

# Global Humanitarian Emergencies: Trends and Projections, 1999-2000

National Intelligence Estimate  
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## Scope Note

This assessment focuses on ***humanitarian emergencies arising from manmade causes and/or major natural disasters.***

- We define humanitarian emergencies as situations in which at least 300,000 civilians require international humanitarian assistance to avoid serious malnutrition or death. Our definition includes those situations in which people need protection in order to facilitate access to humanitarian aid.
- The ***manmade causes*** we focus on are armed conflict, repressive government policies, sudden economic emergencies, and technological occurrences such as Y2K.

- ***This assessment does not address situations in which the need for food or other aid is due primarily to chronic poverty or environmental degradation.***
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## Summary

Both the number and intensity of humanitarian emergencies, as well as the number of people in need, will remain at about the same high level or even increase somewhat by December 2000- testing the capacity and willingness of the international donor community to respond adequately. According to the US Committee for Refugees, roughly 35 million people are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. There are twenty-four ongoing humanitarian emergencies and new or renewed emergencies could appear in the Balkans, Sub-Saharan Africa, Russia, and/or Central America.

- Humanitarian conditions throughout the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Iraq, and North Korea will continue to have a particularly significant impact upon regional stability, as well as on the strategic interests of major outside powers.
- Conditions are likely to worsen in Angola, Colombia, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Republic of Serbia within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), excluding the province of Kosovo. The current drought in the Horn of Africa may induce a famine as severe as that of the mid-1980s.
- The humanitarian situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC) and Sierra Leone are unlikely to improve significantly even if pending peace accords hold, and could worsen considerably if such accords were to fail.

In addition to the emergencies cited above, several other major countries and regions may experience conflict, political instability, sudden economic crises, or technological or natural disasters- leading to new or renewed humanitarian emergencies:

- Resumed hostilities between India and Pakistan that expanded beyond the borders of Kashmir, as they did in previous conflicts, would displace a million or more people on both sides of the border.
- The countries of Central America and the Caribbean that were battered by hurricanes in 1998- especially Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and Haiti-remain vulnerable to weather-induced disasters.
- Internal ethnic conflict would create substantial humanitarian needs in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).
- The possibility of additional sudden economic emergencies also cannot be discounted. In Russia, drought threatens the grain harvest, and unless the outlook improves, Moscow will again need large-scale food assistance.

- Despite Nigeria's turn toward democracy, escalating conflict in the oil-rich Niger River Delta region could lead to widespread refugee flows into neighboring countries.
- The possible effects of widespread Y2K-related difficulties could aggravate current humanitarian emergencies or lead to new emergencies.

The overall demand for emergency humanitarian assistance through December 2000 may exceed the willingness of major donor countries to respond. Overall funding for ongoing emergencies has probably temporarily spiked upward owing to Hurricane Mitch and Kosovo. Nevertheless, the focus on the Balkans could detract attention and resources from other regions with extensive humanitarian needs. Absent major new emergencies, the longer-term funding trend is likely to continue downward, increasing the shortfall. Government funding is likely to decline fastest for long-lasting conflicts where attempts at political resolution continue to fail.

### **The Changing Character of Humanitarian Emergencies**

Humanitarian emergencies are being affected by the changing practices and military capabilities of combatants, the lasting impact of conflicts triggered by genocide and other crimes against humanity, and the impact of sudden economic crises:

- Civilians have increasingly become the key targets for combatants in many conflicts. War has become as much about displacing people as moving borders, creating an ever deeper chasm between the military goals of combatants and humanitarian aims.
- The increasing ferocity of conflict is facilitated by the increased availability-and lower cost- of a wide variety of weapons.
- Instances of killing, injuring, and kidnapping of aid workers are on the rise. Relief agencies increasingly doubt whether adequate security will be provided for their humanitarian efforts, and some organizations are withdrawing from particularly dangerous situations.
- Genocidal-type conflicts create the most intractable humanitarian emergencies. They trigger large numbers of refugees and IDPs, create special security risks for neighboring states and humanitarian workers, and place substantial demands on resources-several billion dollars each in the cases of Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.
- Sudden economic downturns can combine with natural or technological disasters to accentuate or create humanitarian emergencies in developing countries lacking the infrastructure and government capacity to cope with them.

### **Factors Affecting Humanitarian Response**

Democratic governments, energized by NGO pressures, media-inspired public awareness of suffering in selected parts of the world, changing political and legal norms, and their own humanitarian impulses face increasing pressures to respond to humanitarian crises. Donor governments are wrestling with the conditions under which they will use military force to intervene.

### ***Changing Legal Norms***

In recent years, the balance between the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign states and justifications for international humanitarian intervention in response to grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law gradually has been shifting in favor of intervention, particularly for those emergencies that involve genocide or genocide-like conflict. At the same time, the assertion of the right to state sovereignty by some countries will continue to be a major stumbling block to early action in a potential humanitarian emergency.

### ***Changing Political Expectations***

The dominance of democratic states since the Cold War ended—together with growing popular demands for civil liberties and/or self-determination in authoritarian or failing states—increases pressures for humanitarian response. This is particularly true when outside assistance is by mutual consent, but political support is also increasing for humanitarian interventions backed by the threat or use of military force in certain instances. Emergencies provoked by genocide and other atrocities will evoke the strongest political, NGO, and public pressures to intervene. Some developing countries, however, will continue to criticize what they view as donor countries' uneven responses to humanitarian emergencies, comparing the largesse shown in the Balkans with the more limited aid to emergencies in the developing world.

### ***Capacities of Relief Organizations***

The overall capacity of international relief organizations to respond to humanitarian emergencies has improved modestly over time, but problems will persist. Despite progress in strengthening UN agencies' operations over the last decade, rivalries among and within organizations will continue to impede the challenging tasks of managing humanitarian crises and undertaking longer-term reconstruction in places such as Kosovo.

### ***Military Assistance***

The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, and Russia are the only countries with the long-range military airlift capability required to deliver bulk humanitarian aid in large, sudden emergencies, or where humanitarian access is denied to large populations. While the capabilities of donor governments' military forces to participate in humanitarian emergencies remain relatively fixed, the Kosovo crisis and the heightened public interest in humanitarian response will place growing demands on them.

### ***Food Availability***

Slightly tighter world grain supplies for 1999/2000 are not likely to have a significant

impact on the availability of emergency food aid, the supply of which can be boosted by the major food-donating countries in response to an unexpected increase in worldwide emergency food aid needs. However, people targeted for emergency food aid in countries where the host government either denies access to organizations or diverts some of the aid for its own needs may not receive assistance.

## **Outlook**

While democratic governments will continue to be responsive to humanitarian emergencies, their willingness to undertake major humanitarian operations-particularly forceful interventions-is likely to remain constrained. Over the next few years, the perception of success or failure of NATO's military interventions in the Balkans, particularly the costly humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Kosovo, will influence the scale and scope of subsequent humanitarian interventions.

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## **Global Overview**

### **The Current Picture**

The number of ongoing humanitarian emergencies has increased from 21 to 24 since July 1998:

- The increase in the number of emergencies is due to the escalation of humanitarian crises in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)/Kosovo and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC) and the addition of the sudden economic emergency in Indonesia.
- Twelve of the ongoing emergencies are in countries experiencing ongoing conflict; two are due to severe government repression; one is caused by severe economic conditions; the remaining nine are emergencies that have entered the post-conflict or transitional stage.

While the number of emergencies has increased, the number of people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance worldwide-including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and others in need of such assistance-has not changed appreciably.

- The total number of people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance-which was 36 million in January 1998-has remained about the same, according to the US Committee for Refugees (USCR) . The current total cited in the pending 1999 USCR report is roughly 35 million. <sup>1</sup>

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## **Looking Ahead**

### ***Ongoing Humanitarian Emergencies***

Both the number and intensity of humanitarian emergencies, as well as the number of

people in need, are likely to remain at about the same high level or even increase somewhat by December 2000-testing the capacity and willingness of the international donor community to respond adequately. This will be especially likely if one or more potential emergencies develop or humanitarian conditions deteriorate in large and populous countries such as DROC or Ethiopia.

- Humanitarian conditions are likely to worsen in Angola, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Somalia, and the Republic of Serbia within the FRY, excluding the province of Kosovo. Conditions in the Republic of Montenegro within the FRY will remain about the same or could worsen.
- Conditions are expected to remain about the same in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Croatia, Eritrea, Georgia, Liberia, North Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Uganda.
- Humanitarian conditions in DROC and Sierra Leone will remain about the same if the peace accords hold but will worsen if the accords fail.
- Conditions are likely to improve in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Kosovo province in the FRY, Indonesia, Iraq, and Rwanda.

### ***Ongoing Emergencies with Greatest Impact***

Humanitarian conditions throughout the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Iraq, and North Korea will continue to have significant impact upon regional stability as well as on the strategic interests of major outside powers.

- ***Former Yugoslavia*** will continue to require a high level of humanitarian assistance.

- ***Kosovo***. Because of continuing international attention and a modicum of political stability enforced by NATO, Kosovo is likely to experience major improvements in humanitarian conditions. Nevertheless, reconstruction efforts will require substantial international assistance to provide a secure environment, return 1.5 million displaced ethnic Albanians to their homes, rebuild housing and infrastructure, and deliver emergency aid until farms and factories are restored to productivity. Unlike their neighbors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, many displaced Kosovo Albanians will be returning to empty and damaged houses and villages rather than confronting displaced persons from rival ethnic groups.

### ***- Republic of Serbia outside Kosovo and the Republic of Montenegro.***

Humanitarian conditions, while not dire, likely will worsen somewhat as more than 100,000 Serbs from Kosovo add to the half million refugees from Bosnia and Croatia already in the FRY. The FRY's ability to provide support to Serb refugees and IDPs, and to repair damaged infrastructure, will be constrained by bleak economic prospects and the potential for growing domestic political unrest in the aftermath of the end of the conflict in Kosovo. As long as President Milosevic remains in power, international aid to

Serbia will be limited largely to providing humanitarian relief rather than rebuilding the economic infrastructure, repairing damage from NATO bombing, and integrating refugees and IDPs.

- Conditions could also deteriorate in **Montenegro** if civil war breaks out with Serbia, or if international assistance cannot be effectively implemented.

- Improvements in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** are likely to continue through 2000, with extensive housing and economic reconstruction necessary to overcome a range of obstacles.

- Although **Haiti** is recovering from its weather-induced humanitarian emergency, escalating political unrest preceding legislative elections scheduled for December 1999, coupled with a further deterioration of the economic situation, could trigger a modest worsening of humanitarian conditions and increase migration pressures. The Haitian Government will continue to rely on international assistance to resolve any humanitarian crisis.
- **Iraq's** humanitarian prospects are inextricably linked to its relations with the international community and a new weapons inspection regime. Assuming the continuation of the oil-for-food program at or above current levels and access to people in need, humanitarian conditions are likely to improve. The humanitarian situation could take a turn for the worse if the oil-for-food program and other relief efforts were substantially cut by the UN or by the regime or if the regime's insecurity impelled it to step up its repression of Shia, Kurds, and other groups to fend off internal threats.
- **North Korea** will be a significant humanitarian challenge because of the severity of the food deficit, restricted international access to those in need, and the large number of people affected. The infusion of projected international food aid-combined with North Korea's harvest of 3.2 million metric tons-is expected to meet P'yongyang's basic subsistence needs of 4.5 million metric tons from July 1999 through at least March 2000. Even with this aid, widespread malnutrition will persist due, in part, to distribution problems. Absent significant economic reform, North Korea will remain in need of large-scale humanitarian aid-the bulk of which will continue to be provided by the United States, China, and the European Union.

### ***Other Severe Ongoing Emergencies***

Other countries are considered to be of great concern based on the current scale of the humanitarian crisis, the projected outlook for the underlying causes, and/or the likelihood that the emergency will spread to neighboring countries:

- **Angola's** humanitarian situation is deteriorating rapidly, and conditions are expected to worsen further-perhaps drastically-as the civil conflict between the government and UNITA intensifies. The number of people in need will grow well

beyond the current figure of 3 million, while conditions for vulnerable populations will become more severe. Heavy fighting and the combatants' unwillingness to provide humanitarian access to noncombatants are putting many critical areas out of the reach of aid deliveries and increasing the risks for international relief workers and IDPs alike.

- **Ethiopia and Somalia** are facing a significant deterioration in humanitarian conditions resulting mostly from drought but exacerbated both by the Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict and by hostilities among Somalia's warlords, which continue to hamper relief efforts and displace civilians. A total of over 3 million people are currently in need in the two countries; up to a few million more could be at risk from famine by December 2000. Indeed, the current drought in the Horn of Africa may induce a famine as severe as that of the mid-1980s. Preoccupied with the war against Eritrea, having limited resources and infrastructure, and denied access to Eritrean ports, Ethiopia may not respond effectively to the humanitarian needs of its population. The international community also will be pressed to provide extensive food aid to Somalia, where clan leaders dominate decisionmaking in the absence of any central government.
- **Sudan** is a long-standing and large-scale humanitarian emergency: it has 4 million IDPs-the highest number of any country in the world-in addition to its almost 400,000 refugees. It is unlikely that there will be either a breakthrough in negotiations or a major shift in the military balance between Khartoum and the insurgents that would fundamentally change the situation through December 2000. In addition to problems resulting directly from the fighting, the frequent droughts in southern Sudan will have severe consequences because the conflict often limits international efforts to ameliorate the crisis.

Conflict may intensify or spread across **clusters of African countries**:

- **DROC Spillover.** Of particular concern is the risk of a widening conflict in DROC which could affect the neighboring countries of Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and/or Zambia-several of which are already experiencing humanitarian emergencies. Even if a peace accord in DROC holds, humanitarian conditions are unlikely to improve significantly over the next 18-months.
- The conflict in **Sierra Leone** could widen-or the **Liberia** conflict could heat up again-spreading to neighboring states that are now relatively stable, such as Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana and/or Senegal. Even if a peace accord holds in Sierra Leone, humanitarian conditions are unlikely to improve significantly.

### **Potential Concerns**

In addition to the emergencies cited above, several other major countries and regions may experience conflict, political instability, sudden economic crises, or natural disasters-leading to new or renewed humanitarian emergencies (see figure 2).

- Although the crisis appears to be subsiding, renewed conflict between nuclear powers India and Pakistan over **Kashmir** could expand beyond Kashmir into neighboring areas, as it has in previous wars. A full-scale war that extends along the border probably would spread to the Indian state of Rajasthan and the Indian and Pakistani states of Punjab and displace over a million people. The conflict also could spark even more widespread communal fighting in other parts of India, pitting Hindus against Muslims as it did at partition in 1947, when 10 million people were displaced and at least one million were killed. The potential impact of a humanitarian emergency in Kashmir is very high because of the potential for a nuclear exchange

Probability: Low

Potential Impact: Very High

- The countries of **Central America** and the **Caribbean** that were battered by hurricanes last year, especially **Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic,** and **Haiti**, remain vulnerable to weather-induced disasters. Greater-than-average rainfall is projected for the 1999 rainy season. Since much of the rehabilitation work was makeshift, especially in remote rural areas, it will be in jeopardy in storms much less powerful than Mitch. Serious economic disruptions in the region would further increase illegal migration into Mexico and the United States.

Probability: Low

Potential Impact: High

- The aftermath of the Kosovo crisis continues to threaten the fragile inter-ethnic accommodation between **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's (FYROM)** Slavic majority and ethnic Albanian minority. Macedonian Slavs are sympathetic to their Serb kinsmen and wary of the transiting Kosovar Albanian refugees, while ethnic Albanians in the FYROM are extending material and moral support to the Kosovars. These developments could undermine the governing coalition of Slavs and ethnic Albanians. The coalition's survival will depend on the further integration of the Albanian minority into economic and political institutions, the ability of Slavs and ethnic Albanians to insulate themselves from destabilizing pressures from Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, and whether the government allocates promised international aid fairly. Should the inter-ethnic accommodation fall apart, FYROM could plunge into civil conflict, creating a humanitarian emergency affecting a significant percentage of the country's two million people and threatening the stability of the Balkan region as a whole.

Probability: Low

Potential Impact: High

- While democratic elections in **Nigeria** earlier this year have reduced political polarization somewhat, the tasks facing the new government are immense. In particular, the government will be challenged to address the bloody ethnic conflict

in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, where dispossessed ethnic minorities expect a "new deal" in the form of increased access to oil revenues and massive government rehabilitation programs. Both will be very difficult for the government to deliver, given the influence of the military, the weak state of the country's economy, and the need to stick to tough fiscal targets to re-establish Nigeria's credibility with the IMF and private investors. Although unlikely, a boiling over of discontent in the Delta, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and leading to widespread refugee flows into neighboring countries, cannot be ruled out.

Probability: Low

Potential Impact: Medium

- In **Russia**, drought threatens the grain harvest. Russian agricultural specialists have reduced their estimate for the grain harvest this year from 70 million metric tons to 50-55 million tons, slightly above the record low of 48 million tons last year. Wheat output may fall more than 3 million tons short of demand. Recent scattered rains have helped, but the outlook for the harvest could worsen sharply if the drought continues. Unless the outlook improves, Moscow will again need international food assistance.

Probability: Medium

Potential Impact: Low

In addition to these country- and region-specific potential emergencies, more generalized conditions in the current international environment might result in humanitarian crises:

- Additional **sudden economic emergencies** cannot be discounted. The 1997-98 global financial crisis eroded the margins of safety that separate hundreds of millions of people from poverty in dozens of "emerging market" countries. In addition, the legacy of the crisis has made many countries more vulnerable to the social impact of natural disasters. While the global financial system is recovering from the crisis, and while some countries have experienced a faster rebound of production than anticipated, many economies remain in recession. Moreover, financial markets remain wary of the emerging market countries, and the possibility of a significant rise in global interest rates could further undermine recovery.
- The apparent increase in climatological and hydrologic perturbations could generate more frequent and severe weather fluctuations and rainfall events, resulting in more serious **natural disasters** necessitating international humanitarian support (see figure 3).
- The possible humanitarian effects of a widespread **Y2K crisis** could lead to new humanitarian emergencies during winter 2000, particularly in the more advanced developing countries with a growing technology base (see inset on page 11).

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## Looking Ahead

### The Changing Character of Humanitarian Emergencies in the 1990s

The preponderance of ethnic and communal conflicts within and across national boundaries since the Cold War's end has increased the number and changed the character of humanitarian emergencies. According to the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:

- From 1985 through 1989 an average of five declared manmade humanitarian emergencies were ongoing each year (see figure 4).
- By 1990 there were 20 such ongoing emergencies.
- After reaching a peak of 26 in 1994, ongoing emergencies in the 1995-1999 period averaged 22 a year.

Since the late 1980s, the total number of IDPs has exceeded the number of refugees due to the increasing number of internal conflicts (see figure 5).

### ***The Potential Humanitarian Impact of the Y2K Problem***

*The Y2K computer problem will affect hardware, embedded processors, and software throughout the world, including basic infrastructure such as telecommunications, power plants, and water systems. All countries are likely to experience some Y2K disruptions, and many countries will suffer a breakdown of at least part of their basic infrastructure.*

*Y2K-related disruptions have the potential to cause or exacerbate humanitarian crises. These include prolonged outages of power and heat, breakdowns in urban water supplies, military miscalculations due to failures in early warning systems, malfunctions in nuclear power plants, serious food shortages, and environmental disasters resulting from failures in safety controls.*

- *Key countries and regions that have significant ties to the global economy are especially vulnerable.*

*Multiple and simultaneous emergencies on a global scale would quickly overwhelm national and international institutions responsible for providing humanitarian relief. Furthermore, some relief organizations probably will be hindered by Y2K failures in their communications, records-keeping, and transport capabilities.*

*Although Y2K remediation is not technically challenging in principle, it is costly, time-consuming, and labor-intensive. Many firms and governments have difficulty managing such a large-scale task. The private sector and governments in some countries are developing contingency plans to manage the impact on the general population, but these efforts are often poorly funded.*

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## Looking Ahead

### **Emergencies Caused by Conflicts or Government Repression**

Civilians have increasingly become key targets for combatants on all sides. War has become as much about displacing people as moving borders, creating an ever deeper chasm between the military goals of combatants and humanitarian aims. The extent of atrocities against noncombatants has apparently intensified, while humanitarian organizations are increasingly viewed as biased by one side or another, exposing relief workers to retaliation.

#### ***Changing Combatant Practices***

Combatants are employing starvation, slaughter and various civilian and military technologies to expel or kill civilians. Techniques include demonstration killings and maiming (as in Sierra Leone), systematic rape (Bosnia and Herzegovina), instigation or encouragement of atrocities through radio broadcasts (Rwanda), the wholesale expulsion of civilians (Kosovo), and the use of civilians as human shields (Kosovo).

- The increasing ferocity of conflict is facilitated by the wide availability, at very modest prices, of an array of light and medium weapons. Everything from weapons, to ammunition, to training and support packages is for sale or rent.
- Refugee and IDP camps have been used as bases for operations by combatants in Liberia, Pakistan, and DROC, as they were in earlier conflicts along the borders of Rwanda and Cambodia, and in Central America-increasing the risks for camp populations and relief workers alike.

#### ***Combatants Manipulating International Opinion***

In conducting their campaigns, political and military leaders of combatant groups are becoming attentive to the ways in which outside powers react to other combatant leaders, as well as to the prospects that they will be held accountable for illegal behavior under international law. The growing prominence of human rights in international politics and law, however, will incline combatants to attempt to conceal their atrocities and to deny humanitarian access. Combatants also will attempt to publicize, or even concoct, atrocities by the other side.

#### ***Combatants Increasingly Well-Armed***

The halting pace of the economic transitions in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union has sparked an aggressive marketing competition that now dominates the global arms market. The availability of relatively inexpensive weapons plays a key role in facilitating or perpetuating conflicts that cause humanitarian emergencies throughout the world:

- In Africa, the scene of many complex emergencies, small arms are readily available; for example, AK-47s can be had in the Great Lakes region for as little as \$12.
- The breakdown of law and order in Albania led to the massive transfer of arms to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo that helped spark the KLA effort to separate the province from Serbia.

### ***Increasing Risks to Aid Workers***

During the 1990s, humanitarian aid workers have increasingly been targeted by combatants as they operate in "harm's way" in the midst of internal conflict. The fact that humanitarian organizations are increasingly operating in areas where there is no clear recognized governmental authority means they have to negotiate access with multiple parties, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation for political purposes. Instances of killing, injury and kidnapping of aid workers, as well as looting and blackmail are on the rise:

- The number of UN civilian staff killed by malicious acts-the great majority of them in humanitarian emergencies-rose from 11 in 1992 to an average of 23 yearly since then (see figure 6).
  - Nine International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers were killed in 1996-more than any other year in the ICRC's 135-year history and the number of "physical threats" to ICRC workers increased sixfold from 21 in 1990 to an average of 140 yearly in recent years.
  - Insurgent groups have kidnapped relief workers in Somalia and Chechnya, among other places, for their money or equipment, and local soldiers have hijacked relief convoys in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan, and Liberia.
  - Rebel groups in Sierra Leone have kidnapped aid workers while rebels in Uganda have threatened to attack international aid workers if they assist victims of rebel atrocities or displaced persons living in government-established camps.
  - Two Australian aid workers arrested at the start of the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia were convicted for alleged "espionage" by a Belgrade court.
  - Organized crime and pilfering-such as the stealing of vehicles and supplies in Albania, Somalia, Liberia and elsewhere-pose a serious threat to humanitarian personnel and to relief efforts.
  - In areas of high insurgent activity, aircraft conducting humanitarian relief operations could become deliberate targets of attacks if insurgents suspected the flights were being used to support the ruling regime.
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## Looking Ahead

### **The Impact of Conflicts Caused by Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity**

Genocidal or genocide-like conflicts aimed at annihilating all or part of a racial, religious, or ethnic group, and conflicts caused by other crimes against humanity—such as forced, large-scale expulsions of populations—are likely to generate the most intractable humanitarian needs:

- Genocidal conflicts such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, mass killings on a somewhat smaller scale, such as in Burundi and DROC, and mass expulsions in Kosovo evoke the most visceral emotional responses from victims and perpetrators alike. The political, economic, and social conditions that provoke such conflicts are likely to persist.
- Such conflicts also destroy any semblance of civil society and provoke or hasten economic decline. In some instances, they are a by-product of war or state failure; in others a cause, further expanding the scale and scope of the ensuing humanitarian emergencies.
- Most countries experiencing such conflicts in the last decade have yet to restore their pre-conflict growth, while reconciliation between antagonists has proven elusive.
- Such humanitarian emergencies typically produce especially large numbers of refugees and IDPs to feed and house, as in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

Responding to the large numbers of refugees and IDPs triggered by a genocidal or genocidal-like conflict imposes large political and security risks. Such conflicts will place substantial demands on available resources—several billion dollars each in the cases of Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo—and require substantial security for military personnel, civilian officials, and humanitarian relief workers.

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## Looking Ahead

### **Emergencies Caused Primarily by Sudden Economic Crises or Natural and Technological Disasters**

Sudden economic downturns can combine with natural or technological disasters to accentuate or create humanitarian emergencies in developing countries lacking the infrastructure and government capacity to cope with them. These types of humanitarian emergencies are often exacerbated by other factors—such as deep ethnic, social, and political fissures—raising their costs and delaying their recovery.

- Countries that have experienced conflict can suffer from major economic crises—sometimes combined with the effects of international economic sanctions—creating substantial humanitarian needs, as in the former Yugoslavia.
- El Niño-related drought and forest fires in Indonesia last year aggravated the food crisis brought on by the sudden economic emergency and may have contributed to the downfall of the Suharto government.
- The past year saw a sharp increase in the number of people needing aid due to natural disasters. The recently published Red Cross Annual World Disasters Report states that, in 1998, 5.5 million people needed aid after disasters such as floods and earthquakes. The 1998 number is a nearly ten-fold increase over the 1992 figure.
- Natural disasters such as flooding and earthquakes in places such as Central America, Africa, and parts of Asia have a particularly severe impact because of high urbanization, isolated rural populations, and poor infrastructure, complicating aid delivery and recovery.
- The Y2K problem is likely to most directly affect countries least able to deal with the kinds of disruptions it will cause, many of which already confront significant humanitarian crises.

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### Looking Ahead

#### Factors Affecting Humanitarian Response

Democratic governments, energized by NGO pressures, media-inspired public awareness of suffering in selected parts of the world, changing political and legal norms, and their own humanitarian impulses, face increasing pressures to respond to humanitarian emergencies. Donor governments' military forces and international relief organizations will be challenged to respond to the ongoing and potential emergencies outlined above.

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### Looking Ahead

#### The Question of Intervention

There are two broad categories of humanitarian response:

- A consensual response occurs when the government of the country experiencing the emergency welcomes or at least tolerates international assistance.
- A forceful humanitarian intervention involves the threatened or actual use of military power against the will of governments or local political authorities.

Donor governments are wrestling with the conditions under which they will use military force to intervene in humanitarian emergencies. In general, assertion of the right to noninterference by some countries will continue to be a major stumbling block to early action in a potential humanitarian emergency. Governments that provoke, inflame, or tolerate a given humanitarian emergency are for political or economic reasons often reluctant to admit the existence of IDPs, grant asylum to refugees from neighboring countries, or consent to the delivery of outside assistance-unless they find they can exploit the humanitarian relief operations for political or financial gain.

### ***International Legal Norms***

In recent years, the balance between the legal principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign states and various legal justifications for international intervention in response to threats to international peace and security, grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and crimes against humanity has been shifting somewhat in favor of intervention. This is particularly the case for those emergencies that might devolve into genocidal or genocide-like conflict. These shifts in legal principle are, however, by no means conclusive.

- *UN agreements are being interpreted more broadly.* Article 2 of the UN Charter enshrines the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of member states, but Articles 55 and 56 also call on members to take joint or individual action to promote observance of human rights, which are being defined increasingly broadly. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enacted in 1948 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, with their Additional Protocols of 1977, further define the obligations of states party to these treaties to protect human rights and punish violators and also expand the international community's obligations to intervene toward this end.
- *The principle that noncombatants have a right to humanitarian assistance has been established.* Pursuant to the Gulf War and the crisis in Northern Iraq, UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 in December 1991 established the reciprocal principles that noncombatants in a humanitarian emergency have the right to assistance and that states have the obligation to permit humanitarian organizations to enter their territories in order to help those in need. This paved the way for the establishment of a UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and subsequently the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which has since been merged into the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
- *Abusive governments are no longer protected by state sovereignty.* The creation in the early 1990s of international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda has clearly established that international law extends to individual criminal behavior formerly shielded by state sovereignty. Establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998 further enshrines this principle, although the nonparticipation of the United States and other states such as China

underscores concerns about the protection of state sovereignty and the potential for malevolent countries to abuse the ICC in practice.

The UN Security Council continues to authorize or endorse peacekeeping missions primarily to address the security needs of a country or region and remains hesitant to establish operations for the primary purpose of ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, during this decade the Council has increasingly cited intervention for the purpose of ensuring humanitarian assistance as one justification for the international peacekeeping missions on its agenda.

- Many UN operations established in the late 1980s and early 1990s—notably UNAVEM I in Angola and UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia—were re-mandated in the late 1990s to play a more prominent role in coordinating, facilitating, and supporting humanitarian activities.
- While the Council has authorized fewer UN peacekeeping operations since 1995 than in the early 1990s, it has authorized regional organizations and coalitions of the willing to undertake them under the authority of Chapters 7 and 8 of the Charter. Since 1997, the UN Security Council has authorized or endorsed non-UN operations for humanitarian objectives in Albania, the Central African Republic, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Kosovo, and Guinea-Bissau.
- Concomitantly, since the mid-1990s, NATO, the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have also recognized egregious humanitarian abuses in their respective regions as a legitimate target for collective response.

### ***Changing Political Norms***

The post-Cold War political, military, and economic dominance of democratic states—together with the growing drives for civil liberties, democracy, and/or self-determination in authoritarian or failing states—creates pressures on behalf of humanitarian response. This is particularly true when such outside assistance is by mutual consent. In certain instances, public and political support is also increasing for military interventions to pursue humanitarian objectives.

- The revolution in information technologies and the increased economic, cultural, and intellectual permeability of national borders is eroding the ability of inept or venal governments to mask humanitarian emergencies and to escape international attention.
- These factors also enable disadvantaged groups in countries suffering from internal conflicts or repression, such as in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Turkey, to press for better treatment and self-determination and to solicit outside support and intervention.

- The spread of globalization, concern about human rights, and the increasing numbers and influence of nongovernmental organizations around the world heighten public awareness of humanitarian emergencies.
- Humanitarian emergencies provoked by genocide and other mass killings and expulsions are likely to evoke strong political, NGO, and public pressures on outside governments to intervene.

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### Looking Ahead

#### Capacities for Humanitarian Military Assistance

The Kosovo crisis and the heightened public interest in humanitarian response will place growing demands on military capabilities for humanitarian assistance. However, the capabilities of donor governments' military forces to participate in humanitarian emergencies have not changed substantially in recent years.

- The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, and Russia remain the only countries with the long-range military airlift capability required to deliver bulk humanitarian aid in large, sudden emergencies, or where humanitarian access is denied to large populations, most recently in Kosovo.
- The ability of developing countries to participate in humanitarian operations varies widely; most countries lack specialized logistic, transport, engineering, military police, and medical personnel to sustain such forces.
- In the last few years, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, among other states, have launched training activities to enhance African capabilities to respond to humanitarian crises and peacekeeping challenges. The US African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) seeks to train several rapidly deployable, interoperable battalions from stable, democratic countries in Africa to a common standard based on NATO peacekeeping doctrine and procedures.
- Regional-based peacekeeping efforts, such as the Nigeria-led ECOMOG peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, are also becoming increasingly prominent.

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### Looking Ahead

#### Capacities of International Relief Organizations

The international response to humanitarian emergencies is carried out through a loosely organized and loosely coordinated network of inter-governmental and nongovernmental relief organizations. These are supported by governments that provide financial and in-kind resources, undertake political and diplomatic initiatives, and, in some instances, dispatch military forces for humanitarian assistance or forceful intervention on behalf of

civilian populations. The overall capacity of international relief organizations to respond to humanitarian emergencies has improved modestly over time, but problems are likely to persist:

- There has been some progress in strengthening UN agencies' capacities for pre-crisis preparedness and rapid response over the last decade. In recent years, humanitarian agencies have developed several networks and interactive databases that have significantly improved their abilities to provide assistance.
- Limited coordination among the various humanitarian agencies, however, continues to hinder the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. OCHA, for example, has had difficulty establishing a coordinating role, despite the 1997 Secretariat reforms pertaining to humanitarian response.

### ***Relief Agencies Wary of Operating in Hostile Environments***

As humanitarian relief workers are put at increasing risk from local governments and political authorities, and outside states provide uneven security, many aid workers have called for greater use of outside military force to ensure their physical security.

- Relief agencies received protection in Somalia, after the introduction of UNITAF, and in Haiti and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Agencies received some military assistance, but not protection, in eastern Zaire after July 1994, and received no protection in eastern Zaire/ DROC in 1996-97.
- Humanitarian agencies receive no protection in Angola now that the UN peacekeeping operation has virtually shut down, while the level of protection in Sierra Leone and Liberia has varied.

Overall, relief agencies have come to doubt whether the UN, regional organizations, or international military coalition forces will provide adequate security for ongoing humanitarian operations. Therefore, most humanitarian organizations have begun to prepare themselves better to work in hostile environments: they are buying thick-skinned vehicles; taking security awareness and defensive driving courses; hiring security directors from among retired Western military officers, and acquiring more security guards. Even the ICRC-which usually will not accept any military escort-now sometimes hires local guards for its own facilities and equipment.

In the absence of adequate security, increasing numbers of UN agencies, NGOs and the ICRC sometimes temporarily withdraw from particularly dangerous situations. In the 1990s, relief workers have pulled out of Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, eastern DROC, Liberia, northwest Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia due to increased security risks.

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## Looking Ahead

### Availability of Food Aid

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that in 1998, food aid totaled 8 million metric tons (MMt)--up 10 percent from the previous year--of which emergency food aid amounted to almost 3 MMt. The increase, following a four-year decline, was due to higher food aid needs, particularly in Asia; a bumper world grain harvest in 1997/98; high stock levels in donor countries; low grain prices; and a commitment on the part of the major donors to increase their food aid donations. **Total food aid**-which includes food aid for humanitarian emergencies as well as for chronic food deficits-remains far below the peak level of 17.3 million metric tons in 1993 (see figure 7)-when demand also approached a peak.

- The United States and the EC were the largest contributors, providing 4 MMt and 2 MMt, respectively. Deliveries consisted of 7 MMt of cereals and 1 MMt tons of other commodities.

According to the most recent USDA estimates, total world grain production (wheat, coarse grains, and milled rice) for 1999/2000 will be 1.840 billion tons, down from 1.848 last year and down from the record 1997/98 harvest of 1.876 billion. This is still a bumper crop, with wheat at 570 million tons, coarse grains at 880 million, and a forecast record 390 million ton rice crop. World oilseed production (soybeans, cottonseed, peanut oil, sunflower seed oil, etc.) is forecast at a record 298 million tons.

Nevertheless, a drawdown of world grain reserves accumulated during the last three years may be necessary to meet projected 1999/2000 consumption needs. Slightly tighter world grain supplies for 1999/2000 are not likely to have a significant impact on the availability of **emergency food aid**, the supply of which can be boosted by the major food donating countries in response to an unexpected increase in worldwide emergency food aid needs.

- People targeted for emergency food aid in countries where the host government either denies access to organizations or diverts some of the aid for its own needs

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## Outlook

The overall "demand" for emergency humanitarian assistance through December 2000 is likely to exceed the willingness of major donor countries to respond. Governments will continue to prioritize humanitarian emergencies according to their national interests. Only some "supply" components of humanitarian assistance-notably food-are likely to be adequate. The capacity of international humanitarian aid organizations to respond will continue to be limited by resources and hostile environments.

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## Political Will

The decisions of countries to respond to humanitarian emergencies will depend upon whether or not their national interests outweigh competing domestic priorities, a potentially negative political reaction at home, and the dangers and substantial costs involved in providing such assistance.

- While democratic governments will continue to respond to humanitarian emergencies, their willingness to undertake major humanitarian operations-particularly forceful interventions-will remain constrained.
- Over the next few years, the perception of success or failure of NATO's military interventions in the Balkans, particularly the costly humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Kosovo, will establish a benchmark for subsequent humanitarian intervention.

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## Funding

National governments-principally the OECD countries-provide the bulk of financial resources for emergency humanitarian relief. These funds are provided to UN organizations, the ICRC, NGOs, and recipient governments through bilateral grants. The data provided by various international agencies concerning funding for humanitarian emergencies is fragmentary, often noncomparable, and sometimes contradictory (see Table 1.)

Although overall funding for ongoing humanitarian emergencies has probably temporarily spiked upward owing to the crises in Central America and Kosovo, the longer-term funding trend is likely to continue downward absent new emergencies. Hurricane Mitch and Kosovo-like the earlier cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina or Rwanda-probably elicited considerable resources that normally would not go into the humanitarian assistance pipeline.

**Table 1**  
**Annual Official Development Assistance (ODA)**  
**and Humanitarian Emergency Aid Provided by**  
**Development Assistance Committee Members**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
ODA	58.1	60.1	60.8	56.5	59.2	58.9	55.4	48.3
Humanitarian Aid	2.5	4.8	4.7	5.2	>6.0	>4.2	>3.8	~
(Percent of ODA)	(4.3)	(8.0)	(7.7)	(9.2)	(~10)	(~ 7)	(~ 6.8)	~

At the same time, there is evidence that the preoccupation with the Balkans is at least temporarily threatening the overall resources available for responding to other humanitarian emergencies. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is concerned that support for Kosovo is diverting relief efforts from protracted humanitarian emergencies in other countries. For example, in 1998, 93 percent of the UN appeal for Kosovo was funded, but only 41 percent of the Great Lakes appeal was funded--down from 84 percent in 1997. The same pattern of largesse toward Kosovo and parsimony toward Sub-Saharan Africa is evident so far this year according to the UN High Commissioner.

Funding of UN Consolidated Appeals--one component of overall funding--declined from 79 percent in 1994 to 54 percent in 1998 (see figure 8). As of early June 1999, the UN had received only 30 percent of the \$1.7 billion requested for humanitarian emergencies this year.

In the future, donor countries are likely to focus their funding for humanitarian response even more on crises of strategic or regional importance:

- Populations in need in countries that are strategically significant for one or more major outside powers may receive more humanitarian assistance than others which are as or more needy but less strategically significant.

Absent several major new emergencies, the longer-term funding trend is likely to continue along a path of gradual decline:

- Government funding is likely to decline for long-lasting conflicts where attempts at political resolution continue to fail, particularly if they are not in strategically important countries.
- There continues to be interest on the part of some major donors in shifting funds from emergency assistance to post-conflict reconstruction or "peacebuilding" assistance. The World Bank has also expanded its post-conflict programming assistance. Should more major donors move in this direction, funding for traditional emergency response probably would decline.

In the future, major donations from the private sector are likely to provide an increasing share of the funding for humanitarian emergencies. Continuing economic growth in some developed countries enables private organizations and wealthy individuals to play larger roles in funding a number of public purposes, including large-scale humanitarian assistance. In some countries, such as Nigeria, there is increasing pressure for foreign investors to provide "preemptive" humanitarian support.

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## Footnote

1. The figures cited in this paper for the total number of people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance worldwide were provided by the US Committee for Refugees (USCR). Because this paper focuses only on those emergencies in which 300,000 people or more people are in need, the totals listed for individual countries will not add up to the USCR's worldwide total of roughly 35 million.