



TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

implementation. This study's practical approach recognizes the current limitations of the UN to raise revenues and builds modestly on current foundations, at least in the short to medium terms.

The Four Levels of Rapid Reaction

As an analytical technique, the study divides the UN system into four levels: political, strategic, operational and tactical. In reality, these levels are inextricably linked with ambiguous dividing lines between each level. Nevertheless, there are specific functions and structures associated with each of these levels. If each is analyzed separately, it then becomes easier to identify disparities or disconnections between and among the levels. This is fundamental to the integrated approach advanced in this study, since these levels function in some form within national governments, military establishments, a wide range of non-governmental and private institutions, as well as in international organizations. In the end, all four levels must work together harmoniously, towards common objectives and as an integrated team, with what this report calls "unity of purpose", in order to produce a coherent, effective operation or "unity of effort" on the ground.

The **political level**, for the purposes of this study, is the international community of nations which are members of the UN and acting through the Security Council and General Assembly. This level is concerned with the formulation and/or modification of fundamental goals or policy objectives. In the UN system, primary political responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is vested in the Security Council by Article 24 of the UN Charter.

Primary responsibility, however, should not be taken to imply exclusive authority. The General Assembly also plays a significant role at the political level. This is certainly the case concerning the financial dimensions of peace operations, on which this report places considerable emphasis. But it also applies to the development of policy, doctrine and standards. Most importantly, in the long-term the General Assembly tends to set and reflect the overall atmosphere in the UN system, and it thus helps determine the priority accorded the major issues of the day, whether they be security, economic, humanitarian or social. The UN is a global system of sovereign states. Thus, any set of proposals to change the system at the political level must take account of the evolving policies of all Member States towards questions of international peace and security and the role of the UN in that process.

The **strategic level**, for the purposes of the report, is the Secretary-General of the United Nations, supported by the UN Secretariat. He allocates the means to achieve political goals. The Office of the Secretary-General, in particular, is the link between the political and strategic levels. Political goals are translated into strategic objectives at this level, according to the nature and extent of the resources available. The more ambitious and far-reaching the objectives, the more sophisticated and capable the strategic apparatus (the Secretariat) must be. This has implications for the policies, procedures, structures and resources of the UN Secretariat.

The critical link between the strategic objectives and tactical activities (i.e., the detailed organization and execution of tasks) is found at what the report calls the **operational level**. Here the broad strategic objectives set by the Secretariat are