

mid-1992 HQ military staff of 20 to provide guidance to 70,000 field personnel was clearly inadequate.<sup>23</sup> The Secretary General's newly-appointed military adviser at the time, General Baril (coordinating closely with the admirable Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Kofi Annan) worked hard to build up the HQ military staff and expertise, developing a situation centre and the ability to provide up to the minute guidance to field missions. With politically sensitive operations, such guidance from the Secretariat, particularly on evolving sentiment within the Security Council, is critical in order to forestall any disconnections between HQ and field.<sup>24</sup>

One of the largest challenges facing the UN in the field has been to devise means of making up to 40 national contingents (as was the case in the former Yugoslavia) work well together within a large PKO. **Inter-operability** problems can range from lack of linguistic compatibility, to varying levels of discipline and conflicting military traditions.<sup>25</sup> Difficulties of co-ordination are exacerbated by the inexperience of some Member States. Over 70 countries at one point contributed troops, and many of them were new to the peacekeeping game. Their personnel needed to adapt to peacekeeping culture (very much at odds with much military training). Enhanced **training** and growing experience among many recent troop contributing countries will assist in ensuring that national contingents are broadly inter-operable.<sup>26</sup> As well, declining demand for troops should allow the UN to pick and choose only the most competent units among those on offer (bearing in mind the need for geographic balance).

The UN has had to face problems relating to **peacekeeping materiel**, including the need to equip troops from a variety of countries without the wherewithal to supply their personnel with gear suitable to operations in distant lands. Germany's offer to equip and train two Pakistani battalions designated

---

<sup>23</sup> This is particularly obvious when the UN's then-tiny military headquarters operation is compared to national military headquarters staffs the world over, most of them significantly less busy than that of the UN.

<sup>24</sup> Sadly, much of what has been achieved by Annan and his distinguished predecessor, Marrack Goulding, in turning the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) into the UN Secretariat's most effective unit, is now threatened by the budgetary crisis and demands that DPKO, like other departments, accept staff and funding cuts. Even earlier, Annan's efforts to strengthen DPKO were frequently undermined by the General Assembly's committee responsible for administrative and budgetary matters and by counterproductive sniping from the powerful Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

<sup>25</sup> The UN has had to deal with a number of gross infractions to disciplinary standards by peacekeeping personnel, including several incidents of black marketeering. There is evidence of more robust Secretariat action on this front in recent years.

<sup>26</sup> A major challenge for trainers has been the absence of a UN peacekeeping doctrine and guidelines on many basic tasks for peacekeepers. This gap is being addressed within the UN and useful documents have been issued in recent years on many aspects of peacekeeping. Another shortcoming has been one of institutional memory: in the past, the lessons from one PKO were often lost on others and, to some extent, on UN headquarters. To address this problem, DPKO recently established a "lessons learned" unit. Copious media, academic, and governmental writing on a variety of recent PKOs, much of it excellent, will supplement this unit's analyses.