

3 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Particular events such as violations of human rights, breaches of international peace and security, should trigger UN needs assessments and contingency planning. This in turn, or even concurrently, would precipitate parts of the UN into taking certain preparatory actions. This latter aspect involves UN staff making concrete preparations such as stockpiling or starting to identify and even taking on key staff such as a FC and field HQ staff. This will be dealt with separately in Chapter 4 on Preparatory Activity.

The most intransigent issue for UN contingency planning will be that of political sensitivity by states to "official" intervention scenarios being put together for a particular country or region. Such sensitivity is not just a UN problem, and there are certain parallels to be drawn with NATO where they felt it useful to refer to it as "contingency thinking." In UNHCR, traditional timidity in this area has in recent years given way to active albeit discrete contingency planning. However, they are quick to agree that a UN agency located away from the UN politics of New York has much greater discretion in carrying out humanitarian contingency planning.

Achieving that separation between political fora and operational planning will always remain problematic. Political decision makers, at times, will continue to disallow or actively block contingency planning either because of a weakness in leadership, or when such activity itself truly does have a negative impact on the politics of the situation. Both occurrences can be reduced by distancing contingency planning units both physically and organizationally.

At present, contingency planning responsibility in peace-keeping lies primarily with Mission Planning Service (MPS). Its Generic Planning Section is tasked with devising several models or "templates" of peace-keeping missions along with model SOPs. They will draw upon their partner Lessons Learned Unit to continually refine these mission templates. With only a staff of five, Generic Planning has limited resources but if their work is restricted to such generic planning, then they probably have sufficient strength. They as of yet have not linked up with other UN agencies such as UNHCR to see how they carry out generic planning. What has happened to a limited extent is a drawing upon national military experiences in generic planning.

As discussed above, the more problematic step lies in contingency planning for particular countries or regions. This task lies with the MPS's Conceptual Planning Section. The Africa Unit has three staff, the Europe and Latin America Unit has three, and the Asia and Middle East Unit has three. Even assuming that these staffs can be moved between regions, the total capacity of nine seems rather limited in light of the number of potential hot spots in the world and the need to continually update country specific contingency plans.

Similarly, the Standby Arrangements Unit with a total staff of four, appears to be especially understaffed. Their task lies in negotiating and maintaining standby arrangements with all TCNs in both a generic sense and in a mission specific sense. Mission specific standby planning is extremely time consuming for this