved more difficult to curtail the presentation of the project by UK politicians as both a humanitarian and political intervention. The evidence given by Minister Peter Hain to the International Development Committee in this vein was not publicly countered by DFID officials, for example (International Development Committee 1999d).

However, this sharp distinction between a 'political' and a 'humanitarian' intervention rapidly broke down. In particular, when Serb authorities refused to admit the shipments, European and US politicians were quick to argue that these delays would result in unnecessary humanitarian suffering.⁴⁸ These responses exposed the potential contradiction of EfD. On the one hand, it was argued that there was sufficient need for energy to merit the use of aid funds and that these would make a significant political impact. On the other hand, EU governments denied that shortages existed of such significance as to warrant a humanitarian response. This confusion led to it being argued by some that EfD could be at once a political and a humanitarian programme. For example, in evidence to the International Development Committee, British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain argued that:

[EfD] is a humanitarian effort, but we are able to deliver it because of the added opportunity of a political bonus and a political factor too in that we are not giving support to Milosevic and the regime that surrounds him; we are actually rewarding those who are opposed to his brutal rule (International Development Committee 1999d).⁴⁹

A combination of factors meant that the winter months did not see the worst-case scenario unfurl. An unusually mild winter, a windfall of cash from the Chinese government, the fact that the sanctions proved exceptionally leaky, and the investment by the authorities and by the Swiss government in repairing the infrastructure, meant that while there was an energy shortage, the prolonged blackouts anticipated were averted. This is not to suggest that there was no excess mortality or suffering,⁵⁰ only that these were not on the catastrophic scale anticipated. Importantly, however, the factors that averted disaster were not predicted or necessarily predictable by Western donor governments. The important question therefore emerged whether if more widespread need had existed, the political

positions of these governments (and for this study, of the British and Dutch in particular) would have precluded an effective and principled humanitarian response.

5.1.2 Negotiation of asylum for Kosovar refugees into Macedonia

On 24 March 1999 NATO began its aerial bombardment of Serbia, ostensibly designed to secure Yugoslav agreement to the terms of the Rambouillet peace plan. Rather than securing the rapid victory anticipated by the allies, the air strikes served to intensify the conflict within Kosovo, provoking massive population movements out of the country. Within nine weeks of the beginning of the air strikes, nearly 860,000 Kosovar Albanians had fled the country, of whom 344,500 sought first asylum in neighbouring Macedonia. This was one of the largest and most rapid population movements of the 1990s, comparable only with those associated with the Gulf War in 1991 and the genocide in Rwanda of 1994 (Suhrke et al. 2000).

In contrast with Albania and Montenegro, where the borders remained relatively open, the Government of Macedonia (GOM) was extremely reluctant to grant asylum, fearful for its internal stability and of being pulled into a wider war with Serbia. Between 30 March and 4 April, several thousand refugees congregated at Blace — the border crossing between FRY and Macedonia. The GOM instructed its border guards to check meticulously the papers of the refugees, effectively blocking the border. Within days a backlog of tens of thousands of refugees had built up in a muddy field, trapped between Serb authorities and the 'closed' border. At this critical and early phase of the world's first 'humanitarian' war, the question for the allies was how to avert a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in front of the world's media.

Under usual circumstances, UNHCR would have taken the lead for negotiating safe asylum with the host government. In the case of Macedonia, however, this role was assumed by NATO governments, in particular the US, who also constituted the primary donors to the humanitarian operation. Bilateral negotiations did lead to the GOM agreeing to open the border, and to their granting leave to remain, rather than refugee status to the Kosovar Albanians. In return for opening the border, the GOM achieved a number of concessions from the international community:

- That a significant proportion of the refugees be transferred to other countries in the region (the Humanitarian Transfer Programme, HTP), and evacuated outside the region (the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme, HEP).
- That NATO military assets based in Macedonia be deployed to construct camp facilities to receive the refugees.

- In the background there were also discussions regarding promises of long-term development assistance to Macedonia, and to keep the issue of Macedonia's membership of the EU on the agenda.⁵¹

Each of these components of the deal, and the process by which they were negotiated, are of obvious relevance to this study. Diplomatic and military resources were deployed in support of the humanitarian objective of providing safe refuge. At the same time, responding to this humanitarian agenda quickly and effectively was clearly of vital importance, not only to reassure domestic public opinion in NATO countries, but to ensure that NATO was in a position to continue its military intervention and to reduce the 'threat' of major and uncontrolled population movements outside the region.⁵²

In reviewing this experience of political/humanitarian interaction, the study focused on four key issues:

- Issues of protection. In particular, refugee law and current practice (as advocated by UNHCR's Executive Committee)⁵³ is based on the principle of unconditional first asylum. In other words, host governments should grant asylum without assuming that a refugee will be resettled elsewhere. The protection implications of the negotiation of this principle, specifically through the HTP and HEP, are therefore important to explore.
- Issues of impartiality and neutrality. The perception that the humanitarian response was highly politicised was further deepened by the fact that military assets were deployed to construct and run refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania. These constituted part of the same military forces involved in the NATO bombardment. The relationship between humanitarian agencies and the military had been a fraught issue between UNHCR and NATO allies in the lead up to and in the days immediately after the air strikes started, with UNHCR arguing that such cooperation would compromise its impartiality. The question is raised, therefore, whether cooperating with the military forces of one belligerent in a war necessarily compromises humanitarian principles, and if so whether this matters.
- Bilateralisation of response. UNHCR's capacity to conduct the negotiations necessary to secure safe asylum for the Kosovar refugees in Macedonia in April 1999 has been widely criticised in recent evaluations of response (International Development Committee 1999c; Suhrke et al. 2000), and in the course of interviews conducted by this study. The independent evaluation of its response concludes that while the weakness of the

multilateral response provided donor governments with a convenient rationale to engage bilaterally, even had the UN proved strong, states' interests would have dictated heavy bilateral involvement. This bilateralisation of response has political and operational implications that merit review.

- Effectiveness and viability of political-development-aid linkages. This was not a primary focus of this study, but at issue was the question as to whether long-term aid resources had been pledged to Macedonia as a bargaining tool, and whether these had borne fruit.

5.1.3 Afghanistan

Unlike Kosovo and Serbia, Afghanistan has been effectively abandoned by the international political system. With the partial exception of the US, the West has effectively disengaged, leaving only regional powers and the UN involved, the regional power often concerned more about continuing the conflict than resolving it.⁵⁴ Despite, indeed because of, this the Strategic Framework in Afghanistan has been one of the most ambitious attempts to develop a structured coherence between aid and political action yet seen. The Afghanistan case study examined the experience of the Strategic Framework in general, and its links with the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG), a group of donor governments, in particular. It also looked at the specific case of the withdrawal of UN staff and the subsequent banning on security grounds by the UN of British and US passport holders visiting the country. This was reinforced by DFID withdrawing funds from any NGO that sent international staff to the country.

The aid/politics relationship has a long and complex history in Afghanistan. The country's geo-strategic position has been its misfortune since the late nineteenth century, and aid has been linked to foreign policy of donors for almost as long. From 1956 to 1978 the Soviets gave a total of \$1.26bn in economic aid, and the US too gave substantial amounts in the 1950s. The Soviet invasion led to the outflow of millions of refugees into Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan, a key US ally in the region and seen as a bulwark against Communist expansion and a base for the Mujihadeen, received much more aid. Many NGOs too had explicit 'solidarity' agendas, and 'delegated' distribution of aid to Mujihadeen political parties. This resulted in a fairly uncritical aid provision mechanism; issues such as gender, neutrality or impartiality were not discussed. The US was giving Stinger missiles as well as food aid; '...not only were those who masterminded refugee assistance motivated by geo-political agendas, but the work of NGOs responsible for implementing the aid policies was, either consciously or unconsciously, often heavily politicised' (Fielden 1998). In this sense, for the Western donors, particularly the US, aid and political agendas were

obviously 'coherent' in that both supported the overall political goal of defeating the Soviet Union.

After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, the war became a civil war between competing groups of Mujihadeen, steadily drawing in regional powers concerned that Afghanistan should not be ruled by a group unsympathetic to their interests. Aid flows declined significantly and it became much harder for agencies to get money for projects with refugees in Pakistan.⁵⁵ For the US, the decline in aid flows was paralleled by a diplomatic abandonment as well after 1989.⁵⁶ However, the US remains, even in its absence, the only external power with sufficient clout to influence the conflict and the neighbouring powers and thus remains central.

In 1994 the Taliban emerged as a serious political force, as did the possibility of an oil pipeline through western Afghanistan from Turkmenistan. The emergence of the Taliban has been linked to the desire of Pakistan to open secure links with the new central Asian republics. The Taliban initially received tacit US support and active support from US allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. US interest was heightened by the involvement of the American oil company Unocal. By 1998, however, the combined impact of the blaming of Osama Bin Laden, then a guest of the Taliban, for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the Taliban's treatment of women in Kabul, which became a *cause celebre* for American feminists, had turned the US against them. By 1999, rather than playing a role in resolving the conflict, 'getting Bin Laden was Washington's primary policy objective' (Rashid 2000: 177).

Throughout this period, UN attempts at mediation had been a succession of failures, and a series of SRSGs resigned in disgust and frustration, blaming the intransigence of the parties and the persistent provisioning of the different groups with arms by the neighbouring powers. This despite the members of the '6+2' group, a group of Afghanistan's neighbours plus the US and Russia set up by the UN, formally declaring not to do so. This is indeed the overwhelming reason for the UN's failure. But the various UN missions have been consistently understaffed, and, according to many diplomats and aid actors, of indifferent quality, though recently the office has been in the process of being strengthened. The UN receives expressions of support from donor governments for its efforts,⁵⁷ but little in the way of substantive back-up and political engagement. More recently of course, the UNSC has imposed sanctions on Afghanistan, in part to pressure the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden. Indeed, the Taliban are unusual in that they have managed to antagonise four out of the five permanent members, France being the only one not hostile.⁵⁸

In political terms, Afghanistan was initially a 'survival' issue for the West, but dropped off the map after the withdrawal of the Soviets. It has crept back up the agenda, but this time the interest is driven by very different political objectives. Conventional definitions

of security, have been replaced by domestic concerns to guard against terrorism, contain the flow of refugees and narcotics and the protection of women's rights.⁵⁹ The narrative of Afghanistan in the West has changed, from heroic freedom fighters to brutal, sexist bandits, despite the fact that the cast of characters remains largely unchanged.

The conflict between India and Pakistan, and the future orientation of central Asia, are more important regional priorities for Western governments than Afghanistan. Although many donor governments share these concerns, terrorism is primarily an issue that affects the US and the UK; other governments are more concerned about drugs, refugees and regional stability. Essentially strategies range from disengagement and uninterest to deliberate isolation, although for many donor governments there is in fact no serious Afghanistan strategy. Political muscle to end the conflict, especially from the US, has been noticeable only by its absence.

The Afghanistan Support Group and the Strategic Framework

In January 1997 the aid community met in Ashkhabad to try and revitalise assistance work in Afghanistan, a process which was to lead to the Principled Common Programme (PCP). An *ad hoc* donor group was formed to support this process and coordinate the policy; this was known as the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG). This field-led process paralleled a UN initiative that was intended to unite UN assistance, human rights and political initiative in a single country into one coherent and mutually supportive strategy. Afghanistan was selected as the first test case for this approach.

The purpose of the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan was to:

- enhance the synergy between the UN political strategy in Afghanistan and the international assistance activities; and
- promote greater effectiveness and coherence in the international assistance programme.

The 'overarching goal of the UN in Afghanistan is to facilitate the transition from a state of internal conflict to a just and sustainable peace through mutually reinforcing political and assistance initiatives'. When the Strategic Framework was developed, there was some prospect of a peace settlement; this has since vanished.

The ASG met first in Geneva in May 1997, and has since met twice yearly in different donor capitals, chaired by the relevant host. It is a donor forum and the agenda is dominated by donor issues, although it is attended by agencies, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and others. The ASG has been important in pushing the Strategic Framework on to the somewhat reluctant UN operational agencies. In the London ASG for instance, the UN agencies were given an ultimatum by

the donors: 'sign up to the Strategic Framework or funds will be cut'. The Dutch and British governments were particularly proactive in their support for the Strategic Framework.

Security and the withdrawal of humanitarian workers from Afghanistan

Security for aid workers in Afghanistan has long been a problem and this has continued under the Taliban. In 1998 a series of security incidents culminated in the withdrawal of most international staff of humanitarian agencies, including that of the entire UN. A UN official in Kandahar had, according to accounts, either a teapot or some furniture thrown at him by a senior Taliban official; two UN national staff were murdered; and finally, an Italian member of the UN observer mission was murdered on the streets of Kabul after the American bombing in August. This had come after a long period of growing tension between the aid agencies and the Taliban, in particular over their gender policy, during which Emma Bonino, the ECHO commissioner, was briefly imprisoned in Kabul in September 1997. Many suspect these confrontations were deliberately provoked, and that the withdrawal of foreign aid workers was the goal of some hard line Taliban members.

In August 1998, shortly before the bombing, the FCO received information on specific security threats to US and UK nationals. Release of this information to the agencies coincided with the bombing, and international staff withdrew from the country. Initially, DFID took the position that short trips by UK staff would be acceptable. However, the policy evolved into a position that DFID would not fund, and would withdraw committed funds to, any NGO that sent any international staff to Afghanistan, even if these aspects of their work were funded by other donors.

The situation was complicated by the UN pull-out and the ongoing negotiations with the Taliban over its return. At the Tokyo meeting of the ASG, the UK and US persuaded other donors to support the head of OCHA's request that NGOs not go back as this would undermine their negotiating position with the Taliban.⁶⁰ In other words, the concern had moved beyond just security concerns to the broader issue of conditions of work. The continued withdrawal of internationals was seen by some in the UN as a lever to gain concessions from the Taliban. When the UN did go back in February 1999, the UK and US approached the Secretary-General personally to request him not to allow US and UK UN staff to go back given the specific security threats against them. This was accepted and, at the time of writing, these restrictions remain in place. Most NGOs have developed alternative sources of funding to sustain programmes and allow UK nationals to work. DFID maintains that conditions, notably human rights issues,

are such that it is not time to encourage refugee return. As a result of this and the security policy DFID's funding of programmes within the country has fallen to be replaced by funding more programmes with refugees.

DFID has consistently maintained that their concern was exclusively motivated by threats to UK nationals, but the move was widely interpreted by agencies and other donors as part of a US-inspired political strategy to pressurise and isolate the Taliban. The British Prime Minister had after all publicly supported US air-strikes against suspected terrorist bases in Afghanistan. As with Sierra Leone, the attempt to obtain leverage over other donors caused resentment as well. For example, an NGO coordination body, ACBAR, which had a British director, was funded more by other donors than DFID. Yet DFID's restrictions meant he could not travel, thus affecting all donor programmes. The restriction on UK and US UN staff travelling, apart from being highly unusual for the UN, also affected their ability to implement the Strategic Framework; the acting head of UNSMA, for example, was British, as were a number of other key UN staff.

5.2 Coherence of analysis: the politics of information

A frequent refrain contained in evaluations and analyses of humanitarian operations is the political 'blindness' of relief. The accusation runs that aid agencies fail to invest in good political analysis, and that this naïve neutrality leaves them vulnerable to political manipulation by warring parties. Access to accurate political information regarding the dynamics of a conflict can be seen, therefore, as a pre-condition for ensuring effective and principled humanitarian action.

One obvious area of complementarity between the humanitarian and political spheres is in terms of information exchange. A key function of diplomatic departments of governments and international organisations is to collect and analyse political information and to communicate it effectively. At the same time, within the humanitarian sphere, information collection and analysis systems are becoming more sophisticated. A priori, it would seem therefore, that sharing these resources might be useful to ensure a politically informed humanitarian response, and a political response informed by humanitarian concerns.

The findings from this study suggest that there have been some gains in achieving this most minimal level of information exchange between the humanitarian and political spheres. However, a number of significant obstacles remain to enhancing 'coherence'. Some of these obstacles are structural, others are more managerial.

5.2.1 Political early warning and preparedness

The Macedonia example is insightful in terms of the structural obstacles to a coherent approach to the collection and analysis of information in two respects. The first concerns access to political and military information to enable preparedness of the humanitarian response. The second relates to the UN's capacity for political analysis immediately prior to the refugee influx.

A striking feature of accounts about decisions to deploy the military to construct and manage the refugee camps is the consensus between diplomatic and humanitarian agencies that only the military had the capacity to respond at the speed and scale required. This response is premised on the assumption that the size of the refugee influx could not have been predicted in sufficient time for other strategies to have been put in place.

There remains significant dispute as to whether the events of late March, in particular whether the size and pace of refugee flows into Macedonia, were predictable. A number of humanitarian organisations claim that they had foreseen the scenario that later unfolded.⁶¹ Of interest here are the political constraints on official consideration of the scenario that unfurled, and to using such information to inform disaster preparedness. These were threefold.

Officially the GOM refused to countenance planning figures of more than 20,000 refugees, although unofficially figures of 70,000 were discussed (Suhrke et al. 2000). This severely hampered contingency planning and preparedness activity, precluding detailed planning for camp sites, for example, until refugees were already at Blace.

The tensions between the political and operational imperatives of planning for a major refugee inflow within Macedonia were echoed externally. The independent evaluation of UNHCR's response notes that the majority of NATO allies made the mistake of believing their own propaganda (Suhrke et al. 2000). They underestimated the impact of the bombardment on the dynamics of conflict and 'ethnic cleansing', and assumed that their victory would be swift. The report indicates that there were quiet warnings issued by the US that the refugee crisis might intensify in March 1999, but these went unheard by UNHCR and others amid the noisier insistence of NATO's humanitarian and military credentials. In the context of this study, it is notable that not only UNHCR was unprepared for the outflux, but so too, were the majority of NATO governments. Striking, therefore, are the apparent limitations of existing political information sources. Since these are shaped by political interests nationally and internationally, their usefulness as reliable sources for humanitarian planning remains compromised.

The final factor shaping the political economy of early warning information available was the extent to which

systems existed to facilitate exchange across diplomatic and aid lines. Time precluded detailed collection of primary research on this issue, but such information as was available suggested that while there had been some important innovations, such as the DFID-led 'Vereker' group in the UK⁶², difficulties remained in terms of translating such high-level discussions into field-level decision-making. Interviews with DFID officials working in other regions also indicated that while their access to information from other departmental sources, such as the FCO, had improved in recent years, the scope to which this information was shared with operational partners was limited by the constraints of confidentiality.⁶³

Humanitarian agencies themselves remain ambivalent as to whether and how to engage with sources of political information. For example, UNHCR declined invitations from NATO to engage in joint contingency planning (Suhrke et al. 2000).⁶⁴

What the above indicates is the need for independent political analysis that is connected with operational humanitarian capacity. In theory, the UN would appear to satisfy many of these conditions. Its universal mandate might be seen to commit the organisation to the establishment of information systems able to collect and analyse information impartially and to inform its different 'arms' — political, humanitarian, developmental. The reality was somewhat different.

In Macedonia, the UN had deployed a conflict prevention and monitoring team (UNPREDEP) in December 1992. Following Macedonia's recognition of Taiwan, China vetoed the renewal of its mandate in early 1999, forcing UNPREDEP to withdraw from Macedonia three weeks before the NATO bombing started.⁶⁵ Just when political analysis would have been most useful to the UN, its political mandate was withdrawn. This left UNHCR, later with some reinforcement from OCHA, alone in carrying the mantle for negotiations with the GOM.⁶⁶ In other words, the UN's capacity to engage in a political analysis on behalf of the system is contingent upon states' consent. This suggests little space for generating messages likely to prove unpalatable to the state concerned or that question the international consensus on a particular issue.

In Afghanistan, international political analysis has been further complicated by the nature of the Taliban, its secrecy, sheer strangeness to Western observers and rejection of many of the rules and norms of international diplomacy. The unimportance of Afghanistan and its strangeness have combined to produce simplistic and often confrontational attitudes in Western policymakers and journalists often directed more at gaining support from other Western lobby groups, such as feminists in the US, than initiating any dialogue for peace. As one British diplomat put it: 'we get no letters on the failure of the 6+2 process, only the women's rights issue'.

In the early 1990s, the US ended its considerable

investment in intelligence gathering against the Soviets, reducing the scope of information available as the war evolved post-1989. It is arguable that much of both the UN's as well as Western government policy towards Afghanistan has been based on 'wrong assumptions'. The initial support of the US for the Taliban for instance, and their subsequent 'one-club' policy on Bin Laden revealed misunderstandings and misconceptions of the nature of the Taliban and its support base. Information gathering and analysis by all donors tends to be under-resourced and relegated to those concerned with aid. For the UK, of course, the ban on travel has further reduced its ability to analyse the situation, though routine information flows between DFID and the FCO appear to be reasonable. The problem, of course, is the lack of any substantive political strategy driving it.

The UN's mediation approach too has been argued to rest on a number of misconceptions about the nature of the conflict in Afghanistan. While accepting that the UN could do little in the face of regional powers continuing to support factions, and great powers with little interest, Maley (1997d) argues that, part of the UN's failure rests on flawed analysis. This has included a series of misreadings of the balance of forces, but more fundamentally, a failure to realise that 'The crisis confronting Afghanistan runs deeper than the mere composition of government. It turns more significantly on the nature, function and structure of the state' (Maley, 1999, p. 196; emphasis in original). Part of the reason for this lies in pre-conceived notions about diplomacy and mediation, but part also in what many aid actors see as the chronic weakness and under-staffing of OSGAP and DPA over the years.

One of the results of the Strategic Framework has been improved information sharing between UN assistance and political actors (Wiles et al. 1999). In the past, the political side, according to one UN diplomat, 'did not want to be contaminated by the humanitarian', the feeling was that 'they cannot be trusted and they do not understand politics'. The Strategic Framework process has helped to break down these barriers, at least in terms of information exchange. This has been in part spurred by the admission on the political side that 'in many ways the humanitarians know more than we do', about realities in the ground. However, the extent to which the Strategic Framework has resulted in a shared analysis of the situation and thus the possible coherence of assistance and political activities is questionable.⁶⁷ The Strategic Framework, for example, is noticeably silent about how this coherence or synergy is likely to be achieved and contents itself with statements to that effect, assuming that the case for synergy is obvious. It has thus not yet worked through any kind of detailed strategy, based on a shared analysis, that might demonstrate the case.

One reason for this is that there is still an analytical problem at the heart of the Strategic Framework approach. The political and economic dynamic of the war, and the reason for the failure of subsequent UN

missions, is unlikely to be affected by much that aid actors can do. The World Bank for instance estimates the value of the transit trade to be about \$2.4bn, while the CAP raises in the region of \$100m. Assistance activities are also, quite rightly, focused on the poorest and least powerful groups in society. As has been pointed out,

unless peacemaking can appeal to the interests of powerful economic actors and transform them into agents of peace, it will be limited at best to halting fighting in one place before social and economic forces provoke it once again elsewhere in this dangerous region (Rubin, 1999).

The Strategic Framework approach, however, which concentrates on the one hand on mediation between armed groups, and on the other, on relief to the poorest completely ignores these actors. Thus, how the two elements might be 'coherent' and mutually supportive is left unaddressed.

5.2.2 The politics of need

The Serbian case demonstrated how the definition of need is shaped by national and international politics. As detailed in Section 5.1, the question in this case was whether or not the likely shortages of energy in the winter of 1999/2000 were serious enough to constitute a humanitarian crisis. If the term 'humanitarian' was applied, then this would imply an obligation to respond unconditionally; while the label 'rehabilitation' signified waiting until a change of regime had taken place.⁶⁸

Labelling the energy problem in Serbia as humanitarian was particularly problematic because agencies lack commonly accepted standards in this domain. It is not simple to transfer experience from tropical emergencies, where needs are assessed in terms of anthropometric and health indicators, to contexts such as that in the Balkans. There is a lack of consensus within the humanitarian community regarding how to define vulnerability and need in developed country contexts. This lack of clarity regarding what constitutes the humanitarian caseload creates more room for political involvement in the definition of need. This suggests the need for humanitarian agencies to develop more robust indicators of need and of standards in non-tropical emergencies; for example, the development of Sphere standards relating to fuel and heating.

A second striking aspect of the Serbian energy case is that while the EfD project invested considerable energy in seeking to link aid to the energy sector with a political strategy, from a political perspective it missed the key issue. The emergence of a strong parallel economy around fuel and other goods as a result of sanctions and shortage constitutes an important threat to the stability of Serbia and to the emergence of representative and democratic institutions. The EfD project represented a relatively simplistic model of political change, based

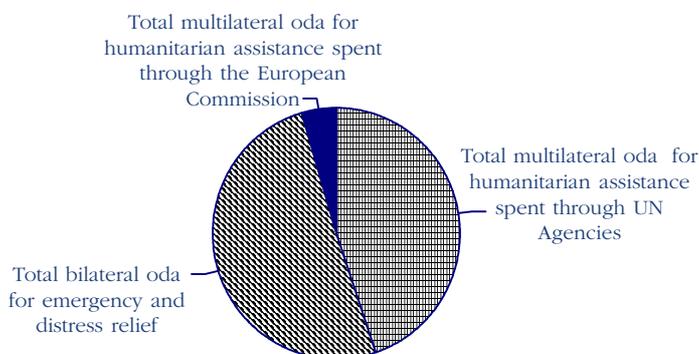
upon assumptions regarding the political behaviour of the electorate. However, it was implemented amid continued sanctions that, in addition to alienating a significant section of Serb public opinion,⁶⁹ were also serving to reinforce the political positions of the very groups Western governments opposed. In this context, the ‘politicisation’ of humanitarian space, entailed by contesting need and the confused presentation of EfD, yielded only marginal political gains, but entailed significant costs to the credibility of the humanitarian system.

In Afghanistan, the absence of comprehensive and agreed indicators of need have also allowed factors other than impartiality to determine funding. It has already been noted that after the war against the Soviets finished, funding declined steeply, despite the fact the fighting continued. Indeed the destruction of Kabul and the outflow of refugees occurred mostly after the end of the war.⁷⁰

On 8 December 1998, at a time when DFID was refusing to fund NGOs to send expatriates to Afghanistan, in a written answer to a parliamentary question, Clare Short asserted: ‘The humanitarian situation inside Afghanistan — in terms of basic needs — is under reasonable control at the present time’. She did admit need might get worse if the winter was bad. Reliable and comprehensive statistics are hard to come by in Afghanistan, but given the high rates of maternal mortality, rising malnutrition among children in Kabul and other indicators,⁷¹ to describe the situation in Afghanistan at any time in the past 20 years as ‘under control’ might be seen as surprising.

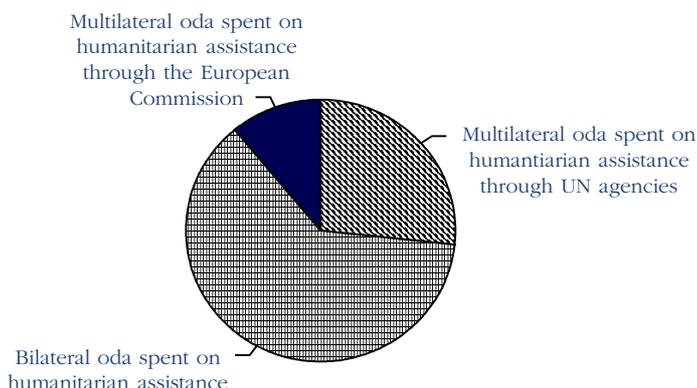
5.3 Mechanisms for coherence: the trend towards bilateralisation

Figure 5.1
Multilateral and bilateral humanitarian assistance spending 1988



Source: Randel and German (2000)

Figure 5.2
Bilateral and multilateral humanitarian aid spending 1988



Source: Randel and German (2000)

In a recent report, Randel and German (2000) note the strong trend towards bilateralisation of humanitarian response. In terms of financial flows, this is indicated by donors earmarking their contributions to multilateral organisations more tightly than in the past, and their bypassing multilateral bodies such as UNHCR and WFP and contracting NGOs directly. In organisational terms too, there have been a number of important changes in the role of donor organisations in humanitarian response. No longer confined to the role of the ‘chequebook’ for the humanitarian system, donor governments are now seeking greater involvement in humanitarian decision-making, in some cases increasing their proximity to the field, in part to ensure the coherence of donor governments’ response to conflict. This section focuses on these organisational dimensions of bilateralisation.

5.3.1 Bilateralisation of aid coordination: the Afghanistan Support Group

Two mechanisms coordinate external political and assistance activities in Afghanistan. The ‘6+2 Group’, is convened by DPA and comprises Afghanistan’s neighbours with Russia and the US. Aid, and its role in peace building, is ‘not on its radar’, perhaps an indication of the importance of aid in the political calculations of those closest to the conflict.

The ASG is a Western donor group, convened by a rotating chair. Its primary focus is aid and the Strategic Framework, but it also discusses political, peace-building and human rights issues. The Stockholm 1998 ASG for instance ‘called upon the Taliban to cease providing a safe haven for such individuals [international terrorists]’ (ASG, 1998). A regular feature on the ASG agenda is narcotics control. It discusses broad policy issues and is supposed to bring some coherence to donor approaches and provide ‘guidance’ to implementing agencies.

The US is the only country on both groups. There are no European powers on the 6 + 2, despite the fact that European states individually, and through the EU, provide the majority of aid to Afghanistan: a structural oddity that could be said to mitigate against coherence, but may in fact be symptomatic of the relative unimportance of aid in the political process.

The primary success of the ASG has probably been to keep the pressure up on the UN system to accept the Strategic Framework, which, for all its weaknesses, does represent a significant step forward for the UN, at least in terms of coordinated assistance strategies (Wiles et al., 1999). While the ASG and the Strategic Framework are separate initiatives, and not formally related, the two mechanisms have developed a close relationship.

In other ways, the role of the ASG has been more ambivalent. As a mechanism for mobilising funding it has been decidedly equivocal — funding in 1998 particularly was very low and to some extent also in 1999 (the overall figures are pushed up by a substantial rise in US funds). There are a number of operational reasons for this, but by having a broad agenda including human rights and peace, the ASG seems to have served to reinforce among donors a feeling that they do not want to spend much money in Afghanistan while the current situation continues.⁷² This is too loose a policy to be called conditionality, which would imply that specific conditions have to be met, but it probably has the same impact in terms of reducing available funds and introducing criteria other than need in determining funding. Because there is little to spend money on in terms of building peace, 'coherence' here seems to have served to reduce available funds, not increase them.

In terms of assistance coordination, the UN has invested considerable effort in moving the Consolidated Appeal Process in Afghanistan away from the usual shopping list and towards a more coherent programme. One component of the Strategic Framework was a commitment from donors that they would only fund programmes that were part of it. Donors, however, continue to cherry pick, ignore the Coordinator's recommendations, and reserve the right to fund outside it, thus undermining the UN Coordinator's ability to develop a coherent strategy. Food aid, emergency assistance and demining regularly get funded but longer term projects and rights-based programmes do not attract the required level of funding, despite regular rhetorical support at ASG meetings. The original proposal of a common fund for the funding of the Strategic Framework was opposed by some donors as well as by UN agencies. Indeed, the ASG, by bringing the donors closer to the programme design process, seems to have arrived at a position where at the Ottawa 1999 ASG:

UN agencies and donors stated that donor intentions seemed to trigger programme design rather than the actual needs on the ground. ACBAR suggested that donors were too involved in programme design and

implementation (OCHA (1999) 'Afghanistan Support Group, Highlights of Ottawa Meeting, 8–9 December 1999', New York).

There has also been disagreement between donors over policy issues, such as capacity building of the authorities and over the security issue. As one donor representative put it '...coordination does not mean we have to agree with each other'. The irony of course is that that is exactly what coordination, as pushed by the donors in the Strategic Framework, does mean. No conditionality can be applied to donors who break the rules. Over time there has also been a growing distance between the British and US position and other donors, particularly over the security issue, which has reduced consensus. Despite UK protests to the contrary, the restriction on UK nationals is still seen as support for America's isolationist approach.

The ASG has also been used as a forum for some donors to push to the fore concerns that are not necessarily very high on the aid agenda,⁷³ such as the US in regard to drugs, and which often move into territory more usually thought of as political. Peace building, narcotics and human rights all figure large at the ASG, but because the ASG is to all intents and purposes an aid coordination body, the solution to these problems becomes a projectised aid approach rather than a political one. Instead of aid becoming an adjunct to a political approach, it becomes the sole approach. Although the ASG and the Strategic Framework are not formally linked, the explicit 'coherence' of aid and politics in the Strategic Framework has provided the excuse for this. This represents in effect a delegation of responsibility for political action on to the assistance sphere.

Perhaps most importantly though, by redefining aid as politics through making it part of a 'coherent' strategy, donors have come to believe, and to argue, that they are doing something for peace building through their support for the Strategic Framework, even if it is just funding assistance.⁷⁴ Thus the post-Rwanda lesson that aid cannot deal with political problems is squared in countries where Western donor governments have no political interests but are prepared to provide aid. Aid is simply redefined as politics and so, by funding the Strategic Framework, donors are taking political action. This parallels the way, pointed out earlier, in which providing public moral and official support for the UN mission allows donors to do very little actual politics.

5.3.2 Bilateralisation of negotiation

Involvement by NATO governments, particularly the US, was critical in securing refuge for Albanian Kosovars in Macedonia in April 1999. This case is one where political and military actors had a comparative advantage over humanitarian actors and their involvement secured humanitarian objectives. Political and military actors had at their disposal important assets and bargaining chips that a body such as UNHCR clearly does not.

These include: the ability to provide political legitimisation in the international community; access to key decision-makers in the host government; diplomatic infrastructure in the shape of embassies; and significant stand-by capacity for logistics and engineering works. In the case of Macedonia, a further important incentive that diplomats could offer was with regard to burden sharing, under the HEP, which relied upon agreement from ministries of the interior in the respective home countries.

The Macedonia case was unusual in attracting this sort of political engagement, which, as indicated above, was motivated by a combination of humanitarian, political and military concerns. The evidence suggests that, despite the multiplicity of agendas driving these negotiations, in the short-term, the outcome was positive in humanitarian terms. Not only was the border unblocked, the deployment of the military enabled camps to be constructed at a pace and to a standard that civilian organisations could not have achieved in the time available.

While concerns have been raised about the protection implications of the HTP and HEP in relation to both Macedonia itself and in terms of future refugee emergencies⁷⁵, overall the involvement of political actors in the negotiations did not seem to entail significant compromise on protection standards. While the principle of unconditional asylum was violated, there appeared to be consensus among those interviewed in Skopje and elsewhere, that compromising on this principle was necessary in order to protect those refugees at Blace.

Suhrke et al. (2000) conclude that UNHCR was effective in providing information regarding protection and international law to the diplomatic community in Skopje and elsewhere with information, and that this was used by diplomats in the course of negotiations with the GOM. This view is contested by some of those interviewed by this study, who portrayed a much more chaotic and unstructured process of negotiation with little room to discuss legal niceties. The presence of standards and benchmarks, however, was seen by many to have been useful. They reminded the GOM of its obligations under international law. Adherence to international norms is increasingly a condition of inclusion in international society and thus international legitimisation (Donnelly 1998).

The presence in the region of a very large media corp, that could refer to international legal standards, was seen by some informants to have kept the political process 'honest'. Thus the idea of a 'feedback loop', whereby political intervention is regulated by public opinion in donor countries, informed by a media that can scrutinise standards seemed important in the Macedonian context. One informant described this as 'democracy at work', whereby Western publics could pressure their political representatives to act for the international good. This suggests the need for sustained

advocacy and public information in order to generate a strong constituency for humanitarian action, and indeed protect it from unwelcome political encroachment.

Even in the Macedonian case, where the political stakes were high, political support for protection declined once the immediate crisis over asylum was over. The capacity of the diplomatic machine to sustain political intervention for humanitarian purposes seems to have been limited.⁷⁶ The lack of investment in protection in the camps meant that there remained persistent security problems with NGO camp managers able to call on little support from UNHCR or others.⁷⁷

In Afghanistan, in many ways the reverse is the case. Donor governments have little contact with the Taliban or much to do with Afghanistan at all. Western embassies in Islamabad typically have someone with responsibility for Afghanistan, often, as with the British and the Dutch, this post focuses on aid not diplomacy. DPA too has been understaffed at both the Islamabad office and in New York, and in Afghanistan itself. There is little capacity to do analysis or engage in diplomacy. This puts the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator in an awkward position as he becomes the international community's *de facto* representative.⁷⁸ Again, this is a form of delegation of political responsibilities to the humanitarian sector. Perhaps surprisingly though, the UN Special Mission in Afghanistan (UNSMA) escapes the level of scrutiny and censure at ASG meetings that donors direct at some of the agencies.

5.3.3 Direct contracting and field presence: bilateral contracting, embassies and field offices

Closer donor involvement in humanitarian decision-making has required a number of organisational changes. These relate to the contractual environment and to the structures available for representation.

While in Macedonia some NGOs, such as Oxfam, advocated for investment in, and respect for, multilateral coordination through UNHCR, other NGOs seem to have been more open to cutting out the 'middle-man' in the humanitarian contractual chain. One NGO representative, disappointed by UNHCR's performance as operational coordinator, described the organisation as a 'speed-bump' in NGO response. He contrasted the one day it could take to secure a contract from the US government, compared with the 6–8 weeks required to access the same resources when channelled through UNHCR. In other words, the trend towards direct contracting of NGOs is driven by demand, as well as supply.

The extent to which donor governments became themselves operational in the Kosovo crisis is probably unparalleled. It was British and American diplomats, for example, who took the lead on identifying sites for the construction of refugee camps, not UNHCR. National contingents were deployed to construct and manage

camps, although in positive contrast to Albania, in Macedonia they actively sought to relinquish this role as quickly as possible to the UN and NGOs.

The UK set up a DFID field office in Skopje. Interestingly, despite the UK's early enthusiasm for politically coherent humanitarian action (see Chapter 3), the field office did not serve as a basis for linking humanitarian action with a broader strategy of conflict reduction. Rather, it took a logistics-driven, relief-oriented approach, with the primary function of the office being to facilitate rapid disbursement of funds and provide accessible briefings to London on a rapidly evolving situation. As a mechanism for enhancing accountability, the office seems to have added relatively little. While undoubtedly a field presence enabled DFID quickly to identify opportunities and threats to the interventions it was funding, it lacked capacity for extensive monitoring of implementation, and was not routinely involved in *ex post* evaluations, such as that of UNICEF's programme. Evaluation of the role of such field offices and their added value would be insightful.

In contrast to the UK, the Dutch government has largely resisted the bilateral route, emphasising the need for constructive engagement with its multilateral partners, particularly UNHCR in the Macedonian case.⁷⁹ In common with the UK, the Dutch deployed military forces to support camp construction. Reflecting the organisation of the Dutch aid programme more generally, where the aid programme is managed at embassy level, there is closer integration between the aid and diplomatic work of the embassy than is the case with the UK. However, this appears to be more for long-term development assistance than for humanitarian aid.⁸⁰

The Serbian case represented very different conditions for bilateralisation, and thus demanded a different response. The US has no diplomatic relations with Belgrade, while the UK and Dutch governments have only limited representation. This 'politics by omission' mode prohibits the use of the direct aid intervention strategies, such as direct contracting with NGOs and the establishment of field offices. Instead, donors rely upon influencing the operation of multilateral and international organisations. Thus, for example, the British and Dutch governments relied heavily upon EU channels to deliver aid to Serbia, specifically ECHO and the Obnova fund for EfD. The existence of multilateral channels enabled these governments to argue that they were able to meet humanitarian need, while maximising their own distance from Serbia.

5.4 Blurring the lines: conditions and conditionality

Increasingly, humanitarian aid is portrayed as part of a coherent strategy of conflict reduction, in part because it is seen as able to mitigate the effects of political and military action undertaken by donor governments

themselves. Thus, for example, in Serbia, the EfD project grew out of a need to quell anxiety among southern EU member states regarding the impact of sanctions. In Macedonia, the outpouring of aid sought to salve the costs of the NATO-hastened mass expulsions of Kosovar Albanians.

At the same time, there was a strikingly strong sentiment in some quarters that humanitarian aid might also undermine political strategies designed to force a peace settlement. The problem is that, whereas the political versus humanitarian distinction is in fact relatively clear, at least in terms of intention, because of the ethical rule of impartiality imposed on humanitarian action, the distinction between 'good' or altruistically driven political action and national interest is much harder to define. This is particularly hard in an era of 'ethical' foreign policy, when foreign policy is assumed to have a moral dimension as well.

Thus the US and UK restriction on UN personnel and the UK restriction on funding of NGOs was widely perceived as an attempt to isolate and pressure the Taliban through the withdrawal of the UN. While the research did not focus on the US, in the case of the UK however, the 'politics' of the UK approach are probably more to do with the domestic bureaucratic politics between DFID and the UK NGOs, in which who is responsible for security, agency or funder, has played a role, a distaste for the Taliban and what they stand for, and a concern that aid was likely to be manipulated by them for their own ends. Thus the second, but largely ignored, element the DFID regulations to NGOs that contained the security conditions, imposed severe restrictions on any form of 'capacity building with ministries or technical departments. The coincidence of interest with a traditional Security Council partner would not have been missed of course, especially by other actors and is revealing of the shifts in the nature of 'politicisation'. Thus what from a DFID point of view was seen as a 'principled' stand, both on security and relations with the Taliban, was perceived by many the UK's partners, donor government and agencies, as a cynical political ploy. The UK position was 'politicised', but not for the reasons many took it to be.

A further problem is the apparently selective use of principles. In both Serbia and Afghanistan, that the 'conditions' for effective aid were not in place was used to justify minimal giving. This strategy necessarily risks creating some contradictions. For example, the UK has argued that the conditions do not exist for the delivery of effective and principled aid to Serbia, and queried the extent of humanitarian need in the country. At the same time, the UK provides funding to Serbia through ECHO and the UN. Avoiding such contradictions involves active engagement with implementing partners to define closely the conditions under which support is provided. This has been the tactic that the US among others has pursued with regard to WFP. Others use the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) as an implementing partner. Following allegations that the YRC is uncomfortably

close to the current government, it has been subject to what one senior UN official described as: ‘...a level of scrutiny not seen elsewhere, for example regarding its \$70/tonne overhead on delivery of food aid’.⁸¹ Responding to these concerns has demanded that UN and Red Cross officials spend considerable time briefing officials and congressmen in Washington.⁸²

Arguably, what this type of scenario represents is increased donor scrutiny of the accountability of humanitarian agencies and closer monitoring of their adherence to basic principles of impartiality and neutrality. What is telling, however, is that these concerns are not raised consistently across emergencies. It is the selectivity of this scrutiny that makes it difficult to resist the conclusion that the accountability and principles agendas are being co-opted to justify a new form of political humanitarianism.

The research suggests further that the use of humanitarian aid as a lever in conflict management is also problematic technically. In the case of Serbia, the EfD was designed to meet humanitarian need, but for political reasons. Not only were the decision-making and implementation procedures of the EU overwhelmingly complex, limiting the timeliness and scope of the programme, but the model also proved flawed in terms of the politics it used. In particular, politicians and diplomats have sought to anchor the legitimacy of the project in Serb civil society, in particular the independent opposition group, G17, that provided the initial EfD concept.⁸³ At the same time, the disunity of the opposition, combined with bureaucratic concerns regarding accountability, meant that the implementation of EfD was undertaken without the direct involvement of Serb opposition groups, but rather as a straightforward delivery of goods, monitored by an international logistics company. In this sense, it did not constitute an effective means of building the capacity or legitimacy of the opposition. This mechanism for implementation further compromised the political legitimacy of the project itself, which could no longer establish a direct link with the ‘good Serb’, resembling rather a crude piece of Western political engineering in a sovereign state.

Part of the reason why politicians and diplomats looked to aid budgets, and initially humanitarian aid budgets, to finance this sort of initiative is that they complain that ministries of foreign affairs lack funds to operate a political strategy.⁸⁴ The financial benefits of coherence to the diplomatic strand are therefore evident. At the same time, despite an emerging orthodoxy within aid circles that aid should be used as part of a strategy for conflict management, in relation to the case studies reported here, aid bureaucrats resisted the incorporation of humanitarian aid funds into the political strategies proposed by their diplomatic counterparts.

So, for example, one of the reasons why EfD remained a small, pilot project was because the EC was unable to secure additional voluntary contributions from aid ministries in EU member states. The Dutch government

actively resisted the use of ECHO funds to finance EfD, while DFID refused to contribute additional resources, despite FCO encouragement.⁸⁵

In Afghanistan, the scale of aid resources are dwarfed by the quantities of military aid provided by the country’s neighbours and the revenues gained from the drugs and transit trade. Furthermore, the Taliban’s goals have little to do with administration or welfare, but are rather concerned with the creation of an Islamic state, withholding aid is thus unlikely to be an effective approach.

In this context, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the absence of any major innovation in the tools of diplomacy, particularly in non-strategic countries, there is likely to be increasing political pressure on aid budgets to contribute to the new security agenda. At present official aid agencies seem ill-equipped to resist such pressure. They are treading an increasingly blurred line arguing that conflict reduction is a legitimate goal of aid, including humanitarian aid; and that conditionality is legitimate in order to ensure aid effectiveness, while also seeking to maintain humanitarian principles.

One tool that does appear to have proved effective in sharpening these lines is legislation. A significant part of ECHO’s argument against the use of aid funds to finance EfD was that it would have violated the regulation governing use of its funds.⁸⁶ This states that:

the sole aim [of humanitarian aid] ... is to prevent or relieve human suffering [and] is accorded to victims without discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, age, sex, age, nationality or political affiliation, and must not be guided by, or subject to, political considerations. (*Official Journal of the European Communities* 1996)

This argument seems have been persuasive, forcing the European Council and Commission to look elsewhere for funds.⁸⁷

5.5 Chapter summary

The evidence from the four case studies reinforces the findings of the analysis of global trends in international policy. In particular, it suggests that the model of coherence promised in the early 1990s of renewed political engagement and integrated management of political, humanitarian and developmental initiatives in conflict-affected countries remains largely elusive. Whereas the humanitarian part of the equation has undergone significant structural and conceptual shifts in order to accommodate coherence, the political part has not. The Macedonian case was exceptional in securing a high level of political engagement to promote a humanitarian end, and it is unlikely that similar circumstances will recur. What it demonstrated,

however, is that where there is a convergence of political and humanitarian interests, significant assets can be mobilised that secure positive humanitarian gains. However, the costs of this exercise to the multilateral system and to long-term protection regimes remain uncoun­ted.

More commonplace is a much more messy interpretation of 'coherence' characterised by:

- The delegation of responsibility for political analysis and management from the sphere of diplomacy to that of humanitarian action.
- In the absence of other effective tools, an increasing interest within diplomatic circles in using (or withholding) humanitarian assets as part of a political strategy. Such strategies not only jeopardise humanitarian principles, but their political yield would also seem marginal.
- Increasing overlap and confusion between the technical conditions required for effective accountability of humanitarian action, and political conditionality on humanitarian assistance, largely because operating conditions are perceived to be scrutinised more or less intensively in different countries depending on the particular political relations between donor and recipient countries.
- Increased information exchange, but a lack of clear leadership and sufficient capacity to translate robust political analysis into common programming tactics.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Coherence and liberal peace

6.1.1 'If you're not with us, you're against us'

In common with other policy fashions, such as participation and sustainable development, the concept of coherence risks losing its meaning. Unravelling the spaghetti-like strands of the coherence debate exposes a melange of expectations and meanings. A range of different types of coherence are embraced by the term: between aid and politics (political coherence); between different humanitarian actors (relief coordination); and between relief and development aid. Common to these different strands of debate is a concern to break down conceptual, institutional and budgetary boundaries in order to enhance the coherence of response.

What such discussions fail to appreciate is the idea that coherence is a process not an outcome. Of itself coherence is value neutral, it is as easy (if not easier) to be consistently wrong than right. The portrayal of coherence as good in itself is perhaps not as guileless as it first seems. Seen from another perspective, glossing over the issue of who is defining the content of coherent policies and assessing their 'rightness' is symptomatic of a particular hegemonic order. As such, even the act of questioning their legitimacy is beyond the pale.

Dillon and Reid (2000) have described this order as resting on the idea of a liberal peace that is shaping global governance. Tracing its ancestry back to the formation of consensus on policies such as structural adjustment,⁸⁸ this new order seeks conformity to norms of economic and political behaviour, ranging from trade liberalisation to democratisation. To paraphrase Jackson (1990), membership of the international community is no longer defined purely or primarily in juridical sovereignty, but is contingent upon states delivering its empirical elements.

This study is concerned with international policy towards those states that are either unwilling or unable to conform to international norms of statehood. By definition, humanitarian assistance in complex political emergencies⁸⁹ is delivered in contexts characterised by extensive abuses of human rights by state and non-state actors; breakdowns in public authority and administration; an absence of democratic institutions and processes; and strong parallel economies. It is in these contexts that the dominant liberal peace paradigm has most difficulty in engaging.

The liberal peace framework is reflected in an emerging consensus towards selectivity of development aid provision. Embodied in the idea of partnership, the UK White Paper, the Netherlands' aid policy under

Minister Herfkens, the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework and the UN's UNDAF, are the basic conditions that are assumed to be required for development to take place and for development assistance to be effective. Importantly, each of these initiatives assumes that these parameters are under the control of states, in other words, that the achievement of a liberal peace is a matter of internal policy choice.

The humanitarian caseload increasingly comprises those countries that have fallen off, or rather have been excluded from, the geo-political and the development assistance map. Historically, humanitarian aid has been exempt from the conditionalities applied to development assistance. The unconditional character of humanitarian aid was a two-way street: the absence of political conditions reflected the fact that, unlike development assistance, it did not signify international legitimation of state and non-state actors under whose control recipients live.⁹⁰

In diverse quarters, and for diverse reasons, the unconditional character of humanitarian assistance is now under thorough review. This is being driven by a complex range of factors, including:

- The recognition that conventional diplomacy, which relied on an appeal to states' interests, is proving ill-equipped to deal with 'post'-modern conflicts. New leverage points are thus being sought. The withholding, or selective provision, of humanitarian assistance is emerging as one potential tool in post-modern conflict-management techniques.
- The rewriting of the lessons of 1994 crisis in Rwanda: namely that because aid fuels conflict, aid interventions require political management. (This is in contrast to the findings of the *Joint Evaluation of the International Response* that concluded that it was the absence and ineffectiveness of the political response that compromised protection of and assistance to the victims.⁹¹)
- The perception that unconditional humanitarian assistance is not effective. Certain minimum conditions must be in place if aid is to be effective in aiding and protecting victims of conflict. These include: consent of warring parties; security; independent access for assessment; and monitoring of needs and distributions.
- That independence of humanitarian action has become an excuse for unaccountable humanitarian action. Working outside the control of state structures, and with weak links

to the communities they serve, humanitarian agencies are often hard pushed to quantify their impact and to justify their allocation of resources.

These political and operational critiques are increasingly conflated to justify the integration of humanitarian objectives within a wider international policy framework, and appeal to values of peace and of value for money. Less clear is precisely who is charge of this integrated agenda.

The answer to this question necessarily varies according to the location of the specific crisis. As argued in Chapter 3, the conventional division of labour between foreign ministries and departments and aid agencies has been reworked over the past decade. As the distinction between aid and foreign policy has broken down, replaced with the idea of international policy, so responsibility for implementing the liberal peace has become divided between respective departments according to the strategic (un)importance of a conflict. Within this division of labour, departments responsible for humanitarian policy are simultaneously at the bottom of the diplomatic pecking order, but in relation to the countries for which they are responsible, they are assuming considerable power and influence.⁹²

Such an analysis suggests that it would be wrong to conceive the ‘politicisation’ of humanitarian aid simply as politicians/diplomats coercively directing aid operations. Something more subtle and sophisticated than this is taking place. Aid agencies themselves are assuming responsibility for political engagement, in doing so they are filling the space largely vacated by departments and organisations with a political mandate. Thus, humanitarian aid is no longer a substitute for political action (Eriksson 1996), it is the primary form of political engagement responsible for delivering a liberal peace (Macrae 1998).

At first sight, the politics of good international citizenship, embraced by the UK in its Third Way foreign policy, and in similar terms by the Netherlands, appears to complement humanitarian values with its commitment to human rights. However, there are two problems that emerge with it.

First, why don’t all states subscribe to these values of a liberal peace? Second, what should be done when states do not subscribe to them?

The first question is clearly complex and space (intellectual and otherwise) precludes a detailed and definitive answer across countries. What is clear, however, is that current policy emphasises the internal causes of conflict, locating responsibility for their resolution within states (Macrae 1996). The assumption that these causes can be addressed by changes in states’ behaviour is what sustains current discussions regarding the use of aid as an incentive and disincentive for peace.

Yet such an approach sits awkwardly with history and the emerging emphasis on globalisation. Not only has external intervention complicated and fuelled internal dynamics, but the political economy of conflict extends beyond national borders, relying upon transnational networks (European Council 1997), driven in part by the forces of globalisation (Duffield 1998). The liberal peace model therefore risks fundamentally misunderstanding the nature of conflict, and is therefore ill-equipped to design solutions to it.⁹³

As indicated in Chapter 3, this has important implications for the legitimacy and feasibility of the idea of international community, embodied in Third Way foreign policy. Specifically, the effectiveness of selective political and aid engagement marginalises pariah states, it doesn’t deal with them. As humanitarian aid policy becomes integrated into this paradigm, so it becomes positioned within a particular set of values. In the process of this positioning, the principles that have guided humanitarian action for over a century — impartiality and neutrality — are necessarily compromised.

Neutrality — in other words, not taking a political position with respect to a conflict — is increasingly seen as unethical position.⁹⁴ By implication if one is not neutral, then one has a position, and increasingly this position is defined by the mono-ethics of the liberal peace. Importantly many humanitarian actors, particularly those who have their roots in development, share the tenets of this model. What is being slowly recognised, however, is that in claiming that aid can and should be used as part of a strategy of conflict management, the quality of humanitarian space is being sacrificed. Thus, some of the most prominent advocates of the ‘new humanitarianism’ are now revising it.

6.1.2 Beyond coherence: defining a complementary ‘politics’

The idea that humanitarian action is apolitical is clearly not sustainable. The political impact of humanitarian action on conflict has been well documented, particularly over the past decade (see, for example Duffield 1994; Keen 1991; Macrae & Zwi 1994). As argued above, less important than the process of coherence, is its content. Specifically, what constitutes the ‘right’ type of political framework to inform humanitarian action. Few of those interviewed had a clear answer to this question. Many recognised, however, that the failure to define this meant that humanitarian agencies were confused when their calls for ‘political action’ were answered, but answered ‘wrongly’.

In his history of the ICRC, Forsythe (1977) distinguishes between three types of politics:

- Realpolitik competition among actors in world politics for power, prestige and resources.

- Partisan politics, that is factional politics, competition among groups within a nation for what there is to get.
- World politics, in other words 'the competition and struggle to make and implement public policy'.

He argues that ICRC, perhaps the embodiment of humanitarianism, tries to avoid action motivated by a desire to help one actor win some sort of victory in world politics over another, or to help one faction triumph over a rival within a nation. But this does not mean that ICRC does not affect these forms of politics. Instead, what ICRC tries to engage in is 'world politics'. If the ICRC wishes to promote respect for IHL in armed conflicts, if it wishes to improve the international protection of political prisoner, it must engage in a struggle to get these values implemented in the public policy of nations.

Freyomon (1972, cited in Delorenzi 1999) sheds further light on the distinctions between different types of politics:

above all we should recognise that humanitarian action cannot be isolated from its political

context and that it therefore has a political content. This means that all humanitarian organisations *must define a long-term humanitarian policy based on a serious analysis of several actors* — this humanitarian policy in turn implies a humanitarian strategy distinct from tactical moves imposed by the variety of crisis. Neglect of this work of reflection leads to contradiction, confusion and what is worse, the degradation of humanitarian action to the level of an instrument of political actors (emphasis added).

In other words, that those involved in humanitarian action need to be clear regarding the terms under which they engage with public policy actors in conflict-affected countries themselves and elsewhere.

Figure 6.1 builds upon Forsythe's categorisation of politics. It shows how securing humanitarian space is contingent upon an active process of negotiating with other forms of politics within a particular conflict setting and internationally. Table 6.1 unpacks these categories further, identifies the key players within this political system and what drives them to respect or undermine humanitarian space.

Figure 6.1 The relationship between 'humanitarian politics' and other forms of politics

'Politicisation' of humanitarian assistance = where humanitarian politics overlaps with other forms of politics

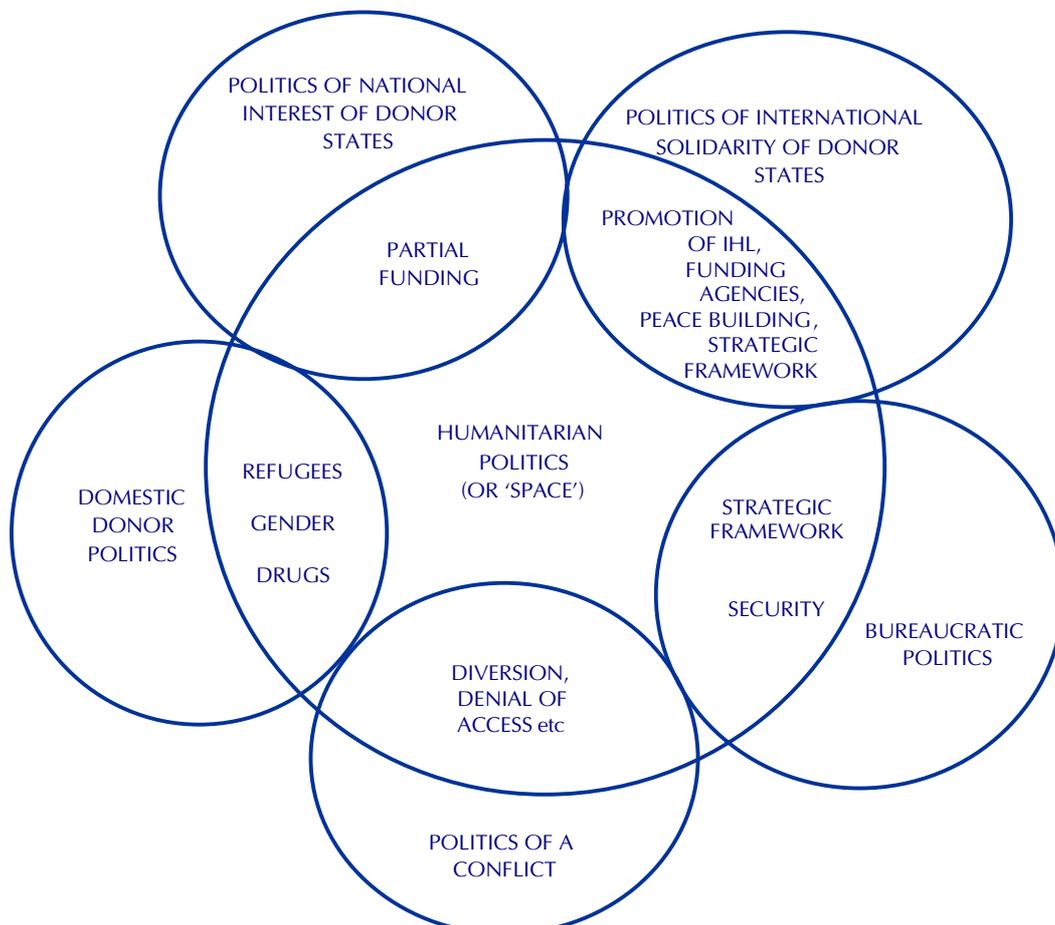


Table 6.1

Forms of politics affecting humanitarian 'space'

	National interest of donor states	International good citizenship	Domestic policies of donor states	Conflict politics	Humanitarian politics	Bureaucratic politics
Players	States Trans-national corporations (UN)	States, UN (NGOs)	Political parties	Warring parties, business (interested states)	Agencies, warring parties (UN, international community)	Agencies, donor ministries
Stakes	National power, wealth, survival	Peace, security, development, human rights	Government	The state, resources, people	Respect for IHL by warring parties	Empire building, policy implementation
Strategies/policy instruments	Diplomacy, trade, war	Development assistance, conditionality, sanctions, 'humanitarian' war, 'coherence'	Re-distribution, regulation etc.	Ethnic manipulation, predation, human rights abuse, manipulation of aid	Persuasion, dissemination, assistance (condemnation)	Restructuring, donor funding mechanisms, security, bilateralisation
Arena	Embassies, regional alliances, Security Council, WTO	UN, World Bank and IMF Development ministries, DAC, beneficiary states	Parliament, media	Country, regional supporters (UN)	Agency/ warring party negotiations, UN, (the press)	CAPs, UN reform, Strategic Framework
Key developments	Retreat from 'non-strategic' states, shift from Cold War proxies to 'third-party' intervention, re-definition of national security, sovereignty 'softer'	Concentration on 'good' countries, reductions in global oca, separation of DFID from FCO	Joined-up government, 'Third-Way' politics, increasing hostility to refugees	Growth of 'war economies', failed states	Broadening and deepening of humanitarian agenda, 'coherence'	Accountability, growing bureaucratic freedom in non-strategic areas
Rules (legal and 'informal')	National interest supreme value, but: international law, IHL	'Human security', peace and development good for all, 'long-term greater good justifies short-term compromises', human rights treaties, IHL	National Law		Conventionality: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, (discretion), but under threat from coherence agenda	Efficiency and effectiveness, financial regularity, 'Mandates rule'

Mapping categories like these against the findings of this research suggests that the shifting definition and dynamics of political interests is resulting in new opportunities and threats:

- In the sphere of *realpolitik*, foreign policy actors are making increasing claims on humanitarian aid. This was evident in the case of Energy for Democracy. More broadly, there is evidence that foreign policy actors are seeing humanitarian assistance as a potentially useful tool in conflict management and that they wish to institutionalise this, for example, by securing resources and defining a hierarchy of political management, with politicians in charge.⁹⁵ To a significant extent, these actors have been encouraged in this view by those aid actors who have claimed that aid can and should be part of an integrated political strategy.
- At the same time, the potential value of the politics of good international citizenship is that its commitment to principles provides a series of benchmarks that can be used to ensure that diplomatic interventions support rather than undermine humanitarian objectives. In the case of both Serbia and Macedonia, humanitarian actors used the law to remind political actors of their obligations in the affected country and elsewhere.
- This process of accountability is enhanced where there is a strong public constituency, reinforced by media exposure.
- Building this constituency is difficult, however. Different members of the humanitarian 'system' send different messages to the media, political actors and indeed to each other, regarding the terms under which they are engaging in complex emergencies. This fuels misunderstanding and suspicion, and further weakens the ability of these actors to sustain humanitarian space internationally and in relation to specific conflicts.
- Important gains have been made in overcoming some of the bureaucratic divisions that existed between aid and political organisations. Contacts have become routinised, enabling staff to familiarise themselves with different organisational cultures and to exchange information.
- The extent to which this has translated into joint planning, however, remains very limited. The strategic framework process is an obvious case where the objective of integrated planning was quickly relegated to the establishment of a complex aid management process. This testifies to the difficulty of working across bureaucratic lines, and to the difficulties of 'projectising peace' within an aid framework.
- Amid these shifting alliances and interests, the perceptions of the warring parties are rarely analysed, and this study has not been able to fill this gap substantively. Such evidence as does exist suggests that belligerents are keen observers of the conduct of humanitarian operations and very sensitive to any changes in the rules by which the humanitarian 'game' is played. The origins of the principles of neutrality and impartiality lie in a process of negotiation with military forces, not philosophers. They are highly pragmatic principles designed to achieve access and security. The erosion of respect for these principles within the international system itself was seen by many informants to have contributed to the increasing insecurity of aid staff.
- Thus, assuming that humanitarian aid might be used actively as a tool for conflict reduction is likely to prove counterproductive. This form of political humanitarianism seems more likely to provoke the withdrawal of consent by belligerents for even the most minimal delivery of relief.

This analysis militates against interpreting coherence as an integration of foreign policy and humanitarian objectives. Collapsing the boundaries between the objectives and operation of these two spheres is extremely problematic in theory and in practice. Instead, what is required is improved understanding between the different players regarding the rules of the game, and to define where their objectives and resources are complementary in terms of regulating potential conflicts.

The remainder of the report maps out a number of recommendations to donor governments, the UN and NGOs. These focus in particular on how to clarify the aid-politics relationship in law and in terms of institutional arrangements.

6.2 Recommendations to donor governments

These recommendations are based on the findings of the two donor government case studies and are therefore directed primarily at British and Dutch humanitarian/foreign policy actors.

6.2.1 Investing in politics

Effective engagement in conflict-affected countries at the periphery requires not only well-managed aid programmes, but investment in diplomacy.

Such investment is required not only to generate accurate political intelligence and analysis, but to define

effective strategies for engagement. The relative poverty of diplomacy in this domain is recognised by aid and foreign policy actors alike. An interpretation of coherence that relies upon aid actors assuming the primary burden for conflict reduction and resolution is not only very unlikely to prove ineffective, but represents a tragically disingenuous interpretation of the lessons of the Rwanda genocide.

6.2.2 Investing in new forms of aid

Part of the reason why humanitarian assistance has become the primary vehicle for international policy is that the conditions do not exist for the re-establishment of conventional, bilateral development aid relations. In the context of a concentration of development aid relations to countries that are performing well, in poor-performing countries, relief aid is now required to fulfil additional, developmental roles, for which it was not designed. This suggests that rather than overloading relief and relief-type aid instruments with additional objectives,

- a thorough, system-wide review of aid instruments that can be deployed in poor performing countries, particularly those where the state is a belligerent in an active conflict and responsible for widespread abuses of human rights.

6.2.3 Codifying principles: the role of law

A striking feature of humanitarian policy in both countries is that it lacks a statutory basis. Such definition as does exist rests upon an analysis of content, not of principles, nor does it codify the political distinction between relief and development assistance.

In both the UK and the Netherlands, changes in political and bureaucratic leadership have prompted innovation and experimentation in humanitarian policy. While important, potentially problematic is the lack of systematic evaluation and scrutiny of these experiments to inform future policy.⁹⁶

Of particular concern in this respect is the conceptual and institutional integration of humanitarian aid and conflict reduction/prevention policy. The potential for significant tensions between these two objectives has been a constant theme of this report. The integration of these objectives compromises principles of impartiality and neutrality. Evidence from this study and others (see, for example Uvin 1999) suggests that such integration is unlikely to be effective. This is particularly the case in situations of active conflict. It is therefore recommended that:

- Donor governments should codify in domestic law their commitment to impartial and independent humanitarian assistance. The objective of such assistance should be to: prevent and alleviate human suffering; to

protect life and health; and ensure respect for the human being.

- In the UK, the proposed International Development Act would provide an important opportunity to enact such a definition.
- Ensuring consistency across countries in the interpretation of the conditions required for effective humanitarian action will be central to its defence against charges of ‘politicisation’. In the case of DFID, decentralisation of humanitarian decision-making implies a particular need to monitor the definition of humanitarian response across departments.
- The OECD-DAC should encourage a common standard of definition of humanitarian aid, which could be reflected in reporting on aid statistics. The redrafting of the *DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Development and Peace* in autumn 2000 might present an opportunity for such debate.

Such a definition, which rests upon principle rather than content, would reflect international humanitarian law and be in line with the definition of ‘humanitarian’ provided by the International Court of Justice in 1986.⁹⁷ Useful examples of such legislation include the regulation governing the use of ECHO funds (Official Journal of the European Communities 1996) and that governing Swiss Disaster Relief (Swiss Federal Council 1997). Both these bodies have used this legislation to inform their humanitarian aid programming in complex political contexts, such as Serbia, and, in the case of ECHO to stave off pressure to use humanitarian aid for political purposes.

Such legislation would consolidate the emerging trend in both countries towards institutional separation between humanitarian aid and conflict-reduction programmes. This trend is to be encouraged, signalled by: departmental restructuring (DFID); budgetary clarity; and ministerial-level commitment to safeguarding humanitarian principles.⁹⁸

6.2.4 Bilateralisation of humanitarian assistance

There is a strong trend towards bilateralisation of humanitarian assistance. This is evidenced by:

- bilateralisation of funding flows — such as earmarking contributions to UN agencies and direct contracting with NGOs;
- increasing proximity of donor governments to operational decision-making through the use of donor coordination bodies, and direct lobbying of individual agencies regarding particular interventions;
- the ‘professionalisation’ and institutionalisation of donor government relations with their implementing partners through, for example,

'Friends of ...' groups, bilateral lobbying, and in the UK the development of Institutional Strategy Papers; and

- the establishment of field offices.

This trend has been driven by legitimate concerns regarding the accountability of humanitarian action, but is easy to confuse (intentionally or otherwise) with increasing political interference in humanitarian operations. This trend risks compromising the independence of humanitarian action. This independence is fundamental to the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention. If humanitarian organisations are seen to be part of governments' foreign policy objectives, then their right to operate as 'humanitarian' actors is compromised in law and in practice (see judgement of the International Criminal Court 1986).

In a number of cases,⁹⁹ governments' concerns regarding whether the conditions exist for the delivery of effective and accountable aid have been conflated with foreign policy interests, resulting in a *de facto* political conditionality on humanitarian assistance.

This study concludes that while it is legitimate and important for donor governments to be concerned with promoting the conditions for effective humanitarian action, the introduction of political conditionality on humanitarian aid is inappropriate and is unlikely to conform with public expectations of humanitarianism.¹⁰⁰ The UK's position on this issue is particularly important to clarify, given both the rate of policy evolution in this area and its more prominent political position on the international stage through its permanent membership of the Security Council and its increasing willingness to engage militarily in internal wars, most recently in Sierra Leone.

The study therefore recommends that:

- Donor governments, in partnership with the UN, review the trend towards bilateralisation of financing of multilateral agencies. This might usefully be coupled with a discussion regarding the channels through which donor governments seek to influence multilateral policy. The proliferation of 'Friends of ...' groups, and the apparent increase in bilateral approaches to multilateral bodies tends to create the impression of policy being introduced through the back door, politicising multilateral institutions, and undermining still further the value of mechanisms such as ECOSOC.
- In consultation with its partners, in due course DFID should review its experience of Institutional Strategy Papers, focusing in particular on the issue of whether the model of conditional unearmarked funding it lays out provides the balance required between accountability and independence of humanitarian action.
- The Dutch government continues in its efforts to promote common reporting standards to donors for official humanitarian aid spending, and that these reporting guidelines include reference to humanitarian principles and how implementing agencies seek to implement these.
- Donors support a system-wide discussion regarding the minimum conditions required to be in place for effective and accountable humanitarian action, that these are made explicit and that innovative mechanisms be introduced to promote independent scrutiny of these conditions in conflict situations.¹⁰¹
- As donors seek to enhance the accountability of their partners, and increase their operational reach in order to achieve this, so mechanisms for enhancing their own accountability merit review.
- Donor governments, in consultation with implementing partners, and particularly OCHA should review the experience of donor-led coordination bodies and other mechanisms such as field offices, to assess their added value. Of particular importance is the question as to whether these have yielded opportunities for effective, complementary political intervention to support the creation of humanitarian space or whether they undermine multilateral coordination efforts.
- Evaluations of donor-funded emergency relief operations are to be encouraged, in particular where they promote analysis of the systems of decision-making and monitoring performance within donor agencies themselves. In order to maintain the independence of the evaluation, and to enable cross-departmental scrutiny where necessary, it is likely to be more appropriate for such evaluations to be managed by a body external to the aid department itself, such as the UK National Audit Office.

6.2.5 Proportionality of humanitarian spending

A key indicator of the impartiality of humanitarian assistance is that it is given in proportion to need, not governed by political considerations. At present, no accepted methodology exists that correlates need with humanitarian expenditure. Until such methods are adopted, as a crude indicator, donor governments should therefore:

- Report annually on the per capita humanitarian aid spending in those countries assisted. Once a common methodology has been adopted, these statistics could usefully be reported to the DAC.

6.2.6 Human resource and representational issues

As foreign policy becomes reconfigured as international policy, so this raises the issue of the skills and management structure required to represent the aid and political interests internationally. This is a complex area, and one that fell outside the detailed scope of this study. It is an issue that was raised, however, by a number of informants, and their comments are reflected here.

- UK permanent missions to the UN receive primary guidance on humanitarian issues from DFID, with FCO making relatively little input. This raises the question of whether DFID or FCO staff should be occupying these posts. The deployment of a DFID humanitarian adviser to New York is to be welcomed in this respect.
- Diplomatic staff seemed intuitively to interpret coherence to require a hierarchy of international interests, with traditional foreign policy interests legitimately occupying the top layer. Increased exposure of these staff to international humanitarian law and the principles guiding the use of humanitarian assistance would promote greater consistency of donor governments' positions abroad and ensure that it reflects these laws.

6.3 Recommendations to the UN

As in the bilateral sphere, the past decade has seen a number of important innovations within the UN system with regard to the principles guiding international responses to complex emergencies, and changes in the organisational capacity to deliver these. As indicated in the introduction, the UN was a secondary 'case study', however, it is possible to draw the following conclusions from the evidence reviewed.

The UN is being increasingly sidelined as a political and humanitarian actor. This is resulting in a vicious cycle whereby poor performance deters bilateral investment so further diminishing its performance. The costs of such a strategy in terms of global governance are self-evident, and at a global level it is difficult to define more than platitudinous recommendations regarding the need to reverse this trend.

Enhancing the effectiveness of the UN's humanitarian response in complex emergencies might usefully benefit from consideration of the following recommendations.

6.3.1 The division of political and humanitarian labour: the role of OCHA and SRSGs

The reform of DHA to create OCHA in 1998 has been widely welcomed throughout the UN system and among donor governments. The shift from operational to

strategic coordination, and from operational agency to advocate has yielded important benefits in terms of the office's credibility internationally (its field-level impact was beyond the scope of this study). One indicator of this is the increased demand for OCHA to contribute briefings to political bodies, including the UNSC and donor groupings such as the HLWG. These briefings were widely seen to be more useful than those provided by departments with an explicitly political mandate.

In this context, there is a risk that OCHA could become a victim of its own success. In common with a trend becoming evident in the donor government sphere, there is a risk that OCHA becomes (or is seen to become) the body for defining and implementing a new political humanitarianism. This suggests the need:

- for OCHA to focus its advocacy work on informing political actors of the humanitarian implications of their actions, and to advocating respect for the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian action, as opposed to proposing particular political courses of action.

It is also recommended that:

- the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General approve the ECHA-drafted guidance regarding the relationship between SRSGs and Humanitarian Coordinators.

This outlines clearly a framework for complementarity of humanitarian and political action, rather than for their integration. Interviews conducted with officials in the UN system and partner NGOs at headquarters and at field level highlighted the very significant risks for the UN of losing its humanitarian credentials if it pursues the line proposed in the Fafo report (Fafo Peace Implementation Network 1999). This issue merits urgent resolution.

6.3.2 Capacity for political analysis and representation

The current division of labour between DPA and DPKO appears to many anachronistic, reflecting a Cold War analysis of the political continuum from war to peace negotiations to the deployment of peacekeepers. The division potentially also stretches scarce resources still further, particularly duplicating geographical expertise. Restructuring this arrangement might free resources to undertake more field-based missions.

More generally there is considerable scope for:

- Conducting independent evaluation of UN-led political intervention and its capacity for analysis in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Study II of the *Joint Evaluation of the International Response in Rwanda* provides a model for such an analysis.

- Examining the scope for secondment of political staff to humanitarian agencies in order to boost capacity for political analysis to inform humanitarian aid programming. This could boost the humanitarian system capacity for political negotiation and the UN's political presence where a mandate for a political mission was not forthcoming from the UNSC. The humanitarian function of such a secondment must be maintained, limiting information flows into the political track.

6.3.3 The strategic framework

The original design of the Strategic Framework (SF) represented an integrationist model of coherence. This model has proved flawed conceptually, and extremely difficult to implement for a variety of operational and bureaucratic reasons. The bitterness surrounding the SF experience is baffling and depressing to those outside the system, further denting the organisation's credibility. There is widespread fear that the impetus behind the SF initiative has been lost and that it will founder once again in Sierra Leone.

The original rationale behind the SF process remains valid: namely the need for the different elements of the UN system to work together effectively in order to achieve peace and security. However, the model proposed generated significant tensions. These have been located largely in the sphere of bureaucratic politics and the depth of these battles has obscured the perhaps more fundamental set of tensions that are now being revealed. These are between the goal of conflict reduction and humanitarian principles — and between humanitarian and developmental goals. Addressing these tensions will imply:

- Revitalising the political track, which has largely fallen out of the Strategic Framework process. This track should be seen as complementary to that pursued by humanitarian actors, rather than driving it.
- Clarifying the terms under which the UN engages with the Taliban to undertake both humanitarian and development initiatives.

6.4 Recommendations to humanitarian organisations and NGOs

6.4.1 Defining 'humanitarianism' and politics

As the quote in the frontispiece suggests, NGOs have been quick to call for political action, but then frequently been uneasy when it has arrived.

In the UK, in particular, there is a widespread unease that humanitarianism has become politicised. The year

of 1998 represented a particularly low point in UK NGOs relationship with DFID in this respect, a situation that has improved somewhat since their meeting with the Secretary of State in February 1999. What is striking in both case study countries is the lack of a common position between NGOs in terms of their expectations of the relationship between official aid and 'politics'. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that official donors have deployed many of the same arguments originally tabled by NGOs and academics to inform their own rethinking on the aid-politics relationship. This suggests that:

- There is a need for NGO fora to debate (confidentially if necessary) current key issues in the humanitarian domain, such as their relationship with international political actors involved in conflict management, aiming for at least a minimum level of consensus. VOICE, ICVA and Interaction provide international fora for such a debate, while BOAG and the Disasters Emergency Committee have a more specific role in terms of UK policy.

Despite constituting a significant share of NGO 'business', the majority of UK NGOs at least lack substantive in-house capacity for policy analysis in the humanitarian sphere. This weakens their ability to respond to emerging policy trends and requires strengthening. Such policy capacity might usefully be invested in:

- NGOs developing more consistent and credible policy and operational guidelines regarding their own engagement with political actors in conflict-affected countries and internationally. Once again, the strain between the more developmental, solidarity approaches that characterise many large agencies and the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality are in particularly urgent need of review in this respect.

Smaller NGOs are likely to need to buy into a common pool of analysis, rather than be able to afford their own dedicated policy analysis capacity.

6.4.2 Operationalising principles

In a recent paper Stockton (2000)¹⁰² argues that the development of the NGO/Red Cross Code of Conduct can be seen as a 'deal' between NGOs and official aid agencies. The terms of this deal were: 'we (the NGO community) will adopt a more principled approach to the implementation of humanitarian operations; in return you respect our independence'. The same paper, together with other recent research (Leader 1999; Slim & McConnan 1998) suggests that the majority of NGOs have been quicker to subscribe to principles than to implement them. The problems lie both in the potential contradictions inherent in the codes themselves, poor

training and management structures to support staff in their implementation, and, of course the difficulty of delivering principled aid in conflict settings.

This policy-implementation gap undermines NGOs' claims to unconditional and unregulated access to public funds, and legitimises closer donor scrutiny of NGO performance and operational decision-making. In this regard, the report therefore recommends that:

- NGOs review their commitments to existing codes of conduct and their capacity to adhere to them, assess the continued relevance and appropriateness of these codes and develop plans, including peer review and independent monitoring, to enhance adherence to them. One particular initiative that deserves wider support from the NGO community in this regard is the Humanitarian Ombudsman.

6.4.3 Creating and maintaining a constituency for humanitarian action

The research suggests that public opinion and public scrutiny of international political action can be a potent force for ensuring that the 'right' kind of politics complement humanitarian action. Equally, this partially informed public opinion can undermine humanitarian action. This suggests the need for sustained advocacy, to inform the general public in donor and recipient countries regarding humanitarian principles and the need for political actors to respect them. NGOs are in a powerful position to develop such advocacy positions. Such investment requires sustaining a minimum level of independent funding in order to enable effective advocacy with regard to donor government behaviour.

6.5 Conclusions

By its very nature, humanitarian action is political. As Mark Duffield has argued, it is a remarkably radical form of political action, seeking to defy the logic of warfare, as well as the more authoritarian calls for self-help smuggled in under a 'developmentalist' banner. This study was concerned to chart the nature of this humanitarian politics and its changing relationship with other forms of political action.

What it suggests is that the primary failure of international policy towards conflict remains in the political realm, not the humanitarian. This means learning the lesson of Rwanda (and the rest), which was not that aid should resolve conflict and genocide, but that prevention of massive abuse of human rights required timely and effective political and military intervention. This is the responsibility of politicians and diplomats, not aid actors. By sleight of hand the coherence called for in the aftermath of events in 1994 has been rewritten such that aid actors are simultaneously blamed for having a negative political impact, while assuming the mantle of diplomats and soldiers. Humanitarian actors thus need to become more aware not only of the political economy of the contexts in which they work, but of the aid processes of which they themselves are a part.

The study does not suggest returning to a halcyon period of 'pure' humanitarianism, if such ever existed. Rather it advocates a more articulate division of political and humanitarian labour, based upon comparative advantage and mandate, where the boundary between the two is marked, and where the rules for their interaction are clearly articulated.

Annex 1

List of Interviews

London

Terry Alloway, Asia Dept, FCO, 15 February 2000, London

Matthew Baugh, Head, Kosovo Section, Conflict and Humanitarian Aid Dept, DFID, 8 February 2000, London

Sarah Beeching, Head, Conflict and Security Policy Section, CHAD, DFID, 7 October 1999, London

William Benson, Professional Adviser to the International Development Committee, 16 November 1999, London

Matthew Carter, Head, Emergencies Section, CAFOD, 30 November 1999, London

Roger Clarke, DFID, CHAD, 14 February 2000, London

Sarah Collinson and Jeff Chinnock, Northern Affairs Unit, Action Aid, 22nd November 1999, London

Will Day, Executive Director, CARE UK, 2 December 1999, London; 14 February 2000, London

James Downer, United Nations Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2 December, London

Tony Faint, Head, International Division, DFID, 15 December 1999, London

Dylan Hendrikson, CDS, 4 November 1999, London

Rob Holden, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, DFID, 27 October 1999, London

Mukesh Kapila, Head, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, DFID, 29 November 1999, London

Simon Mansfield, Greater Horn of Africa Department, DFID, 7 October 1999, London

Peter Marsden, BAAG, 21 February 2000, London

Jonathan Marshall Head, Former Yugoslavia Section, Eastern Adriatic Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 February 2000, London

Dianna Melrose, Policy Planners, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 19 October 1999, London

Sally Morpeth, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 19 October 1999, London

Chris Musgrave, Macedonia Desk, Eastern Adriatic Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office 8 February 2000, London

Alistair Newton, Head, Economic and Political Section, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2 December 1999, London

David Sand-Smith, Head, Aid Policy Department, DFID, 15 December 1999, London

Frances Stephenson, Head of Programmes, Medecins Sans Frontières UK, 29 November 1999, London

Cathy Welch, Aid Policy Dept, DFID, 15 February 2000

Elizabeth Winter, BAAG, 28 February 2000, London

Geneva

Francois Bugnion, Diplomatic Adviser, 23 November 1999, Geneva

Ernest Chipman, OCHA, 23,25 November 1999, Geneva

Sanda Cohen, Dutch Mission, 25 November 1999, Geneva

Dr Bruce Eshaya-Chauvin, Head, Health and Relief Division, 23 November 1999, Geneva

Martin Griffiths, Director, Henry Dunant Centre, 24 November 1999, Geneva

Marion Harroff Tavel, Political Adviser to the Directorate, 23 November 1999, Geneva

Joanne Kalley, UKMIS 25 November 1999, Geneva

Pirko Korula, UNHCR, 24 November 1999, Geneva

Rene Kosirnik, Deputy Director of International Law and Communication, 23 November 1999, Geneva

Nicholas Morris, UNHCR, 24 November 1999, Geneva

Peter Walker, Head, Disaster Policy Unit, IFRC, 25 November 1999, Geneva

The Netherlands

Austen Davies, Executive Director, MSF-Holland, 8 December 1999, Amsterdam

Margot de Jong, Senior Policy Adviser, United Nations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1999, The Hague

Frederique de Man, Director, Political Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1999, The Hague

Jacques de Milliano, former General Director and President of Medecins Sans Frontieres, Holland, 8 December 1999, Amsterdam

Marion Kappeyne van de Coppello, Director, Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1999, The Hague

Joop Nijssen, Political Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 December 1999, The Hague

Carlijne Pauwels, Donor Liaison Officer, MSF-Holland, 8 December 1999, Amsterdam

Peter Potman, Deputy Head, United Nations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1999, The Hague

Mariett Schurmann, Humanitarian Aid Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 December 1999, The Hague

Ferdinand Smit, Deputy Head, Humanitarian Aid Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 December 1999, The Hague

Jan Timmer, Dutch Red Cross, 7 December 1999, The Hague

Dr Oda van Cranenburgh, Leiden University, 6 December 1999

Carlijne van Dullemans, Advisory Council on International Affairs, 6 December 1999, The Hague

Jacques Willemse, Dutch Inter-Church Aid, 8 December 1999, Amsterdam

New York

David Angell, Counsellor, Canadian Mission to the United Nations, 1 November 1999, New York

Martin Barbour, UNOCHA, 3 November 1999, New York

David Bassioni, UNOCHA, 5 November 1999, New York
Mark Dalton, UNOCHA, 1 November 1999, New York

Claude Bruderlein, Harvard University, 3 November 1999, New York

Chris Coleman, Head, Policy Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 4 November 1999, New York

Stewart Eldon, Deputy Head of Mission, UK Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 1 November 1999, New York

Bradley Forester, UNOCHA, 4 November 1999, New York

Helena Fraser, UNOCHA, 3 November 1999, New York

Andrew Gilmour, Department of Political Affairs, 3 November 1999, New York

Michele Griffin, UNDP, 2 November 1999, New York

Mona Hammam, WFP, 3 November 1999, New York

Masood Hyder, Secretariat, United Nations Development Group, UNDP, 5 November 1999, New York

Bruce Jones, UNOCHA, 1 November 1999, New York

Sylvie Junod/Patrick Zahnd, International Committee of the Red Cross, 5 November 1999, New York

Nils Katsberg, Head Emergency Operations, UNICEF, 5 November 1999, New York

Michael Keating, United Nations Development Programme, 3 November 1999, New York

Prof. Semakula Kiwanuka, Ugandan Perm Rep, New York

Amb. Kwanuka, Uganda Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 4 November 1999, New York
Philip O'Brien, UNICEF, 3 November 1999, New York

Alan March, Counsellor (Development), Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 4 November 1999, New York

Jamie McGoldrick, UNOCHA, 3 November 1999, New York

Michael Moller, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, 2 November 1999, New York

Bacre N'Diacre, Head of Office UNHCHR, 3 November 1999, New York

Vassily A Nebenzia, Federation of Russia, Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 5 November 1999, New York

Babu Rahman, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 November 1999, New York

John Renniger, Asia Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, 4 November 1999, New York

Mark Runacres, Counsellor, UK Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 1 November 1999, New York

Laurie Shesteck, USAID, US Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 5 November 1999, New York

Luc Shillings, Royal Netherlands Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 1 November 1999, New York

Belgrade

Lorenzo Amberg, Counsellor, Embassy of Switzerland 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Robert Dann, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA, 15 February 2000, Belgrade

Robert Gordon, Head of Section, British Interests Section of the Embassy of Brazil, 15 February 2000, Belgrade

Kayoko Gotoh, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA, 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Hugo Klijn, Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Netherlands Embassy, 15 February 2000, Belgrade

Jasna Kronja, Project Officer, Care International, Yugoslavia, 16 February 2000, Belgrade

David Lythgoe, Head of Office, ECHO, 16 February 2000, Belgrade

Hannu Mantyaara, Ambassador, Embassy of Finland, 16 February 2000, Belgrade

Suzana Mrgic, Project Officer, G17, 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Juha Ottman, Second Secretary, Embassy of Finland, 16 February 2000, Belgrade

Robert Painter, Head of Office, OCHA, 15 February 2000, Belgrade

John Roche, Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator, ICRC 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Marina Skuric-Prodanovic, FRY Programme Representative, Oxfam, 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Peter Stocker, Head of Delegation for the FRY, ICRC, 17 February 2000, Belgrade

Veerapong Vongvarotai, Assistant Representative (Programmes), UNHCR, 16 February 2000, Belgrade

Skopje

Amin Awad, Representative, UNHCR, 21 February 2000, Skopje

Mark Dickinson, Ambassador, UK Embassy, 23 February 2000, Skopje

Zola Dowell, Oxfam UK, 21 February 2000, Skopje

Nick Ford, Country Director, CRS, 23 February 2000, Skopje

Ataul Karim Head, UNMIK Liaison Office, 21 February 2000, Skopje

Zoran Jolewski, Presidential Adviser, 21 February 2000, Skopje

Eddie McLoughney, Country Representative, UNICEF 22 February 2000, Skopje

Stephan Nikolovski, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 February 2000, Skopje

John Penny, Office of the European Union, 22 February 2000, Skopje

Jan Plantinga, First Secretary, Royal Netherlands Embassy, 22 February 2000, Skopje

Francois Stamm, Head of Delegation, ICRC, 21 February 2000, Skopje

MA Stibbe, First Secretary, Embassy of the Netherlands, 22 February 2000, Skopje

Stephan Tanic, ECHO, 23 February 2000, Skopje

Tony Winton, Head of Office, DFID Support Team, 21 February 2000, Skopje

Islamabad

Umar Daudzi, UNDP Afghanistan Deputy, 23 February, Islamabad

Eric de Mull, UN Coordinator Afghanistan, 17 February, Islamabad

Antonio Donini, UNOCHA, 24 February, Islamabad

Anne Freckelton, British High Commission, 24 February, Islamabad

Stephen Green, Head of Evaluations, WFP Rome, 17 December, Rome 1999

Ruedi Hager, Resident Rep, SDC, 23 February 2000, Islamabad

Chris Johnson, Country Rep, Oxfam, 19 February 2000, Islamabad

Chris Kaye, UNOCHA, 18 February, Islamabad

Mikael Lindvall, First Secretary, Swedish Embassy, 25 February 2000, Islamabad

Dr Zareen Naqvi, World Bank, Islamabad

Samantha Reynolds, UNHCS, 17 February, Islamabad
Michael Sacket, WFP, 18 February 2000, Islamabad

Claire Smith, Political Counsellor, High Commission,
24 February 2000, Islamabad

Koichiro Tanaka, Political Affairs Officer, UNSMA, 23
February 2000, Islamabad

Dr Lowry Taylor, Office of Political Affairs, US Embassy,
Islamabad, 25 February 2000, Islamabad

Govert Visser, Afghanistan Prog, Dutch Embassy, 24
February 2000, Islamabad

Andrew Wilder, SCF US, 24 February 2000, Islamabad

Kabul

Georges Dutreix, MSF, Head of Mission, 20 February
2000, Kabul

Brig Gen Jan-G Isberg, Senior Military Adviser, UNSMA,
19 February 2000, Kabul

Jolyon Leslie, UN Regional Coordinator, 20 February
2000, Kabul

Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister, 20 February 2000,
Kabul

Annex 2

The Advisory Group

Chaloka Beyani, London School of Economics and Political Science

Michael Clarke, Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College

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Martin Griffiths, Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

Marion Harroff-Tavel, International Committee of the Red Cross

Bruce Jones, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Mukesh Kapila, Department for International Development

Dianna Melrose, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Caroline Moorehead

Sally Morphet, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Lewis Sida, Save the Children Fund UK

Ferdinand Smit/Peter Knoppe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

Paul Smith-Lomas, Oxfam GB

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Endnotes

¹ For a review of the literature on the changing conceptualisation of sovereignty in the post-Cold War era see: Dixon, R. (1999) 'Post-Cold War sovereignty: a critical review of the literature in International Relations', mimeo prepared for the Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI, London.

² Section 3.2.5 (bilateralisation of humanitarian response) and Section 4.4 (articulation of UN and donor member states) describe the mechanisms by which Western political actors also exert influence over the paradigms and practice of international organisations.

³ Randel (1994), for example, estimated that in 1993, 97 per cent of relief aid provided by the European Commission (soon to become the world largest single donor of relief aid) was allocated to complex political emergencies. Similarly in 1994, the World Food Programme (WFP) spent only \$19 million on meeting the primary effects of natural disasters, compared with more than \$1.5 billion in conflict-related emergencies (Webb 1996).

⁴ Such as the EC's (1996) 'Communication to the European Parliament and Council on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development', March, Brussels; and the Development Assistance Committee (1997) *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation*, OECD, Paris.

⁵ A Foreign and Commonwealth Office note ('FRY/Kosovo: The Way Ahead. UK view of the legal base for the use of force', 7 October 1998) cited in Roberts (1999) thus argued that:

'There is convincing evidence of an impending humanitarian catastrophe ... We judge on the evidence of FRY's handling of Kosovo throughout this year that a humanitarian catastrophe cannot be averted unless Milosevic is dissuaded from further repressive acts, and that only the use of force will achieve this objective. The UK's view is therefore, that, as matters now stand and if action through the Security Council is not possible, military intervention by NATO is lawful on the grounds of military necessity.'

⁶ Emphasising that aid was not to serve foreign policy interests was particularly important in light of the fact that the previous year the High Court had found against the government in its judgement on the Pergau Dam scandal. While the Court had found no legal grounds for a priori preventing the use of aid for a political purpose, it concluded that aid funds must pass tests of developmental and economic soundness. Thus, if the UK investment in Pergau had *both* served a political interest and satisfied tests of developmental soundness then it would have been lawful; as it did not pass the latter test, it was unlawful.

⁷ See, for example, evidence of Barry Ireton to the International Development Committee 9 June 1998.

⁸ This is confirmed by interviews conducted during the course of this study. DFID's approaches to other donor governments, in which it emphasised the potential dangers of providing aid and the negative political consequences of aid being abused by the junta, were seen as an attempt to discourage them from providing humanitarian assistance during this period, and were criticised and resented. A number of representatives of British NGOs thought that the episode signalled the breakdown of mutual trust that had previously characterised their relations with EMAD.

⁹ See, for example, Maxwell and Buchanan-Smith (1994); evidence by International Alert to the IDC (1998) which argues that: 'There is no such thing as neutral aid, it is all political, if not in motivation, then certainly in impact'; also the evidence given by Mikael Barfod of ECHO to IDC, 20 October 1998, in which he argued:

'The other model (of humanitarian aid) where we are actually moving to now is much more strategic. There you would actively say there is no way that we can handle a situation without linking up with human rights issues, without linking up with development to understand the real impact. We have to be part of the political process leading up to peace, that is what we are there for really; it is not to save someone today so he is killed with his brother tomorrow.'

¹⁰ This was recognised by the Secretary of State, who noted in February 1999 that:

'In recent months there has been active disagreement and different interpretations between DFID and a number of NGOs about the linkages between humanitarian life-saving objectives and longer-term conflict prevention/management objectives.'

Opening statement to the DFID-NGO Roundtable on humanitarian issues.

¹¹ For example, the Chief Executive of one of the UK's largest NGOs involved in relief wrote to the Permanent Secretary on 9 December 1998, seeking clarification of DFID's interpretation of its humanitarian principles. In particular it queried whether DFID was committed to the principle of impartiality, and was deliberately reducing the value of its humanitarian assistance budget. It also highlighted concerns that the implementation of the tenth principle laid out by DFID — namely transparent and explicit discussion with partners — was not being realised in practice.

¹² See also, Leader, N and J Macrae (2000) 'Terms of Engagement: Conditions, Conditionality and

Humanitarian Action. Report on an ODI/Henry Dunant Centre working meeting 3–4 May', *HPG Report No 6*, Overseas Development Institute, London.

¹³ For example, following the publication of the IDC report in 1999, there appears to have been no mechanism established to discuss its findings with regard to DFID policy, and its implications, for example, with respect to DFID's involvement of the Kabbah government in exile, and allegations regarding conditionality on humanitarian aid. The Aid Policy Department does not act as a focal point for mediating inter-departmental differences in this respect, in part, one imagines because CHAD is responsible for policy oversight. Like other policy coordination bodies, this role is potentially complicated by its own operationality.

¹⁴ Field offices are established according to needs and priorities and are often deployed to meet the short-term demands of operations, thus in November 1999 there were as many as seven, but by July 2000 this had reduced to one.

¹⁵ The Humanitarian Policy Group has designed such a research study on various aspects of bilateralisation, which is planned to start in Autumn 2000.

¹⁶ The planned expansion of the DEC into a policy forum, as well as a fund-raising mechanism, has yet to materialise. The British Overseas Aid Group (BOAG) remains divided on humanitarian policy.

¹⁷ Importantly, this document added to the objectives of the Dutch aid programme that of '...achieving peace and dealing with violence conflict, including those of a non-economic character, whether within or between states' (page 124).

¹⁸ This limited the number of countries to which bilateral assistance was given according to the degree of poverty, the existence of progressive social and economic policies, the extent of unsatisfied aid requirements, and finally the extent of respect for human rights.

¹⁹ For example in 1993, Angola, Bosnia and Cambodia qualified only for relief or rehabilitation assistance (see *A World of Dispute*).

²⁰ Interview, Ferdinand Smit, at Humanitarian Aid Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague, 7 December 1999.

²¹ These were that relief should be: targeted on clearly defined population groups; take the form of goods that meet basic needs; fund only additional activities that otherwise would not be funded; adequately supervise aid expenditures and channels.

²² Interestingly, in his speech to the UN Second Committee Minister Pronk prefigures the reforms introduced by Kofi Annan a year later, advocating for unified representation within the UN.

²³ As is recognised in successive policy documents, including most recently in the 1998 'Dutch Policy on Emergency and Rehabilitation Aid', http://www.minbuza.nl/english/OS/c_fsemergy.html

²⁴ It was striking that Dutch officials and NGOs were extremely critical of the UK's stance in relation to Sierra Leone, seeing it as an example of the 'wrong' type of politics informing humanitarian action and so compromising humanitarian objectives. Precisely what rules were preventing a similar controversy playing out in the Netherlands was not articulated, however, other than a sense of intuitive morality.

²⁵ Thus, de facto the AIV recommendation for clearer definition of humanitarian assistance has been implemented, albeit for bureaucratic rather than ethical/programmatically reasons.

²⁶ Also, interviews with officials in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs.

²⁷ This was followed in September 1994 by one in relation to BiH that recognised ethnic cleansing as a threat to peace, as were major violations of IHL in Rwanda that same year (resolution 955). Most recently, in Kosovo, UNSC resolution 1203 affirmed that the security situation within the country constituted a threat to international peace and security, paving the way for the June 1999 resolution mandating the UN to restore and maintain security in the territory.

²⁸ See, for example, the statement of Cuba to the UNSC, 21 May 1997; interview, UK diplomat, New York, November 1999.

²⁹ See, for example, Open Briefing to the Security Council, 1999 at which UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC among others gave briefings on their view of the role of the UN in the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

³⁰ These are: the scope of the breaches of human rights and international humanitarian law, including the numbers of people affected and the nature of the violations; the inability of local authorities to uphold legal order, or identification of a pattern of complicity by local authorities; exhaustion of peaceful, consent-based efforts to address the situation; the ability of the UNSC to monitor actions that are undertaken; limited and proportionate use of force.

³¹ One UK diplomat noted that:

'Negotiating the conclusions in the ECOSOC on humanitarian issues was the most contentious time for the whole of ECOSOC. The statements made about sovereignty were crawled over by developing countries. Other points made were about selectivity and analysis of where the power really lay in terms of decision-making. ... even if the broader humanitarian intervention debates

go the right way, there will be rearguard action in ECOSOC.'

Interview, 2 November 1999.

³² In the case of Sierra Leone, tensions arose because humanitarian access was seen as negotiable during the peace talks and in the agreement; in Burundi, views regarding sanctions and humanitarian exemptions differed between humanitarian agencies and the SRSG (see, interviews: New York, UNICEF, November, 1999; OCHA, November 1999). In East Timor, there was a situation where the Humanitarian Coordinator was under the SRSG, while in West Timor he reported to the Resident Coordinator. In other words, he was neutral in Indonesia, but not in East Timor. 'Where the UN becomes a belligerent, as with Interfet, [one has] to scrutinise the way things are being managed' (interview, official, international organisation, New York, November 1999).

³³ For example, the 1999 Secretary-General's report on improving coordination which argues both that:

... when appropriate, political representatives of the SG may assist the HC with the negotiations, but it is essential that the distinction between humanitarian negotiations for access and security, and negotiations on a political settlement is strictly maintained.

And that:

Assistance strategy should be closely allied with strategies for peace-making, peace building and the promotion of human rights to ensure that all activities are mutually reinforcing. In contexts where peace negotiations are underway, the early introduction of humanitarian concerns and reconstruction plans in to the peace process, can help increase the likelihood of effective transition. Where a multi-disciplinary peace-keeping operation has been deployed, the capacity to ensure such coordination has been reinforced by the Secretary-General's directive *that the SRSG should have clear authority over all UN entities in the field.*

(emphasis added).

³⁴ Reportedly, DPA suffered the most severe cuts of any department in the Secretariat, despite its taking the lead in conflict prevention, the policy priority of the UN.

³⁵ For example, it was only in 1999 that DPKO actively started to analyse the implications of war economies in relation to strategies for conflict. In contrast, it has become part of 'folk policy' that humanitarian aid fuels such economies, and as such provides a significant lever for conflict reduction (see, for example, Annan, K (2000) 'Statement of the Secretary General to the meeting of the Security Council on humanitarian aspects of issues

before the Council', 9 March, United Nations, New York. The Secretary-General asks: 'Is our aid the right aid for the emergency in question? Is it affecting a conflict in a way that may perpetuate it rather than end it?'

³⁶ The other three are: the Development Group (chaired by UNDP); Economic and Social Affairs (chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs); and General Services.

³⁷ ECHA includes only UN humanitarian agencies, and also includes DPKO and DPA; IASC includes NGO coordination bodies, with the ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as standing invitees.

³⁸ For example, ECPS put forward the recommendation to the UNSC that it should field a mission to Timor, the USG for Political Affairs, then pushed for the UNSC to be convened, against the wishes of its President.

³⁹ So, for example, one of the Dutch Permanent Missions stated that on humanitarian issues: 'The Mission is briefed primarily by the humanitarian aid department, but sometimes there is not clear coordination in The Hague.'

⁴⁰ This is not to suggest that historically at least, HLWG has not served an important role, only that it no longer appears to do so. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, HLWG served as an important vehicle to drive the reform of UNHCR (interview, OCHA, Geneva, 23 November 1999).

⁴¹ The scope of the case study was limited to Serbia, which is part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). FRY also includes Montenegro, where different sanctions and aid regimes apply, and these were not investigated.

⁴² See, for example, OCHA (1999) *Electricity and Heating in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Winter 1999-2000*, 20 September, OCHA, Belgrade; FOCUS Planning and Coordination Unit (2000) *Focus Assessment Mission 2 to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Winter 1999-2000*, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Berne; Reports by EU Heads of Mission on the Energy for Democracy Initiative, 2 September and 1 October, 1999. The US was alone in arguing that there would not be an energy crisis in FRY during the 1999/2000 winter. The evidence for this position was never published, however.

⁴³ For a more detailed analysis of these see: Macrae, J (2000) 'Oil ... and Water: Political and Humanitarian Intervention in the Serbian Energy Sector', *Relief and Rehabilitation Network Newsletter*, 16, March, pp26-8.

⁴⁴ The provenance of the EfD idea is contested. The opposition group, G17, had circulated proposals for a project similar in intent to that of EfD, albeit

implemented by national organisations and using oil channelled through Bulgaria. As the idea became incorporated into high-level EU foreign policy channels, so a number of key changes in its form emerged; first the demand that it be implemented using international organisations (UK Crown Agents were ultimately chosen as the contractor); also the number of municipalities was very small initially - only two towns, Nis and Pirot, were selected - rather than the much broader coverage proposed by G17.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Bird, C (1999) 'Nis left in cold as oil sent back', *The Guardian*, 4 December. European Commission (1999) 'Energy for Democracy: chronicle of events', www.europa.eu.int, 3 December.

⁴⁶ See, Council Common Position of 22 October 1999 on support to democratic forces in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Council of the European Union.

⁴⁷ It is important to note, however, that the funds were ultimately reported as oda, including UK oda, since Efd was funded through EC development funds.

⁴⁸ See, for example, ReliefWeb (1999) 'US regrets blockages of heating oil for Serbia', www.reliefweb.int, 3 December; European Commission (1999) 'External relations Commissioner Chris Patten regrets further delays to delivery of "Energy for Democracy" heating oil', press release on www.europa.eu.int, 29 November.

⁴⁹ This position was effectively reiterated when John Battle responded to a parliamentary question posed by Bowen Wells on Energy for Democracy. See Hansard (2000) Energy for Democracy, col 239WH, where again the issue of the distinction between humanitarian and political aid was fudged.

⁵⁰ Importantly, to date there is no epidemiological evidence that demonstrates the impact of fuel shortages during the 1999/2000 winter. The influenza epidemic that struck Europe and North America further complicates interpretation of existing data.

⁵¹ This latter point is disputed by different informants in terms of its significance.

⁵² Some three days into the bombing, the Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs warned NATO that the GOM might insist on a withdrawal of NATO troops from the country (interview, Western diplomat, 22 February 2000). There was growing anti-Western feeling among some sections of the population and within certain government quarters. This was reflected, for example, in the fact that the police 'let' demonstrators burn down the US embassy in Skopje in March 1999. Suhrke et al (2000) note that the number of refugees seeking asylum into western countries from the FRY had increased by 200 per cent in 1997-9.

⁵³ Suhrke et al. (2000) cite the following extracts from UNHCR's Executive Committee:

In situations of large scale influx, asylum seekers should be admitted to the State in which they first seek asylum and if that State is unable to admit them on a temporary basis ... in all cases, the fundamental principle of non-refoulement including non-rejection at the border must be scrupulously observed (ExCom 1981).

Access to asylum and the meeting by States of their protection obligations should not be dependent on burden sharing arrangements first being in place, particularly because respect for fundamental human rights and humanitarian principles is an obligation for all members of the international community (ExCom March 1999).

⁵⁴ 'Any serious peace process would need much greater commitment to peace-making in Afghanistan from the international community than it has shown so far' Rashid (2000:, p. 215). See also Maley (1998).

⁵⁵ Despite the ongoing civil war, and the arrival of fresh refugees, UNHCR and WFP announced and began to phase out the general ration for refugees in Pakistan in 1995. It was replaced by a targeted ration aimed at the 'vulnerable' (Fielden, 1998).

⁵⁶ After providing billions of dollars worth of arms and ammunition to the Mujahadeen, the USA began to walk away from the Afghan issue after the Soviet troops completed their withdrawal in 1989. That walk became a run in 1992 after the fall of Kabul' (Rashid, 2000, p. 175).

⁵⁷ See for example: Clare Short's, parliamentary answer, 8 Dec 1998. 'We also continue to support the mediation efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi'. Similarly Maley (1998) argues that for the US 'the presence of the mission [UNSM] in the field provided a tailor-made excuse for governments which wished to distance themselves from Afghanistan and the Afghans. The US State Department for example routinely covered its lack of any serious policy to help Afghanistan - a country struggling with the bitter legacy of indirect US funding of such groups as Heckmatyr's Hezb-e Islami - by reiterating its support for the UN mission, even when it was transparently obvious when nothing of value was likely to come from the Mission's activities' (Maley, 1998, p. 198).

⁵⁸ Both Russia and China are worried about the spread of fundamentalism and instability in the region. The Taliban recently antagonised the Russians by declaring they would open an embassy in Chechnya.

⁵⁹ For example, the most detailed and comprehensive report produced by the Danish government on the situation in Afghanistan was produced by its immigration service in order to assist decision-making for granting asylum (Wiles et al., 1999).

⁶⁰ See the minutes of the Tokyo ASG meeting.

⁶¹ Interviews NGOs, Skopje, February 2000; one NGO official noted that: 'After two years in Kosovo it was obvious that there were only two options: empty Kosovo of Albanians; or separation of Kosovo from FRY.' See also Fennell, J. (1998) Emergency Assessment and Contingency Plan, Albania/Macedonia Report for CARE International.

⁶² This high-level, inter-departmental group, chaired by John Vereker, the Permanent Secretary for International Development provided a means for DFID, MOD, FCO, Home Office and Treasury officials, among others, to meet for regular updates on the unfolding situation in relation to the Kosovo crisis and report to Downing Street. However, this group was formed after the bombing started.

⁶³ Interview, Africa, Greater Horn Department, DFID, London. Interestingly, the Framework for Coordination, established by UN DPA to facilitate identification and analysis of potential political instability was initially limited to a small number of UN agencies for the same reasons. However, this group was then broadened. Newer members of the group, noted that the flow of sensitive information was two way, requiring that all involved respected confidentiality.

⁶⁴ The arrest of three CARE workers in Serbia on spying charges in 1999 provoked outrage in the humanitarian community. This turned to embarrassment when it transpired that two of the workers, employed by CARE Canada, had been contracted to provide the OSCE with information regarding the unfolding political situation in Kosovo. See Davis, G (2000) 'CARE: The Security Contract', Dateline, <http://www.sbs.coman/dateline/coming/htm>.

⁶⁵ The head of UNPREDEP, Ataul Karim, remained in post to wind down the office, and was therefore able to act informally. He was later made the head of the UNMIK Liaison office in Skopje.

⁶⁶ The UN Department of Political Affairs later seconded a political adviser to UNHCR to boost its capacity to analyse events inside Kosovo and prepare for return. Interviews with this adviser indicated that, from DPA's perspective, what was important about this post was that it enabled them to collect political information despite lacking a the mandate and resources to deploy their own mission.

⁶⁷ As one particularly long-standing UN aid worker said 'I don't know where to put my political analysis'. See also a memo from Carolyn McKaskie, the Acting Head

of OCHA, to Sir Kieran Prendergast, the Head of DPA, urging greater political initiative, based on OCHA's political analysis of the situation.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Gary Streeter's Parliamentary Questions to the UK Secretary of State for International Development, 25 June; 6 July; and 28 October; and the responses.

⁶⁹ It is notable that the same opposition group that proposed the original EfD concept also advocated the lifting of sanctions regarding fuel imports.

⁷⁰ It is striking in this respect that UNHCR and WFP moved from the provision of general rations to targeted distributions in the refugee camps, against the advice of their own internal reports warning that such an approach was unlikely to reach the most vulnerable.

⁷¹ For example, surveys by Action Contre la Faim show increasing levels of global acute nutrition among 5-59 month-old children in Kabul from 1996-8. According to WHO the maternal mortality rate increased from 64 per 10,000 live births in 1990 to 170 per 10,000 in 1997. See Wiles et al., (1999, p. 17) for a discussion of these and other indicators.

⁷² At the Tokyo ASG the US representative declared 'it should be made clear that donor response is tied to progress on Taliban policies and practices'. The EC declared that 'Resumption of aid, especially to Kabul, must be done carefully so as not to be misconstrued as supporting the Taliban.' Minutes of the Stockholm, June 1998 meeting observe: 'It was recognised that the absence of national reconciliation in Afghanistan had a negative impact on willingness of the donors to engage'; and again 'attention was drawn to the Taliban's continued harbouring of international terrorists which was negatively affecting the provision of assistance'.

⁷³ According to the US representative at the Tokyo ASG, '...counter-narcotics was being recognised as one of several over-arching principles which needed to be integrated into all non-humanitarian assistance planning'. This is not a view shared by many others.

⁷⁴ Clare Short in a written answer to a parliamentary question, 8 Dec 1998: 'Our effort to help create a system-wide approach to Afghanistan, and increase synergy between peace-making and humanitarian assistance, has been underpinned by the provision on £8.5m in 1998.' Quite what this 'synergy' might be is unexplained. Similarly, Jan Eliasson, Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the June 1998 ASG 'emphasised that the lack of commitments by the parties to the Afghan conflict should not be allowed to halt the peace process. He called for renewed efforts to support local peace-building processes, wherever opportunities occurred. Humanitarian assistance and other forms of people-centred aid, he said, could have a great deal of leverage in serving as an incentive for local confidence-building endeavours' (ASG, 1998).

⁷⁵ With HTP the concern was the extent to which refugees were being transferred voluntarily. The forerunner of HTP was a small transfer of refugees to Turkey, facilitated by the US government, that caused a stir in UNHCR and in the media. HTP proved politically embarrassing to all concerned and was ultimately dwarfed by the HEP, which evacuated over 90,000 people from Macedonia. HEP led to some protection concerns in Macedonia because of competition for places; more generally, as indicated above, there were concerns that it would ultimately compromise the principle of unconditional asylum upon which international refugee law and practice rest.

⁷⁶ Although one NGO reported that it was US Ambassador Chris Hill, not UNHCR, who was able to quell an angry crowd of Kosovar refugees attacking Roma in a camp.

⁷⁷ Interview, NGO Country Representative, 23 February 2000, Skopje.

⁷⁸ 'In the absence of political representation in Afghanistan, the Humanitarian Coordinator has been drawn into issues outside of his mandate.'

⁷⁹ The Dutch and German Permanent Representatives to the UN in Geneva undertook a rare *démarche* to the High Commissioner in late March 1999 urging her to support the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme and to increase her high-level representation in the Kosovo region. It is striking that the Netherlands donated \$3.36 million to UNHCR for the Kosovo emergency between 1 January- 2 June 1999, compared with \$800,000 donated by the UK (See, Suhrke et al., 2000). In the financial year 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000, DFID's contribution to UNHCR totalled £8 million, excluding in-kind contributions. The key point of interest here is the DFID contribution at the early stage of the crisis.

⁸⁰ Because of this, and because of Minister Herfkens' personal knowledge of Macedonia, this would seem to have enabled the Dutch government to move more swiftly than its UK counterpart in providing rapid and well-targeted assistance to Macedonia, such as balance-of-payments support. In contrast, the UK reported that it had found it difficult to identify well-prioritised projects for bilateral funding and thus increase significantly its contribution to Macedonia.

⁸¹ Interview, OCHA, Belgrade, February 2000.

⁸² Interviews, NGO/UN agencies, Belgrade, February 2000.

⁸³ Interviews, DFID/FCO December 1999 and February 2000. See also Peter Hain, Tony Faint and Ros Marsden evidence to the International Development Committee, 25 November 1999.

⁸⁴ For example, interview Foreign and Commonwealth Office, February 2000.

⁸⁵ Interviews, DFID and FCO, December/February 2000.

⁸⁶ Interview and correspondence ECHO; interview Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 1999.

⁸⁷ It is not an uninteresting question whether the use of development aid funds, such as those from Obnova, are legitimately used as part of an explicitly political programme such as Efd.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Clapham (1996) who traces the evolution of mono-economics, embodied in structural adjustment, through to mono-politics (the good governance agenda).

⁸⁹ Or what Dillon and Reid (1999) have perhaps more aptly called emerging political complexes.

⁹⁰ It is precisely the legitimation implied by the provision of development assistance (as well as its significantly larger volume) that makes the apparently technical shift from relief to development assistance so fraught with political controversy among warring parties and donor governments (see, Macrae, 2000).

⁹¹ See, Eriksson et al. (1996) *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience. Synthesis Report. Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Genocide and Emergency in Rwanda*, Danida, Copenhagen.

⁹² Thus, the rise of OCHA as the darling of the Security Council (post-Kosovo, itself an emasculated institution) providing briefings on conditions in non-strategic countries. Similarly, CHAD in DFID was seen to have widespread reach within UN political circles. In the Netherlands, former Minister Pronk used the humanitarian aid budget as an entry point for political affairs in complex emergencies.

⁹³ The design of the Energy for Democracy project is a case in point: it failed to acknowledge, let alone confront, a primary determinant of the violent political economy of Serbia — the parallel economy, itself fuelled by sanctions.

⁹⁴ See, for example, evidence of International Alert and Oxfam to the International Development Committee.

⁹⁵ See also Leader and Macrae (2000) *op cit*, and in particular the paper by Mikael Barfod regarding ECHO and the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

⁹⁶ There has been some, however. See, for example, UK International Development Committee (1999) *Conflict Prevention and Post-conflict Reconstruction*, two volumes. House of Commons, London; Advisory Council on International Affairs (1998) *Humanitarian Aid: Redefining the Limits*, AIV. The Hague. Importantly, however, both these investigations relied largely on oral evidence from key 'witnesses' and did not have the resources to undertake extensive field-work, underpinned by technical expertise.

⁹⁷ See, International Court of Justice (1986) *Nicaragua versus the United States*.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Short, C (1999) *Opening Statement to the DFID-NGO Roundtable on Humanitarian Issues*. DFID, February 15, London.

⁹⁹ For example, British policy with regard to Sierra Leone in 1997, Afghanistan (since 1996) and British and Dutch policy in Serbia in 1999.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, ICRC (1999) *People and War*, ICRC, Geneva. This provides a global survey of views of conflict-affected population and the general public in donor countries regarding humanitarian principles and law.

¹⁰¹ See also proposed follow up to the ODI/Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Leader, N. and Macrae, J. (2000) *op cit*.

¹⁰² This paper is reproduced in Leader, N. and Macrae, J. (2000) *op cit*.

ISBN 0-85003-493-0



9 780850 034936



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ISBN: 0-85003-493-0 £8.00