

of international conventions will have to be undertaken by coalitions of “the willing and the able”, but under the umbrella of United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

(xi) **Public relations**

**An effective public information system is an essential and integral part of any peace operation.** The importance of the media, both electronic and print, in whatever activity is undertaken, cannot be overstated. There is possibly no other single factor that has a greater influence on the evolution, preparation, and conduct of a peace operation. Some operations in the recent past were rushed into, without adequate preparation and thought, purely because of pressures generated by media reports; in other cases, conduct of operations in mission areas has been influenced by media coverage, even to the extent of being against the better judgement of commanders on the ground. It is imperative that the international community recognizes this impact and has the ability to resist its pressures for deployment of forces without all implications having been taken into account, and full preparations made.

Wherever there has been an effective information system, the mission's success has been largely assisted: and where it was conspicuous by its non-existence for many months, as was the case in the former Yugoslavia, the mission was seriously handicapped. It is essential to have the means of dealing with the disinformation inevitably put out by the parties to the conflict.