



This is not a “hard and fast” definition of a rapid-reaction capability. Rather, it is a summary of what a rapid-reaction capability would need in order to be an effective tool at the disposal of the Security Council.

This capability, once achieved, would inevitably be applied in crisis situations which would require a multi-functional response. As recent experience has demonstrated, planning and implementation of UN peace operations must incorporate political, civilian police and humanitarian components, as well as the military element. The idea of “multi-dimensionality” is therefore crucial to this study. At every level and at all stages of an operation, there must be an integrated approach to a problem which reflects the diverse range of capacities within the UN system and among Member States, and

which brings in other relevant organizations which have roles to play. To achieve “unity of purpose” in defining the strategic goals of an operation and “unity of effort” on the ground, multidimensionality is a fundamental basis of modern UN peace operations.

The Idea of Rapid-Reaction

- the ability to acquire, analyze and take timely decisions
- the organizational capability to prepare generic plans
- the ability to undertake concurrent activities
- the capability to deploy operational-level command and control facilities
- the capability to deploy (approximately 5,000 military and civilian personnel) within three to five weeks

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Organization of the Study

In ensuing chapters, the report elaborates on many of the above points. Chapter Three reviews briefly some current models of rapid reaction, in France, the United States and NATO. Based on this survey, it offers some reflections on what the report calls “the generic components” or basic elements that are essential to the creation and maintenance of any effective rapid-reaction capability. Chapter Four takes these generic components of rapid reaction and compares them with those capabilities currently available in the UN system. It also reviews some of the impediments in the UN to rapid reaction. This leads to the substantive parts of the report and to a series of recommendations in Chapter Five. They argue the case for fulfilling the basic requirements of rapid reaction, and outline structures and procedures necessary for what we call a “Vanguard Concept” at the operational and tactical levels, linked to more effective decision-making at the political and strategic levels.

Chapter Six offers a vision of the future, taking the report into a description of requirements over the longer-term. We acknowledge that, while reforms over the short to medium term may provide the UN with an effective rapid-reaction capability, they may not be the ultimate, fundamental changes which are needed to ensure reliability in the UN's approach to international peace and security. The report argues that the United Nations may need bold and imaginative proposals to assist it in contributing to global security. Its potential may only be realized if the Organization is