

that Canada supports the development of a rapid reaction or deployment capability for peace operations, but that much work still needs to be done. The Stand-by High Readiness Brigade, for example, meets the standards established by the United Nations' Brahimi Report (deployment in 30 days from a Security Council resolution for traditional peacekeeping operations or 90 days for more complex operations), but even these standards may not meet the demands of the most critical situations. At current levels of training and strategic lift capability the Canadian Forces do not have the requisite level of readiness to deploy this rapidly in sufficient numbers.

Thomas Weiss, of City University of New York and co-head of the ICISS research directorate, argued that the central thrust of the report is that "ideas matter." The report's attempt to include values within the framework of national interest is an important but difficult challenge, and Weiss hoped that the events of September 11 have reinforced Michael Ignatieff's argument that "bad neighbourhoods are black-holes". He underlined the report's distinction between "peace enforcement", modeled on the Kosovo Force (KFOR), and "coercive protection" operations that are tasked with disarming refugee camps, protecting safe zones or corridors, etc. He noted, however, that the latter type of operation is poorly understood in military terms, and need to be further developed. He also wondered if the report's emphasis that military reaction is to be considered only as a last resort may inadvertently retard the prospects of convincing the international community to act with due force as early as possible.

In the general discussion that followed several participants agreed with Weiss that a key challenge for the international community is to develop a better understanding of how to undertake effective coercive protection, and of the role such operations could play in various situations. One participant, for example, identified a need to develop a better understanding of how to protect children in conflict situations. Others focused on the recent shift in peace support operations away from the UN aegis and towards coalitions of the willing. Several participants agreed that this shift is a central one for Canada, although there was a wide range of opinion as to the potentials and pitfalls of Canada's apparent new preference for non-UN coalition operations. It was pointed out that Canada has been suspicious of the performance of UN peace operations in the mid- to late 1990s, and that the UN is not an ideal mechanism for directing the more robust type of operation that has become typical in recent years. Identified as an area of particular concern was the lack of military standards for cooperation between national contingents regarding command and control, training and equipment. It was observed that the UN is itself divided on the issue and is unclear as to how to respond to the trend towards regional and coalition-based operations. A number of participants pointed to the need for reform of the UN Security Council. Finally, some participants noted that Canada's ability to react quickly and appropriately remains hindered by a lack of adequate information and intelligence, and that improved communication and cooperation with non-governmental partners with ready access to vital information would help the government to assess when and how to act to protect human rights around the world.

Some participants proposed that both Canada and the UN should return to a serious consideration of creating a standing UN rapid reaction capability. Recent developments in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, following the Brahimi Report, suggest that the option may be worth pursuing. Others argued that a rapid reaction capability is politically unfeasible in the current environment, pointing out that even the Stand-by High Readiness Brigade and the Rapidly