

decision-making environment. This rendered more difficult the management of competing goals, a problem that became particularly acute after the refugees began to move in significant numbers back to Rwanda. In addition, valuable time was spent negotiating and drafting the legal and administrative arrangements for the MNF. All of this made effective management of the mission even more difficult.

Much work has been done recently, both in Canada and abroad, to create new mechanisms to improve the capability of the international community to provide military forces quickly when agreement exists on their deployment. The Canadian study, "Toward a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations", made well-received recommendations to improve those capacities at the UN; as a result of that initiative, the UN has already begun to set up a Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters.

Similarly, Canada has agreed to participate in the Danish proposal for a Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Under SHIRBRIG, participating nations indicate a willingness to contribute forces to the brigade for operations under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, and to participate in a Steering Committee and Planning Element. This initiative develops the idea of the "vanguard concept" outlined in the Canadian *Rapid Reaction* study. However, even though this brigade is planned for use only in Chapter VI operations, nations have firmly resisted any notion that its deployment might be automatic. Each nation has reserved the sovereign right to decide on each occasion whether or not its forces will deploy.

The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs has established the Military and Civil Defence Units (MCDU) project, which serves as a point of access for governments to military and civilian defence assets, catalogues the needs of humanitarian agencies and sends out requests to donor nations to provide the desired personnel and/or equipment. During the Zaire crisis, the MCDU played such a liaison role in the field by facilitating military assistance, in the form of airlift capacity, to UN agencies and NGOs. Its success in this mission offers hope for the future. The operation, however, remains small, and is still regarded as experimental.

As noted above, the Western European Union (WEU) has also begun to create a capability to respond to humanitarian emergencies, using NATO assets. During the crisis, the WEU discussed mounting a limited mission to