

immediate call up. Even units and individuals who have truly been put on UN standby, will have a certain amount of unavoidable personal and organizational demands which can delay immediate full mobilization.

Commonly, standby problems refer mostly to personnel numbers. The primary problem is actually getting the troops. However, almost as critical is the wide variation in training, competence, capacity, and equipment of units.

The first step in resolving this lies in verifying that standby forces actually meet the levels and standards they have ostensibly agreed to. At this time, DPKO does not have the capacity to play the role of an inspector-general and verify the standby arrangements agreed upon with separate TCNs. The SG and his staff have repeatedly emphasised that "it is essential that troops made available to the Organization come supplied and fully familiar with the equipment they will require to function in the field."¹⁹ At present, the Standby Unit has about three individuals who travel from country to country carrying out a number of tasks including that of ensuring that units are prepared. There is no conceivable way that they can carry out any regular or in-depth assessment of peace-keeping capacity much less rapid reaction capacity.

The second step lies in identifying what common contingent equipment standards should be, and what level is needed for any particular mission. Rapid reaction missions will tend to have similar needs and thus these standards can easily be developed in advance and modified as necessary.

Rapidly mobilizable UN resources are already envisaged and various components exist in the form of mission start-up kits. For example, communications needs for past missions have been studied and tables created that set out component requirements depending on the size and function of a headquarters or particular sub unit. Various communications packages have already been palletized. It is just a question of identifying which combinations of pallets get loaded and dispatched to meet the start up needs of a particular mission. Recognizing the high cost of reserve stocks, these start-up kits are primarily items of urgent necessity for new missions that component units would not normally have, eg. force HQ requirements.

Some stockpiling of start-up kits and other resources has been taking place particularly in Brindisi Italy. Much of that stockpiling consists of surplus equipment from terminated missions or 'gifts' from countries. These gifts are particularly problematic inasmuch as particularly older heavier equipment tends to be operational obsolescent and very expensive to store and maintain. Free equipment is invariably far from free. There was also the creation of a trust fund to acquire equipment. It had a target of \$15 million but appears to have only received \$40,000 to date.

Both because of costs and the need for incoming troops to have a thorough knowledge of their equipment, units are encouraged to come with their own equipment. There is thus a role to be played by the UN in ensuring that their equipment is up to standard. Establishing and verifying common equipment and competence with that equipment, will be easier to achieve in the military context. Less amenable to advanced preparations will be the civilian components of any rapid reaction mission.

In all of the above, DPKO has a very good appreciation of what needs to be done; from memorandums of understanding to detailed volumetrics to enable rapid deployment. The Standby Unit is the first to admit that they are not close to having sufficient staff nor the full procedures necessary to carry out their job.

¹⁹ para 17, A/48/403 (S/26450) 14 March 1994 **Improving the capacity of the United Nations for peace-keeping**, Report of the Secretary-General