

of 2000, UN officials had scaled back their expectations to the point where they suggested rapid deployment would have to be conceived of as a response within four to six months. In June, the Secretary General acknowledged the problem when he stated,

Where the will is not there and the resources are not available, the UN peacekeepers will arrive late. It takes us on the average 4-5 months to put troops on the ground because we have no troops. The UN doesn't have an army. We borrow from our governments. So we can put on the ground the troops the governments offer. And as fast as they come, and not always with the equipment they promised. If those with the capacity were to cooperate, the UN can do the job, we would arrive on time, not late.⁹¹

Yet those with the capacity seldom cooperate fully. When assessed on the basis of the aforementioned criteria, the initiative's results are definitely mixed. For example, it is apparent that the UN is still denied sufficient resources, well-trained personnel and adequate mechanisms. Questions about reliability and effectiveness continue to confront the Organisation. As well, there are legitimate concerns about an increasingly unrepresentative, two-tiered system that is far too selective and slow. Rather than address these problems within the UN system, there has also been an alarming tendency to search for alternatives that range from regional military alliances to private mercenary forces.

It is evident that the rapid deployment initiative and more recent arrangements reflect the pursuit of agreement only slightly above the level of the lowest common denominator. The context placed a priority on modest short-to-mid term changes that could be promoted among diverse states without major controversy, major funding or major national contributions. Few can be heralded as visionary, courageous gestures that correspond to the wider human security challenges of the new millennium. While the pragmatic, incremental approach adopted worked relatively well in the short-term, it gradually encountered problems sustaining cooperation among the Friends, the Secretariat and other member states. The wider partnerships deemed necessary were increasingly difficult to encourage as the political and diplomatic commitment to the process declined. In turn, the sense of purpose, potential and urgency diminished. Moreover, in an era characterized by increasing complexity and unprecedented change, a pragmatic, incremental approach runs the risk of being simply too slow to cope. Reform in such a process is prone to setbacks from unsustained efforts, inattentive officials and relatively minor obstruction. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has acknowledged the UN's past pattern of incremental adaptations will not suffice in this rapidly changing context, that to succeed, the Organisation will need fundamental, not piecemeal, reform.⁹²