Saving Lives with Force: An Agenda For Expanding the ACRI

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"The international community can and must do better. Rather than thinking in terms of a 5,000-person UN force, the international community should develop capacity to deploy at least 100,000 more troops abroad."

Several hundred thousand people continue to lose their lives each year due to the direct effects of civil conflict, war-related famine and disease. This number has not markedly increased since the end of the Cold War, nor has it declined.

These wars have an obvious and tragic toll in lost human lives—with most of the dead being innocent noncombatants. The wars have other costs as well: They provide terrorist groups with havens, as in Afghanistan throughout most of the last decade, and with motivating causes, as in many parts of the Middle East. They do much to keep large segments of Africa and certain other parts of the world mired in misery and economic stagnation. Moreover, these wars undercut the US argument that democracies truly protect and promote human rights. The world is essentially run and dominated by the industrial democracies, and their apparent indifference to many such conflicts weakens their moral authority and international legitimacy as global leaders.

What can be done to reduce the prevalence and severity of such wars? Traditional peacekeeping in Kashmir, Cyprus and the Sinai has a role. So does the more comprehensive ap-

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proach—involving not only peacekeeping but also election monitoring, demilitarization and state building—that has been applied in places such as Cambodia, Mozambique, Haiti and the Balkans. Despite many assertions to the contrary, most or all of these missions have achieved at least partial success in the sense that intervention probably made conditions better than they otherwise would have been. However, missions in Angola and Rwanda were outright and major failures, in that bloodshed intensified after the deployment of UN troops. Moreover, the world's failure to intervene in places such as the Sudan and Liberia means that the international community deserves no more than a low passing grade for its humanitarian military efforts in the first post-Cold War decade.

Traditional policy tools such as neutral peacekeeping, preventive action, economic aid and other softer approaches all have important roles, but they are insufficient by themselves. In some cases, wars are already underway, making it impractical to carry out preventive action or to provide much development assistance. In other cases, peacetime political and economic conditions are so poor that aid is wasted, misdirected or ineffectual. Neutral peacekeeping does not always work, either. Advocates of separating militias and disarming combatants must realize that in many, if not most, cases, militias and combatants will not wish to be separated or disarmed—and would not assent to such operations if asked. Their weapons provide routes to power and wealth, and antagonists often have no interest in giving them up or in disengaging from combat operations.

If the global community needs more capacity for humanitarian intervention, should that job be given to the United Nations? Some would say yes. For example, it is commonly argued that a small UN standing force could make a meaningful difference in reducing civil conflict around the world. Proponents often cite a goal of 5,000 troops, motivated in large part by the claim of Canadian General Romeo Dallaire that such a capability, if added to his small UN force in Rwanda in 1994, could have stopped the genocide there. However, Rwanda is a small country that is not representative of many of the places where

civil conflict erupts. Although there is little doubt that General Dallaire would have used 5,000 more troops bravely and with some effectiveness, it appears a low estimate even for Rwanda. Had such forces run into trouble, the international community would have needed to bail them out. In the event of two or more simultaneous conflicts requiring rapid attention, such a force would clearly be far too small.

The international community can and must do better. Rather than thinking in terms of a 5,000-person UN force, the international community should develop capacity to deploy at least 100,000 more troops abroad. Standing up a dedicated UN force of this size would be very expensive, not to mention politically contentious. Fortunately, such a move is unnecessary. National armies around the world are already available, with many of their costs paid by their home governments. Building on this existing capability, rather than creating a new one from scratch, is surely a more efficient way to use resources. To do so, Washington needs to provide political encouragement—and to accept a greater global security role for the European Union, Japan and other countries. In the case of poorer countries, notably many in Africa, the United States and its friends and allies should provide aid and technical assistance to national military establishments.

The main US program for training militaries in Africa, known as the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), can play a meaningful role in this endeavor. This would be especially true if the ACRI were expanded to cover more countries and troops, and if it moved beyond exclusive focus on non-lethal UN Chapter VI peacekeeping operations to help prepare African militaries for Chapter VII forcible interventions and difficult peace operations as well. The United States should expand the ACRI to include more training and more equipment—and preparations for operations that could involve the lethal use of force. In other words, ACRI should grow to resemble Operation Focus Relief—the training for muscular intervention provided primarily to Ni-

geria in recent times[1]—and should not be limited to a small training program for relatively safe operations. Unfortunately, initial signs are that the Bush administration will not move very far or very fast in this direction. It should reconsider.

THE SCOPE OF THE GLOBAL PROBLEM

Precise estimates of how many wars may erupt in the future, and of how many troops it would take to quell them, are of course impossible. But recent history can provide a rough and useful guide. The weight of evidence suggests that it would be desirable to double the world's capacity for humanitarian interventions and difficult peace operations. For that to be possible, various countries will need to improve their military capabilities. The United States can and should do more—but its other global military responsibilities preclude major expansions of its role in humanitarian missions. Other states without America's security obligations need to assume the primary responsibility for expanding global capacities in this realm.

It is not appropriate to use force to settle every conflict in the world. Some conflicts might even be exacerbated by external involvement. Some might be so intractable as not to justify the investment in effort, dollars and the blood of international peacekeepers that would be required to stop them. Others are not severe enough to warrant forcible intervention. While they might merit international diplomatic attention, and possibly the deployment of peacekeepers if cease-fires can be established, they cannot justify deployment of many thousands of troops in a muscular mission. However, the international community can generally do something about the world's worst wars. This is not always the case, but it is true for most civil conflicts of the present and recent past.

Every case must be assessed on its own terms and in light of its own politics. One useful rule of thumb may be to consider

[1] Operation Focus Relief, initiated in 2000, was the US European Command contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone. Its purpose was to equip and train up to seven battalions from West African countries for peace enforcement operations.

forcible humanitarian intervention whenever the rate of killing in a country or region becomes extremely high—regardless of the specific cause of the death toll, be it mass slaughter, genocide or war-related famine. Only a few conflicts in the world typically cause per capita death tolls several times greater than the annual US murder rate of roughly 1,000 people per every 10 million.[2] Even though one cannot make decisions on intervention based primarily on such quantitative metrics, the international community should, in most cases, seriously consider intervention when it witnesses extremely lethal conflicts.

Given the highly political and case-specific nature of military interventions, only a case-by-case analysis can resolve the question of when and how to intervene. To gauge the likely future need for such operations, it is useful to examine the recent past. There were about eight extremely lethal conflicts between 1992 and 1997: Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Angola, as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chechnya. These cases accounted for more than 75 percent of all war-related deaths in the world in that time period. The international community did intervene in a substantial way in Somalia and Bosnia. It also ultimately devoted some belated and limited effort to address the consequences of the 1994 war in Rwanda by helping refugees who fled to then-Zaire. What about the other cases? Should the international community have intervened to stop the killing in those wars?

There will be times when using force to stop genocide or other mass killing is not appropriate. Intervening to stop Russia from killing tens of thousands of innocent Chechens, for instance, would have risked a major-power war between nuclear states with the potential to kill far more people than the intervention could have saved. Invading North Korea to bring food to its starving people when famine was at its worst several years

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[2] Stephen J. Solarz and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Humanitarian Intervention: When Is Force Justified?" *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 1997) pp. 3–14.

ago would probably have precipitated all-out war on the peninsula.

In Rwanda, by contrast, the sheer scale of the killing—nearly one million dead over several months in 1994—meant that almost any timely intervention would have been better than standing aside, and could have saved a significant number of victims. The international community should have quickly sent at least 10,000 troops to defeat the genocidal Hutu militias that targeted Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Whether those forces stayed on for years to help the country rebuild or took the radical step of partitioning Rwanda would in this urgent case have been a secondary concern.

In the Sudan, the international community should also have intervened in the early 1990s. In fact, the case for doing so may become compelling again. The most natural solution to end the fighting and associated famine would be to partition the country into two parts: a predominantly Muslim north and a predominantly Christian south. While this would displease those who are satisfied only by the promotion of multiethnic democracies, it could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives quickly and at a modest blood cost to outside forces.

In Liberia, the death toll during the early 1990s was much smaller than in Rwanda or Sudan. Nonetheless, the world should have intervened to stop the killing and help establish a coalition government and a professional military. Ethnic hatreds were less severe, and the violence more arbitrary and wanton than in many other civil wars. Under those conditions, chances were good that the bloodshed could have been stopped quickly. Liberia's modest geographic size is an additional factor that would have lent viability to a possible intervention.

In short, even leaving aside the complex case of Afghanistan in the 1990s, the international community should have intervened in Rwanda, the Sudan and probably Liberia over the illustrative five-year period in question. In addition, it was right to get involved in Somalia and Bosnia (as well as Kosovo), even if the international community did so belatedly and with only modest success. Based on the analysis of these cases, actual in-

terventions were about half as numerous as would have been ideal. Part of the reason for this mediocre track record was lack of international political will, and part was the lack of military capacity among those states that did have the political will.

How many military personnel would have been enough? Although it is difficult to say absent a detailed study of each country's geography and military balances, several rules of thumb allow rough estimates. First, past experiences with counterinsurgency suggest that in difficult missions an intervening force may need several troops—possibly 10 or more—for every 1,000 members of a country's civilian population.[3] In a country of roughly 10 million, that would translate into 50,000 or more troops.

Second, based on both military doctrine and political symbolism, intervening forces should generally be comparable in number to the largest internal foe they might face. With comparable numbers, as well as superior skills, mobility and firepower, they would be well placed to dominate the ensuing battles.[4] In most of the above conflicts, that would not have required more than 50,000 troops, but numbers could clearly reach into the several tens of thousands even by this second metric.

All told, the international community deployed on average some 50,000 peacekeepers around the world on official UN missions in the 1990s and another 50,000 on average in the Balkans in the second half of the decade. An international community so inclined would have needed twice as many troops for a more ambitious effort to mitigate the most lethal effects of civil violence during that time period. In other words, the typical deployment level of roughly 100,000 troops could have totaled around 200,000.

A survey of conflicts that have been underway in the 2000-2001 time frame produces a similar rough estimate. The interna-

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[3] James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1995–1996) pp. 59–69.

[4] See James J. Gallagher, *Low-Intensity Conflict: A Guide for Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992) pp. 43–73.

tional community continues to deploy some 50,000 troops in the Balkans. Elsewhere, UN peacekeeping missions have become much smaller than in the early- to mid-1990s, though the Sierra Leone operation has kept numbers in the vicinity of 20,000 to 30,000. However, a major possible mission in Congo has not been seriously contemplated, the international community instead choosing to hope that a minimal observer mission rather than a muscular peace enforcement operation will suffice. A serious mission in Congo could easily require 100,000 troops itself, using the force-sizing criteria noted above and making reference as well to the sheer extent and challenging topography of that country. Possible operations in Angola and the Sudan, to say nothing of a more effective mission in Sierra Leone, could push the total up further. Counting ongoing missions as well as hypothetical ones, total deployed troop numbers could again quite easily reach 200,000.

THE GLOBAL "SUPPLY" OF PROJECTABLE MILITARY FORCE

The international community does not have the capacity to sustain 200,000 forces in the field over an extended period of time. Given normal troop rotation patterns, at least 500,000 troops would be needed to sustain up to 200,000 in the field. As the table below shows, the international community falls far short of that goal.

To project military power, armed forces usually require three elements above and beyond troops and combat equipment: strategic lift to move equipment, organic logistics assets like food and water that allow units to operate in foreign and possibly undeveloped regions and military personnel who can be legally deployed under existing national laws.

Sometimes a country can deploy forces abroad without meeting all three requirements. A country need not have long-range lift if its troops are deploying to a nearby location, or if it has enough time to arrange transportation commercially or when another country can transport its troops. Forces deployed in this manner may not need extensive logistics support if they are able to live off the local economy and get by with light equipment. A

given country may be able to deploy conscripts abroad, depending on its specific legal restrictions. Nonetheless, a military that might deploy abroad needs to meet these general criteria.

Estimated Global Supply of Projectable Military Force

Country	*Defense Spending (US$Bil.)*	*Total Active Ground Strength (in thousands)*	*Ground Forces Deployable and Sustainable in 1-3 Months (thousands)*	*Percent of Total Quickly Deployable*
United States	283	640	400	60
United Kingdom	37	120	20	15
France	38	190	15	8
Germany	31	220	10	5
Italy	22	175	5	3
Canada	7.5	21	5	25
Netherlands	7	25	1	4
Other NATO	43.5	980	20	2
Other Europe	13.5	296	3	1
Australia	8	24	5	20
Japan	41	150	2	1
South Korea	12	585	5	1
India	14	1,100	10	1
Pakistan	4	550	2	0.3
Bangladesh	1	120	0.3	0.3
Sri Lanka	1	95	1	1
Malaysia	3	80	2	3
Singapore	5	50	2	4
Russian Federation	56	355	35	10
China	40	1,705	20	1
African Neutrals	7*	350	10	3
Argentina, Brazil, Chile	24	300	12	4
Non-US TOTAL		7490	190	3

*This figure excludes Libya, among others, as well as states in conflict such as the Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

An Agenda for Improving Intervention Capacity and The Need for an Expanded Acri

A significant number of the 500,000 troops necessary to provide a rotation base, but not the majority, should come from the United States. Most forces should come from other countries, and African countries should provide at least 100,000 of those troops, given the prevalence of conflict on their continent and their acute interest in controlling it.

African militaries, however, are generally not well suited to classic power projection operations. Those countries that are not themselves currently engaged in severe conflicts—those referred to as neutrals in the above table—possess an ability to deploy and sustain no more than some 10,000 forces in aggregate. They could deploy more than that for relatively simple missions conducted with little equipment in large cities. However, for missions designed to control large swaths of land and missions that might entail combat and require the use of substantial numbers of military vehicles, African militaries are quite limited at present. The ACRI and other international efforts, despite worthwhile contributions, are doing little to change that basic fact.

What would it cost to expand Africa's collective capacity for power projection to about 100,000 troops? One way to estimate the cost is to use a country with a very capable military but a limited defense budget as a guide. Such a country can provide a good model for frugal but effective military planning.

Consider, for example, the budget of South Korea. In recent decades, that country has averaged spending $10 billion to $12 billion on its military, with about $3 billion to $4 billion typically going to procurement.[5] With that budget, South Korea fields half a million active-duty ground forces, most of them light infantry but with substantial numbers of armored and mechanized formations as well. South Korea's forces thus serve as a good model for the development of global intervention ca-

[5] See various issues of the International Institute for Strategic Studies' *Military Balance* (Oxford University Press, current issues), as well as Ministry of Defense, *Defense White Paper 1997–1998* (Seoul, 1998) pp. 136, 190.

pacity in terms of quality and character. Assuming that South Korea's equipment inventories were built up over a 20-year period, considering the normal lifetimes of most weaponry and that some of its purchases go to its air force and navy, its 450,000 ground troops might operate $45-billion worth of equipment in rough numbers. That translates into $10 billion in equipment per 100,000 troops.

Suppose that African states together sought to field eight to 10 divisions, with about 100,000 associated personnel, suited for intervention abroad. The cost might then be $10 billion to $20 billion, depending on the quality of equipment procured. Poor countries, principally in Africa, might receive such equipment as aid; less poor developing countries might receive rebates or subsidies. In all, the donor community might need to spend $5 billion to $10 billion to make such an arrangement work. The US share might be $2 billion to $4 billion, assuming that Europe would provide an equal amount and that countries such as Japan would contribute significant assistance as well. If provided during a five-year initiative, annual aid would be $400 million to $800 million for this purpose, more than ten times current spending for the ACRI, but several times less than current US military aid to the Middle East.

The virtue of providing this equipment to foreign militaries is that military manpower would not need to be increased or funded. Some funds for needs such as training, ammunition and equipment maintenance might have to be provided on an annual basis. Scaling from the US defense budget, it is possible that annual operating costs could be one-tenth the value of the capital stock of the equipment provided. This would necessitate an additional annual contribution of a couple hundred million dollars or so, for a total US cost of roughly half a billion to a billion dollars a year.

Looking over the international landscape in early 2002, the need for much more international capacity for peace operations and humanitarian interventions is clear. About 50,000 NATO forces remain in the Balkans; nearly 5,000 forces are in Afghanistan (four or five times as many are needed); peacekeeping re-

mains important in Sierra Leone as well. Moreover, major missions should be considered for the enormous country of Congo, Angola in the aftermath of the death of warlord Jonas Savimbi and possibly Burundi. Interventions may also become desirable in the Sudan and Somalia.

The broad point is clear: much more global military capacity for handling difficult operations is needed, with many but not all of the trouble spots located in Africa. As the United States, already very busy around the world, cannot be expected to provide the lion's share of additional forces, this conclusion underscores the need for other countries to improve their capacities for deploying and operating modest numbers of combat forces far from home territories. Europe, Japan and other industrialized countries should continue to reorient some of their military forces for such purposes. In addition, the United States and other major Western countries should greatly expand their assistance to poorer countries, particularly in Africa, so that those countries can develop the capacity for more muscular interventions themselves. If recipient countries are carefully chosen, the risks of aid being wasted or misused can be minimized, and the benefits in lives saved could be enormous.

The existing ACRI, funded at the modest level of about $15 million a year and slated for cutbacks to a level of $10 million by the Bush administration, should instead be significantly expanded. Other donors should do the same with their comparable programs. African militaries should ultimately receive hundreds of millions of dollars a year in aid and training, not only for simple peacekeeping, but also to prepare for more difficult, dangerous and lethal operations. With hundreds of thousands of innocents a year still dying around the world due to war and war-related famine and disease, it is unacceptable to do less.