

When the RDMHQ was initially proposed, it attracted broad support in the UN Secretariat. In welcoming the proposal, Boutros-Ghali stated that the idea fostered a "culture of prevention" and that, "even if it will not be used it is a kind of dissuasion."⁸³

RDMHQ Limitations

A UN RDMHQ of some sixty-one personnel could provide the necessary impetus for developing and co-ordinating headquarters arrangements, but there are legitimate doubts about its ability to fulfil its five primary tasks in any period of intense activity where it may face multiple operations. Even in its full composition, it is still only the shell of an operational mission headquarters. In particular, concerns arose over the initial plans for the RDMHQ -- whether it might be a 'silver bullet' -- a single-mission mechanism that once deployed could leave DPKO with insufficient personnel to manage ongoing departmental and mission requirements. Many recognised the need for both a surge and a steady-state capability if the new mission headquarters was to succeed in meeting wider expectations. As presently constituted, it is best seen as a necessary improvisation, an arrangement that may need to be rapidly augmented. Some of the earlier plans will have to be adapted.

Recruitment and staffing of this headquarters was also far more controversial than initially anticipated. Only 2 posts have been established to date.⁸⁴ The remaining 6 positions were approved in the fall of 1999, but without the additional funding required to staff these positions. A number of member states assumed that these 6 posts might be filled through redeployment within the UN Secretariat. However, this entailed an unmanageable burden upon staff at Headquarters, particularly when start-up of more than one mission had to be explored concurrently.

To expedite the process, in March 2000, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping reiterated its 1995 request for the RDMHQ and demanded that the remaining 6 positions be established and filled as quickly as possible.⁸⁵ Yet, in response to persistent fears of extending already over-tasked personnel, officials within DPKO released a compromise plan in the same month for a smaller Rapid Deployment Management Unit (RDMU). As proposed, this would entail a static planning element of 4 civilians to identify required skills and develop a roster of individual expertise who might be called on short notice to fill diverse headquarter functions.⁸⁶