

# Improving Peace Operations

Carolyn Shaw

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## **Improving Peace Operations**

Anderson, Mary B. *Do No Harm: How aid can support peace - or war*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999.

Chopra, Jarat, ed. *The Politics of Peace Maintenance*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

*Do No Harm* by Mary B. Anderson and *The Politics of Peace Maintenance* edited by Jarat Chopra examine the complexities of peace operations in the world today in an effort to improve various components of these missions. Anderson's project focuses specifically on humanitarian relief efforts, incorporating the many lessons learned by aid workers in a variety of settings, including Tajikistan, Lebanon and India. Anderson's stated purpose is to help aid workers avoid inadvertently doing harm and to promote capacities for peace by increasing awareness of the context in which aid is being provided. In contrast to Anderson, Chopra's volume covers a wider range of peacekeeping activities, attempting to move beyond first and second generation peacekeeping operations. Each contributor evaluates a component of Chopra's proposed "peace maintenance" operations, including organizing civil administration, reestablishing law and order and providing military security. Both books provide a number of useful insights into the challenging tasks that peacekeepers face today.

The first half of Anderson's book is analytical. She outlines the characteristics of recent conflicts (Burundi, Somalia, Bosnia and others) and evaluates the impact of humanitarian aid on these conflicts. She states that it is important for aid workers to be familiar with the context of the conflict in order to recognize when institutions, experiences and values can serve to promote peace instead of increasing tensions. For example, a shared concern for the well-being of children may draw neighbors together even when they support opposing military forces. A common interest in maintaining the local infrastructure may lead to an implicit agreement by both sides not to attack electrical and water resources. By focusing on common concerns, aid workers can reinforce connections instead of divisions in communities. Anderson also evaluates the impact of aid on conflict through resource transfers, listing several well-known problems including theft and dependency. Anderson then provides several useful tips for handling these problems. The chapter on implicit ethical messages highlights an important impact of aid that is rarely addressed. Anderson notes that the attitudes and actions of aid workers can actually sabotage their efforts to help people in conflict zones. Use of armed guards to protect personnel and goods legitimates the use of force even if it is for a good purpose. Attitudes of disrespect for other aid agencies suggest that it is not necessary to cooperate with those you do not like. Suspicion of local populations limits interaction possibilities. Anderson states that awareness of these implicit messages can help aid workers reduce tension between themselves and the local population. She recognizes that some modes of operation (i.e., militarized protection of aid shipments) are difficult to change, but offers several suggestions that have been tried successfully in the field.

The second half of Anderson's book explores the operations of five different agencies and the efforts they have made to promote local capacities for peace. One of the most successful examples of an aid agency being able to fulfill its mandate and promote peace is the case of UNICEF in Lebanon. UNICEF's devotion to the education and health of all children in Lebanon gave them a credibility with all of the factions and allowed the organization to operate more widely and with less obstruction than any other agency in the country. The other cases in Tajikistan, Burundi, India and Somalia also provide excellent examples of agencies using local capacities to promote peace.

Although Anderson provides many practical examples of ways that aid workers can interact beneficially with local populations, she does not address how humanitarian work might be better integrated with the military and diplomatic aspects of intervention. A brief discussion of how other actors in the crisis arena might also benefit from these lessons learned by aid workers would round out this work nicely.

Whereas Anderson provides explicit advice to improve field operations for humanitarian assistance, the Chopra volume focuses on conceptual development. In the first chapter, Chopra introduces the concept of "peace maintenance" as a new model for intervention. He argues that current operations are in need of a political framework. Only political oversight can coordinate military, diplomatic, humanitarian and civil administrative efforts. Each of the volume's contributors elaborate on one aspect of peace maintenance. The critical element of establishing political authority is examined by W. Andy Knight. Knight argues that the key ingredients to establishing political authority include an international mandate, harnessing of political will and financial resources, rapid reaction capability and a permanent UN military force. He notes that a few reforms have been made, but the UN still has a long way to go before becoming more effective in this area. Sally Morphet discusses organizing civil administration in the context of the Congo, West Irian, Namibia, Western Sahara and Cambodia. Some of the more notable lessons learned from these experiences include: the need to assess the parties' readiness for peace before the operation begins; the usefulness of joint mechanisms such as courts of appeal; and the effectiveness of dissemination of information about the mission's mandate.

Mark Plunkett presents an excellent description of what specific actions must be taken in order to help reestablish law and order in failed states. He advocates a "justice package" which includes such practical components as a body of criminal law based on universal principles, a civil police force, international judges, prosecutors and defenders that can train local professionals, and correctional facilities. Plunkett notes that although such a package would be costly, it is not as expensive as military hardware and it is critical for the long-term success of a peace maintenance operation. Antonio Donini explores the role of humanitarianism in peace maintenance. He notes that much state to state aid is becoming privatized. He believes the benefits of aid no longer going through the government are questionable. His portrayal of contract and media hungry NGOs contrasts rather starkly with the portrait painted by Mary Anderson. The element of providing military security is addressed by Richard P. Cousens. He argues that military commanders will approach the task of peace maintenance in much the same way as they would war fighting. They expect to have a cohesive campaign plan linked to strategic

goals and a unified command. Cousens notes that peace maintenance does not require military commanders to significantly alter their doctrine because peace maintenance requires the same elements that commanders have already established. Clement E. Adibe shifts the focus away from the peace mission itself to the people it is designed to serve. He lays out four conditions which promote the acceptance of external authority in failed states: first, the authority must provide for the basic socio-economic needs of the people; second, it must use coercion responsibly to punish those who disobey and to deter potential offenders; third, there must be legitimate authority and fourth, the population must be socialized to accept foreign authority. Adibe rightly notes that these are not easy conditions for the UN to meet and thus it has struggled to maintain authority in recent conflict situations.

The Chopra volume concludes with a critique by Duane Bratt who accurately notes several of the weaknesses in the components of peace maintenance. He lists a number of arguments against a permanent UN military force. He further notes that the UN has not made any efforts to reform its practice in civil administration despite recent failures and the lessons "learned" pointed out by Sally Morphet. In contrast to Anderson who looks at both large and small relief organizations, the focus in the Chopra volume is on the UN. Most of the contributors acknowledge the limitations of the UN, but propose fixes rather than seeking alternative institutional solutions. Some of the authors acknowledge that joint operations with other institutions would be possible, but do not adequately pursue this option. Whereas the Anderson book had considerable practical advice for those in the field, much of the Chopra volume is too abstract to operationalize.

Both of these books will appeal to a variety of readers. The Anderson book provides a good hands-on text for humanitarian aid workers and is also appropriate for an introductory course in international conflict. Her examination of less well-known organizations provides new insights into the possibilities available to humanitarian relief efforts. Her book is an eye opener for anyone who has not thought about the potentially harmful effects of humanitarian aid. The Chopra volume is innovative in its discussion of the concept of peace maintenance. It helps to further the debates among academics as well as UN policy implementors on more effective measures to restore peace. Chopra's careful consideration of each aspect of peace maintenance, including those that are not often considered (humanitarian aid and the local population), provides insights into areas that need greater development to achieve success in the future.

***Carolyn Shaw***

*University of Texas*