

parochial interests enough to organize a coherent and effective multinational response.

The problems encountered went well beyond the absence of mechanisms, and demonstrated that even the best mechanisms are useless without the political will to use them properly. A good example was the Western European Union (WEU). The WEU is a group of relatively 'like-minded' nations. It had a political commitment to respond to such crises and had available to it existing military forces and command structures through the NATO\ Combined Joint Task Forces. Despite all that, however, the WEU did not manage to mount any kind of operation, because its members were seriously divided by political interests. The utility of the new mechanisms being developed, such as the "Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG)", will be just as dependent on effective political direction.

Recommendation 1: While development of existing early-warning and rapid response mechanisms should continue, the prime focus of our efforts should be on the politics and mechanics of mobilizing political will and ensuring an effective response.

Observation 2: Canada was well placed to lead the formation of this MNF.

The Canadian Forces are experienced in peacekeeping operations, and are considered highly professional and impartial by the international community. Canada has a history of constructive engagement in the region unencumbered by parochial geopolitical interests, as well as a well-known and respected commitment to the United Nations. For these reasons, parties on the ground and potential MNF partners were prepared to accept our leadership in forming the mission.

Some others share, to a greater or lesser extent, the characteristics that facilitated Canadian leadership of the formation of the mission. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, for example, have competent armed forces, and in most cases are considered impartial countries with no recent history of armed intervention in support of parochial interests.

The irony needs to be recognized, however, that the very qualities that make these nations politically acceptable as leaders of coalitions may also limit their ability to mount and direct them effectively. These countries do not have