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Special Report

March 1997 | Special Report No. 21

Managing Communications: *Lessons from Interventions in Africa*

Executive Summary

On June 20, 1996, foreign affairs practitioners and representatives from the U.S. and UN militaries, U.S. government emergency agencies, and international and nongovernmental organizations met at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., for a one-day conference entitled "Managing Communications: Lessons from Interventions in Africa." The conference was jointly sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace and the National Defense University.

The conference examined the effectiveness of communications and information-sharing practices (including organizational structures and technologies) among humanitarian and peacekeeping organizations in recent complex emergency operations in Somalia, Rwanda, and Liberia.

The overall premise of the conference was that well-planned information sharing and communications systems linking humanitarian and military actors can enhance operational efficiency, thereby saving lives and resources and, arguably, laying the groundwork for faster regional recuperation and reconstruction. The conference drew lessons from past complex emergency operations, examined current "field" communications practices, considered how new technologies could improve practices, discussed what agreements need to be in place for improved practices to be routinely integrated into deployment preparedness, and explored how to prepare nationals for assuming communications practices.

Conference sessions featured principal actors from recent operations in Africa. Speakers represented the U.S. and UN peacekeeping forces, international and indigenous NGOs, and UN humanitarian agencies. Each speaker presented a synopsis of lessons learned, drawing from specific operations and field experiences, and reflected on what went right and what went wrong and why. At the conclusion of the sessions -- the military perspective was presented in the morning and the humanitarian perspective in the afternoon -- conference attendees divided into assigned breakout groups to discuss the significance of the day's lessons and to propose next steps for improving information sharing and communications practices among groups operating in complex emergency operations.

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Welcome and Introductions

Lt. Gen. Ervin Rokke

President, National Defense University

We are considering how to improve communications systems and procedures between military and civilian participants in joint humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. This conference demonstrates that good communication between civilian and military participants is possible.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had the positive effect of reducing the threat of nuclear holocaust, but the end of the Cold War has also introduced an era of global instability, increasing the need for U.S. involvement in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

These operations involve the U.S. defense establishments, civilian agencies of our government, and NGOs. They also require U.S. cooperation and coordination with other governments and their militaries, with regional organizations, and with international organizations.

The military and civilian personnel participating in these joint operations are highly dedicated to achieving common goals, but they come from different cultures. Lack of familiarity with each other's methods and imperfect communications in the field can lead to misunderstanding, thus hindering the operations.

We will consider how communications systems and procedures used in interventions can be improved by examining three recent interventions in Africa. I cannot think of a more timely and challenging contribution to the success of future humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

Amb. Richard H. Solomon

President, United States Institute of Peace

The U.S. Institute of Peace has highly valued the cooperation of the National Defense University in organizing this conference. Let me describe the intellectual perspective the Institute brings to this enterprise and to other activities.

The American West grew along the telegraph lines and the railroad tracks; the superhighway system that was built in this country during the 1950s was crucial in transforming the structure of our regional integration, expanding our economy, and transforming our cities (some would say hollowing out our cities). Thus, communication and transportation technologies have had a powerful effect on the way society has developed. We are now asking how international society will be transformed along the complex electronic pathways of the information superhighway, the World Wide Web, the Internet. This is the broader perspective the Institute is looking at: the impact of the information revolution on averting or managing complex emergencies and conflicts.

It normally takes about twenty years for a new technology to mature, that is, for scientific innovations to be adapted to commercially and socially useful applications. In just the last decade, we have seen the powerful effect of new communications technologies.

When I was director of policy planning at the State Department, then-Secretary of State George Shultz was working with people in the banking industry who could see that electronic communications had globalized the movement of capital around the world, downgrading the financial centers in London, New York, and Tokyo. Since that time -- and especially in the last two or three years -- the explosive impact of the World Wide Web has revealed the potential for new forms of communication that we are only beginning to recognize.

The Institute is concerned with these issues because patterns of communication among people and people's working relationships are central to issues of conflict and conflict resolution. The breakdown of communications is one sure sign that people are headed for overt conflict.

Similarly, if a conflict has been overt and violent, one of the major tasks in peacemaking is to reestablish communications. This is difficult, requiring third-party mediators to bridge the gap of broken communications. Thus, the issue of communications is central to our own purposes of understanding and developing mechanisms for managing conflict.

Furthermore, at the macro level, organizational patterns of communication are essential to social and governmental processes. Regular, reliable communications facilitate coordinated action. The end of the Cold War has revealed that the organizational structures -- the patterns of communication that were essential to our deterrent posture toward the Soviet Union -- are challenged by the new international conflicts we are trying to address.

There is a mismatch between the problems and the organizations, and this mismatch is our concern today. The new communications technologies have the potential of quickly establishing more efficient, cost-effective ways of enabling collaboration among the new participants in the international challenges we

face. In particular, communications technologies can bring together the work of the U.S. government, our military organizations, and the humanitarian assistance organizations in the private sector, all of which are responding to today's humanitarian crises.

This conference reflects a basic commitment of the Institute to explore the impact and the possible benefits of these communications technologies, that is, the impact of the information age on preventing, managing, and promoting reconciliation of international conflict.

Today's effort -- "Managing Communications: Lessons from Interventions in Africa" -- builds upon discussions begun at the conference held in late 1994, "Managing Global Chaos," and a project we call "Virtual Diplomacy."

At the conference, analysts of international affairs discussed how chaotic the world seemed to have become with the end of the Cold War and with the end of the bipolar confrontation. Some questioned whether the world really was in a state of "global chaos." Nonetheless, this national debate examined whether the United States should get involved in Haiti and what role the United States should assume in Bosnia, particularly in the wake of the Somali intervention. These two situations (Haiti and Bosnia) are examples of violence that may not be a direct challenge to our own security, but that may -- in ways less clear than during the Cold War -- challenge other, less central national interests.

The 1994 conference recognized an emerging relationship between humanitarian assistance organizations and the work of the government. For the first time people who had never been in the same room with each other were brought together at a policy level to summarize their experiences in these humanitarian interventions. Today's conference will build on some of the lessons from "Managing Global Chaos."

We want to explore in some detail how global telecommunications can improve the effectiveness of our working relationships, both within this country and with other international partners in humanitarian assistance organizations. Communications linkages are essential to this process, and today they run the gamut from smoke signals to satellites, from hand held radios and cellular phones to satellite connections and the Internet. How can we integrate these new technologies to make our humanitarian assistance operations more effective?

We hope to see consensus emerge in three areas. The first area is information sharing. The various organizations involved in interventions or in conflict management should share information for their mutual benefit. That sounds obvious, but as we have pursued our work, we have discovered tremendous resistance among organizations to cooperating and sharing information. Humanitarian assistance organizations compete for funding from both private and government agencies, so there is a tendency for the organizations to safeguard their turf, their area of operations; this obviously works against the effectiveness that would come with greater collaboration. Those problems are being addressed, and the issue of sharing information effectively is the first area where we hope to see consensus emerge.

A second area is common planning and training in pre-crisis environments, making responses to the crisis situation more effective. We need to develop protocols for training, and common standards for communications in working operations. The Institute, through its various training programs, can provide a bridge between the work of the private sector and that of various government agencies.

The third area is interoperability of the communications technologies as well as of the working procedures of these various institutions, just as there is interoperability with our military allies abroad. This step requires standardizing equipment and ways of using equipment as well as developing practical communications procedures to enable everyone to talk with everyone else in the field, to share information, and to make their interactions more synergistic.

Setting The Scene

Organization of these proceedings

Each of the following sets of remarks is preceded by a brief biographical sketch of the speaker (addressing principally how the speaker's experience relates to the day's event) and a summary of the main points of the speaker's remarks. Where necessary, the Institute has made minor editorial changes to make the reading easier for a broader audience that may not be well versed in these terms and issues.

Guidance for the speakers

Prior to the conference, the speakers were given a set of questions to use as guidance in preparing their presentations. The following guidelines were adapted from Antonia Handler Chayes and George T. Raach, *Peace Operations: Developing an American Strategy*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995.

- As peacekeepers or humanitarian assistance providers, what was your communications system in the field (both technical and organizational)? How did you communicate with others in the field or at headquarters?
- What were the advantages and disadvantages of your communications system?
- What information regarding field operations did you prepare and transmit to, or receive from, others in the field or at headquarters on a regular basis?
- What mechanisms existed for communications between peacekeepers and humanitarian relief providers? With local authorities, institutions, and organizations?
- What information was shared? With whom? How? What effect did information sharing (or lack thereof) have on your operations? What problems existed in the exchange of information?
- Did you have sufficient communications resources available for your operations? How were they provided and funded?
- Was there a local technical or organizational infrastructure for communications, and how did it affect information flow and sharing?
- What past experiences were relevant to the establishment of your communications systems?
- What improvements in communications management would you recommend?

Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni

Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force

Summary

Every operation is different, making it difficult to create a standardized formula for establishing coordination and communication. Creating cooperation requires creating a relationship and a means of communicating among groups with different cultures and with different views on how that cooperation should take place. The military has learned from experience the key lesson of involving all actors during the planning phase, prior to deployment. Following a crisis, it is essential that all players collaborate on performance evaluation.

Although communications tend to be evaluated in terms of technology, Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni maintains that the right personality is many times more valuable than the right system and mechanical or technological capability. He feels that liaison and personal contact are the best means of communication and are, in some cultures, the only real means of communication.

Biography

During early 1995, General Zinni served as commander of the combined task force for Operation United Shield protecting UN forces during withdrawal from Somalia. During 1992-93, he served as the director for operations for the unified task force Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Also in 1993, he served as the assistant to the U.S. Special Envoy to Somalia during Operation Continue Hope.

I will offer some observations I hope will serve as a framework for thinking about managing communications in complex humanitarian interventions.

First, we must remember that every humanitarian intervention or operation is different; therefore, it is hard to create a formula or a prescriptive way for establishing coordination and communication. The degree of complexity, the nature of the missions that each participant might be required to undertake, the problems on the ground, the locations, the degree to which the local government is functioning or to which there are responsible agencies-all these factors are going to drive the requirements for coordination and communication.

We must also remember that we bring together the military and civilians to deal with these problems. There is a true clash of cultures, which has nothing to do with the culture you're involved with on the ground. The cultures of the soldier, the diplomat, and the relief worker could not be more diverse or more disparate. Creating cooperation requires creating a relationship and a means of communicating among groups that have different views on how that cooperation should take place.

If you say "C-2," for example, a military officer thinks "command and control." A relief worker or diplomat would bristle at those terms, maybe preferring "cooperate and coordinate." From the start, you must appreciate the approach of the different participants; you must also identify an appropriate degree of communication as well as an appropriate degree of authority over that communication and who should have that authority.

When we think in terms of communication, we need to break any intervention down into phases. Of course, we military guys like to do that, to break things down into analyzable parts. The most critical phase is before the crisis erupts into violence. This phase involves organizations that know they will be committed to these interventions. I know, for example, that two of my commanders in chief (CINCs) require me to be prepared to conduct humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. Therefore I must be fully prepared to understand and to know if there is a requirement in their areas of operation.

Understanding and preparing for an intervention requires a lot of pre-crisis, day-to-day coordination and communication with NGOs, with the State Department, with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), with all those agencies we will find alongside us in these crises. Our training must be formidable, and in that training we must establish formal relationships and understand the technical parts of the communication. Thus, when we enter a situation, we will have an initial framework to adapt to the mission and to the uniqueness of the situation. It is too late to begin this once the assignments have been made, once the crisis has begun, once we are all beginning to deploy in our various spheres.

The next phase is the planning phase. This is when we come together to decide how we are going to enter this fray and how we are going to parcel out the missions, tasks, assignments, and locations. This phase may range from very short, immediate responses to a crisis to long-term planning opportunities.

In Somalia, during the United Shield operation, we were able to look at the situation over the course of a few months before we actually had to deploy. This offered us a tremendous advantage in that we were able to plan effectively and to cooperate with all the other groups with which we were going to be involved.

I have also been involved in operations where we planned in a stovepipe manner, that is, we did the military planning very effectively, but we neglected to tie that into the humanitarian side, to the political side, and to the recovery efforts that would go on beyond our stay. We neglected to understand things like

transition and how the transition would occur. These must be planned from the beginning. This is a key lesson the military has learned: Involve everyone at the planning stage and look at the long term.

The first to enter into the situation are usually the assessment teams. In the past, everyone has made assessments; therefore everyone has come back with a different view of the requirements. Disaster-assistance response teams from OFDA go in immediately. CINCs send in assessment teams; the joint task force may send in assessment teams. Relief workers engage in initial assessments. Other nations that may be involved in the various dimensions -- humanitarian, political, military -- are also making assessments.

Each of these assessments then "stovepipes" back. Judgments and decisions are made and tasks are assigned, and when we all arrive, we are in immediate conflict. Therefore, communication and coordination must take place among those who are making the initial evaluation on the ground, because those decisions and recommendations are going to drive the operation.

Obviously, once we are on the ground and are engaged, there must be coordination and communication among all the involved groups. At some point groups will leave. The military likes to go in and do its business when required and then, as the requirement for its services passes, transition out. Any transition -- whether incremental or sudden -- needs to be planned. Communication and coordination must involve those who follow, those who are going to take on the long-term recovery effort, and the communication and coordination must be undertaken from the beginning.

The military tends to treat the immediate problem with actions that sometimes have long-term adverse effects. We must understand that what we do for the emergency treatment of the patient has to be beneficial in the long-term recovery, and that isn't always the case.

This is another key lesson that the military has learned and, unfortunately in many cases, is still learning. We tend to come in very large, we tend to come in very suddenly, we tend to want to resolve the problem in the short term -- even if it is not a short-term problem -- and then we tend to do things that could be disruptive for those who have been there before and will be there long after in the recovery stage.

When operations conclude -- and this may be the greatest requirement, one we fail to do -- it is time to communicate in doing the assessments, to look back, to share the lessons learned. We wait too long to do that. Right after an operation has been completed or after the military or an agency has left, it is important to work with others to assess your performance, our performance. Continuing communication and evaluation are valuable.

Somalia was a good example of a place for learning lessons because it was such a complex operation. Each of us -- whether in the military, the humanitarian, or the political arenas -- had so much involvement that it was worth figuring out what went right and what went wrong. I am always pleased when conferences like this review that particular operation. It was the most complex we have ever dealt with -- more so than Bosnia, Haiti, or any others. It would serve us well to master the lessons of Somalia and identify which paths worked and which led to dead ends.

We establish coordination mechanisms when we go in. I think we must ensure that those mechanisms are designed to play the right roles and that they are not overburdened with too many tasks. For example, when we were in the hills of northern Iraq with the Kurds, we adapted a military agency called the Civil Military Operation Center (CMOC) to provide coordination with the UN agencies and the NGOs working in the area. The CMOC is a civil affairs operation center; it was designed as a means for our civil affairs workers in the military to help the traumatized civilian population, both during and after a conflict.

CMOC was meant to be an operations center, as its name states, that operated in coordination with our combat operations center. It fit nicely in that situation; its organization, its membership from the military side, its capabilities in terms of communications and the skills of the members all formed a nice interface with the NGOs. Although it worked fairly well, it unfortunately was seen as a panacea for resolving all

communications and coordination problems.

By the time we ended up in Somalia many operations later, everything was dumped into the CMOC, with the result that the CMOC was attempting to make policy and to coordinate a humanitarian relief convoy from Point A to Point B and was attempting to determine how much security was necessary and how many trucks were needed to supply relief. But you cannot lump strategic policy concerns in with simple tactical and coordination requirements. We have learned that you need to separate these at one level, perhaps the senior leadership level in the area of concern. An executive steering group should address policy issues, with the participation of the senior military, the senior diplomats in the area, and senior representatives of the NGOs and relief agencies involved. With the policy issues being addressed by an executive steering group, the CMOC can focus on the operational functions, coordinating the tasks the military takes on, complementing and supporting NGO efforts, understanding both the NGO and the political dimensions, and ensuring that we agree on the mechanics of the ground operation.

On the civil-military operation team level, we need connection in the local sectors. A small military unit in a given sector should be in direct contact with the NGOs addressing particular problems in that area, such as medicine, shelter, and food.

In the military, we like to think in terms of three levels: the strategic or high operational level, the operational level on the ground, and the tactical level. That structure should have a parallel coordination mechanism so that we do not try to load too many things onto agencies that are not equipped to handle them.

We should remember that the mission drives relationships. There is no single role for the military in every operation. Consider the military missions and tasks in Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, and northern Iraq. Each time, the military had a different mission. Thus, a general expectation may not be fulfilled if we fail to study the missions and responsibilities.

I have also been involved in operations where the military has provided humanitarian relief. This is not always a good thing. It may be required in emergency situations, but the military often does not understand the requirements or how to handle those requirements as well as do NGOs. I can airdrop tons of meals ready-to-eat (MREs) on top of desperate refugees, and they will probably become more desperate as a result.

I have also been involved in operations where the military did not perform any humanitarian relief tasks. The military was present simply to provide security or to promote and support the relief effort that was being conducted by other agencies (governmental or nongovernmental). Each time, we must study the mission and task to decide how to set up the coordination and communications mechanisms.

This is not just a communications problem between the military and the humanitarian side. We also have a problem in communicating with one another in the military. In Somalia, twenty-six nations provided military forces; these ranged from Third World military organizations to NATO countries. They spanned a broad spectrum, creating problems for us in interoperability.

We have to make sure that we are culturally compatible, that we are politically compatible in our purposes on the ground and also compatible in terms of technology, procedures, and doctrine. We have a tremendous internal communications problem. We had almost forty-four nations participating in Somalia when the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) ended. Imagine coordinating a military operation where the membership involved forces from forty-four nations -- twenty-six was bad enough. And each of these operations brings together that kind of disparate grouping.

We must also interface with the political element, the humanitarian side, and the local officials in the region. We have to understand how to build that system as well. The worldwide connectivity made possible by today's technologies both enables -- and requires -- the ability to create and tap into a "virtual

staff" to support you on the ground. In the event that we ever perform these operations again, my organization has made a connection with the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia, to provide that virtual support staff on the ground.

I want somebody who understands the culture, who can give me advice, who can help me evaluate what is happening, who can predict what sort of reaction I might get from a particular action I might take. Appreciating a different culture is very important. How do I connect to it? I don't have the built-in cultural cell on my staff that I need; where can I get one? With today's technology, I can reach someone (on my staff, at the Foreign Service Institute, or at a university) who specializes in cultural studies, who is an expert in the particular area of the world I happen to be in.

There are many other examples of creative uses of communications technology. We are going to talk about information, about information sharing, and about information management, which is of interest because we have a problem in the way we are perceived in the media.

The military has run newspapers as well as radio stations and television stations. We drop leaflets, we have loudspeaker broadcasts; at times, we become the sole provider of information. How do we coordinate all this and ensure that we live up to the responsibility that comes with providing the sole source of information in an environment?

The last point I would like to make is the value of personalities. We think in terms of technology, but the right personality is ten times more valuable than the right system and ten tons of mechanical or technological capability. Liaison and personal contact become the best means of communication -- in some cultures, they are the only real means of communication -- and we should not become so fixated on technology as an answer.

Let me summarize six points we should remember:

- We must be adaptable; we cannot be rigid or prescriptive. We should set up the communications required by the situation, by the mission dictates, and by the environment.
- The military side must be prepared to provide the means and structure for communication. We bring more resources than any other organization. We cannot expect others to provide the same kind of capability or to match it.
- We provide people to operate CMOCs and other agencies and to do some of the administrative and other support tasks because NGOs and governmental agencies may not have that kind of structure or the wherewithal to support it. The military should expect to assume these roles when it is involved.
- We must understand that we have an obligation to share information. We have run into certain problems about sharing intelligence, but we need to find ways to ensure that information is shared and that the mechanism for doing so is established. I could never in good conscience withhold information in a situation where I know about something that presents a danger or a problem, about something that may hinder or help an operation.
- We must find a means of ensuring that we understand we are all in this together and we are helping one another resolve a situation. The military has made great strides in getting to that point, in not making it more difficult, in breaking down some barriers, and in taking care of its own internal needs for security while still managing to share the information that is required.
- The military must understand that its role is to complement, support, and coordinate the operation, not to control and command it. There is no single authority on the ground when all the dimensions come together. However, that is not the way we are structured. We have to take a long-term view of the operation. What went on before we got there? What will go on after we have arrived? How do we complement that and support it?
- Finally, when the military leaves a situation, we have to be sure that what we leave behind is

usable. If we extract all the military capability, if we have not provided the kind of capability that is maintainable and sustainable by those who come after us, then our presence will be more disruptive in the long run.

Randolph Kent

United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs

Summary

According to Randolph Kent, the communications problem can be traced to two issues: the communication-implementation gap and the perceptual pitfalls in the relationship between peacekeepers and the humanitarian community.

On the communication side of the communication-implementation gap, there is a good "early warning detection" system. However, there is failure on the implementation side. Policymakers generally fail to implement decisions in a timely, effective, and committed way. The perceptual pitfalls issue has to do with how little peacekeepers know about the humanitarian agencies -- not only about what they do, but also about how they operate and about their strengths and weaknesses.

Kent makes the case for beginning any discussion of a humanitarian crisis with the needs of those being assisted -- the people in conflict-affected countries. He maintains that if their needs and coping mechanisms are not taken into account, then all the military and nongovernmental organization personnel will have done is to satisfy their own institutional needs, at the expense of the people who are really in need.

Biography

From October 1994 to December 1995, Kent was UN humanitarian coordinator for Rwanda. He has also served as coordinator of the Inter-Agency Support Unit of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee since its inception n 1992.

This conference highlights the critical issue that communications does indeed play a fundamental role in the humanitarian assistance response. Based on my own experience in Africa and elsewhere, I will cover two themes and suggest solutions or recommendations.

The first theme, the communication-implementation gap issue, is very simple. Over the past two years, much attention has been paid to the whole question of early-warning systems -- a fundamental communications issue -- and far less attention has been paid to early implementation. In a sense the bottom line is that we really do know what is going on; we do have early-warning systems that work, but we fail time after time to realize that what we know needs to be implemented in a timely, effective, and committed way.

The situation we now face in Burundi is a very good example. Does anybody need more early warning? Don't we know there is a crisis looming there? But where is the early implementation? Where is the sense of cost-effectiveness? Did we forget that, with all the signals we had received about Rwanda in 1994, we should have been able to intervene in a timely fashion and to save millions of lives and billions of dollars? We had the early-warning system, but we utterly failed in terms of early implementation.

Let me suggest some basic recommendations for closing the gap between communications and implementation.

First, the implementation gap forces us to examine communications at a different level. It is vital that we learn how to communicate with political leaders who can make the decisions that are needed for us to intervene in a timely way.

Second, as an international community, we have to think more effectively about the intervention tools we have at hand. For example, in Burundi, there is a particular group of peoples who really did control the fate of the country as a whole. Many of these forty or fifty people, called the Sans Échec, have children who are going to school in developed countries. Many of these people have bank accounts outside Bujumbura. Many of these people undertake actions that violate basic human rights standards, but we tolerate it. We allow their children to take advantage of schools outside their own country. We allow these bank accounts to continue. Why? We knew what to do 18 months ago, but now, the obvious solution has perhaps bypassed us.

The second theme is that of perceptual pitfalls in the relationship between what might be called the peacekeepers and the humanitarian community.

We have a perceptual problem in the way the peacekeepers regard the nongovernmental organization (NGO) community. We have to learn to work far more effectively and closely in the field with NGOs. We must remember that we are working with professionals in the NGO community who have a valuable role to play.

We need the NGOs to follow the codes of practice that have been established through major NGO consortia, the International Federation of the Red Cross, and the International Committee of the Red Cross and to practice self-regulation. It did not help to have 150 NGOs in Rwanda in 1994. We need the NGOs to self-regulate, to follow the codes of practice, and to give us their professional expertise.

The United Nations is here to help the NGOs, and vice versa, but we cannot regulate the NGOs. Donor governments have the means of regulating the NGOs if they fail to regulate themselves. I urge donor governments to work more closely with the NGO community so that we do not have the chaos, the siege, of NGOs hitting the beaches every time there is a humanitarian crisis.

The last point I would like to make regarding perceptual pitfalls concerns our relationship with and the way we view the disaster-affected, the vulnerable, those in need. This constant reference to the "hapless victims" is a problem of perception that affects our communication. We must understand that those in need are human beings who understand how to deal with their own problems. All too often, we fail to listen to them. We must learn to listen to those in need so that we will be able to communicate more effectively.

In terms of addressing fundamental misperceptions, we have made progress (certainly from the point of view of the United Nations) in closing the gap between the peacekeepers and the humanitarian assistance personnel. The United Nations now has something called the "Framework," in which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the Department of Political Affairs all exchange information. It is difficult to get organizations to share information, but there is growing momentum to do so, and the Framework provides one way in which information is shared. It was a difficult, painful process at first, but the increasing exchange of information will affect the way we look at assessments jointly and the way we operate jointly.

One thing that struck me in Rwanda is how little the peacekeepers knew about the humanitarian agencies -- not only about what they did, but also about how they operated and about their strengths and weaknesses. There was no single manual at a senior level containing this information, and the troops certainly had no such knowledge. In Rwanda, a card was published to give some explanation, but indoctrination is essential; in-field training, with an emphasis on what the troops need to know is essential.

Another point concerning the perception issue is that UN Security Council mandates or proposals should explicitly state that the humanitarian community and the peacekeepers must work together. The humanitarian community must have access to the same assessed contributions as the peacekeepers. That

access would emphasize that the peacekeepers are there to support the humanitarian function and not the other way around.

The multilateral agencies, the UN specialized agencies, are not merely protecting turf but are trying to ensure continuing resources. The different mandates of each of these agencies creates a certain protectiveness within each. We must look far more carefully at ways to integrate our operations.

Finally, I have a personal and a far more subjective and emotional plea: When we talk about humanitarian crises, let us begin with the needs of those whom we are trying to help -- the people in conflict-affected countries. We must learn to listen to and understand these people. Ultimately, these people are why we are there. If we fail to listen to them, if we fail to understand their coping mechanisms, all we will do is satisfy our own communications needs and our own institutional needs at the expense of the people who are really in need.

Part II: Securing the Theater of Operations: Peacekeeping Communications

Summary

This session addresses the following issues:

- How communications are established and maintained with civilian effort; how the military adjusts and adapts to the preexisting information architecture.
- How peacekeeping forces gather, process, and disseminate data about events on the ground to make good decisions that result in the restoration of civilian security.
- Whether there are cases where either more structured communications procedures or more open communications channels would have improved the ability of peacekeeping forces to coordinate with and protect other groups and military forces in the theater of operations.

Moderator's Overview

Amb. Robert Oakley
Former Special Representative to Somalia

Biography

In December 1992, Amb. Robert Oakley was named by then-President Bush as special envoy for Somalia, serving there with Operation Restore Hope until March 1993. He was again named special envoy for Somalia by President Clinton and served in that capacity from October 1993 until March 1994.

Some people would say that I got us into trouble in Somalia, then I had to come back and get us out. But I happen to agree with Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni. I think that it was a very rich learning experience and that there were a lot of very positive achievements, some of which have been lost in the shuffle.

Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire is the commander of the Canadian land forces. He has had a number of distinguished assignments during his career, but most recently he came to everyone's attention when he took command of the UN Observer Mission in Uganda and Rwanda and of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Although he provided plenty of early warning in what he was telling everyone, he was hampered by mandate, by resources, by political will, and by a lack of response. Sometimes it is easy to talk about early implementation, but you have to figure out what it is you are going to implement, and people have to agree to do that.

In any event, we also have Col. Carlos Frachelle, who worked with the UN Observer Mission in Liberia

from 1993 to 1995. That was a different type of mission, but one that will be equally useful in terms of lessons about where we want to go.

Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston, recently retired, was the commander of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in his capacity as commander of the United States Marine Corps forces in the Atlantic and also the Marine Expeditionary Force. He has had a number of assignments. After he left Somalia he served as the deputy chief of Manpower and Reserve Affairs in the headquarters of the Marine Corps.

One thing that I would encourage you to do in the course of the discussions and in the questions is to bring in some of the experiences that are outside of Africa. It is not always the military that has the corner on the best communications or the best organization.

As far as I am concerned, communications means three things. It is the technology, it is the organizations, and it is the people. I think that Dr. Solomon's idea of smoke signals is a very good one. You can see the smoke in the air, but that does not necessarily mean that you understand the signal, unless you have some cultural background.

Unified Task Force (Somalia)
Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston (Ret.)
United States Marine Corps

Summary

The most important aspect is the people involved, including relations with the antagonists. Lt. Gen. Robert Johnston explains that he would never undertake another peacekeeping operation without psychological operations. Through a massive drop of leaflets, the U.S. military explained to the Somali people its mission and the proscriptions against carrying weapons.

General Johnston also discusses the need for a deployable communications package among the NGOs, a package that would be suitable for use when the military withdraws from a crisis situation.

Biography

Prior to assuming command of Operation Restore Hope, General Johnston served in Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Operation Restore Hope.

The Somali experience was a good example of inadequate pre-crisis planning. First, the mission statement that we received from CINCOM required that we establish a secure environment. We took a conventional force of 27,000 troops, mostly marines, some army. But it was clear from the mission statement that our mission was to support humanitarian operations.

We configured our military forces accordingly, giving them tactical areas of operation built around the requirements of the NGOs. In other words, the NGOs were located in different humanitarian relief sectors (HRS), and we built our brigade force around them. Rather than doing what might have been tactically appropriate to compete with Aideed and Ali Mahdi's troops, we tried to support the NGOs.

As you would expect with a conventional force, we took the most robust communications system one could imagine. However, the geography of Somalia put many of our humanitarian relief sectors as much as 400 or 500 kilometers (250-300 miles) apart, challenging even our communications system.

I'd like to talk about the mechanisms for communication and coordination. When the operation started, we had hoped to have seven coalition countries: four of the major European allies and perhaps three of the African countries. We ended up with twenty-six; we almost had forty-four. A tactical communications network that needed to incorporate twenty-six different coalition countries created an impossible communications situation. We were trying to coordinate 7,000 frequencies for every nation and all the

NGOs.

When we talk about the issue of communications in terms of technology and hardware, it is important to recognize that the people involved are the most important component. On the day we landed, we immediately set up the Civil Military Operation Center (CMOC), and it eventually took on more of a charter than we had planned. We selected two of our very best colonels, Col. Kevin Kennedy, who now works for the United Nations, and Col. Robert MacPherson, who will address us later today.

It was important to assign people who could coordinate with the NGO community, who had the kind of personality and the relationships with the NGOs that would make that operation a success. Although much of the NGO coordination was centralized at the CMOC, we expected that most of the coordination would be done at the HRS level, where the commanders and the local NGOs were operating in relief sectors that varied dramatically in character. All the relief sectors were unique. They had different levels of violence. Some had perhaps two clans involved, some had as many as fourteen clans or subclans. With no way we could orchestrate the entire humanitarian operation from CMOC, we relied heavily on the decentralized HRS levels.

Also important was communication with the Somalis. We always believed that although we could impose a military solution with respect to security, ultimate success in Somalia required that the Somalis be a part of the solution. Amb. Robert Oakley established the Combined Security Committee, which dealt with the leaders in Mogadishu as well as with General Aideed and Ali Mahdi. Now you may not like whom you are dealing with, but it was clear that these two persons could create circumstances that would make our mission fail. The United Nations failed to continue this dialogue with Ali Mahdi and Aideed when we left.

Ambassador Oakley and Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni met daily with the two key faction leaders to resolve issues and to create a communications connection. These meetings successfully identified the ground rules.

On one occasion there were violations of a controlment agreement. We told Aideed that we were going to destroy his compound if his forces didn't stop sniping and shooting at our troops. They didn't stop, and we destroyed the compound. At the next day's meeting, General Zinni and Ambassador Oakley and the combined committee asked Aideed's lieutenants, "Well, are we at war?" The answer was no. There was no retaliation. The daily meetings were an absolutely vital part of our whole communications effort in Somalia.

This was my first peacekeeping operation, and I learned that I would never do another peacekeeping operation without psychological operations. By psychological operations, I don't mean the kind of psychological operations that manipulate people's thinking. Rather, I am talking about the 4th PsyOp group, which was incredibly successful in Desert Storm and again in Operation Restore Hope. Seven million leaflets were dropped in Mogadishu and the outlying areas. These leaflets explained to the local people why the troops were there and described the proscriptions against carrying weapons.

The effort was done systematically and included some 28,000 newspapers that were generated by the rahjo, which means hope. It was perhaps the best vehicle for communicating with the Somali people. It was also a vehicle for the NGOs and the CMOC to communicate with the people. Quite frankly, the papers became hot sellers. As they were dropped off, the kids would grab them and sell them to the Somalis. The papers represented the first real communication the Somalis had had for two to four years.

We involved Somalis in the newspaper production and on the radio. They wrote poetry and described incidents. For example, if there was a firefight, Radio Aideed's explanation of what had happened was always rather ridiculous rhetoric, always anti-United Nations and anti-United States. We were able to broadcast twice a day for forty-five minutes, with Somalis who would offer Somali poetry and Somali stories in addition to countering Aideed's radio reports.

Radio Aideed was Aideed's way of communicating with the Somalis, and there was enormous pressure

from Washington to take down the radio station. We resisted absolutely, believing it was important to know what the other side was saying and to be able to counter it with our own radio broadcasts. Having access to their communications system was very valuable. The Pakistanis took down Radio Aideed after we left, and I think that was a strategic error. Their communications system is an important part of our communications system.

We are fairly good at organizing information. Our daily situation reports were distributed all over the world, so we made an effort to try to communicate with as many of the players as possible, even though we were challenged by having so many players with different missions, including the media. There were 700 reporters in Somalia, and with a coalition of twenty-six countries, they were not all from the Cable News Network and the Associated Press.

Although we faced both language and cultural challenges in working with the media, it was very important for us to communicate with them because the media's mission is to tell a story, not to deliver humanitarian aid. The media would much rather go to a gunfight than see a feeding center. I believe the media in Somalia did a wonderful job. They did some very thoughtful reporting that was helpful to us militarily and that helped the NGO community as well.

Let me talk briefly about some of the challenges of communications. The first challenge we faced in Somalia was coordinating approximately 7,000 radio frequencies. Although it is important not to get too rigid in developing an inflexible communications system when going into a humanitarian operation, we do need to formalize the protocols.

Also, somebody has to be in charge. Clearly, in our case it should have been the Joint Task Force commander. We had the most robust communications capability. Initially, the NGOs were reluctant to give us their radio frequencies, highlighting the issue of the different cultures meeting for the first time. We had to develop an attitude of interaction, of consciously trying to communicate with one another, despite having different missions and different cultures.

We finally bridged that gap -- not by coercion, but by gaining the confidence of the NGOs through the CMOC and through the actions of General Zinni, Ambassador Oakley, and even myself. We had to talk to the NGOs to convince them that their mission was our mission and that we were there to support them.

This is the first crisis action operation I had gone into that had no local infrastructure. If there was any communications network in Somalia, it was probably IMARSAT. But there was no host nation communications system. Even in the early stages of Desert Storm and in Beirut in the 1980s, we had a communications system that allowed us to communicate with our civilian counterparts and the NGOs. It was absent here.

Thus, more concrete protocol for communications needs to be taught in our military schools as part of the program instruction. The military has had problems with interoperability. In Desert Storm, for example, we did not have good interoperability between the Marine Corps and the Navy -- our own services.

We have taken giant steps in the last five years. The United Nations and the NGO community need to do to the same thing. There needs to be a deployable package, not unlike what the military will get from the Joint Communications Support Element. This package is deployable within twenty-four hours; it can jump into a location, with jump-qualified communicators.

I'm not suggesting that the NGOs need a jump-qualified communications system. However, they must have something to build on, because when the military withdraws, we take our communications equipment with us. The United Nations does not have its own deployable communications system, although it took a fairly expensive communications module into Rwanda, which worked very well for the NGO community. However, they were unable to remove the system because the host nation decided it was theirs.

We need to take a step forward and create something that is deployable, whether it comes under the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) or the United Nations. Furthermore, it must be something we are prepared to leave behind, and it must be adaptable for the level of expertise of the people who will operate it when the military pulls out.

We received an alert order from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on December 2. It was only a draft, not an execute. On December 4, Andrew Natsios and the NGO Coordinating Committee went to CINCOM to begin early coordination. It was too late. We already had troops on the way to Mogadishu, and my headquarters was about ready to leave town. That coordinating committee should probably have come to us.

In addition to formalizing communications capability, we need to formalize the coordination requirements for a crisis operation. Just as commanders from the other services report to my command post, I also need to hear from OFDA and the NGO community. That did not happen in Operation Restore Hope, and it has to happen in future operations.

There is good news. When we talk about different cultures, we are creating a new generation of young officers and NGO staff who now have experience in humanitarian operations. They are learning from their experiences. Some of the expertise that General Zinni gained in Provide Comfort helped us greatly in Somalia.

We are not starting from scratch. We have learned a lot. The attitude of interaction is being built into our military training, and our officers and staff understand what DART [Disaster Assistance Response Team] means and what OFDA stands for. Five years ago, if you had asked a marine officer what OFDA was, he would have told you, "I have no idea."

Operation United Shield (Somalia)

Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni
Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force

Summary

In Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni's view, the philosophy of Restore Hope could be termed "centralized planning, decentralized execution." He discusses the importance of communication among all the actors in the field as a significant factor in building a successful operation. Given the military's general lack of familiarity with these "new" missions, good communications becomes increasingly important. One means of achieving this is through the regular exchange of information among all groups involved, which also builds a reliable situational awareness and a common understanding of each player's part in the mission. According to General Zinni, good communications begins at home, prior to deployment.

Finally, direct dealings with the media allowed the military to convey positive images that countered popular misconceptions -- both in the U.S. and in Somalia.

It is hard for me to isolate Operation United Shield from UNOSOM1 (United Nations Operation in Somalia), UNOSOM2, and Restore Hope, because Somalia is one big blur for me, and the operations are all connected. Therefore, I will make a few points regarding Somalia and the subject at hand.

First, when we went back for United Shield to close out the operation and to cover the withdrawal, we were able to exit with no casualties and with minimal conflict -- although we had to fight our way off the beach in the end. The keys to our success were the relationships and communications built up through the course of Restore Hope, which are directly attributable to the work of Amb. Robert Oakley.

When we first got into Restore Hope, Ambassador Oakley insisted that we establish formal contacts with

the factions. This contact began with the Combined Security Committee. This made sense to me, because in Provide Comfort, we had established a military coordination center with a formal connection with the Iraqi army and with the Kurdish Peshmurga guerrilla force. We saw the value in having daily communications with anybody who owned a gun.

This contact had several positive consequences. First, there was a forum for us to defuse potential confrontations or problems, to coordinate with one another, and to ensure that we had no accidental clashes or collisions. The committee was a place where issues and concerns could be raised and rules of behavior could be established. All the participants felt they had an alternative to violence -- the ability to raise an issue of concern.

Because of that forum, I got to know and make personal contact with the other generals, including General Aideed, General Elmi (who was Aideed's principal supervisor of security), and Ossman Otto, who was Aideed's chief financier and first lieutenant at the time. In the end, those contacts allowed us to be sure that the organized militias presented no problems for us during United Shield. We immediately reestablished those contacts, thereby preventing security problems and clashes at the highest level.

In addition to the security committee, Ambassador Oakley also established the political committee, the judiciary committee, the police committee -- committee after committee. We were providing representatives from the military side, and I was attending most of these meetings. In the beginning, I was overwhelmed. But one day, Ambassador Oakley told me, "When they're talking, they're not shooting."

Somalis love to talk. It is a way of preventing violence, whether it goes anywhere or not. Whether or not the talks are fruitful, the idea is to buy time. While other things are happening, things in the street are getting better. You are buying time and preventing violence, and they feel that you are treating them with due respect and bringing them into the process. Ambassador Oakley was absolutely right.

Thus, direct contact is a key element of coordination. But it is not enough. Neither the military nor anyone else on the ground can assume that once communication has been established with the locals, everything will work out. The other key ingredients are understanding the culture and having negotiation skills.

We had a number of people who understood the culture, not the least of whom was Ambassador Oakley. We also had skilled negotiators with us all the time, and we learned from them. It is not enough to establish formal communications; the skills to use the communications must also be mustered.

Restore Hope was a success because we had set up communication. UNOSOM2 had problems because the system we had established broke down; misunderstandings led to conflicts, clashes, violence, and other problems.

We had created our own sources of information, and these sources of information -- our radio station, our newspaper -- were in conflict with those provided by the faction leaders, particularly General Aideed. We engaged in a form of information warfare, but that warfare over the radio waves prevented violent clashes in the streets.

During Restore Hope some people tried to talk us into destroying General Aideed's radio. That would have been a mistake. I contend that UNOSOM2's misunderstandings and clashes resulted from the Pakistani removal of the radio stations on June 5. That action led to a certain kind of talk, to fear on the part of the Somalis, which precipitated the initial conflicts and the ultimate downfall there.

We resisted taking out General Aideed's radio station for several reasons. First, if you are trying to sell a certain set of values, if you are representing the United States, you do not take out another voice just because you dislike what it is saying. If that voice is encouraging violence, if it is coordinating violence, that may be a different matter. However, I do not think General Aideed ever crossed that line while we were there. He may have come close, but he never crossed that line. He was expressing a view, however

wrong, however distasteful. We had the perfect response: our own station.

I was summoned to General Aideed's house one day, and he chewed me out. There is a Somali word that is close to the word rahjo (hope), but which means something else (I will not say what). That is the word General Aideed used to describe our radio station. He was incensed at what we were saying. I said, "General Aideed, if your rhetoric toned down, our rhetoric could tone down. We are only reacting to you." He turned to one of his lieutenants and said, "Okay, let's tone our rhetoric down." So we aired more poetry and less of our version of the way things were going.

We were engaging in a form of information warfare that prevented violent warfare. We were sending a message to the Somalis that there could be multiple voices. Those who encouraged us to take out the Somali radio failed to understand that such an action would result in another form of clash, one that would be much more unacceptable. So the second reason for leaving General Aideed's radio station in place was to allow spleens to vent and views to be given, but in a nonviolent forum. That is an important lesson that has come out of Somalia.

When United Shield forces arrived on the beach, I had messages to convey -- messages to the faction leaders, messages to the Somali people. I could communicate to the faction leaders through the mechanisms and relationships established before. To reach the people, our primary means was the media. But I had a problem: People back inside the Beltway (in Washington, D.C.) did not understand how to handle my obligation and my need to communicate to the media on the ground.

There was concern about how the media formed public opinion in the United States and how it affected decisions made in Washington. But there was also a lack of appreciation of how much I needed to interact with the Somali media, with the international media, with the media brought along by our coalition partners from six other nations and with the UN media and its public affairs division.

Fourteen newspapers were being published in Mogadishu. The primary means of communication is the political cartoon, and I knew that we could convey certain messages the right way if I could deal directly with the media. We were required to remain passive for a long period of time; I was not allowed to engage the media. At least I was told not to engage the media. I engaged the media anyway.

Let me give you some examples of the positive images that appeared. One had a picture of me coming out of the water, shaking my fist, with twenty ships behind me. In Somali, it had a bubble that basically said, "Don't mess with us. We're not here to hurt anyone but we will not tolerate interference with the United Shield Force when we come ashore." The message also went on to say, "We are here temporarily to cover the withdrawal, with no intention of staying beyond our mission requirements." That is a different message from the one General Aideed was putting out, but at least I was able to express our view.

Another message had to do with the nonlethal capabilities we brought with us. I immediately wanted to establish the fact that we had these capabilities. Again, I don't think people in Washington, D.C., appreciated the importance of that. I wanted to send that message for several reasons. First, I wanted to show that while we were not there to hurt anyone or to seek revenge, we could escalate through a whole series of capabilities -- nonlethal to lethal -- in a very seamless way. I wanted not only to show that our intent was humanitarian, but also to send a message to the faction leaders who orchestrated demonstrations. I wanted them to know that attempts to provoke lethal response from us would be handled appropriately, that they would not necessarily drive us to extreme measures.

I am convinced that the images that showed us coming ashore with new technologies -- that Uncle Sam had developed special capabilities in a lab and had passed them on to marines coming ashore -- sent a message that we were not trying to hurt anyone. It also sent the message to the faction leaders that we could now respond to something that had previously been a successful tactic. The orchestrated demonstrations -- the provocation by women and children -- would not be successful at provoking a lethal response.

My last point has to do with communications with the United Nations. This operation was not the ideal situation in terms of having a single military command chain. The United Nations had an operation ashore at the time that our United Shield operation was coming in. General Labu and I had to work out the details of who was responsible for what, when, and how. We also had to determine how we would pass incremental control of forces to each other.

I thought this was done exceptionally well. I attribute this to the fact that early planners were sent into Mogadishu and up to UN headquarters in New York. By the time we were in Mogadishu, the details of how this transfer would occur were already worked out. I was quickly able to set up a liaison. I was able to meet with General Labu, and we were able to prepare a memorandum of understanding describing what would follow.

There was a period when I was responsible for providing fire support for the emergency evacuation of the forces, but General Labu still commanded them. There was another period when he passed operational control to me. This was done in a very structured way; otherwise, we could have had real problems.

It can get pretty tricky when you are trying to pass through lines in the middle of the night under fire, when there are Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops coming through U.S. and Italian lines. Which language are we going to use? Which points are we going to cross? How is the coordination going to happen if we come under fire at given points? Again, the keys to success were early and direct communication, personal contacts, the exchange of liaison officers, and the direct involvement of the commanders.

Our philosophy in Operation Restore Hope was "centralized planning, decentralized execution." You need a coherent, consistent, broad plan, but you must also give latitude to the commanders in their sectors, because the sectors are remarkably different. When you travel short distances in some countries, conditions can change drastically, including religious beliefs, cultural identity, and the degree of authority that may be present. There has to be leeway and latitude for a communication structure, giving the local commander the ability to make certain decisions to adapt to the environment. The whole structure that we put in place was designed to do that; even the Civil Military Operation Center teams had their own unique coordination and communications at the local level.

United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire
Canadian Land Forces Command

Summary

According to Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, complex humanitarian operations call for complex mandates and complex solutions. He expects that the mandate to provide humanitarian support and assistance while ensuring a security atmosphere will become the normal situation.

General Dallaire examines how separate communications systems linking the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda headquarters to Brussels and to the United Nations exacerbated the difficulties of an already complicated situation. On the ground, nonintegrated systems caused confusion and complications.

Finally, General Dallaire calls the human dimension the key to resolving problems in the technical realm of communications.

Biography

General Dallaire commanded the United Nations Observer Mission-Uganda and Rwanda and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda.

The humanitarian operation in Rwanda was completely different from that in Somalia. There was no lead nation in Rwanda, there was no lead structure and there was no coalition of peacekeeping forces. It was a UN mission going into a nation where the belligerents wanted us to come in; a peace process was to be implemented by the presence of neutral, international forces and capabilities in order to end a civil war and bring a democratic process into fruition. However, there were a lot of ad hoc efforts, and that is the element we should work to eliminate.

I contend that the four-month civil war in Rwanda in 1994 resulted in greater destruction than the four-year war in the former Yugoslavia. In that kind of scenario, if you do not have the will to make resources available, you will fail. In Rwanda, we failed from the initial implementation right through the war and genocide, and we are still failing today.

Rwanda is an ideal case to study and analyze. The belligerent parties had signed a peace agreement. Some of them may have signed under duress, but there was still a will for peace. The agreement degenerated through security situations and political impasses that ultimately led to war between two armies, to genocide, to a unilateral cease-fire, to an army in the periphery of the country involved, and then to a continuum, aided and abetted indirectly by the humanitarian effort, in which we are just waiting for the next phase to commence, which is the return of the (Rwandan Patriotic Front) RPF into the country.

Where there was once a peace agreement in one country, there is now instability in an entire region. Burundi is only one facet of the Rwanda problem. The border with Zaire and Uganda, Rwanda itself, and the western part of Tanzania are all involved now because we were ineffective on the ground. Communication, of course, was one of the critical elements.

There is no longer any such thing as a simple mandate -- a clear and precise mandate -- because there is no such thing as a simple problem. Complex humanitarian problems call for complex mandates and complex solutions. We have failed because we have been unable to maneuver within those mandates and develop innovative and integrated tactical solutions and the right tools to provide those solutions.

I expect that the mandate that I had -- to provide humanitarian support and assistance and to ensure a secure environment -- will characterize humanitarian interventions from now on. We can no longer separate the humanitarian problem from the security problem. We will have a humanitarian catastrophe for which there is an inherent security problem that will require an integration of the military, CIVPOL, and humanitarian efforts, or we will have the reverse -- a security situation that creates a humanitarian catastrophe. We saw both of these in Rwanda at different times.

There is no way to separate these aspects, and the leadership is neither humanitarian nor military; it is political. Unless we develop interoperability among humanitarian capabilities, military capabilities, and political capabilities -- which together can create the solution -- we will continue to fail. One of the major reasons we are unable to bring these three elements together is that we cannot communicate effectively.

There have been bright spots in Rwanda and elsewhere. Ultimately, however, these missions are costly in terms of human lives, dollars, and time. Are we really succeeding, or are we simply stymieing the problem for a while, waiting for it to regenerate? How are we talking with one another? How are we communicating?

I am honored to be in a forum in which we are trying to define and examine our communications, because that means we have already identified the problem. We need to talk to one another. That is not an obvious conclusion.

There is still, in the humanitarian milieu, a stigma of having military assistance in the humanitarian effort. There is still, in the military milieu, a problem of operating with civilians -- with the good-hearted "mom and pop" organization that has lots of heart but no capability or with the expensive, large agencies that have lots of capability but sometimes not as much heart. How are we integrating these two milieus, and

what is the political structure to ensure that we all go down the road toward a solution?

How do we talk? There are two dimensions -- the human and the technical. Human attitudes among ourselves are doctrinal procedures; our risk assessments, our analysis methodologies, and our expertise have got to be integrated, not kept in closed loops that may integrate only at the highest level of leadership. The higher leadership is swamped with information, and the local leaders -- humanitarian, political, and military -- are crippled in their ability to implement innovative solutions.

When I talk about leaders, I mean not only leaders in a sector, a camp, or a camp area and not only leaders in the field headquarters. I also mean leaders at headquarters back home -- in Europe or North America. Those different levels of military operations are not integrated, are not interoperable.

Home headquarters are producing orientation programs, developing doctrines, and devising solutions; if they do not come together strategically, then we in the field headquarters end up attempting to marry those different processes, to smooth out the friction that emerges as home headquarters analyzes what is happening on the ground.

The necessary tools are the different commissions on the ground, the communications with the different parties, and the meetings between the different organizations. With these tools, we can coordinate our efforts and put the resources in the right places.

Organizations are divided into two fundamentally different sets of communications: the combat net radio gang and the Motorola gang. How do you integrate those two in order to be effective locally? In humanitarian missions that do not have a lead nation, the different participants generally improvise their communications.

Rwanda was not a priority for many governments and was to be handled on the cheap. The initial orders were for no military communications capability whatsoever, even though there was significant military responsibility and demobilization and even though there was already a significant humanitarian effort on the ground. There were many displaced people, and we also faced the consequences of the refugee problem of the 1959-62 revolution.

We used a Motorola-based, nonsecure, civilian United Nations structure: HF. It took us eight months to build that capability in Rwanda, which is a mountainous country only 200 kilometers (125 miles) by 250 kilometers (160 miles). It had a good telephone system and only two radio stations (three if we include the rebel station in Nurzal). There was no other infrastructure. It took us eight months, which was six months into the mandate.

The system was still not effective when the civil war started. The day after the war started, all but four persons in the UN security team packed up and left. They left the mission on the ground with no communications except for the nonsecure Motorolas.

There were no secure communications within the UN mission, and there was no secure communication back to New York except by code cable. However, given the distribution plans, the only way you felt comfortable in communicating with New York was by telephone. Code cables sent to a UN individual have a built-in distribution list, and they quite readily appear in the New York Times, making it rather difficult to maintain sensitive communications.

Consider the atmosphere in which you are trying both to build up a peacekeeping mission and to integrate the humanitarian effort with the military effort, the security effort, and the political effort. If you are not given the resources, you will improvise. Improvisation creates enormous friction, and the only solution to that friction is based on the available human resources on the ground. Steps include considering the previous training, the previous thrust, the previous planning, and the previous experiences and then building on the will to communicate.

Only when we have resolved the human dimension can we arrive at technical decisions regarding what types of radio systems, what volume of systems, what scaling, and what capabilities should remain. If these requirements cannot be defined because they are arising from different capabilities -- security, humanitarian, and political -- how effective and how cost-effective will any solutions be?

We must conduct multidisciplinary training and education; we must create a course for higher-level political, military, and humanitarian officials; we must produce a list of force commanders, a list of special representatives of the UN Secretary General (SRSGs), a list of humanitarian coordinators; we must conduct command post exercises, contingency planning exercises; we must educate one another in formal discipline structure; and we must write research papers together to solve these problems.

Only when these tasks have been achieved will we be able to clearly define the communications tools needed in the field. The military can solve its problems by bringing in extensive and expensive systems. The humanitarian participants can bring in ad hoc solutions. However, when everything is combined, there is a swamp through which it is impossible to communicate.

Finally, how do you get the NGOs to talk to the belligerents or ex-belligerents? Who is launching these initiatives? At times, the humanitarian effort dominated the work in Rwanda, with the security and political aspects in support. At other times, security dominated, and the humanitarian and political aspects were in support. At still other times, the political aspect should have dominated, but did not.

In such circumstances, you must be adaptable, you must be able to integrate the human and technical dimensions. That is the essence of the problem.

United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Col. Carlos Frachelle
Uruguayan Army

Summary

The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was the first experience of cooperating with another peacekeeping force. While the multinational African force (ECOMOG) had the main responsibility for assisting the parties in implementing the provisions of the agreement, UNOMIL was responsible for monitoring the process. Differing roles and chains of command (Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations) meant that coordination of communications and information sharing was difficult. Ultimately, different goals worked to inhibit effective solutions so that, for instance, formal accords were signed between NGOs and factions, but not between NGOs and UNOMIL.

Biography

From 1993 to 1995 Colonel Frachelle was commander and chief of operations for the UN Observer Mission in Liberia.

In 1989, a civil war brought water, electricity, communication, and transportation services to a complete halt in Liberia. Stores, supermarkets, banks, and service firms were looted and paralyzed. People starved; they were killed, mentally tortured, turned into living skeletons just struggling to survive. There were over 200,000 casualties; about 80 percent of the population was displaced, and the infrastructure was completely destroyed.

Since 1993, the international community has restored many services and infrastructures to viable conditions. However, the present situation is still terrible. In this context, let me describe the beginning of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in September 1993. UNOMIL was the United Nations' first experience of cooperating with another peacekeeping force -- a multinational African force

called ECOMOG.

ECOMOG has the main responsibility for assisting the parties in implementing the provisions of the agreement; UNOMIL is responsible for monitoring the process.

So far this has not been a problem, but these two groups obey two different channels of command and control. The field commander reports directly to the chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the chief military observer of the United Nations reports through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on all matters concerning the functioning of the military personnel of UNOMIL.

Two roles and two channels mean that there are two priorities and, subsequently, two different sets of goals. Difficulties have emerged from the different assessments of the situation, the different plans, and the lack of coordination. There is also hostility between warlords inclined to retain control over certain areas to exploit abundant natural resources in Liberia. Arms and information flow easily through the open, unprotected borders of neighboring countries, and the unrestricted communications creates serious difficulties for humanitarian and peacekeeping organizations.

To date, Liberians have seen more than thirty peace agreements, all of which have been systematically violated. In this setting, humanitarian relief organizations, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies are trying to alleviate the ever increasing human suffering. How effective are communications between and among these humanitarian and peacekeeping organizations?

As the chief of operations, I convened weekly meetings with NGOs and UN agencies at the United Nations Development Program building, exchanging information and ideas and coordinating security. Other meetings for the same purpose were held at the UNOMIL building. We also carried out several security assessments of Liberia. We explained the purpose of the assessments and shared that information. However, organizations have depended on and worked on establishing their own channels of information, rather than participating in a coordinated effort. One result was that formal accords were signed between NGOs and factions with no known consultation with UNOMIL. We have a better chance at success if we present a common, united front than if we present ourselves individually.

The radio communication system in Liberia was not reliable because of the terrain conditions, which interfered at times with field operations. The UNOMIL system (provided by the United Nations) consisted of communication between mission headquarters and New York through portable satellite telephones, fax machines, and data transfer lines. Communication in the field and at headquarters occurred through BHFNHF.

It is remarkable that UNOMIL had no dedicated security frequency on any band. However, we later decided that in case of an emergency, UN personnel should switch to a special channel on their sets. But this arrangement worked for only a short period because of a lack of commitment. Including all actors, the system consisted of radio channels for UNOMIL, radio channels for UN agencies, radio channels for NGOs, and radio channels for ECOWAS.

Luncheon Presentations

Observations on Peacekeeping Operations in Africa
Sen. Paul Simon

My first piece of advice to you is this: When there is a problem, act. Bosnia is a good illustration, if I can digress from Africa temporarily. On the 500th day of the siege of Sarajevo, NATO and the United Nations said, "Stop the shelling or we will use air power against you." That should have been said the second day or the fifth day, not the 500th day.

I am pleased that the ambassador from Rwanda is here, as well as Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, whom I have never met but for whom I have developed a high regard through our telephone conversations. When the situation in Rwanda started to deteriorate, I called Sen. Jim Jeffords, who was the ranking Republican on the subcommittee at that point. I then got through to Kigali and talked to General Dallaire, who was in charge of the small contingent of UN troops in Rwanda. I asked him, "What should we be doing?" I immediately sensed that I was talking to someone who was on top of things, who could make a decision, who is the kind of take-charge person you want in his position. He said, "If we can get 5,000-8,000 troops quickly, we can stabilize the situation."

This was in May. Jim Jeffords and I had a note hand-delivered to the White House and the State Department urging that we move quickly. In October, the UN Security Council passed a resolution, and because the United States had not listened to General Dallaire, tragedy upon tragedy occurred in Rwanda. Again, the lesson is "Act quickly."

The situation in Somalia was somewhat more complicated. Amb. Robert Oakley is much more of an expert on Somalia than I am. However, right after the election in November 1992, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum and I went to Somalia. I have seen a lot of grim scenes in a lot of places, but I had never seen anything like that. I hope I never see anything like that again.

We returned on a Sunday night. The following Monday morning, the UN Security Council authorized sending 3,500 troops into Somalia; there were already 500 Pakistani troops holed up at the airport at Mogadishu. I called U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and said, "You have to get those other 3,000 troops there fast," and then, pulling a figure out of the air, I added, "and another 10,000 troops as well."

He responded, "We're going to send the other 3,000 troops by ship."

"By ship?" I asked. "Thousands of people are going to die while they're moving."

"Well," he said, "Your country charges us too much for use of air transport."

I asked whether we could count it against our UN dues if we used the air transport. He said yes.

I then called Larry Eagleberger, who was then secretary of state, and asked him to call Mr. Boutros-Ghali. I described the situation in Somalia to Mr. Eagleberger and asked him to contact the president, who was in Connecticut for his mother's funeral, and describe the situation. The next morning President Bush asked Mr. Eagleberger to fly to New York to talk to Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

To his great credit, President Bush started moving. A few days later, we had a meeting in the White House: four members of Congress, the president, the vice president, the secretary of defense, the secretary of state, Gen. Colin Powell, and a few others. President Bush decided that we had to move. Ten days later our troops were landing in Somalia.

In editorials, people talk about the Somalia disaster. But we saved hundreds of thousands of lives with what we did. However, we were not as sensitive to the political equations in Somalia as we should have been, and nineteen American service personnel were killed. One was dragged through the streets, and we all saw it on television; an abysmal scene was on our television sets.

There was an immediate call in Congress to get our troops out of Somalia. At that point we had a new president, whose background in foreign affairs was limited. President Bill Clinton called a meeting of fifteen or twenty of us, and we met for about two hours with the people in his administration, and a compromise was worked out for our troops to leave in March.

(Incidentally, the number of American service personnel killed in Somalia was fewer than the number of cab drivers killed in New York City that year. I do not want to see American service personnel killed, and

I do not want to see cab drivers killed, but we cannot let a few terrorists determine U.S. policy in terms of where we go and what we do.)

I did not like the March compromise, but it was better than pulling out immediately. Shortly after the announcement from that meeting, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak (who at that time was the president of the Organization for African Unity) visited Washington. I went to Blair House to meet him. Just prior to our meeting, the White House called to request that I ask President Mubarak if he would keep his troops in Somalia after March. President Mubarak was very unimpressed that the powerful, wealthy United States of America was going to pull its troops out while asking other nations to keep their troops in. I had some sympathy for his views.

We cannot let terrorists dictate what we do anywhere. If some drug dealers kill a Chicago police officer, the mayor of Chicago does not announce that the police will withdraw from that area of the city. You do not let drug dealers determine what you do in the city of Chicago, and you do not let terrorists determine what you do internationally. I recognize that some of you present are not Americans, and I hope you will forgive me for directing my remarks to my fellow Americans.

Professor Mandlebaum from Johns Hopkins University recently wrote that "France acts like a great power but doesn't have the resources. The United States has the resources but doesn't act like a great power." There is, unfortunately, some truth to that assessment. I think we have to stand more firmly, sound a clearer trumpet, work with the community of nations on problems. Then we will find ways to resolve situations.

I remember my first trip to Liberia. I met with Amos Sawyer, who was at that time the country's president. I asked him what he would do if the rebel leader Charles Taylor won the upcoming election. He said, "I'll let him take over the presidency of the country." I said, "Have you ever told him that?" He responded, "He knows that." I then went through twelve checkpoints (literally!) to meet with Charles Taylor. I told him about my conversation with President Sawyer, and he said, "Did he really say that?" Taylor could not believe it.

Because Charles Taylor had great respect for Hank Cohen of the State Department, who was the assistant secretary for African Affairs, I cabled Hank Cohen the next morning, telling him he could help resolve the situation. We had a meeting in the Ivory Coast that resulted in one of the many agreements for peace in Liberia that, unfortunately, have not had lasting results. Liberia is going to continue to fester until the community of nations (and that has to be more than ECOMOG, whose forces deserve our support) agrees to work together to stabilize this situation. Ten years ago, the nuclear threat was probably the world's greatest threat. The great threat today is instability among the nations, an instability that can spread. We must address this situation.

I would like to make three other quick points. First, in working with the community of nations, we ought to be paying our UN dues. We now are $1.4 billion in arrears on UN dues. The UN budget is, I believe, $1.2 billion, excluding peacekeeping. That's $500 million less than the budget of the New York City police department. We are failing to do our share, failing to support peacekeeping fully. When I say "fully," I mean that we have to be willing to put at least a small number of troops in where they are needed as part of a peacekeeping effort.

Second, there was a story in the Washington Post reporting that in the area of offering foreign economic assistance, the United States falls behind Japan, France, and Germany in absolute dollars. France has 60 million people, compared to our 250 million. We have five and a half times the gross economic product of France, but we are providing less assistance. If you look at the numbers as a percentage of income, we fall behind every European country and behind Australia, New Zealand, and Japan as well.

That makes no sense. It makes sense only in terms of election politics, because foreign aid is not popular until you explain it. Every political opponent I have ever had has attacked me on foreign aid. Please

forgive my immodesty, but in the last election, I won the biggest plurality of any Senate candidate of either political party (where there was a contest). The American people are willing to do the right thing, but we have to stand up and explain this. To diminish our role in providing stability through foreign economic assistance makes no sense at all.

Finally, there is one issue that we barely talk about today. Water is going to become very significant in the near future. The World Bank says that within twenty years, thirty-five nations will face severe water problems. Depending on whose projections you believe, the world's population is going to double in the next forty-five to sixty years, but our water supply is constant. We're going to have to do something about that. One thing we ought to be doing is pushing research to find less expensive ways of converting salt water to fresh water.

Sixty percent of the world's population lives within fifty miles of the ocean. Ninety-seven percent of the world's water is salt water. It is inexpensive enough today for drinking water, but almost 90 percent of the water we use is for agricultural and industrial purposes. This topic is not in the headlines today, but it will surely be in the headlines in the near future if we fail to prepare for what is coming down the road.

Let me close by telling you a story about a distinguished Republican senator some of you may have known -- Sen. Jacob Javits from New York. Shortly after he was defeated, it was discovered he had Lou Gehrig's disease. Jake Javits was a very vigorous man -- he used to swim every morning -- but you could just see him gradually shrinking in front of you. About eight weeks before he died, he was wheeled into my office wearing a device on his chest to keep him breathing. He started lobbying me on a bill that interested him. When he finished, I said to him, "Jake, you're an inspiration." I'll never forget his response: "Paul, you have to have a mission in life."

I think he's right. And I think part of our mission -- I am saying this to my fellow Americans -- is to lead so that we can build a world of peace and stability and opportunity for people everywhere.

Report from the Field: Information-Sharing Needs of Humanitarian Assistance Organizations and Peacekeeping Forces

Mark Stiffler

Defense Information Systems Agency

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the United Nations asked me to look at their database support for their worldwide peacekeeping operations, and I refused. I felt that the scope was too narrow, and I was reeducated. We did broaden the scope to look at all aspects of the DPKO information and communications needs, which were extensive. When we presented the report in early 1995, there were over 85,000 staff out in the field, in seventeen countries worldwide, expending $3.1 billion a year -- roughly 61 percent of the available cash resources of the United Nations. Any improvement we could make in that area would result in substantially lower costs to the United Nations and, therefore, to the United States.

It was the win-win proposition of a substantial benefit to both the United States and the United Nations that led Assistant Secretary of Defense Holmes to fund the study. When the study was delivered, the United Nations committed itself to attempting to implement its recommendations through its normal processes, while making efforts to raise money. The recommendations have now been 40 percent implemented.

Working from this study -- which was based on extensive interviews and on observations in the field -- we have developed a system that is deployable and scaleable and is based on appropriate technologies. We used the interoperability precepts that were already in place within the government and the defense establishment of the United States, which were mandated by the Department of Defense and were accepted by NATO as well as by Japan, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand.

The technical elements come under the collective heading of the common operating environment and are the central precepts of the global command and control system. The NATO command and control system, NACCIS, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, DAHMS, and other agencies in the U.S. government are following those same lines.

If the United Nations continues its implementation at the DPKO level, it will be data interoperable and communications interoperable with the United States. It will also have superior deployability, because some of its gear is newer than ours. The United Nations has already acquired roll-on/roll-off equipment, with 4.6-meter seatband satellite antennas with built-in PBXs at about a third of the cost of what we spend for ours. They have, of course, adhered to our data collection standards. The data have to be collected once at the lowest level of any organization; they are then made available all the way up and down the decision chain and are acted upon appropriately, without decision makers going back to the originator of the data and asking for clarification or assistance.

Our companion study, which is much larger in scope, is ongoing work for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and for the World Food Program. That study is 80 percent complete and will be finished in July. We have commitments for implementation from those organizations. We showed how these systems fit together in a recent progress review. We have proposals for joining the Internet with certain other communications elements, as well as for database structures and equipment needs.

These systems are essentially interoperable with DPKO as well as with the existing and emerging systems of the major troop-contributing nations that support the missions of the United Nations. They are also interoperable with the systems from some of the in-kind or cash contributing nations such as Japan.

Interoperability is critical for success. This conference has recognized the problems. You must leave here and, with your collective opinions and impetus, accelerate the process, accentuating the need for that process. Help us find ways to ensure that the process continues.

What does this cost? If they had bought it all off the shelf, DPKO implementation would have cost about $42 million. That cost would have included the ability to handle five simultaneous operations while replenishing from normal stocks and acquisition processes. They scaled that back to three operations, which might be too large now, considering the current tempo of operations. The same procedures are mandated for the UNHCR, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and the World Food Program.

Why should our precious resources be spent helping the United Nations and the humanitarian organizations? Because doing so helps us. I have already mentioned the reduction in direct costs. It is also a more efficient use of scarce resources that we contribute all the time in-kind: heavy-lift resources, food resources, medical resources, osmotic water systems, you name it. A more efficient use of resources means that each contribution goes further.

This investment also leads to effective extraction and protection. We engage in various forms of extraction and protection all the time. Wouldn't it be nice for planners to know where the feeding stations are, where the warehouses are, where the Doctors without Borders care stations are, where the NGOs are, and where the lines of communication are? Wouldn't it have been nice during the extraction of Americans from Liberia to know that there were three World Food Program ships capable of taking people out of Monrovia?

We did know that, but only by accident. Systems like the ones we have designed will identify those resources and make them available to planners, to operators, and to the people on the front line, the humanitarians.

Technology can be a trap for anybody. DPKO gets 1,500 faxes a day, which have to be transcribed, filed, and copied. Is it any wonder that 52 percent of their personnel structure is administrative? That

administrative cost, that information management cost, is huge and results in a lot of downstream complications, as you can imagine.

The technological solutions that we proposed for DPKO and that we are proposing for UNHCR -- the software, the training, the doctrine, etc.--all have to rest on something fundamental that the United Nations is missing. Senior military officers will see it right away; business leaders will see it right away. But it's not apparent to the public. They have a mission, but there is no direct connection from that mission to doctrine, from doctrine to policy, from policy to procedure, and from procedure to measures of effectiveness.

We interviewed over 400 people at all levels, asking them to define their measures of success. How do you know that you are a successful protection officer, that you are a successful logistics officer, that you are a successful emergency preparedness officer? They did not know. There are no measurements for success, no logical reasons for choosing one person over another except for direct observation of the person's expertise, and there is no way to quantify the efficacy of any particular policy or procedure.

You have this connection in the military, and the exercise system validates it time and time again. When it fails to validate it, we change our procedures. When we change our policy or mission, the rest of the system follows suit. Some of our recommendations as engineers are not technically oriented; they are more fundamental. They are so fundamental, in fact, that no technological solution, no matter how well funded and how well established, can survive without that integrated review of the mission, policies, and procedures, the measures of effectiveness and exercises to detect them, and the means for correcting the system.

The people who are working in the United Nations and for the NGOs are very capable. Most of us had never had any dealings with the United Nations before, and we did not know what to expect. About all that we knew was that we were not paying our dues.

We found highly motivated people -- people capable of repairing things onsite but lacking any materials to do the repairs. We watched radios being repaired with parts from a razor. We traveled to parts of the world where young people in their twenties and thirties are trying to work with different organizations, with no back-up training, no support, and very little physical security. They are hungry for knowledge, hungry for that little bit of technological help that will take the drudgery out of what they have to do in terms of reporting, that will provide them with a common information system to help them capture the expertise and have access to it. This is simple stuff -- from checklists of databases to global e-mail access.

The natural implication of installing this equipment, along with the policies and procedures, is to free the UN system from locality. Geneva has to be the most expensive place I have ever visited. Geneva has a thousand people at UNHCR headquarters. They know that is too big, and they want to scale down.

As you get into a more distributed database system, a commodities-based system for information processing, you have more freedom from location. You can put a few people in Geneva who need to be there and move the rest to a place that is really inexpensive, like Muncie, Indiana.

DPKO is already establishing a forward base in Italy for exactly that purpose. Much of the traveling support for DPKO's communications operates out of Italy, not out of New York. These people have not missed the lessons. They do, however, have a terrible political structure, which slows them down.

They are not facing anything we have not faced. But our help, our enthusiasm, and your intellectual approach will help break that logjam. Your advocacy will help them reach the conclusions they know they have to reach and will help endorse the ideas that one or two people can block.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.

Part III: Improving Humanitarian Assistance Through Enhanced Communications
Part IV: Conference Summary, Breakout Sessions

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United States Institute of Peace - 1200 17th Street NW - Washington, DC 20036
(202) 457-1700 (phone) - (202) 429-6063 (fax)