

them in Mission Planning as early as possible as to an impending mission. They would encourage the Standby Unit to use the CPU's contingency plan for some early preparatory identification of TCNs and equipment. This would allow the Standby Unit to gain valuable lead time by matching mission specific contingency plans with specific TCNs. Countries could agree in advance albeit in principle to second troops or equipment if a particular mission were to take place.

Preparatory standby arrangements are critical initial steps that obviously occur to a degree already. Presently when the Security Council is debating the possibility of initiating or strengthening a particular mission, the Standby Arrangements Unit initiates informal contact with potential troop contributors. A problem is that this is already quite late in the day, and does not always provide much lead time for lining up troops in advance. Probably the bigger difficulty is that the Standby Arrangements Unit has a total of four professional staff, which is barely enough to carry out their more general mandate of getting countries to identify standby units through memorandums of understanding if possible, and keeping an up to date roster of standby resources and making sure that both standby troops and equipment meet UN operational standards (see Chapter 7 Standby Arrangements).

As a result, advance identification of TCNs for specific missions is seriously limited by DPKO staff shortages. Once missions are actually authorised, the often more difficult and certainly more pressing task begins of getting countries to actually engage their UN standby units. The Standby Arrangements Unit requires at least one professional per mission to undertake negotiations with potential TCNs both in the preparatory stage and once the SC has authorised the mission.

At a minimum, there are a number of key field command positions that cannot be left to the last minute if there is to be any hope of a rapid and effective reaction once the political decision to proceed has occurred. Often the selection of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (or head of mission) and even more so the Force Commander, is taken at a very late stage. Even more predictable is the belated appointment of the deputy head of mission, the chief of staff, the chief administration officer, and other heads of different mission components.

It would appear that the Conceptual Planning Unit and the Standby Arrangements Unit simply do not have enough staff to undertake preparatory activity as outlined above. Some specialized agencies such as UNHCR have devised methods to respond to crises before the political and financial aspects of deploying peacekeepers are addressed in New York. What methods do they use and are they transferable to peace-keeping?

Equally applicable are the "political" arguments outlined in the previous Chapter on Contingency Planning. The central location of DPKO to the SC and the GA increases their political profile and militates against them being able to undertake substantial preparatory activity. This applies also to the difficulty of identifying the force commander early on. That in turns starts to create a circular argument in that the lack of a force commander makes it more difficult to reassure potential TCN's that they should even tentatively commit their troops. Are there ways to "contract out" preparatory activity to overcome the political sensitivities of the UN in New York?

Even assuming effective early warnings which trigger comprehensive contingency planning and preparation, situations can only be foreseen to a finite degree and one can only advance plan to a finite point. Even vastly improved contingency planning followed by contingency action will not change the need for the UN to react rapidly to new and changing situations. This requires responsive political decision making combined with highly mobile trained response teams to deal with the unforeseen. The next chapter will review quickly what is probably the biggest and the most unresolvable component of UN rapid reaction, political decision making.