



## TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

the medium term, while the UN puts into place procedures which enable multinational forces to function together more effectively, there are bound to be considerable operational problems.

On the other hand, the requirements of the UN are far less onerous than any of the three rapid-reaction forces examined in this report. As this study will propose, rapid reaction would involve relatively small forces, possibly in the order of 5,000 personnel, much smaller than the French or American equivalents. The UN units would not be expected to go into combat situations or into operations in which they would be called upon explicitly to use force against an aggressor. These differences are important. They mean differences in the quantity of personnel requested from Member States, the types of equipment used and the consequent demands placed upon transportation and logistical systems. They also have an important impact on the type of command and control system needed in the UN. As Dr. Cathy Downes of the Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force has written, "The broad military objectives for [rapid-reaction forces] see such taskforces being employed to hold, and where possible de-escalate or contain a crisis until such time as a follow-on UN peacekeeping force can be activated, integrated and deployed or a decision is made to abandon efforts, other than diplomatic, to contain or resolve the conflict."<sup>13</sup>

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The UN has made remarkable progress in recent years in updating its approach to peace operations. It has laid the basis for future progress. The main task is to address those remaining deficiencies in policy and structure which would enable a UN rapid-reaction capability to function effectively in years ahead, thus ensuring that unity of purpose and unity of effort are the common objectives towards which the Organization and the international community are working. Identifying and addressing remaining deficiencies will be critical if the UN is to acquire an effective rapid-reaction capability.