

place in February. The start has been unfortunately slow. The stakes for the UN are high, however, and I remain hopeful that this opportunity for renewal will be seized.

STRENGTHENING THE UN'S RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY

At the 49th General Assembly, I announced the Canadian Study on a UN Rapid Reaction Capability. The study was motivated by Canada's concern that the UN lacked not only political will on occasion, but also the actual capability to respond rapidly to a wide range of humanitarian crises and conflict situations. Rwanda was a conspicuous example but in a conflict-ridden world it was merely illustrative of a more general problem.

The study is looking carefully at what measures, over the short, medium and long terms, are necessary to increase the responsiveness of the UN to emerging crises, to gradually decrease reaction time and to gradually increase effectiveness. This is not only a question of an improved system for predictive analysis and acting on available early warning indicators.

There is a need for a political/military decision-making process that is well informed of the military and technical implications of political decisions. This will require improvements in the current arrangements for full consultations with potential troop contributors.

A closely related issue is that of coherent planning to enable operations to be launched efficiently and in a timely manner once the appropriate political decisions have been taken. The study is therefore examining in some detail the requirements to achieve this capability in the UN Secretariat. This includes questions of strategic airlift and early and effective logistic support.

A crucial element in the whole question of rapid reaction is getting the right people on the scene of a crisis as quickly as possible. The methods and procedures developed over years of conventional peacekeeping are not fully up to this task. The UN needs to be able to deploy a certain minimum-sized contingent to react immediately to an emerging crisis. For the time being, these forces must come directly from member states that hold them at an appropriate degree of readiness. What is perhaps needed, in addition to this, would be a permanent executive or general headquarters, which could conduct continuous basic planning for a wide range of possible contingencies, focussing on operational details. A useful side effect of the existence of such a small body would be the development of common tactical doctrine and associated training standards. This combination of a small permanent planning headquarters and earmarked national units would, in effect, be a UN Vanguard Force, available on very short notice to deploy (perhaps in a preventive way) to the scene of an