

7 STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS

It is a *sine qua non* that standby forces are fundamental to peace-keeping and the capacity of those forces to deploy rapidly will be a deciding factor in rapid reaction.

In early 1993 a Standby Forces Planning Team of seven senior military officers from various TCNs was created within DPKO with a mandate "To develop a system of standby resources, able to be deployed as a whole or in parts . . . at the Secretary-General's request, within an agreed response time, for United Nations duties, as mandated by the Security Council." A critical component of such arrangements is the response time. In theory the response time for individuals is seven days, for designated units and subunits in the initial phase of deployment is 15 days, and for all others 30 days.

Quite apart from nations sending standby troops when a mission actually takes place, even the "theoretical" standby roster is lacking in depth and breadth. The Secretary-General in his report to the SC dated 30 June 1994, stated that "The commitments made so far do not yet cover adequately the spectrum of resources required to mount and execute future peace-keeping operations. Deficiencies still exist in the areas of communications, multi-role logistics, health services, supply, engineers and transport."¹⁸

The inherent problem with standby arrangements, and a theme that underlies most serious problems with UN rapid reaction, stems from the reluctance of UN member states to deliver when the time comes. Failure on their part to rapidly provide well trained and well-equipped units for authorized missions, remains the biggest stumbling block to UN rapid reaction.

Inasmuch as member states always retain the right to decline participation in a particular operation, standby forces even when there is a clear Memorandum of Understanding, are not the UN's by right. There is a national political impediment or time delay that is determined by each country's particular requirement for a governmental administrative decision, or some form of "parliamentary" approval, or government fiat in various unelected regimes. All of these time delays vary, are very hard to control or predict, and invariably go far beyond the target timings set out above of 7, 15, and 30 days.

In addition, there are "national" military time delays determined by the source of standby personnel, e.g., standing professional armies, call up mechanisms, or conscript forces. The latter situation usually requires the longest lead time before a unit is ready to be picked up for deployment.

For rapid reaction there also is a greater need for standby redundancy than in normal standby arrangements. A coherent and complete mission headquarters and the component mission units are needed within weeks not months. There have to be sufficient "alternates" or redundant capacity to allow

¹⁸ para 7, S/1994/777