

TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS



elements of peace operations, military and civilian, governmental and non-governmental. The Report places especially strong emphasis on the idea of multidimensionality, in recognition of the growing complexity of recent peace operations and the need for close cooperation among all elements under UN authority.

The principal idea in this report is the "Vanguard Concept". Under this concept, the UN would be able to assemble from Member States a multi-functional force of up to 5,000 military and civilian personnel and rapidly deploy it under the control of an operational-level headquarters upon authorization of the Security Council. The operational-level headquarters, a new unit to fill a current vacuum in the UN system, would be responsible for the planning and advance preparations which are crucial if rapid reaction is to work. This concept emphasizes the importance of making significant changes at the operational level of the UN system and with the troop contributors who would provide the trained, equipped forces essential to rapid reaction. Forces would be provided by way of enhanced standby arrangements which the Secretariat would conclude with Member States offering personnel to participate in peace operations. The Report includes recommendations to enhance training, explore more efficient systems for logistics and transportation, and bolster the planning efforts of the entire UN system.

A number of other reforms are also emphasized in the short to medium terms. At the political level in the UN system, it is crucial to address deficiencies in the financial and administrative systems of the UN and to develop new financial procedures which delegate financial authorities to appropriate levels of responsibility. It is also important to re-assess the issue of consultation among the UN Secretariat, Security Council members and UN Member States. Better systems, including new institutions, need to be put into place if troop contributors are to continue providing the UN with capable forces. Similarly, ways need to be found to increase the quality of military advice and ensure that military considerations are taken into account as the Security Council considers its responses to crisis situations. With respect to the UN Secretariat (although the Secretary-General has accomplished a remarkable amount in the past two to three years), additional measures should be contemplated, such as a better early-warning systems, linked to contingency planning and political action, and a strengthening of the UN's Standby Arrangements System, which would lie at the heart of the Vanguard Concept.

In all, 21 recommendations are advanced in the Report for the short to medium term. None involve changes in the UN Charter — Charter reform is not necessary in addressing the area of peace operations. Some recommendations argue the case for new institutions, such as Troop Contributors Committees and a Troop Contributors' Council, and a Peace Operations Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee On Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Other recommendations focus on administrative and procedural issues, such as financial questions, or new techniques such as Peacekeeping Services Agreements. Many of the recommendations are based on the premise that the key to effective operations lies in the personnel equation. Substantial emphasis has therefore been placed on advance training, systems of recruitment and ensuring that qualified personnel are available for UN peace operations on short notice.