



## TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

mechanism, which prepares likely courses of action dealing with a range of potential scenarios. The second is mission-specific planning, which evaluates the nature and scope of potential operations in specific geographic areas and the resources required to mount these operations. An effective decision-making process in which planning is central avoids the pit-falls of an *ad hoc* approach and promotes savings in the time and resources required to mount an operation.

Third, there must be **readily-available transportation and infrastructure**. The ability to transport personnel and equipment to and within a theatre of operation, as well as to identify the infrastructure required to support an operation, is fundamental to a successful rapid-reaction capability. This requires the collation in advance of a substantial amount of information, such as the load capacity of specific sea or air lift, the length of time in transit, the number of flights or ships required to transport specific loads and the early identification of sea and airlift capabilities to facilitate the movement of equipment, personnel and other required resources. It is also essential to have complete and authoritative data on local infrastructure, such as air strips and sea ports in the theatre of operations, along with information regarding their capacities for handling strategic movement. This is indispensable in determining with reasonable accuracy how quickly a mission will become fully operational. The availability of strategic air and sea lift also requires careful advance planning with Member States and often with the private sector.

### The Generic Components of Rapid Reaction

- early-warning mechanism
- an effective decision-making process
- readily-available transportation and infrastructure
- adequate logistics support
- adequate finances
- well-trained personnel

Fourth, adequate **logistics support** is crucial to effective rapid-reaction. A force deployed into a region devastated by natural disaster or conflict must be self-sufficient to the extent that it can feed, clothe and house itself during at least the initial period of a crisis. Local conditions can vary enormously, and advance planning must take into account the extent to which a rapid-reaction unit can count on local suppliers for items as basic as potable water. Depending upon the specific tasks of a mission and the nature of the theatre of operations, demands for logistics support could be substantial. Contingency planning must be based upon "worst-case scenarios" but be sufficiently flexible to allow for any number of operational requirements once a mission begins.

Fifth, a key element is **adequate finances**. Finances are rarely a problem for rapid-reaction forces which function at the national level, where there are established procedures for obtaining financial authority and for disbursing monies. At the international level or among multinational forces, finances become more problematic. The key is the existence of appropriate financial authorities commensurate with responsibilities. At the strategic and operational levels, this means the ability to authorize expenditures and expend funds on contingency planning or mission