



## TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

expected of the Organization, and the elements required to enable the UN to act quickly in response to crisis were never put into place. What rapid-reaction capability it possessed was in large measure dependent on individual Member States.

Giving the UN a rapid-reaction capability involves addressing each of the generic components of rapid-reaction identified in the previous chapter and providing the UN with equivalent elements commensurate with UN requirements. In the sections which follow, the report reviews each of the six components and assesses where the UN stands with respect to each one.

### Early Warning

The UN has access to information from many sources. In addition to the international media and the diplomatic community, well represented at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the UN has a global network of programs, institutions and specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others, most of which have field offices throughout the world. Into this loose, unorganized network comes information from non-governmental organizations, most of which are represented in New York and many of which have representation in other states. Despite a traditional allergy within the UN system to the idea of "intelligence collection", some Member States share open-source or low-level intelligence information with the UN Secretariat. There is no shortage of information available to the UN, and there are adequate avenues to provide the basis for early warning of impending crisis situations.

---

**There is no shortage of information available to the UN, and there are adequate avenues to provide the basis for early warning of impending crisis situations**

---

The UN Secretariat does not have a formal early-warning system. But various parts of the Secretariat, especially the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), carry out similar functions, including the Situation Centre, the Policy and Analysis Unit, and both the Generic Planning Unit and the Conceptual Planning Unit within the Mission Planning Service. In 1993 the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) started a two-year project on a Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS), with the mandate of compiling information to identify potential crises with humanitarian

### Un Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

**4 March 1964**

Security Council resolution 186 recommends establishment of UNFICYP

**12/13 March 1964**

UN Secretary-General states that measures to establish a UN force were "underway and making progress".

**8 June 1964**

UNFICYP reaches full strength

*"In the several weeks it took to conclude arrangements for the establishment of the force, the situation in Cyprus remained very unstable. The small British contingent on the ground was only able to contain a small portion of the escalating conflict."*

-Karl Th. Birgisson, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping*