Most humanitarian emergencies do not involve any military forces. The current humanitarian architecture is essentially international, neutral and civilian. No one wants to turn humanitarian action over to militaries - but we all recognize that there will continue to be times when military involvement will be appropriate, and we need to plan better for those contingencies. Only through working together with all, will we be able to build a humanitarian architecture which will respond to the needs and ensure that humanitarian assistance does not become politicized and fractured due to a lack of coordination.

As complex emergencies have gripped the world in recent years - in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Timor - the military has played an essential role to assist the international community's humanitarian efforts and to provide requisite security. Such emergencies require closer coordination and better communication among different parts of the government and with NGOs - these can make the response to crises more comprehensive and effective. Joelle, I remember at InterAction how useful it was to have real NGOs, real ICRC and UN people provide needed perspectives to military planning and training efforts. There has been a dramatic improvement over the past. Now the concepts of CIMICs are regular features of military deployments in humanitarian crises.

I hope you will reconsider your current stance and that you will rejoin the DRC in the future. If you choose not to, the community might question why you are even a member of InterAction. MSF has always been a constructive partner, and I hope you will continue to be one.

Sincerely,

Julia V. Taft
Assistant Secretary

cc: Jim K. Bishop, Director, Disaster Response Unit, Interaction