



the UN has historically been unable to establish logistics support systems for some months following the creation of peace operations. It therefore normally requests troop contributors to deploy their personnel with sufficient logistics support that they can maintain themselves until such time as the UN system can be put into place. The difficulty in some recent operations is that units have not arrived fully equipped. In fact, in some cases, such as UNAMIR in 1994, they arrived with virtually nothing, straining a logistics system which was already fragile and over-burdened. All of these problems are intensified in a rapid-reaction scenario, because the time-frames are compressed and a number of complementary activities must be carried out simultaneously (like identifying troop contributors and arranging logistics support).

The UN has been moving in the past few years to remedy deficiencies in logistics. Advances have been made in using private-sector contractors in the field to deliver services, a development which should provide for greater speed and flexibility. Some thought is being given to the concept of contingency contracting arrangements, along the lines of the United States' Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program¹⁷, which would enable contractors to assemble a proper combination of personnel and resources from a large, international civilian pool of logistics specialists. The recent availability of "start-up kits", essentially for a mission headquarters, is another Secretariat initiative which will save time and money and enhance the UN's potential for rapid reaction.

Procurement issues have always been fraught with difficulties, both political and administrative, and the growth of large-scale, complex peace operations in recent years has led to strong pressures for reform. In 1994 a UN inter-governmental Independent High Level Group of Procurement Experts conducted a detailed study of procurement issues in the UN. It was based on the premise that the process should ensure the timely provision of goods and services in a cost-effective manner, with transparency, clear lines of accountability and adequate control mechanisms. In the course of its work the Group identified problems with excessive bureaucracy, lack of delegation of authority, inflexible regulations, rules and practices, and poor management and leadership. The results of the study include 37 substantive recommendations to modify and strengthen the UN's procurement system.

Action on these recommendations has begun, most importantly on increased delegation of authority for all peace operations and the elimination of restrictions which unduly limit procurement within geographic areas. However, substantial progress remains to be achieved, especially in the areas of reorganization and reallocation of staff in the UN Secretariat and the preparation of new policy manuals.

There is also considerable work to do in ensuring that the UN has adequate supplies of needed materiel for peace operations. The idea of regional stockpiles, either under the UN or possibly in cooperation with regional organizations, has been discussed inconclusively for a number of years. In some cases, regional centres, modelled after the UN's logistics base in Brindisi, Italy, might be appropriate to meeting an urgent situation effectively. The logic of regional depots is that they might be close to future deployment sites and that time and money could be saved on transportation. But strategic air and sea lift is now relatively fast from almost any part of the world, and there might be only marginal savings in regionalizing equipment stocks. Having more than one UN logistics base will also drive up costs and produce duplication of services as well as duplication in the equipment stored. Moreover,