

Something must be done – military intervention

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I INTRODUCTION

‘Something must be done . . .’ is a phrase attributed to Edward VIII, when visiting South Wales during the Depression before he became King; and it is a sentiment often expressed in modern times when confronted with scenes of human anguish, although uttered by the peoples of the world as much as by their leaders. This popular sentiment echoes the plea of the constitutional monarch without executive power, who nonetheless sensed the unacceptability of the deprivation with which he was confronted. So too do the peoples of the world, in particular the developed world who read the newspaper reports or see the television footage of inhumanity, hunger, injustice and war, crave action to set the situation to rights.

The United Nations has, since its inception, had responsibility for international peace and security, and has been heavily engaged in humanitarian work. The former responsibility has been difficult to discharge during much of the cold war: with its end the opportunity for the UN to resume this role has been much enhanced - in its own name or as authority for states to take action. Thirty peacekeeping operations were created between 1988 and 1997, out of a grand total of forty-three since the UN’s birth.¹ A multitude of humanitarian relief and development organizations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has long been engaged in bringing succour and support to the needy, and their admirable efforts continue to expand. And in the 1990s we have seen the increasing application of military force as part of the action that the international community has taken - not always with satisfactory results. The reasons for such military deployments are varied, ranging from those largely motivated by the desire to help bring humanitarian relief to those dedicated to the restoration of peace and security.

¹*UN facts*, published by the Department of Public Information, dated March 1997.

This study looks into the proper employment of military forces and personnel in peace operations undertaken or authorised by the UN. It assesses what armed forces are best able to do in this sphere, and for what purpose they are designed and trained. Their possible contribution is considered, and the circumstances in which they should be engaged explored. Peace operations are those undertakings involving the deployment of armed forces under UN command or sanctioned by the UN Security Council. Although the spectrum of activities covers Aclassical@peacekeeping of the cold war period to the major enforcement action of the 1990-91 Gulf war, the focus will be more on those activities which fall short of full-scale war. The chapter of the UN Charter under which these operations are undertaken is important to this study only in respect of the implications for the mandate and *modus operandi* of each undertaking. This study will thus try to elucidate the circumstances in which use of force, or the threat of its use, should be considered by the international community when Asomething@needs to be done in the name of the UN.

The objective of this exercise is to provide the policy-maker with a series of tests or questions to be addressed in considering the proper response to a request or impulse to do something. The outcome does not pretend to be comprehensive, or adequate for all future contingencies, but it should help guide the process of deliberation leading to the making of decisions. It is intended to help guard against the less successful and more quixotic ventures which in retrospect we see to have been misconceived. It focuses consideration on the use and deployment of military forces and personnel, not on other governmental or NGO action.

In examining this subject we will consider the nature of armed forces and some of the capabilities of their constituent elements; in so doing we will emphasise particular qualities and skills which lend themselves to peace operations. This will also provide an opportunity to review examples of recent peace operations, the contribution made by the involvement of military personnel, and the context in which peace operations are conducted, namely the political environment into which the military is inserted. The selection of examples does not claim to be representative, but it is designed to throw into vivid relief certain lessons about the value of military intervention. Following a discussion of some of the underlying issues which motivate policy makers, the study will arrive at broad conclusions.

II THE NATURE OF THE MILITARY

Armed forces are constituted by individual sovereign states to provide for their own defence. They are the means of ensuring the territorial integrity of their own country, of defending and promoting their interests, and are the symbol of nationhood. At least, those are the general reasons for states to raise and maintain armed forces. The military is not only used to respond to external threats and to safeguard the borders against aggression. National interests outside the homeland may be pursued and armed forces will always be a resource of central government in the event of internal national emergency. Their employment in the service of peace to benefit primarily the interests of the international community, separate from narrowly defined national interests, is an innovation of the twentieth century.

Some states have placed more emphasis on a gendarmerie style of force, others have made power projection and the ability to wage offensive war a priority. Doctrines are not uniform. The UK has developed a doctrine of minimum force for its internal security operations, whereas the US has adopted a policy of overwhelming force in its conventional doctrine. Much, inevitably, depends upon the perceived threat and each individual state's manner of responding to its security dilemma. In the cold war era the Nordic countries built a strong territorial defence as well as a peacekeeping capability. The point of these observations is that the training and traditions of one state's armed forces do not necessarily equip them to undertake all the functions of which other forces are capable. Equally, peace operations vary in their scope and in their strictly military content, according to the mandate, the theatre and the level of violence. We should not ignore the fact that some forces operating an 'All or nothing' doctrine, as John Gerard Ruggie has argued, may not be best adapted for low-intensity deployment requiring flexibility and sensitivity of operation, indeed may be left with the 'Nothing' option for a growing number of future scenarios.² Nevertheless, we can draw some general conclusions about what tasks the military is well

²*Winning the Peace: America and the World Order in the New Era*, published by Columbia University Press in 1996, at page 97.

prepared for, and for which it has unique qualities.

Armed forces are designed to operate effectively in circumstances that call for physical endurance in the face of adversity. The assumption is that they may have to operate where the normal amenities of civilised life have been disrupted or do not exist. The military unit is organised as a self-contained organism to operate whatever the conditions. Where cases of turmoil or war present themselves to the international community for treatment, the instruments available to it for use in the field are few; armed forces possess some of the essential qualities needed. Moreover, they are constituted with a command structure to enable the translation of conceptual objectives into action on the ground. And their profession is one that is infused with discipline to ensure control of that action, including the delivery of force.

The most obvious capability which armed forces bring is their coercive strength. It is this potential for the deliberate application of force which is their central *raison d'être*. Their ability both to protect themselves and to coerce others is often the most immediate reason for considering the dispatch of troops to undertake peace operations. But they have limitations - and that goes to the heart of the question about what purpose they should be deployed to achieve. Intervention never takes place in a vacuum; it carries a moral and political burden. It is inherently difficult to gauge even broadly how the interposing of an outside force will be received. The arrival of a new military force changes the dynamics of the situation on the ground. However good the motives of those intervening, some local reaction may be geared to provocation or worse; and the perception of the force by the local population will be influenced both by its conduct and the formal basis for its deployment. Forcing one party to a conflict (such as the recalcitrant Bosnian Serb army) to desist from isolated acts of aggression against another, such as ethnic cleansing or inhumane conduct, is not a straightforward military task. Even escorting a humanitarian convoy to its destination may involve the use or threat of force such that a wider response is stimulated by those in opposition to the target group being aided. However well honed a military force is, it is a blunt instrument whose adaptability and range of uses is limited. It remains, of course, the essential element if enforcement of the international community's will through military might is the central objective.

Since the end of the cold war we have seen armed forces deployed in a variety of roles where particular skills, other than their basic military capability, have been vital to their mission. Monitoring and observing have been military tasks since the early days of peacekeeping (starting with UNTSO in the Middle East as the first such mission in 1948 and continuing more recently with UNIKOM on the Kuwait/Iraq border in 1991). The target of this activity is usually, but not exclusively, other military or para-military forces in order to discern unusual or unauthorised activities. Military personnel are needed for this because they understand the meaning of the activities they witness. Thus military personnel should pick up indications of a heightened state of readiness, irregular patterns of patrolling or increased holdings of weapons that would escape the untutored eye. It is also the case that a certain fraternity exists between those who bear arms and wear uniform, which facilitates a level of communication not open to the civilian. Additionally, the places assigned for observation are often remote or inhospitable and require the kind of training for rugged survival possessed by armed forces.

Monitoring and observation can take many forms. The maintenance of a cease-fire by formed military units capable of self-defence, or unarmed military observers, is perhaps the layman's basic conception of what peacekeeping forces do, involving the checking of adherence to a 'green line' and the terms of a truce. A different approach is to focus on weaponry and its location, either to ensure its security and non-removal or to ascertain its continued absence from certain localities. Such observation is not necessarily confined to the ground environment; rivers and coastlines may be the subject of such monitoring from small craft up to sea-going vessels; and air surveillance is another option in certain circumstances, either by helicopter or fixed wing aircraft, including those specifically designed for the purpose. The comprehensive imposition of an embargo can involve armed forces on the ground, in the air and on the water. No-fly zones may also be imposed, whose policing can only be undertaken by combat aircraft. The basic objective of observation and monitoring operations is to freeze a particular security situation. Exposure to the UN and the public at large if there is abuse of that frozen state is an invaluable weapon in the armoury of the international community; but enforcement may also be necessary if the UN's mandate so decrees. The intervening force cannot count on those former belligerents who are the target of the mandate meekly to accept the status quo, albeit the intervention may at the outset have been with the

consent of the parties. The risk of confrontation and escalation must be taken into account in an assessment of the contingencies that could arise.

Disarming and cantoning troops as part of a peace settlement has also been an undertaking for outside armed forces. This is a delicate operation which requires the building of confidence and the establishment of trust. At the outset there is an organisational task which requires knowledge of how armies behave and what will be most conducive to getting the warring parties to lay down their arms and go through the process of demobilisation. Concerns about vulnerability, and uncertainty about the future, make this a tense time for those submitting to the process and those administering it. The success or failure of the mission is dependent on the professionalism of the military personnel administering the operation and their ability to behave both sensitively and firmly in dealing with the anxieties and logistic problems which inevitably arise. This activity could also have a place in a preventive operation to forestall the onset of hostilities.

Demobilisation is only one step on the path to translating military personnel from being part of a fighting force to civilian life. The training of former military personnel in civilian trades is important in order to ensure that those released do not immediately take up arms again outside the prescribed structures, for want of any other skill base. Such re-training is common in well established forces which recruit their personnel with the aim of retaining them for extended periods before releasing them back into civil society. The training itself may best be a job for civilians, including experts themselves retired from the forces who can help smooth the complex transition from uniformed life.

The start of physical reconstruction work in the aftermath of conflict can also be allocated to the military in circumstances where the peace is fragile. This may be a questionable use of military resources but the options for making a quick start to get life back to something like normality can be limited in the early stages. At the cessation of violence, when it is most vital to encourage the rebuilding of *civil* society, the only resource immediately available to the international community may paradoxically be the *military*. Part of their value is that they can withstand intimidation, but the convincing demonstration to those who

have renounced violence that reconstruction can start quickly is the foremost priority. The retraining and reorientation of the armed forces of a state may also form part of the programme for the reconstruction of the institutions of civil society.

Another form of training that is often required is in techniques of mine clearance. This can be and is done by civilian bodies, often by NGOs set up for this very purpose, generally relying on recently retired military experts and the mobilisation of the local populace. But serving military experts are required to establish the norms of quality control and to provide consistency throughout a theatre of operations. A centre of technical excellence is usually needed to deal with new threats and novel devices, as well as to disseminate information so that all those involved have the most up-to-date information.

For the tasks cited above a very strong case can be made for the deployment of military units or trained personnel. There are, however, other tasks which have been undertaken by the military but which are not in themselves military. The provision of clean water, for example, is often a priority for the local civilian population and a necessity for those bringing aid from outside. This capability could be provided by civilian contractors, except that the environment of the operation is often insecure and those giving assistance to one side are likely to be intimidated or attacked by the other. It is thus the need for basic military skills that recommends the use of a military unit to furnish this fundamental underpinning. Engaging a contractor to provide this service may be expensive (in view of the security hazards) and unreliable, insofar as the terms of their contract may be well nigh impossible to fulfill - with unacceptable results on the ground.

Transportation too appears to be a candidate for provision by the civil sector. This will often be the case both inside the country and for the transportation of goods and personnel to it. Nevertheless, there is frequently no option other than to use military means. To take the example of air transport, at the outset conditions at the airhead may be precarious, in respect of the physical state of the runway, the logistic support available and the air traffic control arrangements. The accessibility of the airfield may not

be suitable for civil airliners either. Perhaps most importantly, the need quickly to provide an intervention force with the heavy equipment essential for its job often requires military transport aircraft conceived specially for that purpose. Likewise, the delivery of urgent medical and food supplies may be provided by military transport as the only viable means available in the early stages.

Communications are another service which the military are well adapted to offer. Naturally, any military deployment will have its own integrated command and control arrangements which will involve communications out into the field and back to headquarters. In some cases where no major military deployment is made, communications for humanitarian relief work may be vital. NGOs will have the basics of a communication system but over difficult terrain and long distances special resource to maintain essential links can be lacking. This is a case where a little specialist help can go a long way in enabling the NGOs to operate more effectively.

High on the list of necessary capabilities for an intervention force is the ability to provide a service with a good degree of independence from the local economy. This comes from the self-sufficiency of which the military is capable, but at a cost. The logistic train that accompanies a formed military unit (as opposed to individuals as observers) is considerable. Military planning has to take the worst case, and in the unstable situations of most peace operations, it does not make sense to cut corners and assume a level of local cooperation or access that may leave troops stranded and vulnerable. The result is that a small deployment for a limited period can often appear to politicians and political observers to be an exercise in taking 'everything but the kitchen sink'. Even a limited deployment can give the impression of a major undertaking and it certainly means that the numbers engaged on an operation are greater than the defined task to be done would at first glance suggest. Interestingly, when a multinational intervention involving the deployment of a mix of more and less capable forces is being considered, the logistic and support services of the more sophisticated armies are amongst the capabilities most in demand.

When coercion or military protection is required, there is clearly no alternative to the deployment of a military intervention force. Particular skills or attributes that are not part of the coercive repertoire may

also be essential to the success of an operation. In outlining some of the tasks which are performed by the military in peace operations, it is apparent that some of them could be done by civilian organisations if the conditions were benign and the engagement of a contractor would produce reliable results. It follows that the more difficult and dangerous the situation is, the more likely it is for the military option to be considered. Where military personnel are needed for specific technical tasks (because they are the only ones reliably available), it may be possible to reduce their profile so that their involvement is not equated to a military intervention, but the symbolism of the uniform is difficult to escape. It bears underlining that the military are not infinitely adaptable, and the unwillingness and unsuitability of the armed forces to act as a civil police force is well known from recent experience in both Haiti and Bosnia. Although they have a remarkably wide range of capabilities, the tasks they can undertake and the objectives they can achieve *contribute* to the broad effort to ameliorate the situation of which the international community is seized. The essential point is that the involvement of the military is not an end in itself and must be integrated into a wider political strategy aimed at the re-establishment of a stable and peaceful society. Before returning to this point we will investigate a number of situations into which the military have been called to intervene.

In concluding this section one obvious fact warrants repetition. Intervention by a military force is a significant event, even when it is done with the consent of the parties - all the more so when it is not. (Individual military personnel or small sub-units doing specialised tasks such as communications or providing airfield services can escape this characterisation.) Intervention is a political act on the part of the state contributing troops and it represents a major step for the state receiving the intervention, whether voluntarily or not. It is not a value-free action. There is inevitably some loss of sovereignty to the state receiving the intervention, through the very presence of other states' troops under the command of an outside organisation. Their overall purpose may be benign but their local reception and interaction in the particular cannot be confidently predicted, certainly in respect of incidents that occur in the daily round. The presence of troops from outside also changes the nature of the relationship between the recipient state and the international community, as represented by the states contributing troops to the intervention force. Troops may arrive as implementers of a cease-fire plan and have to prevent its

opponents from destroying it. To local eyes that impartiality may look lop-sided. Troops deployed to monitor, observe, and maybe deter, can end up as targets or hostages of factions within the recipient state. For the troop-contributing states some national prestige is engaged, the well-being of their soldiers is naturally a primary concern, and the desire to gain kudos cannot be separated from other motivations for making a contribution. These factors mean that tension is a part of the relationship and the commitment of military forces is, in this regard, fundamentally different from other, non-military involvement.

III CONTEXT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

During the cold war, peacekeeping forces were generally used to maintain a separation between warring factions when actual conflict had ceased. This classical peacekeeping was based on the consent of the parties, impartiality on the part of the intervening forces and the latter's use of force only in self-defence. They were a buffer to discourage the parties from re-engagement and they were equipped at most with the means of self-defence but not of enforcing their will. To operate in this way it was necessary for the hostile sides to have reached the point where it was more advantageous to accept a stalemate and perhaps work for a political solution than it was to pursue a military victory. The in-built weakness of this model is that if one or both of the factions decide to abandon the cease-fire and return to the use of force to gain their objectives, the peacekeepers have neither the might (nor the mandate) to prevent them from doing so. In UNEF I which was told to withdraw in 1967 by Egypt, we have an example of a peacekeeping force which did its job, provided the side playing host to the UN force shared the same interest in a monitored cease-fire, but which was brushed aside when that shared interest evaporated. The presence of a military third party can thus serve to deter mavericks and to prevent an unintended slide into conflict only when this suits the host party, but its coercive power is negligible. Although it

would serve no purpose to advertise the fact that such a force had no real military teeth, those responsible for authorising the deployment must recognise the reality and consider what sort of contingency plans, political as well as military, to draw up in the event of the cease-fire being abandoned.

Since the end of the cold war the circumstances in which intervention by military forces have been deemed appropriate have multiplied, and having reached an apogee diminished again. The situations have moved on from the interposing of a blue-helmeted force between two rival, warring parties to the involvement of outside military forces in the more amorphous internal domestic difficulties of a state, which often give rise to grave humanitarian emergencies.

The earliest examples of such engagement in the new world of the 1990s involved the mediated termination of civil wars which had been the product of cold war rivalries. Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique are classic cases of the resolution of internal conflict by third parties, leading with the UN's help to the holding of elections and the installation of a democratically elected government. In each of the cases the role of the military under UN auspices has been a vital component part of the success of the multi-faceted mission. The Cambodia case may be seen to be flawed by subsequent developments but the concerted effort cannot be gainsaid. Angola and Western Sahara are examples of work in progress, both being long in the process of coming to a satisfactory conclusion. More complex situations of civil war, ethnic conflict, humanitarian disaster, and institutional failure have come to the fore as cases for treatment. The tractability of the problems has varied enormously as has the ambition of the UN Security Council in authorising military intervention, and its willingness to permit the use of force under chapter VII of the UN Charter. It is worth noting, equally, that a number of intra-national conflicts which have been underway with considerable ferocity and appalling loss of life have never really been seriously considered as cases for UN-sponsored intervention; Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Algeria come to mind. Some have argued that they are not yet 'ripe' for intervention.

Much current thinking focuses on the different stages of the evolution of a conflict and the opportunities for intervention to stabilise, improve or overcome the situation that has arisen. Whereas in classical

peacekeeping, military intervention occurred at a time when the conflict had reached a stalemate or other natural hiatus such as exhaustion, there is now recognition that prevention *should* be a better path if the problem can be identified in time and action taken to prevent matters deteriorating. To date the only example of military prevention for which credit can be claimed in warding off the likely collapse into internecine conflict is UNPREDEP, the UN force in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. And the jury will be out on the effectiveness of the deployment until after it is withdrawn in mid-1998 and the longer term results can be assessed. Prevention goes much wider than a military monitoring force and the chief tools of prevention involve early and decisive engagement with the gamut of political and economic sticks and carrots.

The crucial requirement, of course, for timely preventive action is information (and the will to act on it). Michael Lund³ has provided a helpful analysis of how conflicts unfold and the stages at which, in different scenarios, military intervention has been effected. He argues for early preventive deployment before matters get out of hand. The Carnegie Commission report on preventing deadly conflict argues similarly that the warning signs can be identified and preventive action taken, that there is no inevitability about intra- or inter-state violence. The central point in the Commission's words is: >The costs of prevention, however, are minuscule when compared with the costs of deadly conflict⁴ In similar vein, Mohamed Sahnoun, the former UN Special Representative for Somalia, writes: AIt is my belief if the international community had intervened earlier and more effectively in Somalia, much of the catastrophe that has unfolded could have been avoided. In theory, there should have been no shortage of actors who could have intervened to mediate the conflicts that engulfed Somalia.⁵ The difficulty is persuading the international community to invest in prevention when the costs of failing to do so are difficult to assess

³*Preventing Violent Conflicts*, published by the United States Institute of Peace in 1996.

⁴*Final Report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict*, published in December 1997, executive summary on page xlv.

⁵*Somalia, The Missed Opportunities*, published by United States Institute of Peace Press in 1994, at page xiii.

accurately, and the potential cases for treatment are legion.

The case of the UN force in Cyprus is of relevance to this study even if the original UN deployment started as long ago as 1964. Its role was modified (perforce) in 1974 but UNFICYP has now been in operation for over thirty years. It has been argued that this represents success in that the island has not again been plunged into inter-communal strife. The UN-supervised peace has held and a state of inactive belligerency has enabled a dialogue to be pursued. The UN has mandated a variety of high representatives to achieve a lasting settlement, but so far without success. There has been some movement but real engagement has been minimal despite the UN's earnest and sustained efforts. We may ask the question why the mediation attempts have not borne fruit. An explanation is that at least one of the parties has been under no pressure to compromise and conclude a final settlement, *because* of the UN military presence

The political process has been well intentioned but has lacked the essential ingredient of urgency to force a solution. The threat of disengagement by the UN has up to the present been deemed empty or unacceptable. The question must be asked whether peacekeeping of this sort is conducive to the resolution of a problem, as opposed to setting the dispute in aspic such that its essential elements are preserved except for the use of violence. The idea of withdrawing forces to encourage the opposing factions to find a solution under the duress of a return to war is of course abhorrent but it has to be addressed as an option, particularly if the imminent threat had a real chance of re-invigorating the stalemated talks. There are two observations to make: first, that the lack of pressure to solve the political problem at the root of the conflict contributes to its non-resolution; and second, that the demands on the international community for intervention elsewhere are increasing over time and the resources available are not, so that the matter of priorities has to be addressed.

Another case of relevance to our enquiry into the usefulness of the deployment of an intervention force is the UN force in Croatia after the Serb uprising to claim territory in Slavonia and the Krajina. The local Serb forces established facts on the ground through force of arms, which the Croats were unable to

reverse at the time. As Laura Silber and Allan Little recount⁶, the Serbs had achieved what they wanted in terms of local autonomy, and the Croats had succeeded in internationalising the conflict. Both sides agreed that a peacekeeping force to prevent further conflict would be desirable. Their respective reasoning was entirely at odds but the desired outcome, at least in the short term, was identical. The Serbs wanted their gains to be endorsed and recognised (even defended) by the UN; the Croats wanted to draw breath without any further ravaging of their territory so that they could train and arm a fighting force capable of retaking the land they had lost. So UNPROFOR I came into being with the willing support of both sides, while the international community sought a wider political solution. But only for so long. When the Croats were ready to recapture the Serb controlled areas, at a time when support for the far-flung aspirations of Greater Serbia was weakened, they informed the UN force commander that an attack was imminent, by-passed the peacekeepers and re-established their sovereignty over Croatian territory⁷. Here is an instance of the factions conniving to make use of the UN for their own different purposes, for so long as it suited at least one of them. Michael Walzer makes the point about the cynicism with which cease-fires can be entered into: ~~A~~But it isn't always true that such cease-fires serve the purposes of humanity ...they may simply fix the conditions under which fighting will be resumed, at a later date and with a new intensity.⁸ This calls into question whether the UN and the international community should allow themselves to be manipulated in this way.

These latter two examples are not unique and they raise some key questions about the role of intervention forces and the purposes they serve. They throw into relief the essential need for military force

⁶*Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation*, published by Penguin in 1997, at page 188.

⁷*Ibid* at pages 356-360.

⁸*Just and Unjust Wars*, published by BasicBooks at page 123.

to be deployed in a political context involving a process designed to deal with the fundamentals of the problem. In the absence of such a process, with will and urgency behind it, the military force becomes a football to be played with by the factions on the ground. And yet UN interventions have certainly saved lives on the ground and been mandated with the best of intentions. The underlying question that arises is whether such forces really contribute to the peace and security that the UN seeks. Was there ever a realistic chance of the cease-fire in Croatia enduring while the restoration of sovereignty remained Croatia's legitimate goal? And what sort of pressure will bring about a settlement in Cyprus, short of the stark reality of an imminent conflict?

It is worth recalling the bloody conflicts, internal and international, down the ages which resolved themselves by victory and defeat. This is not to argue that conflict is the right way to resolve problems between or within states. Nor is it to argue that all interventions designed to halt conflict are to be deprecated. The words of Silber and Little in relation to Slovenia's unilateral decision to secede are nonetheless telling: 'Slovenia had opted for force and had won a great prize. It had taught Europe a lesson that the peace mediators never once took on board - that war is sometimes not only a profoundly rational path to take, especially when you know you can win, but is also sometimes the only way to get what you want.'⁹ Few would deny the logic of Slovenia's independence today. Such an outcome has other parallels; to take a fanciful but not completely outlandish example, it is doubtful that the USA would be a better place today if its civil war had been interrupted by an outside force intent upon preventing the final outcome that we know and insistent upon avoiding the climax of victory or defeat.

⁹*Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation*, op cit at page 167.

Another example of relevance is the manner of Bangladesh's emergence as an independent state in 1971. A civil war was in effect under way between East and West Pakistan. In this case there was intervention by a third party, India. This consisted of two key actions: prevention of reinforcement overflights from West to East and action by the Indian army on the ground, mainly in the East, to defeat and oust the army of West Pakistan. As the twenty-four resolutions submitted to the UN Security Council over a two week period show, this intervention was not uncontroversial.¹⁰ It is doubtful that an intervention force to hold a cease-fire line before the Indian victory was complete would have served the cause of peace and security. India's withdrawal from Bangladesh was effected rapidly and the presence of US Task Force 74 led by USS Enterprise has been interpreted variously as being a threat to India in the event of her non-withdrawal, or a reassurance to Pakistan that no further dismemberment would be sanctioned. This case is interesting both because the political problem at the root of this conflict was eventually resolved through force, and because India intervened on the side of one of the parties to ensure what it perceived to be the right, possibly the just, outcome. We shall return to this issue of justice but for the time being the point is that the intervention did not attempt to arrest the violent progress towards a resolution of the underlying problem, indeed it was rather to accelerate it. If the objective of the international community is peace and security, perhaps that can sometimes best be achieved by letting local events run their course. It is a difficult judgement but one that must be attempted.

¹⁰Richard Sisson and Leo Rose's *War and Secession - Pakistan and India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*, published by the University of California Press in 1990, at page 218.

By contrast we should look into the genocide perpetrated in Rwanda in 1994, which the UN did not stop for want of forces offered by the member nations to deploy there. The Canadian UN commander, Major General Dallaire, stated that with a force of 5000 trained troops and an appropriate mandate he could have prevented thousands of deaths. A widely held view (now) is that the subsequent destabilisation of Rwanda and its massive refugee flows might have been avoided by timely intervention. The Carnegie Commission, with the Institute for the study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University and the United States Army, convened a panel of experts who concluded that: **A**In Rwanda in 1994, it is likely that 5000 troops could have averted the slaughter of a half-million people.¹¹ This was genocide, as US President Clinton acknowledged, belatedly but publicly, in his visit to Africa in March 1998. Genocide, in the words of the 1948 *UN Convention*, **A**... is a crime under international law which they [the parties] undertake to prevent and punish.¹² So the international community can be said to have failed to live up to its obligations. Nevertheless an intervention to save lives, though laudable in itself, does not amount to a coherent strategy for a resolution of the political problem. As Glynne Evans writes about the African Great Lakes crises: **A**Indeed, a military intervention will interfere with local dynamics - often complicating and protracting a situation rather than simplifying it - unless the aim is indeed to change the correlation of local factions and impose a solution by force.¹² There is ambiguity here about what military intervention can be expected to achieve: stopping the killing in the short term and imposing a solution are two different propositions.

¹¹*Preventing Deadly Conflict*, op cit at page 198.

¹²Adelphi Paper 311, *Responding to Crises in the African Great Lakes*, published by the IISS in August 1997, at page 16.

Let us also inspect an intervention which has the reputation for being tragically flawed but for a period produced good results. Intervention by the UN in Somalia now has the stigma of failure firmly attached to it, both in respect of the state and as a peace operation. The US-led (and UN-authorised) UNITAF operation in 1992 ¹³ to create a secure environment for humanitarian relief work went a long way to reaching its goal. It is generally described as a success and not least for the close integration of the political and military effort to fulfill its mandate. When a new and broader mandate was prepared for a successor force, UNOSOM II, the scope of operations was increased to include nation building and disarmament, while the forces available diminished. The original aim of a peace operation geared to humanitarian relief and the promotion of reconciliation was lost in a bloodsoaked vendetta against one of the clan leaders. The overwhelming failure here was in the integration of military action into the political context, not in UNITAF but in UNOSOM II. As Robert Oakley and John Hirsch have commented: ¹⁴ 'Peacekeeping operations, certainly under Chapter VII, are essentially political operations carried out by military means. What counts ultimately is not the military effect but the political results. The application of military force will be an ingredient of the means to enable the political process to bear fruit.'

The picture that emerges from this selection of examples is of military intervention as part of a broader political scheme. The integration of military tasks into the political framework of a national settlement in, for example Namibia, was well balanced and served the overall goal well. Where the military intervention is not tied sufficiently tightly into the political process, there is the strong danger of the military activities becoming ends in themselves. Moreover, the question has to be asked whether an interrupted conflict enhances the prospects for a final political solution - or diminishes it. Even in the case of all-out military enforcement action, as in the Gulf war, it is essential that the political objective is clearly in view and that political control prevails in the wielding of coercive violence to achieve lasting peace and security. If we accept as axiomatic that military intervention must be properly integrated into a political process, there is

¹³ *UN Security Council Resolution 794 of 3 December 1992.*

¹⁴ *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, published by the United States Institute of Peace Press in 1995, at page 166.

nevertheless the awkward case where fire-brigade action is needed; in other words, where flames have already broken out and need to be doused to prevent their spreading.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that in some cases intervention is required before it is possible to work out a proper political response in which to embed that action. Changing the metaphor, in an article entitled *Using Force as a Tourniquet*, Joshua Muravchik¹⁵ argues that a tourniquet can be required to staunch bleeding in an emergency. The real lesson of the Somali mission is not to avoid such interventions but to limit them to circumscribed, humanitarian goals. A person who suffers a grievous wound may bleed to death in minutes, but if given a tourniquet, may eventually make a full recovery. The same can be true for the emergencies that beset nations. He makes this point in the context of both natural and political disasters, whereas this writer would confine such emergency response to dire humanitarian situations, including systematic massacres and genocide. Muravchik goes on to say, Stopping genocide or mass death from starvation or disease does not mean putting everything right. That may be so but once engaged it is difficult for an intervention force to extract itself without having achieved more than the negative effect of stopping an evil. In any case, the task of emergency intervention is not straightforward; it will usually bring the intervening force into violent confrontation with those responsible for perpetrating the disaster, especially in the case of genocide or where ethnic cleansing is being pursued. And the need for a political settlement remains acute, albeit the emergency nature of the intervention precludes the immediate establishment of a political process.

This section has posed some challenging questions about the contribution the military can make and the context in which military intervention must be embedded. The optimum approach involves a meshing of the civil and military effort, with the military in support of the defined political end. But some compromise of that optimum is inevitable where fire-brigade action is essential. Policy makers must recognise when they are compromising in this way, and the implications of that compromise.

¹⁵New York Times *Magazine* of 15 December 1996, at pages 58 and 59.

IV APPLICATION

Definitions of, and distinctions between, the different types of military intervention under UN auspices abound. Those adopted by the then Secretary General in *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992, and amended in his 1995 Supplement, are one such approach. This writer distinguishes four main categories of peace operations: preventive deployments; operations based on consent (under chapter VI); enforcement operations (under chapter VII) ranging from war-fighting down to coercion through the threat of the use of force; and comprehensive peace settlement operations. The chapter of the UN Charter under which the first and last categories operate may vary, although to date they have been set up under chapter VI, for they have been at the initiative or with the consent of the parties. It is not inconceivable that preventive operations could be given a chapter VII mandate to ward off the threat of aggression by one party against another. Support for humanitarian work is not a separate function, but will be encompassed in any of these categories, to a greater or lesser degree. Within this broad span of possible military activity, none can sensibly be undertaken without a political framework. This is the case even when a humanitarian goal is the major reason for the military involvement, because the cause of the emergency has to be addressed and that is rarely just a matter of technical or climatic difficulty.

We can begin to identify the circumstances in which decision makers should favour the deployment of armed forces in peace operations. There can be no absolute prescription, for each case has to be reviewed in its own right and in the context of the particular situation.

Where the question of enforcement arises, contributors to a peace operation must be prepared to undertake warlike operations. At the top of the scale this means the sort of operation seen in the Gulf war which is little different from conventional war, indeed could conceivably lead to limited NBC

exchanges. The implications of this kind of commitment are considerable. The outcome of the enforcement action is unknowable in advance; it will be recalled that, before the Gulf war, the forecasts of casualties on the side of the coalition ran to ten thousand or more, and none suggested the limited number that eventually resulted. Blood will have to be spilled if the will of the international community is enforced with violence. States have to be prepared to commit their own troops with that hazard in prospect. That means that their leaders have to be sure that their compatriots support the commitment, both generally and to the point where the blood of their own nations' armed forces may be expended. With a commitment that is not under UN command, but involves states acting with UN authorisation, goes the likely responsibility of bearing the associated costs. This may not always be the case, as we know from the Gulf war in which the main participants on the allied side had their costs reimbursed by regional powers and by other countries contributing cash support in lieu of troops. It is also the fact that a major deployment has an opportunity cost. The military forces dispatched are not available for other tasks; this can be significant if there is a separate national threat which overshadows a would-be contributor. With the cold war at an end in 1990, the transfer of a good part of the armoured fighting core of NATO's forces from Europe did not present a serious risk, but it is interesting to speculate whether a similar depletion would have been acceptable even two years earlier.

Enforcement operations under chapter VII of the UN Charter can require the full panoply of the fighting capability of a country's or coalition's forces. The needs and risks are clear. It is, however, less clear what force elements are required when the job to be done is militarily more ambiguous. For example, the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait clearly needed conventional armed forces capable of joint operations against a foe with heavy armoured forces and prepared defensive positions. In contradistinction, the force needed to fulfill the mandate of the UN Security Council in respect of Somalia through UNITAF was much less clear, the task being to provide a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid. What force is needed to create such security? How much does the threat of more force in reserve count, and will an excessively large deployment be counter-productive as well as wasteful? Decisions on what constitutes a viable and effective force will change with the developing situation. A force that is too small or one that is too large involve costs of a different kind, both of which will result in criticism. The Dutch

defence minister Voorhoeve in 1995 said, with reference to the fall of the UN designated safe area of Srebrenica in Bosnia: AWhat must be learned for the future is that enough military power must be provided from the start, so that you can escalate when the enemy adopts terror tactics.@¹⁶ This criticism was leveled at the international community's failure to provide the tools to enable their ambitious mandate for safe areas to be implemented. The composition of the force to accompany the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement (IFOR) took account of the data about local capabilities to ensure that the force was not challenged and that it could prevent a return to civil war. Deterrence has played a big part in IFOR's success in *not* having to resort to violence in any major fashion; it, and SFOR, has nonetheless been a coercive presence essential to the implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

¹⁶*Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation*, op cit at page 362, note 2.

It is not only forces deployed under chapter VII of the Charter that need to be carefully weighed. In many ways, interventions under chapter VI are more difficult to judge, since the writ of the host country may not run and local lawlessness may be extreme. The key to deployments under chapter VI has been consent. If the host country has invited the intervention or at least acquiesced in it, it is reasonable to expect intervention operations to be conducted in a spirit of cooperation with the parties. Consent is both the conceptual underpinning and the main source of protection for the intervention force. This concept is explored extensively by Charles Dobbie in an article in *Survival*.¹⁷ The intervention force is expected to work with the parties to fulfill its mandate. That is not to say that confrontations, banditry and difficulties are not expected: that is the nature of situations in which there has been bloodshed and violence between two or more parties. The point is that the intervening force is expected to work with the grain of the local movement towards a settlement, with a political process to achieve a solution. If consent is withdrawn, it may not make military sense for the intervention force to remain, for it is unlikely to be properly equipped for an enforcement role. Just as importantly, such a mission may not make political sense. To quote former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali: **A**The logic of peacekeeping flows from political and military premises that are quite distinct from those of enforcement; and the dynamics of the latter are incompatible with the political process that peacekeeping is intended to facilitate.@¹⁸

¹⁷ *A Concept for Post-Cold War Peacekeeping*, in *Survival* of Autumn 1995, published by the IISS, at page 121 et seq.

¹⁸ *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* in 1995, at paragraph 35.

Yet there appears to be pressure for the UN to be doing more, not less, and opinion tends towards criticism of the international community for shirking opportunities to do good. The lessons are twofold; first, that the mandate and the capability of the force must bear a direct relationship to each other; and second, that when peacekeeping by consent is not working to the extent that the requirement shifts more to an enforcement role, the purpose of the intervention force needs urgent review, and possibly its withdrawal. The option of withdrawal should not be ignored. A change to an enforcement mandate will certainly require different military capabilities. John Gerard Ruggie argues that the UN must devise a doctrine for operating in these gray area peace operations.¹⁹ His point is that the distinction between the two types of operation is not tenable in the real world and that an intervention force has to be militarily credible, in other words have an enforcement capability. He argues that forceful impartiality should be exercised in support or defence of certain rules of conduct, not the particular parties to the dispute. He concludes that if the UN is unable or unwilling to adopt a different strategy members have no business asking the UN to become involved in gray area operations in the first place. This argument has some strength but it does not recognise sufficiently the realities of states' willingness to get involved, or rather their reluctance to do so. An enforcement operation carries very different risks and also calls for a much clearer moral judgement about the case to be remedied - on the part of the Security Council and those contributing troops. The resource implications are also likely to be very different for enforcement will require a more capable force with reserves to hand.

A key question which the international community has to address is whether it is trying to achieve justice or peace in its interventions. These two aims are not mutually exclusive, nor are they as absolute as they may at first appear. Peace can mean no more than a state of peacefulness, in which hostilities are suspended and, for example, humanitarian aid can be delivered relatively unimpeded. Justice can mean a just settlement of the political problem at the root of the conflict, or alternatively a political compromise the parties accept as just. The routes to either of these outcomes can involve different approaches; justice

¹⁹*Winning the Peace*, op cit at page 100.

could involve the intervention force siding with one of the parties, perhaps the weaker one, and enabling it to win the war; peace could mean taking no position on the rights and wrongs of the conflict, and supporting a stable outcome in which violence ceases, perhaps even with victory having been won by the undeserving side. Rarely is the case as crude as it is painted above. The reality is more nuanced and the judgement to be made usually has to balance the two competing claims of peace and justice, with a good dose of realism thrown in about what is achievable. Justice, of course, implies a peaceful result eventually, but the means to achieve it may require forceful intervention on the side of one of the participants. Justice, in other words, is likely to need enforcement and that involves a significant commitment to ensure that it sticks. It implies both a political framework and the means to make the patient keep taking the medicine. For peace to be the priority, on the other hand, implies an overriding wish to see the violence stop. Peacefulness is a desirable advance when a bloody war has been raging. And it may well be a noble act to help the belligerents to hold to a cease-fire. In the real world the goal may ultimately be stability rather than the ideal of justice, whose achievement will strain the capabilities of politicians, and their military servants alike, to deliver. To understand the objective of the undertaking to which armed forces are to be committed is crucial to decision-making about what sort of force to send or whether it makes sense to send one at all.

It is also important to recognise that >doing something= in the interests of the international community does not automatically imply the engagement of armed forces. NGOs may well have be the best tool available; the work of a political task force, perhaps under a special representative of the UN Secretary General, may be the right contribution; economic sticks and carrots may be more useful, or the situation may be beyond treatment or not at the right stage of maturity for active involvement by outside parties. Before deciding on military intervention, the alternative of letting events take their course in, say, a civil war has to be examined and judgements made about the stage (early, late or ever) when intervention can make a decisive difference.

All the above assumes a UN Security Council willing to authorise military intervention, and an international community prepared to provide the necessary means to carry out the mandate set by the

Council. The enthusiasm with which new tasks were embraced in the early 1990s had diminished by the mid-1990s, just as the unity of the Security Council has continued to decline into the late 1990s, as evidenced by the attitude taken to Iraq's objection to certain UNSCOM inspections in 1997/8. There is an increasing tendency towards placing the onus on regional players to take the lead in dealing with crises in their respective regions, with authorisation or endorsement from the Security Council as necessary. National sovereignty and the extent of its inviolability remains tricky and sensitive, and the subject is unlikely to be addressed, let alone resolved as a matter of principle in the near term. Interventions will thus be decided as the cases emerge for consideration. Precedents have been set, for example in the humanitarian relief of the Kurds in Northern Iraq in 1991, and the notion that domestic affairs can never be the concern of the international community no longer holds sway. Above all, the question is how firmly states are committed to upholding the precepts of the UN Charter, the cornerstone of which is the maintenance of international peace and security. US ambivalence is manifest in its failure to its dues, although Presidential Decision Directive 25 of May 1994 makes plain that peace operations have a part to play in the prevention and resolution of regional conflict, subject to some stringent caveats, including in respect to the involvement of US forces. The views of the US count not only because of its position of leadership in the world (and UN veto) but because of the almost universal dependence on US forces for certain capabilities such as long range, high capacity aircraft and intelligence.

V TESTS and CONCLUSIONS

Military intervention is a serious matter. The reason for the existence of armed forces is generally to provide security for individual countries= national interests. Increasingly armed forces are being used in the service of a wider sense of international order. This not merely a matter of altruism, but rather a recognition that narrow definitions of national interest no longer suffice. The increasing indivisibility of

security is a function of our globalised society. Nevertheless, the circumstances in which armed forces should intervene at the behest of the UN need careful examination.

The broad objective. *The international community's objective has to be a political solution to the underlying problem that has given rise to the conflict or humanitarian disaster.* The broad objective of any intervention by outside armed forces must be clearly stated. This paper has set out some of the tasks which the military can perform and why such deployment often appears to be the only choice available. Where civilian alternatives exist their employment should be the norm, for the introduction of a military intervention force changes both local dynamics and the relationship between the international community and the recipient state. The military task can be no more than a component part of the broader political strategy to achieve a given political goal. Where the situation is amenable to a political settlement between the parties, military intervention with the consent of the parties can help to stabilise matters and reduce tensions. On the other hand, where the prospect for a negotiated settlement through outside mediation looks unlikely any intervention contemplated will need to be forceful and one-sided. As Barry Posen brutally puts it, in connection with refugee disasters, 'All except full-scale war are temporary expedients. They reduce hardship and save lives but they do not solve the original political problems that produced the violence that produced the refugees. It is probably true that a full-scale war is the best military answer to refugees produced by cruel occupations or highly repressive indigenous regimes.'²⁰ The political objective of the international community must be clearly identified in the UN's mandate for the intervention, so that the implications for a military role can be properly assessed.

Commitment. *Intervention by outside armed forces should not take place in the absence of a political process which will ultimately render the intervention force redundant.* Once the international community has become engaged through military intervention, it is not an easy job to disengage. There have been cases, the most infamous being that of UNOSOM II in Somalia, where the

²⁰ *Military Responses to Refugee Disasters in International Security*, Summer 1996 at page 108.

situation deteriorated to the point where the UN effectively abandoned the responsibility it had earlier assumed. This signal failure not only damaged the UN's reputation but also called into question the contribution that military intervention can make. All the more reason, therefore, that any military intervention should be well thought through. Peace operations are rarely short-lived and it is understandable that military planners should give emphasis to what they crudely call an 'exit strategy'. But setting arbitrary deadlines and timetables is really to miss the point. The commitment, once made, is to support a viable political process which the international community has embarked upon in the light of an appreciation of the risks and benefits involved.

The military task. *Next, the military task to be undertaken has to be clearly defined, and carefully weighed.* UN Mandates have in recent years suffered from obscurity and breadth. Some argue, as do Professors Toni and Abram Chayes²¹, that this is an inevitable product of the process of drafting a Security Council resolution; compromises and fudged language are unavoidable in order to achieve a mandate in reasonable time. This writer begs to differ. Clarity is essential in respect of the military tasks for any intervention, and the provision of resources to undertake them. It should go without saying that the military objective, and the means to achieve it, must be kept in balance, and that the failure to do so should call into question the rationale for the overall mission. For example, the creation of safe areas in Bosnia without the means to secure them brought the reputation and professional standing of the UN into disrepute, and undermined its ability to operate subsequently. The reluctance on the part of military planners to engage in peace operations whose military objectives are obscure or unattainable was well exemplified in 1997, when intervention in Zaire was contemplated and rejected. The deployment of military force must be a practical measure responding to the realities on the ground, not a politico-military confidence trick.

²¹*Harvard Law School* course in Fall semester 1997.

Likelihood of success. *Perhaps the most tricky judgement to be made is on the vital question of whether the intervention will meet with success.* There are two parts to this success: the immediate military operation and the overarching political process that must accompany it. Even limited military tasks involve risks, one of which is the possibility of escalation and extension of the conflict, beyond the capabilities of those originally mandated to intervene. Such risks are heightened when a crisis has not reached its climax and the war is still expanding. It is bad practice to intervene to achieve a military objective when the political process has not simultaneously been activated. Susan Woodward comments on the inextricable linkage of the two parts in the implementation of the Dayton agreement, as follows: *The military cannot leave until the civilian aspects are well underway, and the civilians cannot do their tasks without military assistance. This is not a matter alone of organisational coordination and unity of command but of strategy. In peacekeeping strategy, economic revival should follow close on the heels of a cease-fire so that soldiers can demobilise and be re-incorporated into society, politicians are willing to shift monies from a nearly exclusive preoccupation with defense to economic recovery, increased commerce brings people from all sides of the war back into contact, and the process of rebuilding trust can begin. In this way, the cease-fire becomes anchored in society and political solutions can emerge.*²² The political and military objectives must, of course, be kept under constant review in a dynamic situation. Thresholds should be identified to ensure that the changing scene does not move outside the bounds of what can be achieved with the resources, military and other, allocated.

²²*Implementing Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a post-Dayton Primer and Memorandum of Warning*, published by the Brookings Institution in May 1996, at page 36.

Local impact. *The physician's precept of 'do no harm' must be heeded.* The considerations set out above have focused primarily on the perceptions of those who would intervene, not those receiving the intervention. Concern about the safety of the military personnel sent to intervene is uppermost in the minds of those in authority who send them; it is an entirely legitimate, domestic political concern. But the approach gives the impression of the tail wagging the dog. A prior question has to be what can be done for the country and its inhabitants in need? The impact on the recipient country of outside assistance has to be carefully assessed. The physician's precept of 'do no harm', quoted by Richard Betts in a quizzical article²³ about the notion of impartiality, is an essential starting point. It may be better formulated as ensuring that more good is done than harm, since any intervention is bound to have some impact which is not positive. At the very least, some local equilibrium will be disturbed. This calculation cannot be precise but its undertaking is all the more serious for that. It is one thing to risk the lives of troops for a good cause in a successful operation, and quite another in domestic political terms to find that the operation is marred by failure and casualties. Protracting a conflict by a well-intentioned but limited intervention will not meet the criterion of doing no harm. If enforcement action is contemplated, the benefits must be calculated and set against the costs to be incurred. Proportionality of effort has its part to play in the weighing of the political balance. Mohamed Sahnoun contrasts without judgement, the cost at \$2bn, of UN operations in Somalia with the less than \$50m of effective relief delivered.²⁴

Political primacy. *The fact that military action is an instrument of politics must be understood.* Intervention by itself cannot solve the political problem that was the source of the situation requiring intervention. Even in the case of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the military eviction of the Iraqi forces was an essential act but did not by itself restore peace and security; that requires political efforts which are more complicated to bring to fruition. A political process must be engaged by the international

²³*The Delusion of Impartial Intervention*, in *Foreign Affairs* of November/December 1994.

²⁴Foreword to *War and Hunger*, edited by Joanna Macrae and Anthony Zwi, published by Zed Books in 1994.

community which involves the parties to the conflict, so that a resolution can be envisaged which brings peace, justice or at least the prospect of stability and political progress. This is a tall order and some will argue that if there were a prohibition on military deployments in the absence of a functioning political process with a prospect of success, none would take place at all. It is fair to respond that there are a number of military interventions that should not have taken place; and that the short term alleviation of a problem does not necessarily lead to a longer term solution or even a lasting amelioration in the situation. And yet it is too harsh to say that in the absence of clarity about the next political steps nothing should be done militarily.

Exceptions. *There will be exceptions in the case of extreme humanitarian distress which call for intervention, even when the solution to the wider political issue has not been identified.*²⁵ Joshua Muravchik, cited in section III, implies that if we see a person bleeding to death in the street we have an obligation to apply a tourniquet. That seems like basic humanity. The question of course arises what happens next? Further medical treatment will inevitably be required before the victim is restored to health - or maybe only convalescence. Applying the tourniquet and leaving the victim in the street does not solve the problem. This is a reasonable analogy and poses the dilemma nicely. There is no easy answer but we should accept that pressing cases for humanitarian intervention will arise and need a response: genocide, egregious human rights abuses and imminent threats to peace and stability are prime examples. Michael Walzer writes of the need for intervention to put a stop to actions that **A** shock the conscience of humankind.²⁶ The former two examples are already covered by UN conventions which call for action by the signatories; and the latter case is covered by the Charter itself.

Intervention with armed force by the international community does have its place in the tool kit of the world's emergency service, but it must be used selectively. The deployment of military forces is not a

²⁵The writer is indebted to Professor Bryan Hehir and his courses at Harvard in the academic year of 1997/8 for stimulating consideration of the ethical basis for intervention.

²⁶*The Politics of Rescue*, published in *Social Research* in Spring 1995, at page 55.

panacea, nor is it a cost-free placebo. The value of a military intervention force is in the disciplined coercion it brings when a political process is engaged and the resolution of the fundamental problem is being addressed. Without that political process, military intervention is expensive window dressing which places the military in jeopardy for inadequate reason. Looking at it from the standpoint of the failures of policy and execution, Michael Ignatieff comments in his analysis of intervention: A Very often in these liberal interventions the moral reflex - »something must be done= - was sustained by the unexamined assumption that we had the power to do anything. This assumption of omnipotence often stood between indignation and insight, between feeling strongly and knowing what it was possible to do. If we had started from more humble assumptions - that we can always do less than we would like, that we may be able to stop horror, but we cannot always prevent tragedy - we might have been more responsible and, just possibly, devised strategies of intervention that would have stood more of a chance of success.²⁷ Understanding the nature of the tragedy that is unfolding and working out whether and how it is susceptible to outside political treatment - working against tragedy's inherent inevitability - are fundamental to decisions by the international community on military intervention.

²⁷*The Warrior's Honor*, published by Metropolitan Books in 1997, at page 96.