

CONCLUSION

The failure to avert organized mass murder in Rwanda prompted a reappraisal of contemporary approaches, as well as a multinational initiative to enhance the United Nations capacity for rapid deployment. That led to supportive innovation at the political, strategic, operational and tactical levels. However, in the aftermath of Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is apparent that those initial efforts must now be revitalized, expanded and accelerated.

Rather than await the next catastrophe, it is time to consider how additional SHIRBRIGs and dedicated UN elements might be introduced as a complementary expansion on current arrangements.¹¹⁷ A composite UN Standing Emergency Capability, including these personnel, would be a cost-effective and more reliable option; one that merits serious consideration and action.

Both pragmatists and visionaries are aware that the recent political environment was not conducive to the immediate establishment of a UN standing force. Nor, in the earlier period of unprecedented activity, was the Organisation prepared to manage additional, controversial capabilities. As well, by 1997 the former political and diplomatic enthusiasm dissipated quickly when it encountered concerns related to sovereignty, risks, representation, limited support and insufficient financing. Yet rapid changes, ongoing conflicts, and the wider challenges of interdependence, are now altering the former context. Many are already reviewing contemporary approaches and mechanisms for preventing and resolving violent conflict, including the option of a UN standing emergency capability or force. In the earlier words of Stephen Kinloch, "driven back, the idea will, as in the past, ineluctably re-emerge, Phoenix-like, at the most favourable opportunity."¹¹⁸

This report attempts to address two critical questions frequently overlooked in academe and official circles. How do we revitalize and accelerate political momentum? First, it recommends a more inclusive soft power initiative to educate and inform interested parties. This approach could prompt renewed efforts and generate a broad-based constituency of support. There are new opportunities for developing partnerships between supportive member states, non-governmental organizations, departments, institutes and individuals. Second, how might supportive parties facilitate the elusive development of a reliable UN capability for rapid deployment to diverse