

TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS



authorization. The humanitarian agencies also have personnel available to join peace operations, albeit in small numbers. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in recognition of the importance of the human rights components in several peace operations, began in 1994 to strengthen the support offered by the UN's Centre for Human Rights to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. These are small but useful steps in the direction of finding medium-term solutions to the problems of the civilian side of peace operations.

The most problematic area in past peace operations has been civilian police. The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) suffered from a number of deficiencies in the way that the civilian police component was mounted, as well as in the uneven quality of police units. The UN learned important lessons from this operation which it applied in subsequent operations, including in UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia and UNMIH in Haiti. Although the UN currently has more than 1,800 civilian police deployed in various peace operations, it has never been able to secure the numbers of high-quality civilian police personnel required for peace operations. This persistent problem can only be remedied over the long-term through the development and training of the UN's own civilian police units, building a corps of international civilian police which can be supplemented, when needed, by national contributions.

The most obvious advantage of a permanent, standing UN civilian police unit is reliability. The UN would not have to seek national contributions to peace operations, or at least contributions of current orders of magnitude. It would not have to await the lengthy domestic processes of each Member State before a critical mass of police forces is assembled. Moreover, in remedying what has thus far been a key problem of the UN's civilian police sector, a permanent force could be trained to the high standards which the UN should demand of these units. How large a force might be required, how it would be recruited and trained, how it would be deployed, or how it could be divided to cover a number of current operations would be questions demanding a great deal of consideration over the short to medium term before the UN embarked upon what would admittedly be a relatively costly option.

The UN could begin by bolstering those units in DPKO responsible for civilian police, with a view to building capability standards and training packages. It could then move to the recruitment of small numbers of trainers, who could be devoted mainly to the types of training missions in which UNMIH has been involved in Haiti. It could, over time and drawing on the expertise of Member States, duplicate on the civilian police side the work which the UN Training Assistance Teams have begun to undertake on the military side. Because the civilian police components of peace operations have not been as large as the military components, the development of a permanent, standing UN police force could be an option developed at less cost than a comparable military option. As long as the UN remains in difficult financial circumstances, however, this is a long-term option, with a considerable amount of work in the short to medium terms prior to its full development.

- 23. The Secretary-General, in conjunction with interested Member States, should examine the technical feasibility of establishing over the long term a permanent, standing civilian police capability within the UN Secretariat, capable of rapid deployment in appropriate operations.**

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