

eventual resolution might be overtaken by simple containment. As outlined by Mark Duffield, the internationalization of public welfare is due to the collapse of effective governance.⁴⁴ This internationalization, however, comes via the sub-contracting to NGOs, a reflection of the change in governance in aid providing states. But one can argue that this devolution might not be a tactical form of privatization, meaning done for the sake of cost and efficiency, but rather as a strategic privatization where the developed world is slowly disengaging itself from not just the realm of assistance, but also of resolution. Humanitarianism itself would be a "humanitarian alibi", activity performed that avoids essential political measures made by states.⁴⁵

The provision of outside military force is usually seen as a sign of political commitment towards resolving conflicts. As shown above, the intrusion of politics is a difficult issue for humanitarians. Nonetheless, it is also clear for conflict resolution to occur in the current humanitarian context, one cannot employ the Cold War mindset where humanitarianism and political activity were isolated from each other. For Thomas G. Weiss, "...there is no longer any need to ask whether politics and humanitarian action intersect. The real question is how this intersection can be managed to ensure more humanized politics and more effective humanitarian action".⁴⁶ But turning to the private sector for security in the face of the retreat of the "public sector" does not bring any improvement in the management of Weiss' intersection because political commitment has been removed entirely.

Reinforcing the security of humanitarians via private means will certainly protect humanitarians and facilitate operations, but at the cost of minimal applied diplomatic pressure. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Mercenarism, Enrique Ballesteros, complains that the actions of PSCs such as EO leave the deep-lying problems untouched in the client states.⁴⁷ Yet, while their activities certainly have political implications, PSCs themselves indicate that they steer clear of client state politics. It is similarly difficult to contemplate NGOs attempting to resolve conflicts due to either a desire to maintain the humanitarian ethic, or failing that, possessing the requisite political authority to offer carrots or use sticks when needed. In short, placing humanitarianism increasingly in the hands of private actors and outside any larger diplomatic framework may reinforce the trend of treating humanitarian activity as a sign of commitment and a cure-all, thus preventing many conflicts from reaching the frontpage and receiving much needed international attention.

⁴⁴ Mark Duffield, "The Political Economy of Internal War: Asset Transfer, Complex Emergencies and International Aid," in Joanna Macrae and Anthony Zwi, eds., War & Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp. 64-65.

⁴⁵ Larry Minear, "Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping Operations," background paper for the UNITAR/IPS/NIRA Singapore Conference, 24-26 February 1997. See also Cornelio Sommaruga, "Humanitarian action and peace-keeping operations," International Review of the Red Cross (No. 317, March 1997), pp. 178-186.

⁴⁶ Thomas G. Weiss, "Principles, Politics, and Humanitarian Action," Ethics and International Affairs 13 (1999), p. 22.

⁴⁷ See David J. Francis, "Mercenary intervention in Sierra Leone: Providing national security or international exploitation?" Third World Quarterly 20 (April 1999), pp. 319-338.