

Identifying the strengths and limitations of existing arrangements, as well as potential improvements, is a relatively simple exercise. A more challenging question pertains to how supportive parties might stimulate further developments, particularly in effecting a transition from national standby arrangements to a dedicated UN standing capability.

There appear to be four approaches with at least some potential for generating wider support and possibly the pursuit of more ambitious measures. First, officials could pursue further incremental changes and improvisations to existing arrangements. Gradually, this might inspire wider confidence and political will. Second, a vision-oriented, cumulative development process could begin to attract even wider assistance. Third, more favourable conditions would also stem from supportive public diplomacy and civil society working through partnerships and transnational coalitions. Information, education and advocacy are among the keys to mobilising broad-based support. Fourth, although regrettable, favourable conditions may ensue in the immediate aftermath of another global tragedy. Over the past century, there were at least five occasions when deadly conflict generated what might be described as 'ripe' moments. Rather than await the international consensus that stems from another tragedy, it is time to conduct an in-depth review of the options and requirements for a UN standing emergency capability.

If pursued independently, each approach might generate modest progress. If pursued simultaneously, as part of a co-ordinated and integrated plan, the prospects would definitely improve. Therefore, this paper provides a preliminary blueprint of options corresponding to each approach. Success on this rather elusive endeavour will necessitate a far more comprehensive approach. Given the stakes involved, supportive parties must be at least prepared to consider and refine the options. As Minister Axworthy noted in February 2000,

The capacity of the UN to manage complex missions is under great strain. A co-ordinated and integrated approach is required nationally and internationally to ensure that we are prepared. Rapidly identifying and mobilizing the necessary military and civilian resources is fundamental to the success of a decision to intervene for humanitarian purposes.¹¹

Section II of this study provides a brief overview of the national studies and initiatives launched to enhance UN rapid deployment capabilities. Section III reviews existing arrangements such as the UNSAS, the SHIRBRIG and the RDMHQ. It addresses the limitations of each and identifies potential options for improvement. Political and diplomatic efforts must be renewed to restore confidence in these preliminary arrangements. Section IV suggests the need for a more inclusive