



TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

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alert, the DPKO would have the authority to identify those elements of mission-specific contingency plans that could be implemented or initiated without compromising the Security Council's prerogative of deciding whether and when a particular mission would take place. Thus far, however, the linkage between the information available to the UN about potential crisis situations and the contingency planning efforts of the Secretariat has been decidedly weak.

Nor is there a linkage between the incipient early-warning systems of the UN and the troop-contributing states which might be asked to supply personnel for urgent missions. In 1993, the Secretariat began to refine its system of standby arrangements, designed to identify personnel for peace operations, in recognition of the problem that failure to provide well-trained and adequately-equipped units for particular missions remains the biggest stumbling block to UN rapid reaction. If national political authorities were able to weigh the merits of participation further in advance, and if officials and military authorities could prepare personnel before formal notification, the lead time between formal notification and deployment might be cut.

The Decision-Making Process

To enable the UN to react rapidly to crisis situations, the decision-making processes should reflect certain principles and guidelines. The mandate of a mission should be clear and implementable. There should be an identifiable and commonly accepted reporting authority. The composition of the force should be appropriate to the mission, and there should be an effective process of consultation among all of the mission partners. In missions involving both military and civilian resources, there should be a recognized focus of authority, a clear and efficient division of responsibilities and agreed operating procedures. The participation of each troop-contributing nation should be accepted by all parties to the conflict. The size, training and equipment of the force should be appropriate to the purpose at hand and remain so over the life of the mission. There should be a defined concept of operations, an effective command and control structure and clear rules of engagement.

The UN system is extraordinarily complex, however, and there is nothing approaching "standard operating procedures" when it comes to discussing, defining, deciding upon or implementing a peace operation. Until very recently, there had been no crisis management and emergency preparedness unit within the UN to integrate the views of its nine Under-Secretaries General and to enable the Secretary General to present a fully-coordinated response for consideration by the Security Council. The Council, jealous of its prerogatives under the Charter, was until recently reluctant to engage potential troop-contributing states in discussions about peace missions and mandates. There is no Secretariat unit which can take a draft resolution of the Council and transform it into an "options paper", with a fully-staffed list of options, consequences, risks and resource implications. Nor is there a unit in the Secretariat that provides the clear, unequivocal and achievable operational guidance between the Security Council and the operational level, that is, those responsible for executing the plan and integrating personnel and resources in pursuit of political and strategic objectives.