

arrangements to improve the broader range of peacekeeping activities. However, one new mechanism was imperative to fill the void at the operational level -- a permanent, operational-level rapid reaction headquarters.²³ A 'vanguard' concept was also highlighted as "the most crucial innovation in the UN's peace support operations over the next few years."²⁴ It would "link the operational level headquarters with tactical elements provided by Member States to the Secretary-General through the standby arrangements system."²⁵ The Canadian study reaffirmed "broad support for the general directions of the Secretary-General and the UN Secretariat in building its peace operations capability for the future."²⁶ Recommendations were refined to appeal to a broad range of supportive member states. This would be an inclusive, co-operative building process with the objective of developing a unity of both purpose and effort. Charter reform would be unnecessary, nor would there be additional expenses for the organisation. In many respects, it was a compelling case for pragmatic, realisable change within the short to medium term. A UN Standing Emergency Capability was overviewed as a long-term option worthy of further exploration should the political landscape evolve and available arrangements prove inadequate.

In January 1995, the Danish government announced that it would be approaching a number of nations for support in establishing a working group to develop a UN Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG).²⁷ The guiding assumption of the study was that a number of countries could, "by forming an affiliation between appropriate contributions to the [UNSAS], make a pre-established, multinational UN Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade available to the United Nations, thus providing a rapid deployment capability for deployments of a limited duration."²⁸ It noted that the brigade should be reserved solely for providing an effective presence at short notice, and solely for peacekeeping operations, including humanitarian tasks.²⁹ National units would be required on fifteen to thirty days notice and be sustainable for 180 days. With an agreed focus on being "first in" and "first out," participants would have some assurance of the limited duration of their deployment. Agreement would still be required from individual participating nations. To address the concerns of countries that might have reservations over a particular operation, a relatively broad pool of participants would provide sufficient redundancy among units.³⁰ States could, therefore, abstain from an operation without jeopardising the brigade's deployment.

The Netherlands' non-paper succeeded in stimulating an international exchange of views. It was clear, however, that only a less binding, less ambitious arrangement would be acceptable, at least