



TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

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The vanguard concept is based on the principle of linking all of the levels of the UN system, especially an operational headquarters and mission groups provided by Member States at the tactical level, for the purpose of deploying a force as rapidly as possible for a brief period, either to meet an immediate crisis or to anticipate the arrival of follow-on forces or a more traditionally-organized peacekeeping operation. With more sophisticated and precise standby arrangements with troop-contributing nations, along with the support of a permanent operational-level headquarters, the UN Security Council would have at its disposal tactical units or vanguard groups capable of deploying a multidimensional operation of up to 5000 personnel.

- 18. The United Nations should develop a vanguard concept which would link the operational-level headquarters with tactical elements provided by Member States to the Secretary-General through the standby arrangements system.**
- 19. The Secretary-General and Member States should consider organizing standby units into multinational "capability components", corresponding to function (observation force, humanitarian assistance force, ceasefire monitoring force, etc.) with appropriate training and exercising to enhance readiness. These capability components might include some of the newer tasks of multidimensional operations (natural disaster relief, humanitarian emergencies), working in close conjunction with other sectors of the UN and non-governmental organizations.**

The Tactical Level

At the tactical level of the UN system, or the operation on the ground, virtually all of the assets belong to Member States. If the vanguard concept is to be workable, the challenge in this area is to provide capable, multi-functional personnel which can form part of any UN rapid-reaction mission group. This is best achieved through the development of training and equipment guidelines which will ensure a minimum level of performance and equipment standards when national units are deployed under the operational control of the UN. The core of this approach is the standby arrangements system now under process of development in the Secretariat (and discussed earlier in this chapter).

The Availability of Personnel

A number of measures could usefully be added to the steps already under way to increase the numbers of well-trained personnel available for deployment. Member States which may have reservations about contributing to peace operations should bear in mind an important recent development in the legal field related to the security of UN personnel - including peacekeepers: the Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel. The main objective of the Convention is to protect personnel serving in UN operations. Once it has entered into force, this instrument should provide an element of reassurance to Member States by extending the scope of legal protection available to their nationals participating in UN peace operations. Member States should be encouraged to ratify this Convention and bring it into force as soon as possible.