A STUDY OF COMPLEX EMERGENCIES: HOW THEY AFFECT

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN

ASSISTANCE

THESIS

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CCP	China Communist Party
CHE	Complex Humanitarian Emergency
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaces Persons
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
PRC	People's Republic of China
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
UDC	Underdeveloped Countries
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Cooperation of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOSOM I	United Nations Operation Somalia I
UNOSOM II	United Nations Operation Somalia II
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHO	World Health Organization

1. THE HISTORY OF EMERGENCIES AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE:

"The human race has never been free from man-made and natural calamities."[1] From the beginning of history societies have witnessed wars, famines, diseases, oppression, and countless other atrocities, which I classify as "emergencies". These emergencies have marked significant periods in time and outlined both the dark side of humanity as well as the compassionate nature of humanitarian assistance. Although emergencies are not a new phenomenon, advances in technology and weaponry have assisted in an evolution and increase in the frequency and destruction caused by man-made emergencies. We know that more destructive weaponry as well as more sophisticated modes of transportation and communication has increased the potential severity of man-made emergencies, primarily conflict. However, the flip side of that coin is that advances in technology have also increased the capacity and potential effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

This essay will investigate the common problems which arise during and after complex emergencies. It will attempt to uncover ways in which international humanitarian assistance can be delivered to those in need more effectively. By understanding the common areas of disruption in the delivery and distribution of

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[1] Robert F. Gorman, *Historical Dictionary of Refugee and Disaster Relief Organizations* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000) 1.

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international humanitarian assistance it may be possible to more effectively and more efficiently alleviate human suffering through humanitarian intervention. With world events necessitating the highest standard for humanitarian assistance it is as important as ever to understand and have knowledge of the difficulties that humanitarian assistance face.

As societies have increased in their development of both technological capabilities and their interconnectivity, one can observe a more comprehensive capacity for charitable interactions between societies. However, relationships between societies, including charitable relationships, are not solely determined by increased capabilities and interactions. That is to say that with increased interaction between societies comes, increased political motives and motivations for action or inaction. European colonialism increased competition for resources between states. Colonialism brought with it oppression, disease, and murder of indigenous peoples, conflicts between established states, the exploitation of others in the name of mercantilism, and the migration of expatriates avoiding persecution or seeking religious tolerance. In 1648 with the signing of the treaties of Münster and Osnabrück, which make up the Peace of Westphalia, the modern state system was born. Within the modern state system, the ideas of sovereignty, independence, and equality among states created the environment in which international interaction would be forced to operate, thereby defining who was responsible for relief during and after emergencies. Although the Peace of Westphalia was orchestrated in response to the religious wars of the past (designed to allow for religious tolerance), it did not resolve the issues of conflict.

Emergencies continue to threaten societies with little means available to offset the suffering of the people outside the authority of the political sovereigns. While national sovereigns played the primary humanitarian role, with exclusive authority over their people and territory, man-made emergencies continued to grow in number and severity. From the American and French revolutions, through World War I and II, the Cold War between East and West, and a more recent shift from conventional inter-state warfare to a nonconventional intra-state conflict, there has been a constant evolution in the nature of man-made emergencies. The establishment of the United Nations (UN), the understanding of sovereignty, and the focus on non-intervention created an international system in which international humanitarian assistance became difficult to deliver. Romsbotham and Woodhouse state that, "The roots of the classical debate about forcible humanitarian intervention thus lie within the non-intervention norm – a somewhat surprising fact which explains much of its elusiveness."[2]

Aside from man-made emergencies, there are natural emergencies. And although natural emergencies differ in both physical and psychological nature from man-made emergencies, humanitarian responses can still remain politically charged so long as the national sovereign remains the primary avenue for relief. Smillie and Minear address the difficulties associated with the politics of humanitarian intervention when they state, "The implementation of human rights is left to governments, which for political reasons are often reluctant to hold their peers' feet to the fire, no matter how egregious their

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[2] Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Humanitarian Intervention in Contemporary Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 38

shortcomings."[3] Although emergencies have always existed, the capacity for more effective humanitarian assistance has increased with advances in technology.

The concept of humanitarian assistance is not a new idea. Humanitarian assistance, or "charity", dates back to the beginning of civilizations. Aristotle's understanding of people as "social and political by nature,"[4] led to a sense of community and virtue aimed at the common good. Over time, the concept of virtue (how one should act) evolved. Medieval Christian writers and philosophers, such as Augustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas furthered the understanding of charity or humanitarianism. Robert Phillips takes notice of the teachings of St. Augustine when he asserts, in his book *Humanitarian Intervention*:

> If the good of others is truly tied up with my good and if human goods have a transcultural character, then the political or cultural boundaries within which I dwell may not be regarded as absolute. In other words, my obligation to help others in their need is not unconnected with my own fulfillment. The virtue of charity is, thus, central to the moral life because only through self-giving love (which entails a forgetfulness of self) is the self fulfilled.[5]

Augustine of Hippo further stressed the importance of the state to offer goods and opportunities for participation in human fulfillment. He believed we are members of a larger community, whereby, community is not an option.

The ideologies and philosophies of the ancient and medieval thinkers created the foundation for humanitarian assistance based on the concept of charity. Throughout

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[3] Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations. Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc., 2004), 7
[4] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1962), 15
[5] Robert Phillips and Duane Cady, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1996), 21

history churches, families, and communities have rallied together to assist in the needs of others. Although the ideas of charity and humanitarian assistance have remained, the implementation has evolved over time. There has been an increase in the role of the international community, leaving local or regional players to take a back seat. This evolution can arguably be attributed to advances in technology, the increase in intra-state conflict, or the disparity in the north/south divide. Whatever the reason, the result is undeniable – rapid international agency expansion.

In the 19th century, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was established to assist wounded soldiers during times of war. The ICRC began an international humanitarian movement. Later, in the early 20th century the World Council of Churches (WCC) was developed to "deepen the fellowship of Christian churches and communities."[6] The 20th century has witnesses a proliferation in regional and international humanitarian agencies and organizations. Agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) established in 1948, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) established in 1950, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) formed in 1945, United States Agency for International Development (USAID 1961), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF 1946), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1965), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE 1945), and thousands of other NGOs and UN agencies aimed at alleviating the suffering of communities. Now more than any other time in history, it *appears* that international humanitarian assistance may have entered a "golden age". An

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[6] World Council of Churches website: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/background.html (viewed on 10/15/2010)

age of humanitarian opportunity, we live in an age in which aid can be delivered within hours nearly anywhere in the world, an age where there is near universal acceptance of basic human rights, and an age in which aid donations are as high as ever before (although they usually still fall short of appeals).

However, even though there has been an increase in the number of international organizations and agencies aimed at alleviating human suffering, and there has been more universal acceptance for the need of humanitarian assistance, there remain significant issues and problems associated with the implementation of international humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies. This essay will examine the factors and complexities of emergencies, by outlining the main differences between "man-made" emergencies and "natural" emergencies. It will discuss what constitutes a "complex humanitarian emergency" (CHE), and why it has been increasingly difficult within the international community to provide humanitarian emergency assistance. This essay will focus on four primary issues which often create problems for international humanitarian assistance. The four problem areas this essay will address are; (1) political factors (which often use international humanitarian assistance for their own advancement), (2) international agency issues (which often have conflicting or limited mandates), (3) local institutional capacity issues (which often limit the effectiveness of international humanitarian assistance), and (4) the difficulties that face the international community in bridging the gap between immediate relief and long term development.

2. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND COMPLEX EMERGENCIES: WHAT ARE THEY?

What are complex emergencies? Is there a universal definition that can be applied? Defining what constitutes a "complex emergency" is as complex as the emergencies themselves, however many scholars have attempted to develop a standard by which to judge if an event qualifies as a "complex emergency". The term complex emergencies, also known as complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE), refers to a variety of events ranging from natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and disease to man-made disasters such as civil war and genocide, and create a situation of wide spread human suffering.

Through a single event, or a combination of events, a situation arises in which economic, environmental, and social instability and distress ensues, creating wide spread human suffering. Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss define complex emergencies as "situations which may be triggered by natural disasters such as droughts or floods, by intercommunal violence with roots in ethnic or religious tensions or exclusionary politics, by economic or environmental stress, or by some combination of these factors."[7] Although Minear and Weiss include both natural as well as man-made disasters in their definition, their definition is deficient in focusing on the effect of such events. The important factor in defining complex emergencies are the economic, environmental, and

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[7] Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 17

societal *impact* these events create - human suffering. Even though the Minear and Weiss definition alludes to, and perhaps implies, a degree of human suffering, I believe human suffering is the ultimate measure of what constitutes a complex emergency. Based on this measure, I believe Raimo Väyrynen offers a more accurate definition of CHEs, in *The Age of Humanitarian Emergencies*, as "a profound social crisis in which a large number of people die and suffer from war, disease, hunger, and displacement owing to man-made and natural disasters, while some others may benefit from it."[8]

One of the difficulties in defining complex emergencies arises from the abstract concept of the word emergency. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines emergency as, "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence demanding immediate action."[9] Webster's definition suggests that longer developing events such as droughts, or soil erosion and deforestation cannot constitute an emergency, because they are not sudden in their onset. Although longer developing or continuous situations such as soil erosion and deforestation may not be the primary cause of an emergency, they can be the catalyst for drought and starvation in which millions suffer. This ambiguity can lead to a confusion of terms and can ultimately alter which events some believe deserve international humanitarian attention. It would appear that the necessity of a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence deserves less attention as a qualifying factor than the need for an immediate response. And the ultimate determining factor for an immediate response is not the event itself, but the effect of the event – wide spread human suffering. This distinction, although minor is not trivial.

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[8] Raimo Väyrynen, *The Age of Humanitarian Emergencies* (Helsinki: UNU/WIDER Research for Action paper no. 25, 1996), 19
[9] Victoria Neufeldt, *Webster's New World Dictionary* (Cleveland: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1990), 195

It is easy for one to comprehend in what ways earthquakes, typhoons, and civil war can create situations of crisis and distress within a given territory. However, it is also important to understand that these events can have far reaching effects throughout a region. Many underdeveloped countries are a single event away from wide spread famine, disease, and death. The majority of underdeveloped countries economies, though agriculturally-based, are typically not self-sufficient in food production, creates a potential situation of starvation. Many of these countries, such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, feel the effects of soil erosion and drought every year. As these country's agricultural sector become increasingly volatile, so does their existence. But it is not drought and famine alone that threaten underdeveloped states. Civil wars, internal and ethnic conflicts, and regional disputes often spill over into civilian population. The destruction of farms and agricultural sectors for political or ethnical reasons directly or indirectly kill thousands of people throughout the world every year. Apart from the local effects civil wars have within a country there are also regional effects such as large refugee outflows which cross borders. These large refugee outflows create problems for neighboring states which now worry about their own food sources and agricultural sectors. Based on all of these factors, a more concise definition of "complex emergencies" is a confluence of political, economic, societal, and environmental stresses which combine to threaten human life on a wide scale. It is the threat to human life which is the crux of why an event is or is not classified as a complex emergency.

As the number of complex humanitarian emergencies increases, and as the international community becomes increasingly aware of the effects of these situations, international outcry for humanitarian assistance increases.

What is Humanitarian Assistance and Why Should the International Community Intervene in CHEs?

Humanitarian assistance is anything but clear cut. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, humanitarian means, "promoting the welfare of humanity."[10] However, for international humanitarian assistance purposes this definition seldom offers the necessary precision when incorporating human rights and refugees. This definitional problem can create controversy between agencies and organizations as far as what actually constitutes humanitarian aid.

There is little debate that food, water, medication, and first aid kits would satisfy the general definition of humanitarian assistance. The controversy arises from items such as tools, machetes, children's toys, or spare parts for water purification plants; which although perhaps necessary, can result in political interference contributing to the review of individual items, and can affect the approval process. Minear and Weiss explain in their book, *Humanitarian Action in a Time of War*, "The UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee, in determining which items would benefit from the humanitarian exemption to the existing embargoes, has been hampered by a lack of clear international consensus on what constitutes 'humanitarian'."[11] The reason that humanitarian assistance is ambiguous is due to the lack of any agreed-upon definition of the term.

The general understanding of humanitarian assistance was asserted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) when it determined that assistance must be to prevent

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[10] Ibid, 287

[11] Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss, *Handbook for Practitioners Humanitarian Action in Times of War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 1993), 8

and alleviate human suffering and to protect life and health as well as to ensure respect

for the human being while being given without discrimination. The ICJ determination

was founded on the bases of the ICRC, which established seven principles for

humanitarianism: "humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service,

unity, and universality."[12] Although the ICRC outlines seven principles it is the first four

principles which, arguably, make up the core. Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss state

in their book *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*:

> Humanity commands attention to all people. Impartiality requires that
> assistance be based on need and not on the basis of nationality, race,
> religion, gender, or political opinion. Neutrality demands that
> humanitarian organizations refrain from taking part in hostilities or from
> any action that either benefits or disadvantages the parties to the conflict.
> Independence demands that assistance should not be connected to any of
> the parties directly involved in conflicts or who have a stake in the
> outcome.[13]

Although these core principles are generally accepted by the international community,

and appear reasonable on face value, there is a fundamental problem when delivering

international humanitarian assistance to areas involved in man-made complex

emergencies. The fact that man-made CHEs are often between warring parties or

opposition groups, leads to a situation in which humanitarian assistance is inevitably

going to support one side of the conflict or the other. There is not an absolute full-proof

way of distributing international humanitarian assistance without discrimination. As

Robert Phillips asserts, "it is hardly likely that strict political neutrality is possible, given

that the genesis of humanitarian intervention is typically human suffering occasioned by

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[12] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Statutes of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva: ICRC, 1863), Article IV, Section I(a)
[13] Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 3

political conflict."[14] Consequently, the general understanding that humanitarian assistance should be apolitical is not the reality of most situations, whereby, intervention is determined and implemented through political mechanisms.

Even in times of natural complex emergencies, universal consensus on what constitutes international humanitarian assistance is difficult to establish due to the political nature of the international system. The fact that intervention, even for humanitarian purposes, is political creates situations that often overlook the essence of humanitarianism, causing international humanitarian assistance to be denied. Potential political bias may determine which complex emergency a government opts to assist in and what items governments associate with humanitarian assistance. The conditions within the international community are such that, to date, a universal agreement of what constitutes international humanitarian assistance does not exist. These conditions further complicate the issues of when, where, what, and even *if* any international humanitarian assistance should be delivered in response to a particular complex emergency.

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[14] Robert Phillips and Duane Cady, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996), 21

What Can the International Community Do to Relieve the Stresses of CHEs?

Determining what and how much should be done by the international community in combating complex humanitarian emergencies remains a highly contested issue. One of the reasons international interventions continue to be controversial is the lack of any universal criteria of what constitutes a complex humanitarian emergency. Often time agencies disagree on the degree to which a situation must reach before it is considered an international concern as opposed to a regional or local problem. The distinction is not an easy one to make. In states with limited political and institutional transparency, as well as unreliable mechanisms for assessing the degree of stress on the economy, environment, and society it becomes increasingly difficult to determine when a situation transitions from a local problem to an international one. Many scholars and statesmen view humanitarian aid primarily as a local or regional responsibility; however the increase in international aid agencies and the near universal acceptance of human rights through the UN has begun to alter the arena in which aid is given. The international community has taken on a more active role in delivering humanitarian aid.

Another problem for accurately determining the need for humanitarian assistance stems from advances in technology and media coupled with political interests. Although twenty-first century media coverage has the capability of quickly making the world aware of potential distress within states the media is often politically biased in their coverage of complex emergencies (especially civil wars and genocide in underdeveloped states). This level of uncertainty coupled with biased media coverage, if there even is coverage,

contributes to imperfect information about what is actually taking place in underdeveloped countries.

Combined with imperfect information and biased media coverage, there exists an inherent financial problem international organizations and agencies have. The primary source of international assistance is provided through donor contributions. Since international humanitarian assistance is primarily based on voluntary donor funding institutions, governments, agencies and private organizations provide humanitarian assistance sporadically and inconsistently, and sufficient funding is often not received. Munslow and Brown explain that, "Emergency appeals are rarely met in full, with only 57% of the UN's appeal targets being donated for its operations in 1993."[15] This is not an isolate case, in more recent years the consolidated appeals process (CAP) of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has attempted to strategically plan and request funding (donations) for the purpose of alleviating human suffering. Although CAP works in conjunction with NGOs, UN agencies, as well as local and regional organizations they often fail to meet their humanitarian appeals. The following charts outline CAP's funding shortfalls per year from 2000 until October 2010. These statistics indicate that a large portion of individuals suffering from complex emergencies are not receiving the humanitarian assistance they need.

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[15] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, no. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 214.

Appeal funding and shortfall
(as of end October each year)

$6 billion
$5 billion
$4 billion
$3 billion
$2 billion
$1 billion
$0 billion

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

■ Total contributions ■ Shortfall
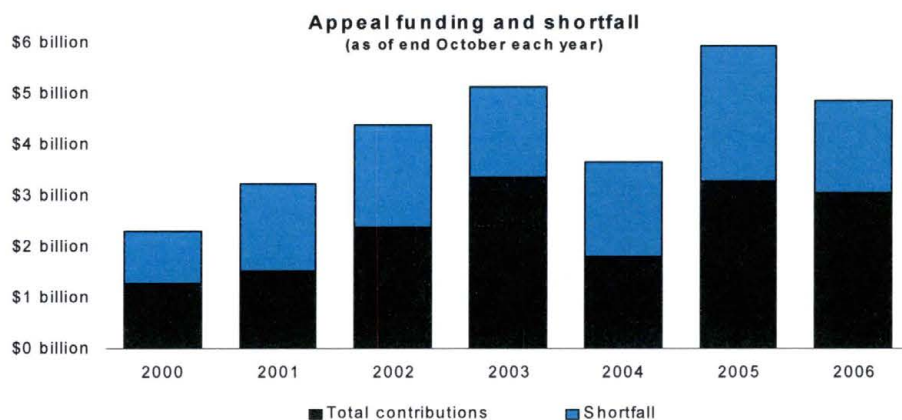
Figure 1- Appeal Funding and Shortfall (as of end October each year)

CAP funding, unfunded requirements, and % covered, 2006-2010

$12 billion
$10 billion
$8 billion
$6 billion
$4 billion
$2 billion
$ billion

■ % covered
□ Unfunded requirements
▥ Funding

59%

71%

72%

67%   72%

$1.7 billion $1.4 billion $2.0 billion $2.8 billion $4.7 billion

$3.4 billion $3.7 billion $5.1 billion $6.9 billion $6.6 billion

2006 (final) 2007 (final) 2008 (final) 2009 (final) 2010 (to date)
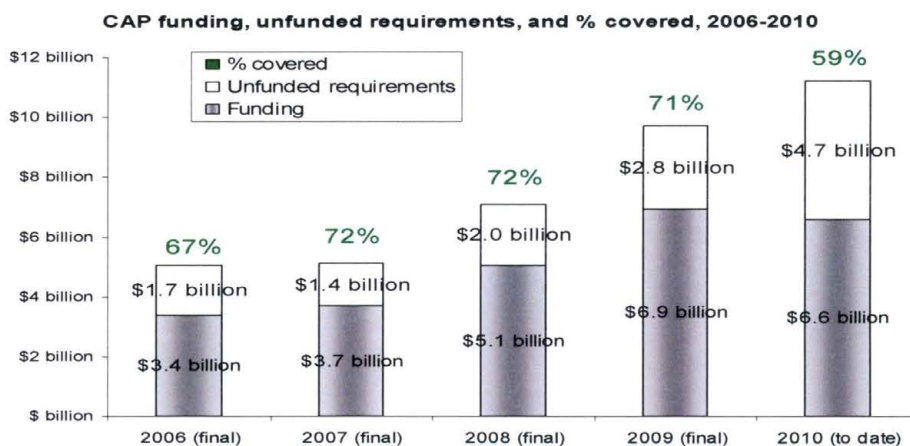
Figure 2- CAP Funding, Unfunded Requirements and % Covered, 2006-2010

To date there is no mathematical formula for humanitarian assistance. This fact leads to determinations from individuals and organizations on when and how much assistance is sufficient for a particular area in a particular situation. Therefore, the question of when and how much humanitarian assistance becomes a political question.

As Randolph Kent stated, "Governments pick and choose how and when they will react to calls for or offers of assistance."[16] An example of this was in 1992; Kenya was experiencing severe famine in which international assistance was needed. However, due to inconsistent reporting by different agencies the international response was delayed, unorganized, and largely ineffective. During this time the World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF were competing for institutional supremacy. While at the same time, USAID had determined that the massive food shortage was due to local policies within the country, and as a result they decided to withhold aid until local policy reforms were made in regards to agricultural price controls and movement controls. O'Keefe and Kirkby explain in their article *Relief and Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies* that, "USAID made clear that they were disappointed by the European Union (EU) funding (to Kenya), because the National Cereal and Produce Board (NCPB) had not undertaken any institutional reforms."[17] Evidence supports that even when large parts of a country or population face famine and starvation, international assistance can rely heavily on politics.

Determining when and how much aid or assistance is required is a complex question. Not only does the international community have to determine whether the emergency is one that requires international intervention, but they also have to determine how much aid to send. This is as complex of an issue as determining when to send assistance in the first place. If the international community sends too much assistance

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[16] Randolph C Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief The International Network in Action* (London: Pinter, 1987), 62

[17] Phil O'Keefe, John Kirkby, "Relief and Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies" *Review of African Political Economy*, 24, no 74, Africa's Environmental Crisis: Challenging the Orthodoxies (Dec. 1997): 575.

they may risk subverting local or regional economies or may add to the conflict. Humanitarian assistance can serve as a mechanism for perpetuating civil war and conflict. Munslow and Brown assert that, "The harm in question is that relief aid destroys local capacities and fuels war economies. It is argued that aid is too often hijacked by warring factions and is a significant factor in perpetuating the war economy."[18] As one can see, the determination of when and how much international humanitarian assistance should be send to struggling states is hazy at best. Although the determination of when and how much aid to send, as well as if the emergency is one of local or international concern, is a political decision; the major increase in the number of aid agencies and organizations signify a overwhelming acceptance that international aid is necessary and can be beneficial in alleviating human suffering.

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[18] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, no. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 210.

3. POLITICAL FACTORS AS PROBLEMATIC

Aristotle believed politics was the master science because it determined the other sciences allowed within the state. Based on this interpretation, it would appear that nothing can escape the grasp of politics, and international humanitarian assistance is no different. The ideas of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality, developed by the ICRC, although utopian, are not the reality of the international community. International humanitarian assistance faces political problems at the international level, the local level, as well as a combination of both.

At the local political level, much of the controversy over international humanitarian assistance, in a time of emergency, stems from local authorities who attempt to: 1) discourage international intervention for fear of bringing unwanted scrutiny upon their government and the state, 2) use international humanitarian assistance as a way to bolster their own standing within the government, and 3) use international assistance as a weapon against the civilian population and opposition groups (however, this techniques is not necessarily exclusive to governments. Warring factions in failed states can also use this technique). These political motivations create a real obstacle for the international community when attempting to deliver and distribute needed international humanitarian assistance.

The fact that international intervention brings with it outside eyes from a myriad of agencies can, in situations of oppression, further local authorities' interest in limiting international aid. In the Sudan in 1988 during a time of drought and civil war, many international humanitarian agencies were prevented from entering the hardest hit areas in the south where the war was being fought, as government authorities barred international access and limited international visibility. As Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss point out in their book *Mercy Under Fire,* "In an exercise of their sovereignty, government authorities barred UN officials from rebel-held areas where the suffering was worst, and had strictly limited access even to government-controlled areas."[19]

In many underdeveloped states as infrastructures breakdown (later discussed as an issue of institutional capacity) often time open war erupts between competing sources of authority. These competing sources of authority can create a situation in which local authorities begin to further oppress local populations in an attempt to maintain control and power. As local stability disintegrates, and violence increases within a state, the legitimate government attempts to retain its control to protect and defend law and order, and attempts to provide safety using the principle of sovereignty. The oppressive nature of state governments, especially weak or failing state governments, further the interest of the *de facto* state authority to isolate itself from the international community. The last thing a government leader wants is the international community witnessing the atrocities they created. This should not be confused with failed states however, which lack government authority. Robert Rotberg discusses the difficulties surrounding failed states

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[19] Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 109

in his article *Failed States in a World of Terror* when he states, "Today's failed states,

such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, are incapable of projecting power and

asserting authority within their own borders, leaving their territories governmentally

empty."[20] Failed states create added difficulties for international humanitarian assistance,

namely security and the lack of governmental mechanisms available to assist in the

delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Although there is a distinct difference

between weak, failing, and failed or collapsed states, the difficulties in effectively

delivering international humanitarian assistance remains constant. Even though the

stability of the state is an important factor in effectively delivering international

humanitarian assistance it is not the only factor. As Cliffe and Luckham assert:

> state crisis is a dimension of CHEs and in fact offer a way to categorize
> different forms: a state-formation conflict (Bosnia), a struggle for state
> control (Rwanda), or eventual state collapse (Somalia)…it is worth noting
> the policies followed by authoritarian *ancien regime*, including its
> repression or mismanagement of conflict over long periods of time, were a
> crucial part of the story, although other factors, including strategic choices
> made by different external, state and non-state actors at the moment of
> crisis, shaped the eventual outcome.[21]

Another way local authorities can use international humanitarian assistance is to

bolster their own standing within the government. In this way local politics can be used

to disrupt international humanitarian assistance by governmental intervention or by

blocking aid (holding up aid). There are numerous reasons local governments might

perceive blocking international humanitarian aid as a positive political technique.

However, most situations arise when there is a struggle for authority within the state

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[20] Robert Rotberg, "Failed States in a World of Terror" *Foreign Affairs,* 81, No. 4, (Jul. – Aug., 2002): 128.
[21] Lionel Cliffe, Robin Luckham, "Complex Political Emergencies and the State: Failure and the Fate of the State" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1, Complex Political Emergencies (Feb., 1999): 34-35.

itself. Government leaders can attempt to hold up international aid as a means for bolstering their personal support. As Munslow and Brown state, "Incumbent holders of power and their challengers struggle to use relief aid to bolster their cause."[22] By holding up international aid, then distributing it themselves they seek to strengthen their political support from the citizens while at the same time weakening the support of the opposition party. In situations such as this, aid is often distributed; however there is a significant time delay in the distribution of humanitarian aid for political purposes. In the case of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict international humanitarian access was controlled by the government of Ethiopia, whereby humanitarian relief sites were positioned outside the conflict area. The Ethiopian government used humanitarian aid as a mechanism for bolstering their own political agenda, and only cooperated with humanitarian agencies that followed Ethiopian directives.

Although governments both use aid to bolster their standing as well as discourage humanitarian intervention for local political purposes, perhaps the most disruptive way international humanitarian aid is used is by using it as a weapon against the population and opposition groups. During times of man-made emergencies local authorities as well as opposition groups can use international humanitarian aid as a weapon in an ongoing war between factions (this technique is not exclusive to governments and is often a technique used by failed states):

> In many conflicts, relief convoys have been hijacked or blocked, drivers wounded or killed, and emergency assistance activities commandeered or shut down. Food and medicine are often withheld from civilian populations. They are the ready weapons in the arsenal of governments

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[22] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 208.

and insurgents who manipulate them in ways that violate provisions of international law as well as the fundamental tenets of civilized societies.[23]

In Somalia 1991-1992, the war between faction clans was raging out of control. Warlords were competing for control over the capital of Mogadishu and other territories within Somalia. Civilian populations were being displaced and refugee outflows were reaching massive proportions. As the war in Somalia raged out of control, destroying crops, killing livestock, and creating an increased number of displaced persons, famine and starvation was becoming an increasing concern for the Somali people. In 1992, the UN determined that international intervention was necessary to alleviate the stress civil war was causing to the population of Somalia. International, regional, and UN agencies decided to act by providing humanitarian assistance of food, seeds, livestock, medicine, blankets, and other necessities to the people of war torn Somalia. However, as international humanitarian assistance entered Somalia, local factions commandeered aid, blocked assistance routes, and prevented humanitarian aid from being delivered to the people in most need. As infrastructures collapsed and local factions competed for authority, humanitarian assistance was used as a weapon against the people of Somalia. And without UN mechanisms in place (rules of engagement) to effectively delivery and distribute humanitarian assistance the aid was being increasingly used by the local authorities to further oppress the people. In her book *Do No Harm,* Mary Anderson asserts that humanitarian aid can perpetuate conflict in five ways:

> 1. Aid resources are often stolen by warriors and used to support armies and buy weapons. 2. Aid affects markets by reinforcing either the war

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[23] Ibid, 3

economy or the peace economy. 3. The distributional impacts of aid affect intergroup relationships, either feeding tensions or reinforcing connections. 4. Aid substitutes for local resources required to meet civilian needs, freeing them to support conflict. 5. Aid legitimizes people and their actions or agendas, supporting the pursuit of either war or peace.[24]

The events of Somalia in the early 1990s and the international intervention of the United Nations in UNOSOM I & II portrays what can happen when local political factors and governments fail and international humanitarian assistance is used as a weapon. Somalia was not an isolated event. Similar situations surfaced in the Sudan, Rwanda, and the Congo. Raimo Väyrynen asserts that "the supply of and access to food, health services and humanitarian assistance becomes an instrument of local power politics rather than a right or an act of charity."[25]

Local politics continue to play an important role both positively and negatively in the distribution of international humanitarian assistance throughout the world. As long as humanitarian assistance is used as leverage by individual governments or leaders (including warlords and insurgents) the effective delivery and distribution of international humanitarian assistance will be largely dependent on local governments and local political factors.

Aside from local political factors that negatively affect international humanitarian assistance, there are also international political factors which have an impact on the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Since the beginning of the Cold War, the geopolitical structure of the international community was poised to use intervention

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[24] Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm· How Aid can Support Peace-or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1999), 39

[25] Raimo Väyrynen, *The Age of Humanitarian Emergencies* (Helsinki: UNU/WIDER Research for Action paper no. 25, 1996), 16

or nonintervention, even for humanitarian purposes, as a means for state interests. As Minear and Smillie state in *The Charity of Nations*, "foreign policy interests inevitably intrude on the humanitarian response to emergencies."[26] The geopolitical structure of the world can help explain the lack of international involvement (including humanitarian involvement) in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's extermination of the Kurdish people within his territory. During the 1980's Saddam Hussein systematically exterminated members of the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party). This reign of terror included massive levels of violence and the use of chemical weapons, killing tens of thousands of Kurds. During this campaign the international community, including the United States, supplied and armed Saddam Hussein, who was viewed as a bulwark against Iranian Islamic fundamentalism. Again, this is not an isolated case; international politics and the geopolitical structure of the world continue to play an important role in the delivery and distribution of international humanitarian assistance.

Although the Cold War-style superpower politics diminished with the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a single superpower, the political interests of donor countries still greatly impact the proportionality of international humanitarian assistance. International politics and state interests continue to influence whether an emergency receives assistance or not, and to what degree assistance is provided. This reality has only been exacerbated with the terrorist attacks of 9/11. As Smillie and Minear explain in *The Charity of Nations*, "The U.S. government now requires U.S. NGO grantees to

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[26] Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc., 2004), 135

certify that their operational partners overseas have no connections with terrorist groups."[27]

The disproportional distribution of humanitarian assistance has led some humanitarian agencies to develop a rating system in order to classify types of emergencies. They list them as first-class, second-class, and third-class, in which international humanitarian funding is provided for first-class and second-class emergencies only. Third-class emergencies, also called "forgotten emergencies" which are among the most common types of emergencies are neglected. The international political interests in dealing with "forgotten emergencies" is such that there is little to no funding available for assistance, which "demonstrates that the system is in routine violation of its core principles, particularly those of humanity, universality, and impartiality."[28] Low donor support for "forgotten emergencies" is largely due to little interest from donor countries, and there is no compelling state interest beyond humanitarian assistance itself. "Forgotten emergencies" have little to no international political relevance to donor countries due to their lack of geopolitical importance as well as the degree of media coverage. This leads to limited funding from donor countries. It is important to understand however, that emergencies can shift from first-class or second-class emergencies to third-class or "forgotten emergencies" and back again during various time periods.

Sierra Leone is an example of an emergency that shifted from a third-class (forgotten emergency) to a first-class emergency as media coverage increased. In 1991

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[27] Ibid, 143
[28] Ibid, 145

the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) attempted to overthrow the Sierra Leone government. During the eleven year civil war the RUF terrorized, looted, raped, and murdered civilians throughout the country causing massive levels of refugee outflows and internally displaced persons. During much of this time the international community gave little attention to the atrocities that were taking place in Sierra Leone until media coverage started exposing the brutality in the name of diamonds, to which the western world was the primary beneficiary. In 1999 the international community took diplomatic steps to stop the atrocities and bring peace back to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone was a "forgotten emergency" for much of its civil war with little to no international humanitarian assistance. Smillie and Minear attempted to explain the reasons why Sierra Leone was neglected in their book *A Charity of Nations* when they wrote, "Until 2000, it (Sierra Leone) held little strategic, political, or economic interest for any great power."[29] The UN ultimately assisted in negotiating a peace between the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone; however the effects of the civil war in Sierra Leone left much to be desired for humanitarian assistance and again demonstrated that geopolitics plays a huge role in the willingness of donor countries to volunteer foreign aid even for humanitarian purposes.

In many cases where international humanitarian assistance is needed, there is a need for military or UN peacekeeping forces in order to facilitate the delivery of aid. However, as Ramsbotham and Woodhouse assert, "When states are sending troops across borders, it is, to say the least, unlikely that humanitarian ends can be separated from

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[29] Ibid, 23

political ends, as the humanitarian principle of neutrality implies."[30] That is to say, that international humanitarian assistance cannot be separated from and often possesses political motives and motivations.

Many of the local and international political problems revolve around the ideas of sovereignty, non-intervention, and state interest, which have been sited and called upon in order to prevent other states from interfering, even for humanitarian reasons, in the affairs of others. While many states perceive the idea of sovereignty to be supreme, the United Nations (UN), which was established in 1945 in the aftermath of WWII, rooted in the idea of sovereignty, can have inherent contradictions within its Charter. Article 2 (1) of the UN Charter states, "the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members"[31] while Article 1 (3) indicates that, "to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."[32] This begs the question: what if the sovereign state is violating human rights on a massive level? Is the international community supposed to stand aside and contribute to the violation through inaction? Article 2 (7) of the UN charter states, "Nothing contained in the present charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall

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[30] Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Humanitarian Intervention in Contemporary Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 74
[31] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations* (Geneva: United Nations Printing, 1945), Article 2(1)
[32] Ibid, Article 1(3)

require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the present charter."[33]

Strict observation of this provision would prevent any state from acting against an

oppressive dictator. In 1992, Secretary-General of the UN Boutros-Ghali asserted his

understanding of sovereignty when he stated, "the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and

exclusive sovereignty no longer stands, and was in fact never so absolute as it was

conceived to be in theory."[34]

In recent decades however, there appears to be a growing belief that national

sovereignty is a byproduct of self-determination or "popular sovereignty", whereby the

people are the ultimate source of authority within the state. This shift appears to be

linked to the increase of democracies (the third wave of democratization) within the

world. The understanding of democratization rests with the ideas of free and fair

elections in which the people choose their leaders and their form of government, and

contains legitimacy for party organizations and institutions. Andreas Schedler asserts in

The Menu of Manipulation that elections alone are not sufficient to categorize regimes as

democratic; there are seven principles which include empowerment, free supply, free

demand, inclusion, insulation, integrity, and irreversibility.[35] Although many scholars

and statesman do agree that national sovereignty has given way to "popular sovereignty"

this distinction is largely neglected by authoritarian regimes in the third world that see

popular sovereignty as a threat to their power and control. In January of 2011 Egypt

erupted in political protests as "the people" attempted to oust President Mubarak, and

[33] Ibid, Article 2 (7)
[34] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the United Nations" *Foreign Affairs*, 71, No. 5 (1992): 98-99.
[35] Andreas Schedler, "The Menu of Manipulation" *The Journal of Democracy*, 13, No. 2 (April, 2002): 36-50.

replace their government with a more democratic regime. The ongoing protests are an appeal by the citizens for governmental reforms in which the ultimate source of authority would reside with the people. The protests were soon met with pro-Mubarak fanatics who resorted to violence in an attempt to maintain the status-quo. Recently there have been reports of secret police attacking citizens and journalists. Violence within Egypt has increased as the nonviolent protests have been met with violent opposition. The current situation within Egypt displays the power struggle between a national sovereign and the more recent idea of popular sovereignty. As long as authoritarian regimes see popular sovereignty as a threat to their power and control there will continue to be oppression and human suffering, and international humanitarian assistance will have to contend with the idea of national sovereignty.

Funding of international humanitarian assistance has also become a largely political issue, as donor nations earmark donations. Barnett and Weiss explain the political nature of donations when they state, "Earmarking is when the donor dictates where and how assistance may be used, frequently identifying regions, countries, operations, or projects."[36] There has been a recent shift from multilateral aid assistance toward bilateral aid assistance. In 1988 states directed roughly 45 percent of humanitarian assistance through UN agencies. After 1994, however, that average dropped to 25 percent (and even lower in 1999 because of Kosovo).[37] As international humanitarian aid shifts toward more bilateral agreements there become more

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[36] Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 33-34
[37] Randel and German, "Trends in the Financing of Humanitarian Assistance," (Research Report, Overseas Development Institute, 2002), 21

opportunities for aid to be used as a means for achieving individual state interests.

"Today, the foreign policy interests of donor countries exercise growing influence on the

humanitarian behavior of UN agencies, NGOs, skewing their efforts and muting their

advocacy on behalf of victims."[38] The shift from multilateral aid relief to bilateral aid

relief has opened the door to more increased political motivations for action. In this way

international humanitarian assistance can be held hostage by donor countries, establishing

a quid-pro-quo mentality toward humanitarian assistance and further distorting the

principles of humanitarianism by the ICRC.

It appears international humanitarian assistance has been, and to a large degree

still is, at odds with the ideas of absolute sovereignty and non-intervention since their

beginning. The understanding that states are absolutely sovereign and no action can be

taken by the international community without invitation is largely exaggerated. The

international community understood the need for international laws and customary norms

for human rights and the proper conduct of war. As Stephen Krasner states, "the

contemporary period the sovereign state is being subjected to unprecedented pressures,

especially from globalization and human rights norms which bring the viability of the

system itself into question."[39] These norms and customs were advocated with the Hague

Convention and subsequent conferences and conventions for human rights. It was the

intention of the international community to limit human suffering at the hands of

oppressive regimes against genocide and other atrocities. However, even though the

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[38] Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations. Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc., 2004), 136

[39] Stephen Kresner, "Abiding Sovereignty" *International Political Science Review*, 22, No. 3, Transformation of International Relations: Between Change and Continuity (Jul., 2001): 230.

intention of alleviating human suffering was present in the establishment of such norms and customs, there is a constant struggle and contradiction between alleviating human suffering and advancing state interests through international politics. This contradiction has become more prevalent with globalization, whereby a state's prosperity is connected to other state's situations and circumstances. As individual state's interests become more connected to world economics and power politics, their incentive to intervene in foreign emergencies, including for humanitarian reasons, becomes more politically motivated.

The reality of the international community and the delivery of international humanitarian assistance are such that international politics cannot be separated from humanitarian advocacy and assistance. The inherent contradiction between the principles of humanitarianism posed by the ICRC, and the reality of the international community, construct an environment in which international humanitarian assistance must operate within the created structure of the system; whereby humanitarian assistance should be delivered in such a way that human suffering is limited as much as possible without exacerbating the emergency further. As Jane Stromseth notes, "an overtly non-political 'humanitarian' approach may command a greater normative agreement, and may turn out to be the first step on the way to an eventual settlement, but, by the same token, it is unlikely on its own to address the underlying political problems which caused the suffering in the first place."[40]

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[40] Jane Stromseth, "Iraqi Repression of its Civilian Population: Collective Response and Contingency Challenges" (Damrosch ed., 1993), 100

4. INTERNATIONAL AGENCY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

International agencies themselves can create problems for the effective delivery of international humanitarian assistance aimed toward alleviating human suffering caused by complex humanitarian emergencies throughout the world. International agencies and organizations are created to facilitate the relief of some international problem. The creation of international organizations and agencies are structured according to a particular type of document. The constituent instrument itself can contribute to the problems of international humanitarian assistance. International agencies and organizations operate within the guidelines of their constituent instrument, and assist in humanitarian relief accordingly. However, there are times that the constituent instrument can limit the response of international agencies or organizations in the way it defines the functions of the organization or agency.

An example of how an agency or organization is limited by the function of the organization itself can be seen in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR was created to facilitate in the assistance for refugees. However, the original mandate did not explicitly cover internally displaced persons (IDP). If migrants (that were forced by war) crossed borders they fell under the function of the UNHCR according to the agency mandate. Conversely, if the peoples displaced by war did not, or were unable to, cross international borders the original mandate of the

UNHCR excluded them as aid recipients. Instead, they logically fell under the jurisdiction of local policies and governments; many of which were often responsible for creating the conditions which the people were fleeing to begin with. The fact that international humanitarian assistance for refugees through the UNHCR excluded internally displaced persons meant that a substantial portion of affected peoples were unable to receive formal international aid even though they were in need. Although, IDPs were subsequently added to the UNHCR mandate in 1992, this can explain some ways the function of the agency or organization, according to its mandate, can create problems for international humanitarian assistance.

The reality surrounding international humanitarian agencies, their inability to forcibly intrude in the internal affairs of a member state, coupled with often deficient mandates further exacerbates the problems on the ground. The fact that internally displaced persons often must fend for themselves or rely on oppressive governments portrays the deficiency agency mandates can have on the delivery of humanitarian assistance. And although internally displaced peoples do not cross international borders their need for assistance is not diminished, in fact, their need for assistance might be greater. As Munslow and Brown assert about international agencies in regards to complex humanitarian emergencies, "The institutions we have available to deal with these occurrences often lack the necessary mandate."[41] While the case provided for IDPs portray the deficiency of the UNHCR's mandate, it should be mentioned that other

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[41] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 208.

humanitarian agencies under their particular mandate could have and at times often do attempt to assist. However, the problem of agency cooperation as well as the idea of non-intervention remains a real problem in the delivery of international humanitarian assistance.

Agency mandates are often very specific and can exclude particular situations or can overlap other agency's mandates. In recent years international agencies have attempted to adapt their mandates and standard operating procedures in order to incorporate more accountability. However, the effectiveness of this adaptation is debatable at best. As Barnett and Weiss explain, "The emergence of a contested discourse of accountability – has transformed norms, ideas, and practices within humanitarian organizations, is open to questions."[42]

One of the debates/questions with the shift of agencies to incorporate more accountability stems from the term accountable. The term accountable connotes a sense of measurable expectation, whereas expectations are either met or not and there is some consequence for failure to meet the expectation. Who are agencies accountable to? Are they accountable to their donors? Is accountability a term used internally toward self-set objectives? Whatever the rationale used in the transition to become more accountable, accountability implies a relational connection. And although accountability seems to come from some organizational restructuring, it is arguably the practical humanitarian actions of individuals on the ground that controls the outcome of agency assistance.

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[42] Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question. Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 125

Therefore, attempts by individual humanitarian agency members to effectively alleviate human suffering, is predicated on a clear and concise mandate. That is to say, without a clear and concise mandate from the agencies, members on the ground lack the direction and ability to effectively delivery humanitarian assistance.

The fact that humanitarian assistance outcomes are largely, if not exclusively, based on the actions of individual members on the ground, brings about other organizational issues which can create further problems for delivering effective international humanitarian aid. The level of competence and skill set of agency members is paramount in the effective delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Agency workers need to be well versed in the history, culture, and situations surrounding a particular emergency, especially in responses to man-made emergencies. As Mary Anderson states, "Because aid becomes a part of the context and hence of the war in which it is given, aid workers need to understand the motivations and purposes of the conflicts where they work."[43]

Agency aid workers must be pragmatic, resourceful, and among other things – practical in their expectations. Knowledge of the region and culture in which humanitarian agents work is as important in the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance as the mechanisms for delivery. Without sufficient knowledge of the environment surrounding the emergency, international humanitarian agency members can further human suffering. Individual agency members should be aware of how the people

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[43] Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm. How Aid can Support Peace-or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1999), 20

in the conflict feel about the conflict, and should understand the affected people's attitudes about the situation. Do they feel manipulated? Since international humanitarian assistance can either reinforce war or peace, it is paramount that individuals involved in providing aid understand the attitudes, and feelings of the affected people within the emergency. Individual aid workers are the first line, so to speak, of the emergency; therefore they must be able to accurately understand and iterate the needs and attitudes of the affected people involved. If individual aid givers incorrectly assess the attitudes of the people and the situation in which they are involved, they risk exacerbating the situation and furthering the war/conflict mentality. In this way, the individual skill level of the aid workers is an important aspect of effectively delivering international humanitarian assistance. In regards to delivering effective international humanitarian assistance, the deficiencies in agency mandates and lack of sufficiently skilled personnel are only some of the problems inherent in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Another agency/organizational problem for international humanitarian assistance are the ways in which funding is received and what the funding is used for. Most agencies or organizations receive funding from private, public, and individual state sources through voluntary donations. The fact that funding is received through public, private, and individual states as donations create a situation in which funding is limited or creates a vested interest (geopolitical state interest) to assist a certain complex humanitarian emergency over another. The problem stems from a limitation of resources. "Relative scarcity of resources has led to a situation whereby different complex emergencies have to 'compete' with each other for funding; in a sense marketing

themselves."[44] The competition between complex emergencies further diminishes the ICRC established principles of humanitarianism, namely humanity, impartiality, and universality. Whereby, some emergencies "win" and others "lose". As stated earlier, first and second class emergencies receive the lion's share of humanitarian assistance while third-class or "forgotten emergencies" are often neglected. For reasons explained earlier, geopolitical relevance and degree of media coverage, some emergencies "win" and others are forgotten and "lose" in the game of humanitarian assistance. Along with the constant competition between 'complex emergencies' is the constant competition by agencies for donations and funding. "The reliance on contributions from major donors…means that the UN is really at the mercy of these donors."[45]

Because donor states can use their position as the primary source of funding for complex emergencies in different ways, there can create a political condition in which international humanitarian assistance is inconsistent, sporadic, or held hostage to the interests of major donors. First, donor states can tie aid to a particular use or a particular emergency. In this way, donor states are dictating where and in what ways there aid can be used, often to further state interest in a particular area of the world. As stated earlier, there has been a shift from multilateral aid to more bilateral donations. This shift has increased the potential of tying aid to particular emergencies which serve a strategic political interest to the donor state. This reality again furthers the disproportionality of

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[44] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 215.
[45] Ibid, 217

aid to first, second, or third-class (forgotten) emergencies in the name of state interest, and further diminishes the principles set forth by the ICRC.

A second way donor states can use humanitarian aid, is to conditionally attach aid to local policy reforms. An example of humanitarian conditionality can be seen in the case of Kenya in 1992. In 1992 USAID withheld food aid from Kenya until local policy changes were made to their local agricultural sector. USAID determined that the degree of food shortage in Kenya was due to poor agricultural policies within the state itself, therefore they decided that aid would only be sent as a condition to agricultural policy reforms. The understanding of conditionality as a means to achieve political ends has been around for decades. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) often use economic incentives as a way to leverage underdeveloped states into more liberal economic policies. And although these economic incentives are in the form of voluntary loans, they are usually offered at a time when there is little alternative for the recipient state. The idea of conditionality for aid, whether for development or humanitarian assistance, is not a new phenomenon, and in the case of Kenya, the delivery of humanitarian assistance was not exempt from conditionality. The case of Kenya is an example of how aid, especially through bilateral mechanisms, can be held hostage by donor states as a condition of reforms. As international humanitarian assistance becomes a larger portion of overall foreign aid, major donors are able to use humanitarian funding as an incentive to further their interest, while at the same time create a situation of competition between agencies and organizations for these resources.

Although international agencies and organizations do create problems for international humanitarian assistance by way of function and funding, the most frequent problematic issue stems from agencies competing for supremacy. As stated earlier, the 1992 emergency of Kenya and the increasing concern of famine and starvation created a competition between agencies for superiority. When international agencies complete the people who are suffering lose. Whether it was because of an unwillingness to cooperate or an inability to coordinate humanitarian efforts, agency supremacy continues to be a legitimate concern for the international community in dealing with complex humanitarian emergencies. Philip White discusses potential issues and concerns agency supremacy can create when he states, "Until recently all WFP emergency operations required the approval of Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Director General, an arrangement which has at times been a source of friction between the two bodies."[46] The international system is structured in such a way, due to overlapping mandates and authority, that it breeds competition between agencies, competition for funding and resources, as well as competition between agencies for supremacy and the lead in response efforts within the emergency itself. Additionally in Kenya, "UNICEF's involvement was relatively thin but it is apparent that in early 1992 the organization fought with WFP for institutional supremacy."[47] In many emergencies the struggle for supremacy leads to conflict over key decisions which affect multiple agencies.

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[46] Philip White, "The Role of UN Specialized Agencies in Complex Emergencies: A case Study of FAO" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1, Complex Emergencies (Feb 1999): 229.

[47] Phil O'Keefe, John Kirkby, "Relief and Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies" *Review of African Political Economy*, 24, No. 74, Africa's Environmental Crisis: Challenging the Orthodoxies (Dec. 1997): 572.

Due to the competing issues surrounding complex emergencies and international humanitarian agencies, there has been a recent push toward more coordinated planning and cooperation. In 1991 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) was formed with a mission to "mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies; advocate for the rights of people in need; promote preparedness and prevention; and facilitate sustainable solutions."[48] However, even though the UN has recognized the problem of competition between agencies, the reality of cooperation is still difficult to achieve. "As a result, the humanitarian enterprise is characterized by a surprising degree of mistrust and antipathy: between donors and UN agencies; between UN agencies and their implementing partners; between international NGOs and civil society organizations in host countries; and between humanitarian actors and institutions with political, diplomatic, military, and peacekeeping responsibilities."[49] Mary Anderson further expresses this point when she writes, "Another negative implicit ethical message is conveyed by the failure of aid agencies to cooperate with each other. Aid agency field workers report that they often bad-mouth other agencies' work. They compete for aid recipients, often by criticizing the program approaches of other agencies and refusing to have anything to do with them."[50] The problem of cooperation between agencies has

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[48] The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website: http://ochaonline.un.org/tabid/5838/language/en-US/Default.aspx (accessed on Feb., 9, 2011)

[49] Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations. Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc., 2004), 19

[50] Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm. How Aid can Support Peace-or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1999), 56

become a focus of the UN and other NGOs throughout the international community, and

they have addressed this issue in an attempt to more effectively distribute international

humanitarian assistance. The formation of the UNOCHA to facilitate mobilization and

cooperation, aimed at the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in order to

alleviate human suffering is just one way the international community as attempted to

address the issue of cooperation.

Through its mandate, UNOCHA has attempted to coordinate humanitarian

assistance by implementing three principles, these principles are:

> 1) Responsibility for people affected by emergencies lies –first and
> foremost- with their respective states. 2) States in need are expected to
> facilitate the work of responding organizations. And 3) humanitarian
> assistance must be linked to the humanitarian principles of humanity,
> neutrality, and impartiality (the fourth principle of independence was later
> added).[51]

Although international cooperation has become a point of focus for the international

community there still remain significant obstacles surrounding the effective delivery of

humanitarian assistance. Whether by mandate, funding, or competition for supremacy,

international agencies and organizations often time create further problems for the

delivery and distribution of international humanitarian assistance.

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[51] The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website:
http://ochaonline.un.org/tabid/5838/language/en-US/Default.aspx (accessed on Feb., 9, 2011)

5. LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES

"Aid is only as good as the ability of a recipient's economy and government to use it prudently and productively."[52] Local institutional capacities are one of the most problematic issues and concerns for the effective delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Francis Fukuyama asserts that, "lack of state capacity in poor countries has come to haunt the developed world much more directly"[53], this includes international humanitarian assistance. Most CHEs occur in underdeveloped states, in which local infrastructures are inadequately established and maintained. The lack of stable host nation infrastructures and institutions, to include: transportation, legal, sanitation, utility, economic, governmental, and agricultural sectors, can create an environment in which international humanitarian assistance is largely ineffective and disproportionally distributed.

David Levinson notes, "Infrastructure capacity absorption depends on the location, timing, density, and character of development as well as the underlying technology."[54] In underdeveloped states, infrastructures are ineffective, fractured, and

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[52] Nancy Birdsall, Dani Rodrik, Arvind Subramanian, "How to Help Poor Countries" *Foreign Affairs*, 84, No. 4 (July/August 2005): 143.

[53] Francis Fukuyama, "The Imperative of State Building" *Journal of Democracy*, 15, No. 2 (Apr. 2004): 18.

[54] David Levinson, "Monitoring Infrastructure Capacity" *Land Market Monitoring for Small Urban Growth* (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, 2000), 2

politically controlled by corrupt agents of the government. This can lead to inefficient delivery of international humanitarian assistance during complex emergencies. When a country's mechanisms of transportation are weak or lacking the ability for international agencies to get humanitarian aid into areas of human suffering is difficult at best. The transportation sector is the primary delivery and distribution mechanism for assistance. If the recipient country's transportation sector is deficient or lacking the means for delivery of international humanitarian assistance is deficient. Whereby, aid is often restricted to areas easily accessed, and rural areas where delivery is more problematic, are largely neglected.

Sanitation and adequate water purification mechanisms are also essential for the effectiveness of international humanitarian assistance. Poor sanitation and water purification sectors can exacerbate complex emergencies by increasing the likelihood of diseases such as cholera. In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that demolished much of Haiti, the lack of necessary mechanisms for water and sanitation created further complexities with the onset of cholera. During complex emergencies there become additional pressures by the international humanitarian assistance community to limit harm. However, when host nation institutions are lacking, the ability of the humanitarian community to alleviate human suffering can be jeopardized, as was the case with Haiti and the onset of cholera. In addition to sanitation and transportation, economic and agricultural capacities play a large role in the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. Poor economic and agricultural sectors often further impoverish rural areas,

and create additional needs for humanitarian assistance. Poor economic and agricultural policies, implemented by host governments can create emergency situations.

In 1958, the People's Republic of China (PRC), under the rule of the China Communist Party (CCP), implemented new economic policies to facilitate development. The PRC shifted its agricultural economic base in rural areas to steel production. The error in calculation led to massive human suffering and starvation. The economic shift during the "Great Leap Forward" was anything but prudent. China's poor economic policies coupled with large levels of corruption created a situation of wide spread human suffering and death.

Often time weak governmental capacities and institutions are related to corruption and the ineffectiveness of the rule of law. Corrupt governments can disproportionally distribute humanitarian aid to colleagues and clients of the state, thereby preventing aid from getting to the needed population. The fact that underdeveloped states often lack transparency, have high levels of corruption, contain weak or unenforced systems of law, and institutions that are unresponsive further the ineffectiveness of humanitarian assistance. Brautigam and Knack assert, "Corruption receives the lion's share of the press, but related problems include inadequate official information, weak mechanisms of accountability, poorly enforced rule of law, and bureaucracies that are ineffective and unresponsive."[55]

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[55] Deborah Brautigam, Stephen Knack, "Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa" *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 52, No. 2 (Jan., 2004): 258-259.

According to Francis Fukuyama, state-building is "the creation of new governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones."[56] However, the realities of underdeveloped countries (UDCs), which are among the most susceptible to CHEs, are such that their institutional capacities are incapable of absorbing international humanitarian assistance, whereby "weak, incompetent, or nonexistent governments have been and continue to be a source of severe difficulties."[57] In the face of these realities, the international humanitarian assistance community has additional problems in the delivery of international assistance. As Munslow and Brown suggest, "the present structures for emergency relief in crisis situations have neither the ability to retain an institutional memory to shorten learning curves nor appropriate delivery structures to ensure that there is an effective transition from an emergency situation toward a more sustainable development future."[58]

Local institutional capacities within underdeveloped states often create an environment in which international humanitarian assistance becomes largely ineffective or problematic. The reality of state weakness, often referred to as weak, failing, or failed states, create further complications in the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Fukuyama wrote, "Weak or failed states are close to the root of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty and AIDS to drug trafficking and terrorism."[59] Although local institutional capacities create an added problem for

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[56] Francis Fukuyama, "The Imperative of State Building" *Journal of Democracy*, 15, No. 2 (Apr 2004): 17
[57] Ibid, 17
[58] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 208-209.
[59] Francis Fukuyama, "The Imperative of State Building" *Journal of Democracy*, 15, No. 2 (Apr. 2004): 17.

humanitarian assistance, it is important to acknowledge that weak or failing institutions

can also be the primary cause for the need of humanitarian assistance in the first place.

Government actions and economic policies can further marginalize regions and further

deprive people relative to the ruling elites. This relative deprivation creates more

inequality, whereby weak mechanisms of accountability and lacking institutions further

exacerbate situations which can lead to CHEs. As Cliffe and Luckham assert, "systemic

crises or failures in state capacity and the entire process of governance decrease the

ability of states to respond to popular grievances and manage conflict, and the effective

absence of the state allows societal conflicts to escalate."[60] Institutional fragility, in this

sense, can be both the cause for humanitarian assistance and an impediment to the

effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

Examples of weak local capacities contributing to or causing environmental,

economic, and societal stress can be witnessed on a large scale in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Many Sub-Saharan African countries are a product of colonialism, whereby institutional

structures were created for the benefit of the colonizing nation. As a consequence, after

independence, many Sub-Saharan African states lacked the necessary skills and

mechanisms needed for self-governance, whereby "local skill bases were weak"[61]. As

many Sub-Saharan African states achieved independence there emerged one-party

systems of government which did little to build local institutions. Arthur Rivkin

suggested in 1968, "the history of universities, courts, civil services, parliaments –to say

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[60] Lionel Cliffe, Robin Luckham, "Complex Political Emergencies and the State: Failure and the Fate of the State" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1, Complex Political Emergencies (Feb., 1999): 33.
[61] Deborah Brautigam, Stephen Knack, "Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa" *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 52, No. 2 (Jan., 2004): 259.

nothing of private or therefore private voluntary groups- in Africa has been one of subordination, take-over, and destruction by the one party…(this) has made it all but impossible for truly national institutions representative of and responsive to the total nation to develop and grow."[62] This reality created significant institutional weaknesses in which many local bureaucracies could not overcome. Although these institutional inadequacies alone may not spell a recipe for emergency, they create an environment susceptible to societal, economic, and environmental stresses. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, this environment was coupled with economic instability as well as long established political instability and war. So long as the local governmental structures, including institutional structures are incapable of responding to popular grievances and managing conflict there will be an increased likelihood for emergency.

In states where institutions are weak there is a lack of basic mechanisms for effectively and positively using international humanitarian assistance. Whereby, "existing governmental administrative structures are hardly prepared to cope with the plethora of humanitarian tasks."[63] Institutional weakness can appear in many forms. A state's inability to enforce laws, such as tax laws or property rights, can create an environment in which tax evasion and government seizure of land become rampant. Along with the ineffectiveness of law, states with weak institutions often contain high levels of corruption which include bribery and clientelism. These situations can create an environment in which humanitarian agencies need to bribe officials or navigate the

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[62] Arnold Rivkin, "The Role of Institution-Building in Africa" *Nations by Design· Institution Building in Africa* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), 17

[63] Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 40

complicated waters of bureaucracies in order to get the needed assistance into the country.

The institutional weakness of failing or failed states further poverty and inequality, and in turn increases the potential of rebellion and government oppression. It is easy to understand how weak institutions, including: weak enforcement of law, government corruption, inequality, and poverty can lead to oppression and civil war, and ultimately the need for humanitarian assistance. However, weak institutions can also create impediments for humanitarian assistance in general. In states with weak institutions there are low absorption capacities for aid. The fact that an increased level of international humanitarian assistance requires government oversight and reporting, leads to further involvement by weak governments in the assistance of the delivery and distribution of assistance. This creates a situation in which more humanitarian assistance requires more institutional controls. The fact that more institutional controls are needed exactly at the time when institutions are at their weakest creates an inherent problem for humanitarian assistance. O'Keefe and Kirkby explained this phenomena when they wrote, "The environment in which agencies operate in attempting humanitarian relief is much more difficult than in normal emergencies. That is because of the level of destruction of infrastructures, the intense psycho-social problems of the affected people and the insecure working conditions for agencies and for local people when governments no longer function."[64] These destroyed infrastructures, along with intense psycho-social

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[64] Phil O'Keefe, John Krikby, "Relief and Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies" *Review of African Political Economy*, 24, No. 74, Africa's Environmental Crisis: Challenging the Orthodoxies (Dec. 1997): 567.

problems and working conditions without governmental controls, create additional
problematic conditions for the effective delivery and distribution of international
humanitarian assistance. If the international community do not adequately address these
issues, their chances of successfully delivering and distributing humanitarian aid, aimed
at alleviating human suffering, is greatly reduced.

6. PROBLEMS BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

The transition from immediate relief to development for states in the mist of emergency can create another problem for international humanitarian assistance.   Beyond the local and international politics, the limitations of the agencies themselves, and the problem with state capacity, there exists a sense among many that relief should be aimed at alleviating the immediate suffering caused by natural and man-made disasters; however, this mentality has failed to recognize the causal effect development problems had on the creation of the emergency as well as future problems that can arise if development is not adequately addressed. This mentality has led to an environment in which aid is aimed at symptoms, and not the root causes of the emergency.

Many believe agencies either assist in the immediate relief or attempt to facilitate continued development, but are seldom organized to effectively address both the symptoms as well as the root causes at the same time. As Munslow and Brown assert, "Institutional mandates either stop at relief or start with development, but do not extend to building the bridge between the two in a manner that would encourage simultaneous programs."[65] The reality that agencies are not equipped to address both relief and

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[65] Barry Munslow, Christopher Brown, "Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse" *Third World Quarterly*,. 20, No. 1 Complex Political Emergencies (Feb. 1999): 209.

development simultaneously creates an environment in which valuable time and resources are lost. Munslow and Brown outline a basic timeline in their article *Complex Emergencies: The Institutional Impasse* and stated, "The normal pattern was a relief phase of up to six months, a rehabilitation phase lasting for half a year to two years followed by a medium term reconstruction phase lasting several years."[66] This conventional pattern for relief has neglected to account for the long-term development needed to ensure future prosperity.

Although many scholars and statesmen alike believe that future prosperity is the responsibility of the state in question, it would be prudent for agencies and international organizations to at least offer assistance and guidance in the transition from relief to development for fear of slipping back into a state of emergency, once again calling on international humanitarian assistance. Often time agencies and individual states stop sending relief after the initial state of emergency has been alleviated. This problem may be a result of changed public opinion, media coverage, or the emergence of another CHE somewhere else. However, if there was an initial action plan which included and addressed the transition from immediate relief to development, this problem could perhaps be addressed more pragmatically.

The lack of an effectively defined action plan increases the difficulty of long-term development, and increases the probability of future complex humanitarian emergencies within the region. O'Keefe and Kirkby explain that, "rehabilitation and reconstruction

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[66] Ibid, 209

should be planned. Rehabilitation should be part of the relief process."[67] Until recently,

within the international community there was a largely universal understanding that

reconstruction or state-building is primarily the responsibility of the state itself.

However, in the aftermath of a complex humanitarian emergency the state itself is often

in a condition of disaster, and often lacks the ability to single-handedly implement

reconstruction. With destroyed infrastructures, struggling or failed economies, and

societal hardships, many states look to the international community for help. This reality

suggests that the international community should be prepared to address reconstruction as

a part of relief. From this standpoint, the international community must be prepared, with

an effective action plan, for the difficult task of transitioning from relief to

reconstruction.

Transitioning from relief to development is a long process, which had

traditionally been left to UN agencies and NGOs. However, as with the case in Iraq,

humanitarian relief and long-term development has become intertwined with military

intervention. This process relies on the actions and functions of many actors, including

often: militaries, NGOs, UN agencies, local governments, etc. In the case of Iraq,

immediate relief as well as long term development was not left entirely to the

humanitarian agencies. The US military implemented humanitarian assistance and even

established a humanitarian planning team under the direction of the Department of

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[67] Phil O'Keefe, John Kirkby, "Relief and Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies" *Review of African Political Economy*, 24, No. 74, Africa's Environmental Crisis: Challenging the Orthodoxies (Dec. 1997): 568.

Defense (DOD).[68] Prior to the intervention of Iraq the military as well as Disaster

Assistance Response Teams (DART) developed a pre-war action plan which would

attempt to allow for a relatively smooth transition from relief to longer-term

development; and in "January 2003 the pentagon further broke from tradition and created

the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). Their job was to

coordinate the relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq with other US and Coalition relief

organizations."[69] Although the reason for intervention into Iraq is questionable, the

transition from immediate relief to long-term development went relatively smoothly,

primarily due to the pre-war planning by the US military as well as other organizations.

Even though the intervention in Iraq may be viewed as a relative success from a

standpoint of humanitarian relief to long-term development, it is important to understand

as Cliffe and Luckham state:

> Finally, the set of circumstances that have termed the 'shape' of conflict
> will be determinant of what is possible at any moment in terms of
> combining relief and development. The ongoing debate about the relief-
> development continuum, while ... recognizing that relief, development
> and peacemaking ought to go on simultaneously, has given rise to
> explorations of what kinds of military-political situations might preclude
> much emphasis on rehabilitation and development.[70]

Another significant factor which can inhibit reconstruction is the type of CHE

itself. In the past, the international community has not distinguished between CHEs

caused by natural disasters and those caused by civil war and conflict. This distinction is

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[68] Frederick M. Burkle, Jr., Bradley A. Woodruff, Eric K. Noji, "Lessons and Controversies: Planning and Executing Immediate Relief in the Aftermath of the War in Iraq" *Third World Quarterly*, 26, No. 4/5, Reconstructing Post-Saddam Iraq: A Quixotic Beginning to the Global Democratic Revolution (2005): 800.
[69] Ibid, 801
[70] Lionel Cliffe, Robin Luckham, "Complex Political Emergencies and the State: Failure and the Fate of the State" *Third World Quarterly*, 20, No. 1, Complex Political Emergencies (Feb., 1999): 41.

important due to the overall effects that civil war and conflict have psychologically on the population, and the intentional result of conflict and internal war. The fact that civil war and conflict are a result of endogenous processes creates an internal situation more adverse to international intervention.

The type of CHE must be acknowledged prior to international humanitarian intervention. J M Albala-Bertrand asserts that, "in natural disasters, the set of response activities seek to put people back on their feet via both relief and rehabilitation activities. Relief aims at the alleviation of victims, distress and the re-establishment of supplies for the satisfaction of the most basic needs."[71] However, as with the 2010 emergency in Haiti, initial assistance aimed at immediate relief, while neglecting long-term issues can lead to disaster. The cholera outbreak in Haiti could have possibly been avoided if the international community would have focused more efforts toward development and not been content with providing primarily immediate relief.

Psychological differences between natural CHEs and man-made CHEs, such as civil wars and internal conflict, often affect the planning process by the international community, and when dealing with natural CHEs often fall short of long-term development. The primary consideration for the international community when it comes to providing humanitarian assistance within a state should be whether the institutional frameworks are intact or whether the infrastructures are destroyed. This determination

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[71] J M Albala-Bertrand, "Responses to Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and Natural Disasters: An analytical Comparison" *Third World Quarterly*, 21, No. 2 (Apr. 2000): 219.

should prompt further planning as to the need for relief to development, and can assist in bridging the gap between the two.

Often time, in the aftermath of civil war and conflict the institutional frameworks are devastated and the infrastructures are weak or gone. For the international community, by understanding the psychological and structural differences between internal war and natural disaster, they can more effectively provide humanitarian assistance. As Albala-Bertrand explains, "The main analytical differences in responses to natural disasters and that to complex emergencies are essentially based on the institutional setting within which these calamities occur."[72] Although both natural disasters as well as internal conflict can create CHE situations, the international community should acknowledge there is often a psychological and institutional difference between them. Because there are often time psychological and institutional differences, the international community should not address each CHE with a standard operating procedure mentality. If the international community does not distinguish between them, and does not consider the differences between internal conflicts and natural disasters they can create further problem for international humanitarian assistance.

In natural CHEs the international humanitarian community is often invited without haste to assist in alleviating human suffering; however, as stated previously, in man-made CHEs the host nation is often resistant to international intervention due to the myriad of agencies and the perceptions accompanied with them. This can further complicate international humanitarian assistance, especially when attempting to bridge

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[72] Ibid, 225

the gap between initial relief and long term development. Host nations may perceive

long term develop as a type of control by the international community, primarily when

man-made CHEs are "the result of deliberate disruption of institutional arrangements."[73]

The distinction between man-made and natural CHEs is, therefore, an important factor to

the delivery of international humanitarian assistance as well as the effectiveness of

bridging the gap between immediate relief and long term development.

Another factor which limits the international community in delivering and

distributing international assistance is the reality that immediate relief can itself disrupt

long term development. In order for host nations to be able to effectively implement

effective policies for better development, their economic and in many cases their

agricultural sectors must not be subverted by immediate relief. If the international

humanitarian community is not prudent in their delivery of humanitarian assistance they

can inadvertently subvert local economies, primarily in areas where agriculture is the

staple export of the state. When cheap or free food is given in response to an emergency

there is a possibility of disrupting local economies for years to come. This can hinder

local long term development, and set back the host nation.

It is therefore important for the international community to understand local

conditions, as well as follow a well thought out and executed action plan before fool

heartedly intervening in emergencies. Although the ICRC principles of humanitarian

assistance were created and established on the premise of alleviating human suffering,

there must be considerations taken prior to entering into an emergency situation. These

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[73] Ibid, 217

considerations should take into account the effective transition from immediate relief to long term development, including the psychological factors of the type of emergency, the individual agencies ability to transition from relief to development simultaneously, as well as if and how humanitarian aid can subvert local economies which could have longer lasting effects on recipient nations.

7. A STUDY OF COMPLEX EMERGENCIES AND THEIR BENEFIT

Although emergency situations have existed from the beginning of human civilizations, the term complex humanitarian emergency was not coined until the 1980s. However, over time there has been a shift in the ways in which the international community addresses CHEs. The understanding of absolute state sovereignty and nonintervention has given way to a more hands on approach by the international community in alleviating human suffering. The signing of the Peace of Westphalia, the emergence of the ICRC, the end of WWII, the duration of the Cold War, and the more recent impact of 9/11, have assisted in the transition by international humanitarian agencies to become more involved in humanitarian assistance.

Within the past century the international community has witnessed an explosion in the number of NGOs and humanitarian agencies, all with particular mandates and intentions at alleviating human suffering. However, with good intentions come unanticipated results. Although, international humanitarian agencies are more poised, through technological advances and a more interconnected world, to assist in their goals and mandates, there have also been unanticipated, negative effects which have come up. I have attempted to outline four of the most problematic areas of concern for delivering international humanitarian assistance in response to complex emergencies. These areas

of concern are local and international political issues; agency issues, local/recipient capacities in absorbing aid, and the problem of bridging the gap between immediate relief and long term development.

Some of the unanticipated, negative results of delivering international humanitarian assistance are the local and international political issues that surround international intervention. The international community is often confronted by local political power struggles, international political interests, or some combination of both when attempting to deliver or distribute international humanitarian assistance. These political factors often inhibit the ability of humanitarian agencies and organizations from abiding by the humanitarian principle outlined by the ICRC. The ideas of sovereignty and nonintervention; the power struggles between warring factions which often contribute to aid being used as a weapon; the international interests of states which determine whether an emergency is a viable recipient of aid; and the longer interpretation of international law, all play important roles, and must be considered by the international humanitarian community when attempting to deliver assistance. International humanitarian assistance is no longer, if it was ever, determined solely on the need to alleviate human suffering.

The individual mandates and organizing documents which outline the functions of international organizations and humanitarian agencies also contribute to the problems facing the delivery of international humanitarian assistance. Although NGOs, UN agencies, and other humanitarian organizations are formed for the purpose of alleviating human suffering, the specific and often limiting mandates, the skill level and competence

of individual members, and the frequent battles for supremacy with in an emergency contribute to the problems that face the international community when delivering international humanitarian assistance. Individual mandates are very specific in the function of the agency and often do not extend to all of that suffer in an emergency. The fact that it is difficult to find prudent, competent, and caring individuals, who can effectively operate according to the humanitarian principles, especially in man-made emergencies; and the constant battle for supremacy and the unwillingness of agency cooperation further conflict with the overall purpose of humanitarian assistance.

Another problem facing international humanitarian assistance is the inability of local recipient states to absorb humanitarian assistance. Often times the recipient states' infrastructures and institutions are weak or failing, which may have been the cause of the emergency in the first place, creating a situation in which international humanitarian assistance is ineffective. Most CHEs occur in underdeveloped states with weak transportation, legal, governmental, and sanitation sectors. Delivery routes can be rough and may not extend to the most rural areas (often time most needy people), governments may be inundated with corrupt officials, and sanitation and water sectors can exacerbate the emergency by creating additional diseases. These realities put an additional burden on the international community when attempting to distribute and deliver humanitarian assistance.

Aside from the above mentioned concerns for the international humanitarian community there is also the problem of bridging the gap between immediate relief and long term development. Whether the problems in development stems from the

psychological factor of the emergency, the limitations of the agency mandate, or the problem of delivering assistance without subverting local agricultural and economic sectors, the international humanitarian community should be cognizant of the circumstances and should outline an appropriate plan of action to order to more effectively combat the problem of bridging the gap between immediate relief and long term development.

The purpose of this paper is to outline potential problems and hang-ups in the delivery of international humanitarian assistance after complex emergencies. By outlining the problems, better defining what a complex emergency is and how man-made emergencies differ from natural complex emergencies, it is my purpose to explain the difficulties facing the international community when delivering international humanitarian assistance after complex emergencies. Hopefully, this knowledge will assist in the understanding of the complexities of emergency situations and help assist in providing more effective international humanitarian assistance. The principles of humanitarianism, as outlined by the ICRC, which include, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality, although noble in theory, is not the reality of the international system. Consequently, it is my goal to outline the reality facing the international humanitarian community with knowledge about the system in which international humanitarian assistance is given, and the problems which often face the international humanitarian community.

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