

There were several advantages to the creation of the Steering Group. This mechanism limited Canadian political liability; as decisions were taken by consensus, Canada was not solely responsible for them, despite being the "leader" of the mission. The Steering Group also served to attract new members to the MNF; by allowing countries to participate in the early development of the mission, Canada hoped to secure their participation in the actual operation, or their financial support for it.

The Steering Group became a liability when it came time actually to manage the military mission. Some of the "partners" used the consensus mechanism to pursue their own agendas in the region. The process was particularly perverted in the case of this particular mission, because no country other than Canada ever formally handed over command of personnel or equipment to the MNF, yet they were all in a position to influence heavily its activities.

Recommendation 17: While partners and potential partners should be consulted as the operation is being developed, countries should have a say in the direct management of the military operation only after command of assets or personnel has been formally handed over to the MNF Commander.

Recommendation 17b: We must explore mechanisms that enable the Steering Group to operate effectively without being held hostage to any one or two voices. This might take the form of a two-tiered structure. The first level might be a large, consultative group of interested countries, mandated by an international organization (UN, OSCE, OAU, OAS). Within that, a small core to run the operation would be formed, made up of countries and agencies participating significantly in operations in theatre, and with enough common goals to manage the mission effectively.

Recommendation 17b: Careful attention should be given to the involvement in the consultation process of the country(ies) being assisted, and of those in the immediate region. Again, care must be taken not to allow consultation to replace or impede timely, resolute action.

Observation 18: Canadian communications strategy focused largely on domestic media.

As leaders of the multinational mission, it was in Canadian interests that the Canadian perspective on the mission be understood abroad. However, the Canadian communications effort during the operation focused almost