INTERAGENCY REVIEW OF U.S. GOVERNMENT CIVILIAN HUMANITARIAN & TRANSITION PROGRAMS

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SECTION I: OVERVIEW

Background

Summary of Conclusions

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Background to the Review

The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 created a new legal framework for better integrating arms control, public diplomacy and foreign assistance within US foreign policy. As it came into force April 1, 1999, the Secretary of State assumed direct authority over the Administrator of USAID. The Secretary provides foreign policy guidance to all U.S. foreign assistance programs. Operationally, USAID remains an independent statutory agency with a separate appropriation.

In line with her authorities, and concerned over the effectiveness of U.S. humanitarian response to Mitch and Kosovo, the Secretary of State commissioned an interagency policy review of humanitarian and transition programs. In the spring of 1999, representatives of the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator's Office conducted extensive discussions on the scope and purpose of the review. The review began in early July and concluded in December.

Co-chaired by Morton H. Halperin, Director of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff, and James Michel, Counselor to USAID, the review's general mandate was spelled out in a June 4, 1999 memorandum from the Secretary to the Administrator:

> "State and USAID will also review and make recommendations on humanitarian and transition assistance policy and programs, to identify concrete policy and organizational options for making this assistance most effective. The review will be conducted in consultation with the NSC staff and other relevant agencies."

The review was charged with answering four questions:

- Whether the current allocation of humanitarian responsibilities between the State Department and USAID encourages coherent leadership on humanitarian issues in our foreign policy-making process;
- Whether current institutional arrangements result in efficient operational coordination;
- Whether these arrangements adequately leverage USG humanitarian influence within international fora and in our dealings with other governments; and
- Whether these arrangements build effective interlinkage among emergency, transitional, and sustainable development programs.

The review's work was conducted by a Core Group comprised of staff from the Department of State, USAID and the NSC, aided extensively by the staff of the National Intelligence Council

and the Office of Management and Budget. The Core Group also consulted with the Department of Defense, FEMA and other concerned federal agencies.

Section I of the following report summarizes major issues and findings and concludes with a general discussion of the different choices for moving ahead.

Section II lays out three categories of options:

- Discrete measures to enhance State-USAID coordination;
- Options that clarify who is in charge, realign existing authorities and institutional arrangements, but stop short of actual merger; and
- Consolidation of State-USAID humanitarian and transitional programs.

For each option, the Core group worked collectively to devise the most feasible and robust possibility. The report does not contain recommendations. The Secretary may choose, after consulting with the USAID Administrator and the National Security Advisor, to move ahead on certain immediately actionable options. More robust and complex options will require a formal interagency review and Administration decision.

At key points during this review, InterAction, the Overseas Development Council, the US Institute for Peace and the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance each generously hosted outreach sessions with facilitated input from outside policy experts, emergency relief and development NGOs, human rights advocates and Congressional staff.

Summary of Conclusions

Since the end of the Cold War, the foreign policy stakes of U.S. civilian humanitarian programs have risen significantly, driven by profound changes in the complex crises themselves (detailed below) and the prominent place these now occupy in our overall foreign policy. The humanitarian factor has become central to senior policy makers' deliberations over U.S. foreign policy priorities and possible diplomatic, economic or military interventions to ease crises and facilitate humanitarian relief.

As our global humanitarian interests have become more complex and vital to our foreign policy, the need has grown for the USG to have unified, coherent humanitarian leadership. That is not to imply that humanitarian considerations will, or should, dictate foreign policy outcomes. Rather, USG leadership is needed to guarantee that humanitarian considerations are present and an active force within the foreign policy-making process. As we've witnessed in Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor, Sudan and elsewhere, major foreign policy challenges typically feature, at their very center, complex humanitarian emergencies that demand coherence in our policy response.

Leadership requires a strong humanitarian voice at internal senior-level policy deliberations and in external discussions with other donors, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); effective integration of humanitarian, transition and development programs; and efficient operational coordination across USG agencies. Leadership is essential if we are to use our full political/diplomatic leverage with the UN and other donors to ensure adequate burden-sharing. (In most instances today, more humanitarian assistance is provided through multilateral mechanisms than through bilateral efforts.)

At present, widely admired U.S. humanitarian efforts are recognized as an indispensable global instrument to save lives, minimize mass human suffering and encourage effective transitions in crisis situations. USAID has achieved an outstanding record of response to natural disasters. PRM has achieved an outstanding record of response to refugee flows. Both agencies also have substantial programs to respond to complex humanitarian emergencies and to internally displaced persons (IDPs), through both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, PRM primarily through multilateral contributions and USAID through bilateral.

Our humanitarian achievements notwithstanding, we can and should do better to empower the humanitarian agenda and overcome the fragmentation of USG humanitarian affairs. Internal conflict victims now figure as a major and growing humanitarian challenge, yet they have traditionally been a secondary or indirect priority for both State and USAID. Neither agency has a clear lead responsibility for addressing this humanitarian problem, even though it now exceeds that posed by refugees. (The United Nations is also wrestling with the fact that no UN agency has clear responsibility for IDPs.) Increasingly, complex emergencies generate a complex mixture of refugees and internally displaced. However, neither BHR's natural disaster competencies and primarily bilateral response nor PRM's multilateral emphasis and refugee response provide the basis for a comprehensive approach.

Equally important, at critical moments during recent crises in Kosovo, Mitch and Timor, it has been unclear which operational agency has been responsible for leading the USG humanitarian response. (See the Kosovo and Mitch case studies.)

The Afghanistan case study details how ad hoc mid-level coordination within the USG was insufficient when important humanitarian policy disputes surfaced. Coherent, expeditious resolution of disputes was difficult to achieve, in the absence of senior humanitarian leadership. Instead, important unilateral decisions were taken without adequate interagency consideration.

In the Sudan instance (see case study), a single humanitarian voice may have increased the likelihood that humanitarian considerations would have been more systematically integrated into Sudan policy deliberations.

Overall, the current split between State and USAID's civilian emergency programs has impeded coherent leadership on humanitarian matters, domestically and abroad, and complicated the coordination of civilian and military humanitarian efforts. The humanitarian voice in senior USG policy-making has often been absent at critical moments, such that the humanitarian implications of political-military choices in crisis situations do not receive adequate consideration. Overlapping bureaucratic mandates and duplication of effort hinder both the operational efficiency of our humanitarian programs, especially with respect to internally displaced persons, and the interlinkage of programs.

Over the past two decades, strong bipartisan support within the U.S. Congress has provided flexibility for our present humanitarian response mechanisms. Any future steps to strengthen the USG humanitarian response must rest on early bipartisan Hill consultations and a special effort to do no harm to existing capacities.

A unified humanitarian leadership can take different forms, and there are divergent views as to whether it can be achieved through enhanced coordination or requires much more robust institutional reorganization. In any case, the central aim of creating unified leadership is to strengthen consideration of the humanitarian implications of political-military choices in crisis situations, including the mandate and role of external military interventions. This essential step will not, it must be said, necessarily guarantee there is always adequate high-level political will to take the appropriate political-military decisions necessary to advance USG humanitarian interests. Ultimate decision responsibility rests with political authorities above the officials who manage our humanitarian programs. This reality notwithstanding, our top political authorities will be far better equipped to reach decisions that best advance U.S. humanitarian interests when they are served by unified humanitarian leadership.

In brief, the answers to the four lead questions of the review are:

- The current structure results in less than coherent leadership on complex humanitarian issues in our foreign policy making process.

- We do achieve effective operational coordination, but only through significant effort in a context of continued mandate overlap and some duplication of effort.

- We do not optimally leverage our humanitarian influence abroad, in proportion to the level of effort and resources expended and the general prestige attached to our programs.

- There is inadequate interlinkage among emergency, transitional and development programs.

Given these conclusions, the present status quo is not an optimal basis for promoting U.S. humanitarian interests. We can and should do better. A concerted, senior-level effort is needed to weigh the options outlined in this report, decide upon an appropriate course of reform and begin to execute it.

The Core Group's report, in line with the Secretary's tasking, concentrates overwhelmingly upon the civilian component of our humanitarian response and hence only partially treats the issue of civil-military coordination. (See, for instance, the proposed priorities for the Senior Advisory Council, outlined in the options section.) A next logical step would be an in-depth look at the means to strengthen civil-military collaboration in humanitarian affairs.

1. The rising foreign policy stakes of U.S. humanitarian programs

The changing nature of crises

Today's crisis differs fundamentally from the crisis of ten years ago, takes place in a far different global context, and calls for new thinking and approaches in our humanitarian affairs.

Aggregate demand: In the last decade, the number of complex emergencies has trebled (to 24 today, affecting 35 million) while their magnitude and costs have crept upward. Annual U.S. humanitarian assistance commitments now exceed $2.5 billion. Experts estimate that the global demand for humanitarian relief will not subside, and rather that we should anticipate more crises, ever greater demand for humanitarian assistance in the future, and tough resource tradeoffs that potentially 'crowd out' second tier, chronic crises. (See Annex 1, 'Global Humanitarian Emergencies: Trends and projections, 1999-2000,' prepared by the National Intelligence Council.)

Humanitarian intervention vs. respect for sovereignty. In the 1990s, the common commitment among democratic states to respond to humanitarian disasters deepened. The United States took on a global humanitarian role and mobilized diplomatic, humanitarian, and sometimes military resources to respond to an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises. We tasked the United Nations to meet the needs of millions of displaced in ongoing internal conflicts. Our leadership, with respect both to international norms and commitment of resources and personnel, has been essential.

When the USG has intervened on humanitarian and human rights grounds in major crises (Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia, northern Iraq), exceptional political and military actions were essential to advance critical humanitarian interests. In several instances, a policy decision was taken within a multilateral context not to accept sovereign boundaries as a barrier to intervention. Cumulatively, these policy choices have added a complex new dimension, political and legal, to international humanitarian programs. The ramifications of this historic shift reach well beyond any individual case and will greatly shape deliberations over future crises.

High domestic political sensitivity to USG crisis response. Because of intensified media coverage and accelerated communications directly from inside crisis zones, the harsh realities of mass human suffering are now transmitted swiftly into multiple official channels -- and America's living rooms. As seen during Haiti, Mitch, Kosovo, and the Turkish and Taiwanese earthquakes, these visual images can stimulate intense domestic pressure to do more, better, and more quickly.

These crises can also prompt a sudden surge of popular interest in making donations to U.S. and international NGOs and USG-supported relief efforts. If not competently managed and donations are seriously delayed, blame can quickly redound to USG officials. Though the USG gained some recent experience in managing public outreach (e.g. for Hurricane Mitch and the Turkish earthquake relief efforts), both State and USAID officials freely acknowledge that

neither has strong competencies in this area (cf. FEMA's expertise) and that this function of the USG civilian international humanitarian response requires significant strengthening.

In those mega-crises where the President's prestige is at stake and media scrutiny is intense, the White House can be expected to identify a special individual and mechanism to handle media, public outreach and coordination of USG civilian and military humanitarian programs. A high level White House official, reflecting on the President's decision in both Mitch and Kosovo to designate a senior humanitarian coordinator to bring order to the USG humanitarian response, emphasized that a more unified humanitarian leadership of USG civilian humanitarian programs would not necessarily change White House calculations during future crises. Unified leadership of civilian humanitarian programs would improve the effectiveness of USG response and be welcomed by the White House, however the White House would likely still assert its prerogative during mega-crises.

Changed warfare and the massive challenge of internally displaced persons. Today, most but not all humanitarian crises stem from internal ethnic wars in which combatants systematically generate mass flows of refugees and internally displaced persons as a strategy of war (IDPs are now estimated at over 20 million). And in the course of a single conflict, as witnessed in Kosovo and East Timor, a displaced person one day can be a refugee the next, and shortly thereafter a displaced person yet again.

Against this backdrop, the traditional programmatic distinction between refugees and displaced persons has become obsolete. UNHCR no longer restricts itself to dealing solely with refugees: when instructed by the UN Secretary General to serve IDPs, it does so. The body of U.S. and international law governing treatment of refugees remains in force, but nothing comparable has been developed for IDPs. In the case of the USG, State and USAID continue to struggle with their respective roles vis-a-vis displaced persons and refugees, and in some instances serve the same target population through the same NGOs and international organizations.[1]

Emergent human rights agenda. These complex emergencies have also forced the international community to confront urgent human rights imperatives, including how to cope with evidence of war crimes and genocide, and how to avoid making relief supplies instruments of repression by those with superior forces. These challenges increasingly coexist - in acute tension - with relief operations, and have generated an ongoing debate over standards of confidentiality, respective mandates, and how best to integrate human rights and relief functions.

Critical today is the protection of humanitarian programs and staff. Increasingly, USG officials, NGO field workers, and displaced and refugee populations confront grave security risks which, in turn, have generated higher demand on the USG and others for better protection, improved risk assessment, better communications and coordinated action, training, and a more reliable information flow from the field to senior policy makers. At present, no locus within the USG

[1] This issue is examined in depth by former OFDA Director James Kunder in a recent policy paper commissioned by the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement and the U.S. Committee for Refugees, titled 'The U.S. Government and Internally Displaced Persons: Present But Not Accounted For,' Washington, D.C. November 1999.

has lead programmatic responsibility for the security of humanitarian relief personnel or protection of the population from war crimes (see Annex 5, Kosovo Case Study, Summary).

Tough foreign policy challenges

Interdependence of humanitarian and other foreign policies. The line separating the USG humanitarian stake from our other key foreign policy goals has been erased: these issues have become deeply embedded in one another. In high profile cases such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, Somalia, North Korea, northern Iraq and Mitch, our actions to ameliorate humanitarian crises have become conspicuously interlinked with other U.S. foreign policy goals: democratization, respect for human rights, regional stability and control over weapons of mass destruction, protection of sustainable development investments and consolidation of fragile transitions from war to peace. Since countries in crisis tend overwhelmingly to be very poor at promoting economic reform and broad-based development, our humanitarian response gives ever-greater emphasis to conflict prevention and looking beyond the immediate crisis to prospects for future economic recovery. Increasingly, multilateral humanitarian interventions must be integrated with peacekeeping strategies.

Dependence on the military. At the same time, our civilian humanitarian actions have come to rest increasingly upon U.S. and other military forces providing a secure environment: in Somalia, Rwanda/Zaire, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. The military has also been an essential factor in addressing recent natural disasters in Central America, Turkey and Bangladesh. Today, for example, over 11,000 American troops are deployed across the Balkans. The increasing role of the U.S. military in assisting with humanitarian operations significantly elevates the need to ensure timely, effective coordination mechanisms among State, USAID and DOD. In both Washington and in the field, standardized operating procedures and a more systematic consultation process would reduce the confusion and delays seen during Mitch, Kosovo and elsewhere.

Intensified debate over U.S. humanitarian policy. The rising interdependence of our civilian humanitarian programs with other foreign policy interests has raised complex foreign policy challenges, stirred increased outside criticism and raised risks to the integrity of USG humanitarian programs. The USG has been accused, for example, of

-Not adhering to a consistent humanitarian standard, but rather allowing larger foreign policy and national security calculations to distort the humanitarian agenda;

-Naively overestimating the impact of humanitarian interventions on our other foreign policy goals, thereby creating exaggerated expectations that cannot be realized; and

-Using humanitarian actions as a substitute for more robust political investments essential to dealing with heavily conflicted situations.

In Somalia, Rwanda, and eastern Congo we learned several hard lessons about the severe consequences when humanitarian issues and programs are not adequately taken into account when critical political and military decisions are taken. Our (and the UN's) humanitarian programs suffered significantly. An intense debate subsequently ensued in the media, think

tanks and professional circles over humanitarian interventions, particularly USG policies and responsibilities.[2]

In Africa today, we continue to struggle to understand the lessons from the Rwanda genocide, the mishandling by the international community of armed refugee encampments in eastern Congo and the killing of American peacekeepers in Mogadishu. In the Kosovo crisis this spring, we confronted a skeptical media and American public who were concerned about how we intended to reach imperiled IDPs and why we, the UN and others were ill prepared for the mass outflow of refugees. In Haiti, Bosnia and elsewhere, we continue to work to move these countries out of crisis, constrained by far longer time requirements and higher costs than originally envisioned, and compounded by enduring socioeconomic divisions within these countries and continuing vulnerability to violence and paralysis.

The past decade has also underscored both the causal connection between complex emergencies and impaired development and the need to understand how the development process itself is linked to recovery from war. While humanitarian response is at one level a discrete set of activities, recent research and experience have proven that humanitarian activities cannot be designed and executed in isolation, but rather where possible should be carefully coordinated with development and other post-conflict programs. Discussion now centers on how humanitarian and development activities intersect, and on integrated approaches to conflict prevention, peace-building and economic and social progress.

The future. Humanitarian crises have changed profoundly in the past decade and have become, for better or worse, a central facet to our foreign policy. We struggle today - institutionally and conceptually - to catch up with harsh new external realities. A major debate over humanitarianism's place in U.S. foreign policy is fully upon us. How we integrate humanitarian objectives with other key foreign policy goals will be critical to our operational effectiveness and the maintenance of political support for US humanitarian programs and for our overall foreign policy on the Hill, among NGOs and advocacy groups, and with the American public at large. There are no easy answers, but it is clear that we must give humanitarian issues full consideration when key political and military decisions are taken - through unified humanitarian leadership.

2. Key internal constraints on USG humanitarian effectiveness

The review concludes that the most important impediment to improved humanitarian effectiveness is lack of unified leadership within the USG. Opinions differ as to whether unified leadership can be achieved through enhanced coordination or, alternatively, that it requires

[2] See Thomas G. Weiss, "Principles, Politics and Humanitarian Action," in Ethics and International Affairs, Vol. 13 (1999) pp. 1-22; recent issues of International Review of the Red Cross; David Rieff, Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West, Simon and Schuster: NY, 1995, and "The Humanitarian Illusion," The New Republic, March 16, 1998, p. 29; Michael Ignatieff, The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience, Henry Holt: NY, 1977; Michael Maren, The Road to Hell, The Free Press: NY, 1997; Scott Anderson, The Man Who Tried to Save the World: The Dangerous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Fred Cuny, Random House: NY, 1999; Philip Gourevitch, We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families, Farrar Straus: NY, 1998.

systematic reorganization. Nonetheless, there is a consensus that we can do better if we tackle several internal factors that presently constrain our humanitarian effectiveness.

A less than logical structure, with unclear lines of accountability

If tasked to design from ground zero an institutional structure for delivery of our civilian humanitarian assistance, few would come up with our current structure. Often, the current system features overlapping mandates and duplication of effort and provides no ready answer to the question of who is in charge. Except when extraordinary steps are taken in the midst of worsening crises to vest power in high-level interim appointees – the pattern in Mitch and Kosovo – humanitarian crises are normally handled by several officials below Subcabinet rank who interact without assignment of lead responsibility or formal procedures for coordination. The absence of a single authoritative humanitarian voice is felt most acutely at the senior policy level.

Refugee assistance and much of the funding for and interface with key international organizations (UNHCR, ICRC) rests with State/PRM. PRM also directly funds NGO programs which often closely resemble those funded by BHR (which uses NGOs as its primary implementing partners), particularly in the area of displaced persons. USAID funds and provides the interface for the World Food Program (WFP). Both State/IO and USAID oversee the US contributions to UNICEF.

Management of USAID's response to foreign disasters, transition initiatives, and food aid rests with BHR. Under the guidance of the resident Ambassador, USAID manages most U.S. humanitarian operations in the field, through USAID field missions and Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) which conduct assessments of field humanitarian needs and assist in directing U.S. resources. Management of the Department of State's response to humanitarian emergencies rests with PRM. PRM works through New York, Geneva and relevant embassies to provide policy and operational guidance for the multilateral response, and PRM posts regional refugee officers to conduct field assessments and oversee refugee assistance efforts. Washington staff from USAID and State regularly conduct field assessments and reviews.

Traditionally, State/PRM has provided assistance to refugees, primarily through international organizations, and to conflict victims through ICRC. Traditionally, USAID/BHR has focused on assistance to victims of natural disasters, and to internally displaced persons affected by conflict and other emergencies. However, with the mixing of refugee and displaced populations in the Balkans and Timor, this traditional division has significantly eroded. State and USAID each serve these two populations, and both work through international organizations and NGOs. Though a division of labor is usually reached in any given situation, that does not overcome the obvious overlap of mandates and duplication of effort in U.S. civilian relief programs.

The USAID Administrator is the President's designated Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance. In several recent crises (the Mexico fires, Rwanda post-genocide, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Turkish earthquakes), the USAID Administrator committed himself full-time to lead the USG response during periods of highest demand.

However, the Special Coordinator's role, despite its important contributions, has been ambiguous and problematic. It runs up against the reality that the PRM Assistant Secretary has lead responsibility for refugee-dominated emergencies and for pursuing humanitarian policies in multilateral institutions such as UNHCR and ICRC. In those select priority instances when the Administrator has filled the Coordinator's seat, he has been constrained by several factors (acknowledged in interviews by former Administrator Atwood himself, among others.) Most importantly, many high-ranking USG officials were either insufficiently aware of the President's designation, or skeptical that the Special Coordinator would be accepted by the State Department or the Department of Defense (the latter far prefers NSC direction when it has humanitarian operational responsibilities.)

For the majority of humanitarian crises, leadership within USAID rests with the Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Humanitarian Response, with oversight from the Administrator and Deputy Administrator as needed. For natural disasters, BHR clearly has the lead responsibility. For refugee-dominated crises, PRM clearly has the lead responsibility. For many complex emergencies, however, there is often considerable uncertainty as to whether the PRM Assistant Secretary or BHR Assistant Administrator has lead responsibility for civilian relief programs.

The USG's institutional arrangements for civilian humanitarian relief diverge from those of many other donors, who appear to have a more logical structure. Most donors place their entire humanitarian assistance operation within a single organization which maintains direct institutional links between the relief unit and the organization responsible for development. There is no predominant model among other donors as to whether the Foreign Ministry or the Development Aid Ministry has the lead on humanitarian assistance policy. Among donors which have given the Foreign Ministry the lead, this does not appear to politicize humanitarian programs.

Attitudes, habits, power

All three of these factors disadvantage the USG's civilian humanitarian agenda.

Humanitarian officers are viewed by senior policymakers as technical implementers, and not as authorities who need to be present and heard when foreign policy is formulated.

Across our government, humanitarian programs are seldom seen as complex policy instruments that require prior strategic analysis, contingency planning and policy advocacy. Priority is attached to managing relations with operational partners, and the NGOs themselves reinforce this operational bias.

Within both State and USAID, humanitarians exercise relatively weak influence, as compared with regional and other bureaus. Correcting this imbalance is critical to empowering the humanitarian voice.

With State and USAID alike, service in the humanitarian area does not have the same status or professional rewards as conventional diplomacy or management of development programs, despite the growing importance and increased resource commitments for this work.

Neither USAID nor State has a reliable, standing "surge" capacity to respond to simultaneous complex emergencies, though increasingly each is called upon, in the midst of impending or rapidly worsening crises, to reassign staff suddenly to crisis duties.

3. A summary of priority requirements

Action is needed in six priority areas to strengthen the effectiveness of USG civilian humanitarian programs.

Clarify institutional accountability. No single person is consistently or reliably accountable to the President and Secretary of State for managing our civilian humanitarian interests. As new crises break, we need to be confident of who is in charge.

Ensure high-level policy advocacy. In Cabinet and Subcabinet deliberations, humanitarian issues are often ignored or treated as secondary issues. More often than not, there is no authoritative voice on humanitarian matters present at senior foreign policy deliberations prior to and during the critical onset of a crisis. Opportunities for timely and effective contingency planning and advanced deployment of field capacities are missed. Insufficient attention is paid to the humanitarian risks and opportunities associated with alternative policy choices. A dedicated humanitarian chair at all senior policy deliberations is one clear answer. This should be accompanied by strengthened information transmission – from the field to the senior humanitarian voice – that brings forward accurate and timely information on humanitarian crises.

Improve coordination with DOD. Effective coordination of U.S. civilian and military humanitarian operations is essential, yet decisions on when and how to deploy the U.S. military for humanitarian purposes are often made in an ad hoc, cumbersome fashion which has led to costly delays, especially in the critical early phase of operations. It should be a USG priority to more systematically define standard operating procedures in order to better clarify the interface between civilian humanitarian programs and the US military.

Strengthen coordination with other donors. USAID and State both deal extensively with international organizations and other donors. Effective communication of US policies and intentions to other donors is essential – to policy coordination, to effective field operations and to leveraging additional resources for humanitarian response. Yet the multiplicity of voices representing the U.S. to other bilateral and multilateral donors creates conflict within the USG and confusion among our international partners. The result is that our global humanitarian leverage does not match the investment of USG energies, resources and prestige (See Annex 6, Background Paper on Donor Coordination.)

Strengthen operational efficiency/eliminate mandate overlap and duplication of effort. Though the U.S. humanitarian response is well respected and essential, the current decentralized operational structure gives rise to bureaucratic conflict and overlap, especially in regard to internally displaced persons. This is inefficient use of scarce human and financial resources and impedes coordination at the field level. However, any future streamlining of field operations will need to take care to preserve multiple options for program implementation.

Strengthen policy development, program innovations and public outreach. The past few years have witnessed important innovations, most notably USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. Nonetheless, there are several critical emergent issues that require sustained, high-level attention. Funding of transition programs, while improved, still falls far short of requirements, resulting in difficult gaps in immediate post-conflict situations. We need better USG policy on internally displaced persons, the urgent human rights requirements now seen in conflicted relief settings, and how best to manage intensified media interest and private donations.

4. Options for moving ahead

Unified humanitarian leadership within USG civilian programs requires several elements:

- An empowered humanitarian voice charged with integrating the humanitarian agenda with senior policy deliberations;
- Coordination and direction of operational humanitarian and transitional programs across USG agencies, including coordination of civilian humanitarian programs with DOD and leadership on USG policy development on critical emergent humanitarian issues;
- Effective coordination with other donors and international organizations;
- Interlinkage of humanitarian, transitional and reconstruction assistance with the aim of promoting both crisis prevention and post-crisis recovery and durable development.

The review has identified three approaches which would enhance the effectiveness and improve the leadership of USG humanitarian assistance:

(i) Discrete measures: There are several discrete measures which State and USAID could pursue incrementally, without altering the present allocation of agency responsibilities or foreclosing future action to integrate State and USAID's humanitarian programs. These measures include the creation of a senior humanitarian policy seat at Principals' and Deputies' committee meetings and a joint State-USAID Policy and Planning Task Force. They also include steps to strengthen interagency coordination, (including standard operating procedures for engagement with DOD) and expanded collaboration in training, field assessments, and outreach to Congress and the media. Since this approach works within the current division of responsibility between State and USAID, it does not answer the question of lead responsibility or eliminate overlapping mandates and duplication of effort and may even increase duplication. It

builds on recent State-USAID collaboration and the steps that each agency has taken on its own to improve performance. Neither State nor USAID requires additional authorities to implement these measures.

(ii) Clarify who is in charge: A central conclusion of the review is that clarifying who is in charge of USG civilian humanitarian programs is critical to strengthening their effectiveness. The three options in this category provide the Secretary with immediately actionable choices to test the thesis that a more unified, coherent leadership of civilian humanitarian programs can make a substantial difference, without requiring an overhaul of current institutional arrangements. For any of these, the President's designation of a Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance would need to be revisited, in light of the Secretary's expanded statutory authorities. These arrangements would not preclude the President from naming an overall coordinator of USG humanitarian response, including military assistance, for exceptional crises. Each option would be twinned with a senior Humanitarian Advisory Council. By definition, these steps fall short of full consolidation in not transferring control of resources or fully redrawing existing lines of authority. Hence they will not be free of ambiguity or institutional tension and there is no certainty that they can dramatically improve performance. If an option does substantially overcome present constraints, it might prove to be an adequate fix on its own. Alternatively, an option might serve as experimental guidepost towards future consolidation. Options include (i) substantially strengthen the USAID Administrator's role; (ii) predetermine that lead responsibility for all natural disasters will rest with BHR and for all complex emergencies with PRM, unless the Secretary decides higher level representation is required in a particular case; and (iii) create a mechanism, subject to the Secretary's ultimate direction, that would allocate responsibilities for emergencies on a case-by-case basis. These options would require consultations with Congress, but no legislative modification of authorities. Physical proximity (collocation) of some functions might also be considered under this option.

(iii) Consolidation: In this category, civilian humanitarian responsibilities would be consolidated: into USAID, State or a new foreign affairs agency under the Secretary. Central to deciding among the three possibilities is what priority is attached to competing policy goals: to integrate humanitarian affairs into foreign policy; to create an empowered single-focus humanitarian entity; and to integrate relief, transition and development assistance. Each option could create a unitary, streamlined structure with a dedicated humanitarian mandate, centralized control over humanitarian resources, and senior leadership with access at the PC and DC levels. The State and USAID options call for a substantial reordering of the overall mandate, structure and practices of these two respective institutions. All options would require a bold break with the past and demonstrate a new commitment to finding a solution to emerging complex humanitarian challenges. They could foster a dynamic culture, humanitarian doctrine and career cadre of international emergency management specialists. Implementation of these options would be complex and stretch over several years and require the engagement of the President and the Secretary and significant Congressional action.

Discussion of these three approaches is the subject of Section II of this report.