



TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

where only the UN can act, and the report acknowledges the central role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. In some areas, such as the creation of regional equipment depots, only future studies will be able to judge whether regionalism is more efficient or cost-effective than single depots or maintaining equipment in national hands. Getting the right balance between the universality of the UN and the strength of regionalism will be one of the key challenges ahead for all states interested in more effective UN peace operations.

The report also calls for a better partnership with the private sector. In the past few years, a number of initiatives in the Secretariat have confirmed the importance of an effective alliance among the UN, national governments and the private sector in such areas as transportation and logistics. Other areas could usefully be explored, such as lease-to-purchase arrangements for equipment, which take advantage of the strengths of the private sector while meeting the standards and demands of the UN. As the UN considers the principles of reliability, efficiency, timeliness and cost-effectiveness, among others, it must harness all of the means at its disposal to meet the requirements of a new era.

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Equally, the report emphasizes the need for multidimensionality in the UN's approach to peace operations. The more complex missions of the 1990s have already demonstrated the importance of a comprehensive approach to peacekeeping, in which military and civilian staffs, drawn from a number of organizations and agencies, some governmental, some inter-governmental, some non-governmental, work to common objectives. Peacekeeping is no longer a purely military vocation, and humanitarian assistance, legal affairs, human rights, electoral assistance and other elements have become integral parts of the peacekeeping equation. To ensure the unity of effort crucial to success, adequate partnerships must be forged among all of the parties which are stakeholders in the types of operations likely to characterize the UN's future work.

At the same time, recognizing that the UN is an association of states, the report places substantial emphasis on securing increased levels of cooperation and commitment between Member States and the UN Secretariat. This is important in many respects. At a time of financial crisis in the UN, Member States could be instrumental in implementing many of the recommendations in this report. Member States, for example, could offer to host meetings of potential Force Commanders, or conferences of states with UN standby arrangements. Member States could offer to share many of the resources developed for national forces, such as training manuals or data on global infrastructure. Member States could also take the lead in building coalitions in the UN to implement other ideas, for example, establishing a working group to look at the use of new technologies in peace operations, or helping the early-warning capabilities of the Secretariat through the development of an "alert system" and the establishment of secure electronic reporting systems. If Member States with established records in the area of peacekeeping share the burden of moving forward in many of these intricate areas, the UN Secretariat will be relieved of many responsibilities for which there are clearly no new resources.

This report devotes considerable attention to financial questions. At a time when the UN is in a deep financial crisis, triggered largely by the failure of some Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, the report endeavours to frame recommendations which are both responsible in their financial implications for