



## CHAPTER FIVE

### A PRACTICAL AGENDA FOR REFORM:

#### THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM

*"In many of today's crises, it is clear that an early intervention could have prevented later negative developments, and might have saved many lives. The problem has been to find the capacity to deploy credible and effective forces at an early stage in a crisis and at short notice. This would be particularly useful in low-level but dangerous conflicts."*

*Our Global Neighborhood,  
The Report of the Commission on Global  
Governance, 1995*

### Increasing the UN's Capabilities

The capacity to respond quickly in the face of crisis does not come easily. Within the UN system, an impressive series of reforms initiated in the past few years has begun to transform the way peace operations are undertaken. In the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, where an extraordinarily high degree of professionalism and motivation belies the criticisms often directed towards the UN, the progress of the past two years has been remarkable. There is truth in the observation, heard frequently in DPKO, that the UN knows what it needs but simply lacks the resources to do the job.

The principal idea which informs this chapter is the creation of a vanguard concept. In accordance with this concept, the UN would be able to assemble from Member States a multi-functional group of up to 5,000 military and civilian personnel and rapidly deploy it under the control of an operational-level headquarters upon authorization by the Security Council. This Vanguard Group would be the first element to deploy, either in a preventive or conflict management role, and it would, if necessary, be replaced by a subsequent "follow-on" force along more traditionally-organized lines. To realize this vanguard concept, which is addressed in recommendations 16 to 19 in this chapter, improvements will be necessary throughout the UN system. Attaining a credible rapid-reaction capability will be more difficult than reforming the process of "steady-state" peace operations. A number of measures touching all four levels of the UN system will need to be implemented, specifically:

- enhancing the effectiveness of the decision-making process in political councils of the UN;
- strengthening the UN Secretariat's capacity to conduct comprehensive, strategic planning in advance of a crisis;
- remedying the absence of any permanent operational-level planning and control capability; and
- ensuring that capable, adequately-equipped, multi-functional military and civilian personnel are available when required.

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