

Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping *An Agenda for Peace?*

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1 Introduction

In 1993 Adam Roberts, the Professor of International Relations at Oxford University observed that:

'Humanitarian war' is an oxymoron which may yet become reality. The recent practice of states, and of the United Nations, has involved major uses of armed force in the name of humanitarianism: especially in northern Iraq, in Somalia and in former Yugoslavia. These humanitarian activities in situations of conflict raise many awkward questions.

(Roberts 1993)

The period 1991-1994 has indeed witnessed the use of UN military humanitarianism on an unprecedented scale. And since Roberts' comments UNISOM military actions against General Aideed's forces in Somalia and NATO airstrikes in former Yugoslavia have indeed made an awkward reality of humanitarian war. In 1992 there were a mere 12,000 military and police personnel operating as UN peacekeepers around the world. By the end of 1994 there were some 79,948 military and police personnel operating under UN auspices (IISS 1994), a figure which does not include the 10,000 US troops involved in 'Operation Restore Democracy' in Haiti. Equally striking is the fact that in the 40 years of the Cold War between 1948 and 1988, only 13 UN peacekeeping operations were launched. But in the six years between 1988-1994 there have been a total of 21 UN peacekeeping operations (Fetherstone 1994).

For people affected by war related crises which are now increasingly described as 'complex emergencies', and for the relief and development agencies who seek to help them, the presence of UN military forces 'represents the arrival of a major new player in today's humanitarian operations - a large new kid on the block' (Slim 1995). And in the last three years in particular it is no exaggeration to talk of 'the militarization of the international relief system' (Slim 1995). This new interventionist period in humanitarian affairs has been an extremely steep learning curve for UN agencies and NGOs, as well as for UN military forces themselves and for the members of the UN Security Council who have despatched them to such situations. At the policy level, this has given rise to much earnest debate

about the role of the military in humanitarian emergencies by soldiers, politicians, international lawyers and NGOs alike. The result has been a plethora of working papers, conferences and manuals on the subject (Keen *et al.* 1995).

This article examines the rise of what can be described as the military humanitarian policy of the United Nations since 1992. It does not attempt to examine particular UN operations in detail but instead to trace the origins of current UN policy and the outlines of the new military doctrines on peacekeeping which have emerged during the last three years. As such it seeks to introduce relief and development workers to some of the emerging military thinking behind UN peacekeeping. The article is organized into four parts. First it explores how a military based approach to the increasing number of complex political emergencies emerged as a deliberate policy from within the United Nations in the new era of consensus after the Cold War. Second, it looks at various NGO reactions to this new era. Third, it compares the very different nature of today's UN peacekeeping operations with its Cold War predecessors. Fourth, it examines the principle of consent in UN military humanitarianism and looks at what the British Army in particular have come to define as good peacekeeping practice in the light of recent operations. Finally, it takes the view that the new peacekeeping is here to stay and that it has a lot to offer. The main challenge facing all those involved in humanitarian assistance is to further refine its techniques and not to reject all military intervention on principle.

2 A New Humanitarian Era

With the end of the Cold War, the United Nations entered into a new veto-free era of international consensus. It looked set to be given a second chance to become an overarching force for peace and security throughout the world. To encourage it to get down to its new business, the heads of state of Security Council countries, in their first ever meeting in January 1992, commissioned the new Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to come

up with 'an analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient within the framework and provisions of the Charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping' (Boutros Boutros-Ghali 1992). Despite the typically tortuous prose of this UN mandate (a feature of the UN which has determinedly not changed since the end of the Cold War), the Secretary-General was not deterred and later that year produced the landmark document entitled **An Agenda for Peace** (Boutros Boutros-Ghali 1992).

Agenda for Peace set out the main principles by which the UN intended to take the lead on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. At the heart of Agenda for Peace is the policy that increased use of UN military force should play the major part in implementing these new strategies. The text of Agenda for Peace reverberates with a new optimism. Its timing and the strategies for peace which it expounds seek to herald a new era of conflict resolution and active humanitarianism. Not only does it sketch out the UN's new strategy of military humanitarianism, but it also declares the UN's right to pursue such a strategy. In the now famous words, it declares that 'the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed' (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, para 17). More than ever before, Agenda for Peace declared the right of the UN to intervene in a state under Chapter VII of its charter in the name of its citizens' human rights. This is a position which has since been explored in more detail by UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report which suggests four kinds of situation¹ which 'would appear to warrant international intervention' (UNDP 1994: 57).

In the two years which followed Agenda for Peace, the UN, and particularly the Security Council, sought to put the agenda into action through a series of Security Council resolutions in response to humanitarian emergencies round the world (Slim and Penrose 1994). In what has frequently been described as a series of humanitarian experiments,

¹ The four situations given are: 1) Mass slaughter of the population by the state; 2) decimation through starvation or the withholding of health or other services; 3) forced exodus; and 4) occupation and the denial of the right to self-determination.

UN military operations have been carried out in the name of peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, post conflict peace-building and humanitarian assistance in countries like Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda and most recently in Angola. And since 1992, the Secretary General has been urging member states to set aside particular sections of their armed forces to be on permanent 'stand-by' for immediate deployment by the UN. Convincing the more powerful member states to earmark troops has proved problematic, but by June 1994 the Secretary General was able to report that there were firm pledges of 30,000 stand-by troops from 21 countries with a further 40,000 troops likely to be pledged by 27 other member states (United Nations 1994b).

To implement this increasingly militarized peace and humanitarian policy the UN has also, albeit after a long delay, increased its military capacity at the Secretariat level in New York. By the first half of 1994, the Secretariat had 148 military personnel coordinating its forces worldwide (United Nations 1994a). Although this military staff suffers from a high rate of turnover, it means that the UN now has a round the clock 'Situation Centre' for its military operations. The annual report of the International Institute of Strategic Studies has also observed that 'intelligence is no longer a UN taboo' (IISS 1994: 268) and that the UN is expected to gather an increasing amount of its own intelligence or gain access to the intelligence of member states. However, such intelligence sharing remains a controversial issue and looks set to be worked out selectively on a case by case basis.

Although events in Somalia have discouraged the United States in particular from entering wholeheartedly into new largescale peacekeeping operations, the broad strategy of Agenda for Peace as a whole remains in place at the heart of the UN today. The concept of UN peacekeeping itself is not in question and is still being implemented in countries like Angola with the creation of UNAVEM III and its mission of up to 7000 UN troops (UN 1995). However, the main powers of the Security Council now recognize that after the initial burst of enthusiasm for such military humanitarianism, there should be a period of more cautious and considered reflection on when and how best to mount such operations. Most significantly, in May 1994, the

Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive on US peacekeeping policy (PDD 25) made it clear that US involvement in such operations would require greater deliberation. In particular it stated that any US involvement in UN peacekeeping would depend on there being a definite advancement of US interests, a real threat to international peace and security, clear mission objectives and scope, an effective ceasefire and agreement to UN presence by all parties, and an identifiable 'end point' to UN operations (the so-called 'sunset clause') in any peacekeeping mandate (Albright and Lake 1994). One obvious and tragic result of this new caution was the distinct lack of timely UN military intervention in the Rwanda genocide.

As a result, the original policies of Agenda for Peace are still in place but their implementation is being viewed still more selectively by the main powers in the UN on a case-by-case and 'can-do' basis, largely determined by individual national interest. Despite the initial optimism of 1992, the UN today neither has any agreed and universal criteria for military humanitarian intervention, nor any effective standing capacity to implement such intervention.

3 A Chorus of Disapproval

The human rights group, African Rights, has described UN and NGO operations in the new humanitarian era as the liberation of the humanitarian organizations from 'the Cold War straight-jacket' - and characterized it as a reckless period of 'humanitarianism unbound' in which assertive humanitarian policies have often done more harm than good (African Rights 1994, p1). More generally, UN military operations have been the objects of a loud chorus of criticism or mixed messages from parts of the media and NGO community in particular - some calling for military intervention one day and then castigating it the next.

With the exception of some researched and considered assessments (African Rights 1993a) and the reporting of particular and grave human rights abuses (eg. African Rights 1993b) much of the well publicized criticism of UN military humanitarianism has been generalized and reactive rather than thorough and considered. Among the NGO

community in particular, it has certainly been almost *de rigueur* to concentrate on the failings of UN military humanitarianism rather than to identify what military forces can do well in such situations (Keen *et al.* 1995). But in their reflective rather than telegenic mode, most NGOs give a more balanced and pragmatic view. Two recent contributions on the subject from Save the Children and Oxfam frame the current NGO dilemma well. The first view from Save the Children might be said to encapsulate the general conclusion of most relief agencies that military humanitarianism is a high risk, usually short-term and imperfect strategy which can easily backfire:

military intervention is no panacea ... greater [military] intervention by the international community should not be automatically equated with rapid and durable solutions ... once the United Nations intervenes militarily in a humanitarian emergency, as in Somalia, its actions can all too easily become part of the problem - another complicating ingredient.
(Save the Children 1994)

Yet at the same time, a recent statement by Oxfam recognizes the increasing need for some form of UN military protection in many of today's humanitarian operations:

Oxfam works in 70 countries around the world, including many in which we cooperate with UN humanitarian operations, and 10 where we work alongside a UN peacekeeping mission. In many situations of conflict, the fulfilment of our mandate to alleviate poverty is increasingly dependent on UN protection. Equally, many UN programmes depend on Oxfam and other NGOs to implement major projects.
(Oxfam 1995)

While Oxfam's remark seems to refer mainly to its own protection, the need for protecting affected civilian populations is of course far greater. But these two statements do reveal the main challenge for most UN military humanitarian operations: the need to find a balance between protection and escalation. In other words, the need to protect various communities within a conflict while not escalating that conflict.

As will be seen, British military strategists see this balance as determined by the effective management of consent in any peacekeeping operation. But first it is important to identify how today's military humanitarianism differs from traditional UN peacekeeping and why it is proving so much more complicated to strike this balance. The short answer is that today's UN forces are trying to do much more than they have ever done before, usually in much more difficult circumstances.

4 Peacekeeping Old and New

The term 'peacekeeping' is really a misnomer when applied to the majority of the military humanitarian operations of the new humanitarian era - not least because UN forces are frequently being asked to operate in situations where there is no peace to keep. In *Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali talked of 'new departures in peacekeeping' (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 29) and since 1992 a number of new terms have been coined to describe what Mackinlay and Chopra refer to as 'second generation' multinational UN military operations, recognizing the fact that today's operations have gone 'beyond peacekeeping' (Mackinlay and Chopra 1993). Such new terms include phrases like peace support operations (PSO), multi-dimensional operations, wider peacekeeping or peace enforcement and involve a range of very different tasks to traditional peacekeeping as developed out of the original Canadian initiatives of the 1950s.

The traditional UN peacekeeping of the Cold War era was nowhere defined in the UN charter, but emerged as a pragmatic way in which the international community supported peaceful settlements to international conflicts. With a mandate falling between chapters six and seven of the UN charter, these peacekeeping operations were known as operations carried out under chapter six and a half of the UN Charter. Their main characteristics have been best described by Marrack Goulding, a previous head of UN peacekeeping, who identified traditional peacekeeping as:

Field operations established by the United Nations, with the consent of the parties concerned, to help control and resolve conflicts between them, under UN command and control, at the expense collectively of the member

states, and with military and other personnel and equipment provided voluntarily by them, acting impartially between the parties and using force to the minimum extent necessary.

(Goulding 1993)

The principles and practice of today's second generation peacekeeping operations are obviously radically different from this form of traditional peacekeeping. In operational terms, the main task of traditional peacekeeping was the inter-positioning of UN troops between warring parties already abiding by a ceasefire. Peacekeeping therefore largely involved ceasefire monitoring, surveillance and conflict prevention and could last for many years. UNTSO in the Middle East has been running for 46 years while UNFICYP in Cyprus is now in its 31st year. The command and control of such operations was a genuinely UN command and expenses were born collectively by the UN member states. Such operations were also governed by three key principles of consent, impartiality and minimum force.

In contrast, the recent UN 'peacekeeping' operations differ in matters of environment, principle and practice from their Cold War predecessors. The change in environment for UN peacekeeping is an obvious one. Second generation peacekeeping has seen UN forces intervene in the middle of **civil wars** when they are still 'hot' rather than at the end of **inter-state wars** when they are 'frozen' or in remission. As the Canadian General Lewis MacKenzie (a former UN commander of UNPROFOR in former Yugoslavia) has observed, the traditional environment of UN peacekeeping operations were relatively tame: 'The UN would be presented with a nice little conflict where the belligerents had decided to end the conflict and had pledged to keep the peace ... [but] the UN avoided civil wars because they were much too nasty to get involved in' (MacKenzie 1993).

In practice, the operational range of the new peacekeeping is characterised by five main tasks as set out in Table 1, adapted from Mackinlay and Chopra (1993: 7-23) and the British Army (1994: 2: 1-2).

This range of activities differs enormously from the routine inter-positioning and observer operations of traditional peacekeeping. Today's activities are

much more assertive and interventionist in nature. They show the new peacekeeping to be much more militarily and politically active with operations ranging from war-fighting (Somalia) to being the political midwife to the birth of new democratic governments (Mozambique and Cambodia).

But the new peacekeeping does not differ from traditional peacekeeping in its activities alone. In matters of principle, it frequently struggles to maintain or deliberately oversteps the three key peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality and minimum force. In the mainly intra-state civil wars of today's humanitarian emergencies, the consent of all parties concerned to UN operations has been extremely difficult to achieve and maintain. Likewise, with judgements about UN impartiality being so much a matter of the perception and vested interest of the different parties concerned, most UN peacekeeping actions are perceived as at best ambiguous and at worst downright partisan in wars which are still 'live'.

Most disturbing of all perhaps, has been the apparent erosion of the principle of minimum force and what Regehr has warned of as 'the developing conventional wisdom that peacekeeping is evolving towards a much greater reliance on the use of force' (Regehr 1993). The traditional peacekeeper's function has been described as 'that of the lightly armed gendarme' whose 'absence of arms encouraged the perception of a non-threatening body acting under the authority of the UN' (Connaughton 1992). While this may still be an accurate description of the UN guards in Iraq or the UN force monitoring elections in Mozambique, such a gentle peacekeeper stands in stark contrast to members of the US force in Somalia or to the NATO airstrikes in former Yugoslavia. Although acting in self-defense in both cases, an increased use of force does surely raise the stakes and the risks in any peacekeeping operation. In terms of the balance between protection and escalation, this development combined with the vagaries of consent in the new peacekeeping environment are the most alarming. In the Somalia operation in particular, second generation UN operations consistently chose to use maximum force in response to UN casualties - an indication that the temper of the new UN peacekeeping has shifted away from exerting a more traditional moral authority to a more aggressive physical authority.

Table 1 Main Tasks of the New Peacekeeping

Objectives	Tasks
Conflict prevention	Preventive deployment, interposition, early warning, surveillance
Guarantee and denial of movement	No-fly zones, safe-havens, blockades, sanctions enforcement, guaranteeing free passage
Protection and delivery of humanitarian relief	Protection and escort of humanitarian relief and agencies, or direct delivery of logistics, health or infrastructure support
Supervision of a comprehensive settlement	Demobilization, disarmament, demining, election monitoring, reforming/training of security forces
Military assistance to civil structures in a failed state	Peace enforcement, political trusteeship

A third and final difference in the new peacekeeping has been the possibility of UN operations being launched under the command of a single nation and not some form of collective UN command. In Africa, such one nation operations have been carried out in Somalia by the USA (UNITAF) and in Rwanda by the French (Operation Turquoise). Such undiluted command and control of UN operations in the hands of single nations is in contrast to the collective control of traditional peacekeeping.

5 Hearts and Minds: Consent Management as Good Peacekeeping Practice

The revolution in UN peacekeeping which has been demanded of UN forces in the last three years has seen a determined effort by military policy makers to keep up with the events into which their political masters in the Security Council have landed them. Military policy - or 'doctrine' as soldiers call it - has been hard put to draw good practice conclusions from the many and diverse operations of the last three years. However, in many armed forces new peacekeeping doctrines have emerged and continue to evolve. One of the most clearly stated and thought through is the peacekeeping doctrine of the British Army which was finalized in manual form towards the end of 1994 (British Army 1994). Those relief and development workers likely to

work alongside UN peacekeeping operations would do well to study this manual. Its clear vision of good peacekeeping practice should help NGOs to understand what to expect from UN soldiers in such situations. The doctrine itself gives cause for optimism by showing that soldiers are thinking creatively, pragmatically and in earnest about their new roles. And the doctrine is free from any unhealthy zeal for intervention, nor is it prone to delusions of quick fix military solutions.

At the heart of the British peacekeeping doctrine sits the principle of consent. The British Army have introduced the term 'wider peacekeeping' to capture the new environment and demands of second generation peacekeeping (British Army 1994, Ch. 1, Section 8). And they use the notion of consent to distinguish between wider peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. Wider peacekeeping operations, like traditional peacekeeping operations are 'carried out with the general consent of the belligerent parties' (*ibid.*, Ch.2 p.5). In contrast, peace enforcement activities are those carried out 'to restore peace between belligerent parties who do not all consent to intervention' (*ibid.*, Ch.2: 5). The principle of consent - the most fundamental principle of traditional peacekeeping - has therefore remained a corner stone of current military peacekeeping doctrine. But it does so not as a **given** but as a **variable** in today's peacekeeping environment,

because in volatile and multi-factional civil wars consent is dispersed and uneven:

‘Consent to wider peacekeeping activities is likely to be anything but absolute. In theatre, depending on the volatility of the general environment, it is unlikely ever to be more than partial and could amount to nothing more than tolerance of presence. Consent is something that the peacekeeper can expect to have bits of, from certain people, in certain places, for certain things, for certain periods of time.’

(*ibid.* Ch.2: 7)

The art of wider peacekeeping is therefore, first and foremost, the management of consent - its generation, maintenance and retrieval. And the main concern of a peacekeeping force is to stay on the right side of the line of consent. For only by maintaining as much consent as possible can the force fulfil its humanitarian and mediation tasks and remain relatively secure. Operating without consent, a peacekeeping force becomes a peace enforcement force and is liable to enter a war-fighting situation in which its own security will become its over-riding preoccupation. UNOSOM's operations in Somalia after 5th June 1993 are regarded as the prime example of when a peacekeeping operation crossed the line of consent and slipped into a peace-enforcement and war-fighting situation (Slim and Visman 1995). And many soldiers now refer to the line of consent as the ‘Mogadishu line’. Once this line has been crossed, peacekeeping doctrine dictates that there is no way back. If the use of force is perceived as being partial and without consent, it is unlikely that this particular UN force will ever be able to function as a peacekeeping force again in that situation. Figure 1, taken from the British Army Manual on **Wider Peacekeeping** (Ch.2: 13) illustrates this point.

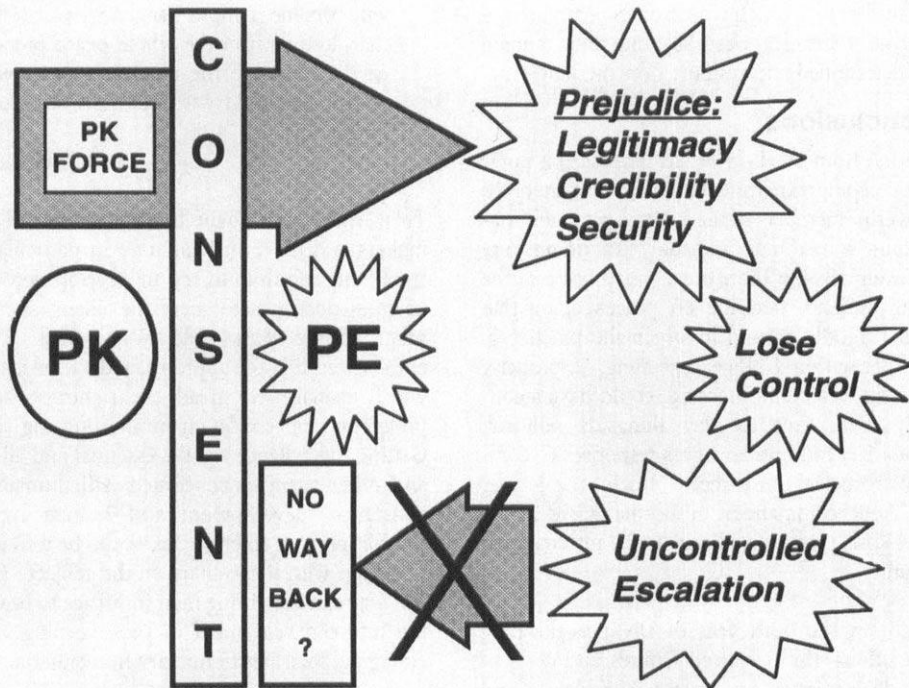
In military jargon, the management of consent is all about ‘hearts and minds’. People need to be persuaded of a peacekeeping force's third party status. The principles which govern good practice are thus identified as ‘impartiality, legitimacy, mutual respect, minimum force, credibility and transparency’ (*ibid.*, Ch.2: 8). Loss of any of these endangers consent. The techniques for managing consent are the everyday work of the effective peacekeeper and are identified as: ‘negotiation,

mediation, liaison, civil affairs, community information, public information and community relations’ (*ibid.*, Ch.5, p1). Only by communicating with the affected population in this way will the model peacekeeper be able to create the environment which allows him or her to carry out the broader objectives of humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution, ceasefire monitoring, electoral supervision, demobilization and so forth.

Another strong feature underlying the British Army doctrine is its acceptance of the protracted turbulence of most of the wars they are operating in today and the essential no-win position of peacekeeping forces. Success is understood as the capacity of the force, working in tandem with political and humanitarian efforts, to create the right environment for peace: the recognition that peacekeeping forces can create space but not solutions. Inherent to the doctrine of wider peacekeeping therefore is an element of pragmatism which recognizes its limits and the extreme difficulties and uncertainty inherent to today's peacekeeping environment.

This particular acceptance of longterm turbulence and uncertainty integral to the British Army doctrine differs from the American approach represented in PDD 25 which is so insistent on having a clear view of ‘end-states’ before beginning a peacekeeping operation and having them clearly in writing as ‘sunset clauses’. At the risk of stereotyping, Connaughton puts down such differences to national temper. Writing almost prophetically in September 1992 he notes that: ‘American force characteristics are arguably unsuitable for peacekeeping operations, which tend to be drawn out, require inordinate patience and the ability to turn the other cheek.’ (Connaughton 1992: 40). Instead, he recognizes the characteristics of American military might as having outright comparative advantage in peace-enforcement or preventive deployment. Such an appreciation of the distinctive competence of different national armies in the new range of peacekeeping activities will obviously need to be developed in any UN peacekeeping strategy in the years ahead. With some 40 different countries currently contributing to UN peacekeeping operations (IISS 1994), it is to be expected that some forces will be better at some things than others, and vice versa. Connaughton

Figure 1 Peacekeeping (PK) and peace-enforcement (PE): the role of consent



Source British Army Manual on Wider Peacekeeping.

describes this important point by his phrase 'forces for courses'.

The fundamental emphasis placed on consent, complexity and longevity in the British Army's new peacekeeping doctrine should perhaps gladden NGOs and UN relief agencies. Most agency criticisms of recent UN peacekeeping operations in Africa have focused on the inability of peacekeeping forces to relate to and engage with local populations, and their inability to take the long and complex view. The British doctrine at least sets out to take a longterm and sophisticated approach which puts the affected population at the heart of its analysis. But good practice manuals are seldom translated effortlessly into action and three challenges remain in particular.

First, no matter how good the troops, any peacekeeping operation is still vulnerable to being set an impossible mission and unreasonable mandate by politicians. Second, the doctrine's notion of consent is not necessarily as simple and participatory as it sounds. Any peacekeeping force must seek to establish a genuine **depth** of consent which takes into account the whole community's view. At present, there is a hint that consent means the consent of faction leaders or local war lords and - as any development worker knows - such community leaders do not always have the best interests of their communities at heart and are not necessarily representative. Third, it seems important that the British approach which recognizes turbulence, longevity and complexity in today's emergencies does not slip into a certain fatalism. A major criticism of peacekeeping has always been that it freezes conflict but

does not make peace. An overly phlegmatic approach to the turbulence and complexity of today's conflicts may tend to make a virtue out of simply 'being there'. Such a passive position would doubtlessly involve the maintenance of a status quo within the conflict which would often be unfair and unresolved. Instead, peacekeeping must remain active, determined and resolute over the longterm.

6 Conclusions

The period from 1991-1994 has witnessed a range of peacekeeping experiments which have involved the powerful members of the international community doing something (Somalia) and doing very little (Rwanda). But there are signs in some of the emerging military doctrine on peacekeeping that there is a middle ground in which the practice of second generation UN peacekeeping, if properly refined and well communicated, could have a consistently useful role to play alongside political, humanitarian and human rights responses to complex emergencies. In a recent article, the former UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia, General Sir Michael Rose, posed a challenge to the international community:

Sadly, in the 50th year of UN peacekeeping operations, the perceived failures and costs of the UN mission in former Yugoslavia, and

recent experiences in Somalia, have led to widespread disillusionment. Yet if the world loses faith in peacekeeping, and responses to the new world disorder are thereby limited to the extremes of total war or total peace, the world will become a more dangerous place. Rather than lose faith in the whole peace process, we need to analyse the changed operational circumstances and try to determine new doctrines for the future.

(Rose 1995)

This article has sought to show how UN policy makers and the British military in particular have tried, and continue to try, to develop new peacekeeping doctrines to meet the changed environment of the post Cold War world. It has emphasized that the appropriate doctrine is the one which manages to tread the tightrope between protection and escalation in any ongoing conflict. Getting this balance right is essential and all NGOs and other agencies concerned with humanitarian assistance, development and human rights in today's complex emergencies would be well advised to engage with the military on the subject. Only in this way can they bring their influence to bear upon the future development of peacekeeping and the emerging doctrines of military humanitarianism.

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