



## TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

In addition to pursuing what are essentially "capability standards", the UN has recently made a start at efforts to help put these standards into effect. The concept of UN Training Assistance Teams, or UNTATs, has recently been expanded and strengthened, using the "train-the-trainers" concept, and UNTATs will soon be available for assisting Member States in their training endeavours. The UN also has at its disposal a global network of peacekeeping training centres on which to build. The Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, located in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, has carved out an especially significant niche in building what it calls the "new peacekeeping partnership" among the military, other government institutions and the non-governmental sector. With a solid emphasis on training, the UN next needs to look at the potential role of regional organizations, including the possibility of securing regional coordinators of the United Nations system, to build on the solid accomplishments of the past two years. Initiatives by the United Kingdom and France on peacekeeping training in Africa promise to help in the process of enhancing the global quality of peacekeeping forces.

Further progress on securing personnel which can function adequately in multinational operations depends largely upon the UN developing a set of authoritative policies and procedures, or "doctrine", which creates consistency of purpose and goals from mission to mission. Doctrine does not evolve in a vacuum. It derives from "lessons learned" from previous operations, and builds upon the political objectives and the strategic plans of the Organization. At the national level, doctrine is authorized by the senior military commanders. At the international level, achieving formal agreement on doctrine is inherently difficult. As peace operations become more complex, a lack of clear doctrine causes both philosophical and operational problems. As an activity not authorized in the UN Charter, peacekeeping has never rested on sound doctrinal foundations. Recent moves by the Security Council into "grey areas" in several operations have made the need for building more solid doctrinal foundations even more pressing.

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### UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG)

#### 16 February 1989

Security Council resolution 632 approves Secretary-General plan for UNTAG. Initial deployment to be in place by D-Day (1 April): 4,650 troops (three battalions); 300 military observers.

#### 1 April 1989

"D-Day". Apart from 291 unarmed military observers, few UNTAG personnel have arrived in Namibia. SWAPO forces cross the border from Angola into Namibia.

#### 2-8 April 1989

Intense fighting between SWAPO and SADF forces leaves some 2,000 people killed.

*"...advance operational planning was one of the weakest aspects of UNTAG. The UN spent a decade working hard for the political settlement but did not develop operational plans sufficiently during that period to be ready when the settlement came through."*

-Virginia Page Fortna, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping*