

complex and unsafe environments, humanitarian actors, in conjunction with host countries, are left largely responsible for the management of insecure refugee camps. It is this situation which led the UNHCR to develop a "ladder of options" concept⁷ in 1999 which proposes that consideration be given to the deployment of international military forces to insecure refugee camp environments. It was recognized that such a deployment would require strong political convergence among states and would likely only occur under exceptional circumstances. As yet, this proposal has not been followed-up, as many, particularly in the military field, remain concerned about the implications of such engagement.

The seminar held at Eynsham Hall, near Oxford England, in July 2001 was an effort aimed at determining under what circumstances international military forces would be deployed to insecure refugee camp environments, and what mandate, training and capacity would be required to undertake such a task. To better analyse these questions, seminar participants were asked to focus on three scenarios, and to consider where the presence of international military forces might be usefully employed to assist humanitarian agencies and host states responsible for camp management. Each group included military officials from both host and troop contributing countries, and representatives from the diplomatic, police, UN and NGO communities.

III. Considerations around the deployment of military forces

Seminar participants spent a considerable amount of time considering the appropriateness of deploying international military actors to refugee camp environments. Initially, much of this discussion was tied to concerns about the use of military actors in humanitarian crises writ large. Participants noted that the use of international military forces in response to humanitarian situations is a relatively recent phenomenon, one that raises many concerns among all actors. Humanitarian agencies and NGOs in particular often regard such deployments with skepticism, perceiving such actions to stem from decisions made by political actors, largely in western countries, responding to the public and media's call to "do something" in response to a humanitarian crisis. However, such actors often fail to address the political or other root causes of the crisis. In addition, some participants noted that, more often than not, the tasks military forces undertake when engaged in a humanitarian crisis does not focus on their value added. For example, military tasks tend to focus on aid delivery as opposed to enhancing physical security and protecting civilian populations from violence. Participants recognized that the military are not the appropriate tool to address long-term humanitarian problems, not least because armed forces are not considered by the parties on the ground to be "neutral", thus potentially jeopardizing the refugees and humanitarian organizations they were hoping to assist. To ensure military and humanitarian goals are achieving the desired result of alleviating a humanitarian crisis, all actors must therefore agree to a well-defined and coherent policy on the effective and appropriate use of the military in support of humanitarian goals.

⁷ "The Security, and Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Refugee Camps and Settlements", January 14, 1999 Report to the Executive Committee of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.