

I. Introduction:

International concern regarding insecurity in refugee camps has heightened during the past decade. Events in the Great Lakes of Africa in the mid-1990s and more recently in Macedonia, West Timor, Guinea, and Tanzania have underscored the challenges which can be associated with maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, particularly, but not exclusively, when armed elements and combatants move alongside refugees. Failure to effectively address such circumstances can have important implications for regional stability, and for the safety and security of civilians in and around those environments, including humanitarian workers assisting them.

Following therefore on experiences in the field and discussions in the UN Security Council and General Assembly over the past several years, as well as in the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping and the Executive Committee of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, attention has recently been focussed on identifying practical strategies for addressing serious insecurity in refugee camp environments. In this context, and as a follow-up to a March 2000 seminar on the "Potential Role of International Police in Refugee Camp Security" hosted by Canada, a seminar was co-organized by Canada and the United Kingdom from July 10-12, 2001 to clarify the role military forces might likewise have in dealing with serious insecurity in and around refugee camp environments. Recognizing some strides had been made on these issues of late, emphasis was placed on further elaborating on doctrine and seeking to clarify and build consensus among military actors and the humanitarian community on what appropriate roles regional or international military forces might assume.

Participants included representatives from troop contributing countries with military and police peacekeeping experience and national refugee camp protection responsibilities, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Red Cross movement, and the international NGO community.

The following report summarizes the main areas of discussion and recommendations that emerged from the two-day meeting. It also identifies possible ways forward as expressed by the participants. The report is divided into the following sections:

- Background/Context
- Considerations around the deployment of military forces
- Possible roles for military actors
- Recommendations
- Next Steps