

Although their work is clearly vital, beneficial and legitimate, I would like to conclude with a few remarks on how NGOs might work towards finding their niche as peacebuilders. First, consultations and cooperation between nation-states, international organizations and NGOs must be furthered. Evidently, international civil societal efforts have a limit and the community of nations must improve its performance in interventionist operations. To date, several examples of increased consultations stand out as being steps in the right direction. Several like-minded states - including Canada, Norway and the Netherlands - have undertaken extensive consultations between foreign policy practitioners and NGOs. For its part, the US - which has been negligent in its financing of international organizations - has demonstrated some generosity in its funding of NGOs, such as the Red Cross.²¹ In addition, an observer has noted that the UN Security Council has begun to conduct extensive consultations with NGOs.²² Hopefully in the next decade, the increased demand placed upon NGOs can be matched by an equal level of consultation and cooperation. With consultations and cooperation, the trend toward fractured peace efforts, interagency rivalries and unstable relationship may be ended. Second, NGOs must make the case that nation-states and international organization cannot withdraw further from their responsibility to find sustained and comprehensive military/political solutions to the conflicts tearing apart the world today.²³ The capabilities of many NGOs have reached their limits and a further withdrawal by political actors may further exasperate difficulties and weaken the reputation of NGOs as peacebuilders. In an effort to address the difficult issue of politicization, a final step NGOs may take is to learn from their experience in the past decade and improve their understanding of the political environments in which they work. Amid the difficult environment of contemporary conflict, NGOs must find a way to preserve their impartiality. With good fortune, the lessons of the 1990s will assist both the international community and NGOs in securing a more peaceful and secure world in the new century.

²¹ According to Ignatieff, in 1995 the US contributed \$170 million to the Red Cross.

²² David Malone, President of the International Peace Academy, Address to the University of Alberta, 5 November 1999.

²³ Barbara Shenstone, "Civilian Roles in Peace Support Operations."