
HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Even if the development of relationships between NGOs, diplomats, civilians and military forces is not new, the recent concepts of “duty to interfere” and “responsibility to protect” have paved the way for what is now called “humanitarian diplomacy”.

Since military operations took place in Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur and Sahel, crisis resolution has been constantly evolving and now largely affects the relationships between military forces, diplomats and non-governmental organizations on the scene of action. As a matter of fact, the involvement of humanitarian organizations, medias, large multinational companies, private security firms and non-state actors on a regular basis raises the issue of having the various, State and non-State actors cohabitate, co-operate and integrate in the theatre, often with incompatible objectives.

Many tasks assigned to military forces, peace enforcement tasks, humanitarian assistance, and “nation building” are now increasingly contradictory and civil populations living in affected countries are the first victims of such situations, along with humanitarian workers.

The challenges our world is facing, local and international armed conflicts, major pandemics, violations of human rights, major migratory movements, corruption fighting, terrorism and the various forms of criminality, as well as natural and man-made disasters, can no longer be met at diplomatic level only. This is why a number of Western countries have been trying to find solutions implementing political, military and humanitarian strategies and increasingly delegating their powers, together with significant financial assets, to multilateral organizations and international NGOs, thus actually tasking humanitarian actors.

In the last 20 years, actors involved have progressively understood they highly depend on each other and on their mutual relationships. Many harmonization attempts have been made but no overall guidelines could be developed, because each crisis is unique.

A new approach is thus necessary if some form of control is to be implemented in crisis areas.

With this objective in mind, the Order of Malta and the French Navy, who share the same concerns, have decided to hold this meeting with internationally recognized personalities representing the military and civil institutions involved in humanitarian actions, in order to define the practices and courses of action to be implemented by the various actors in the theatre and delineate the aims and ethics of these types of deployments.



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