



underpinning of any credible reform effort — still needs priority attention, with particular emphasis on the delegation of authority in both financial and personnel administration.” It went on to state that the Secretary-General is concerned that the Organization “functions today under a regime of control from the top rather than one of decentralized operational responsibility.”²⁶

The Strategic Level

At the level of the UN Secretariat, the key requirement is to keep up the momentum of the past two years, in spite of the UN's financial difficulties. In addition to continuing work on “steady-state” peacekeeping, efforts also need to be made to focus attention on the particular requirements of rapid reaction, in order to ensure that systems are in place to facilitate the planning of missions and the early identification of mission groups capable of quick deployment. As US Presidential Decision Directive 25 emphasized, “the goal is not to create a global high command but to enable the UN to manage its existing load more effectively.”²⁷

Early Warning

The Security Council and UN member states would respond more rapidly to crises if there were effective systems of early warning, triggering contingency planning and the decision-making process at the political level. Recent efforts to pool information among DPKO, DPA and other relevant departments are likely to result in the availability of a much higher standard of assessed information at the political level, particularly for Security Council members. Recent reports, such as *The United Nations in Its Second Half-Century*, by the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations, have placed special emphasis on early warning and the need for better machinery within the UN Secretariat. Although its approach to early warning has validity, possibly of equal importance is the need to share early-warning information among the UN, the specialized agencies and regional organizations, which could enhance the depth of such reports. Given the UN's current financial situation, the Secretary-General should be encouraged to cooperate with Member States with national capabilities in this area, with a view to helping develop and refine the UN's early-warning capabilities.

8. **The Secretary-General should continue to refine the early-warning capabilities of the Secretariat, concluding additional agreements between the UN and Member States to share information. He should ensure that the early-warning capabilities which already exist within the UN system and related organizations are effectively pooled and that Member States and regional organizations have access to this material.**

A major improvement would be the development of an early-warning “alert system”, linked through the contingency planning efforts of the Secretary-General to the Security Council. Getting these triggering mechanisms and linkages right would be crucial to making an early-warning system function to the benefit of rapid reaction. The heart of such a system could be the recently-created Situation Centre, which might collate and analyze early-warning data and provide an alert service to the Secretary-

While the traditions of the UN's financial system tend toward centralization of control, the idea of delegation to appropriate levels of authority needs to be pressed with vigour
