A Preliminary Blueprint of Long-Term Options for Enhancing a UN Rapid Reaction Capability

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Overview

The development of an effective UN rapid reaction capability will take time, vision and a coherent goal-oriented plan. It has become all too evident that the UN suffers from a serious capability gap—that it continues to lack the necessary resources and infrastructure for rapid reaction. To fill this gap, there will be a need for a comprehensive and cumulative development process; one that is guided by a long-term sense of purpose and the prospect of contributing to an urgently needed mechanism for war-prevention and humanitarian assistance.

Recent discussion on enhancing UN rapid reaction capabilities have focused on the relative merits of three options: either coordinate better arrangement for the prompt provision of contingents earmarked through the 1993 UN Stand-by Arrangement System; organize stand-by vanguard groups from a coalition of committed Member States; or, initiate a standing brigade of professional UN volunteers. To date, there has been a tendency to regard these proposals as distinct, if not mutually exclusive. Yet in a stage by stage cumulative development process, there is the prospect of a coherent evolution; one that integrates the strengths of potentially compatible and reinforcing options.

At the forefront of the proposed evolution is the establishment of a UN rapid reaction base that can serve as an operational and tactical headquarters and as a dedicated centre for planning, training, equipment stockpiling and staging. As the organization proceeds, nationally-based, stand-by, contingents can be supplemented with standing elements assigned to this base for a period of approximately two years. Ultimately, these efforts should evolve into a UN Standing Emergency Capability comprised of dedicated UN volunteers, national contingents and civilian

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personnel that are stationed and trained together. New doctrine and advance preparation, including comprehensive training programmes, will be essential. It is also an appropriate time to begin planning for multiple UN rapid reaction bases. This evolution is seen to offer the best chance of assuring reliability and readiness.

Committed Member States can take a leading role in initiating such a process. Regional representation can be encouraged by the demonstration of organizational competence and by the development of Partnerships between initial contributors and supportive Member States.

There is a need for a variety of blueprints that outline not only the foundation of a rapid reaction capability but also a more durable structure and capacity for expansion. This chapter departs from conventional thinking and assumes the UN requires a rapid reaction capability on a scale commensurate with the tasks it is likely to be assigned. It cannot be asked to improvise and make do with less on an ongoing basis. Consideration of long-term options is, however, inherently speculative. The following proposals offer some guidance to stimulate further discussion, analysis and planning.

A Comprehensive Approach

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to peace and security issues. A new rapid reaction capability cannot succeed in isolation. It must be designed as an integral component of UN crisis management—as a complement to the Organization's ongoing efforts in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Such a mechanism can only be justified, moreover, if it has the ability to provide a more cost-effective and timely response to a wide array of complex potential challenges.

To address such challenges adequately, it is evident that this new instrument will need to have a multidimensional composition and character. This will entail a comprehensive approach utilizing both military and civilian elements.

Recent UN operations have demonstrated the importance of providing for the diverse needs of people in desperate circumstances. Frequently there is a requirement to provide food and shelter, re-establish communications, restore a sense of order with civilian police services, open schools, rebuild bridges and develop the necessary infrastructure for good governance. Faith and confidence in the future diminish rapidly in the absence of such efforts. While UN forces play an essential role in dissuading violent options, immediate rehabilitation projects play an equally important role in demonstrating an enduring commitment to a sustainable peace process. Together, they facilitate the work of those engaged in peacemaking.

The added complexity of second generation UN multinational operations will demand new cooperative practices and combined efforts. The commensurate expansion of operational and tactical responsibilities is likely to continue. Far-sighted, multi-disciplinary planning and advance preparations will be imperative. Military and civilian elements will have to be well coordinated and sufficiently flexible to respond to a range of future emergencies. An effective UN rapid reaction capability will depend upon combining the skills and expertise within participating Member States, the UN and the community of related non-governmental organizations. An integrated unity of effort and a complementary division of labour can be encouraged through team building, inclusive doctrine and participation in common training.

A Cumulative Development Process

To move beyond the ad hoc organizational practices that have been characterized as a last-minute sheriff's posse, sound "building blocks" will need to be firmly established and built up over the next decade. The chance of immediately initiating a UN standing capability is now seen to be quite remote. A cumulative development process appears to be the most feasible.

Such a process would open up a wider range of future options while gradually inspiring greater confidence in the UN's ability to manage new capabilities. Practical experience will be necessary to allay longstanding anxieties.

We envisage several stages in this cumulative development. Each stage will determine the scope and the scale of potential activities. Additional responsibilities and assistance will have to be earned through the demonstration of organizational competence, operational readiness and success in the field.

Overall, however, it is essential that planning begins to build on, and expand beyond, the limited foundation provided by the UN Stand-by Arrangements System and proposals for a relatively small operational headquarters within the Directorate of Peacekeeping. In short, the UN's capability gap can only be bridged by institutionalizing and consolidating an effective rapid reaction capability. Its potential viability will be dependent upon the establishment of a more durable and permanent structure.

While this chapter recommends a cumulative development process, it is a preliminary review of related options and by no means a fixed trajectory nor a definitive or final blueprint. Any process will be open to revision, redirection or expansion at every stage. Member states would not be tied to an agreed process; it would remain entirely up to their discretion whether or not to participate.

STAGE 1: ESTABLISH A DEDICATED UN RAPID REACTION BASE

Among the future options meriting consideration is the establishment of a UN rapid reaction base. If UN responses are to be rapid, there will be a need for a dedicated facility from which to prepare, mount and manage future operations. A UN base would enhance multinational cooperation and confidence through joint planning, training and exercises.

In the near term, this base would be expected to assist in the organization and preparation of national stand-by contingents and the necessary civilian elements. Within a relatively short period, it could begin to serve as a central training, logis-
tics, staging and equipment stockpiling centre. Over time, a UN base would offer the optimum prospect of concentrating the personnel, equipment, and combined effort necessary for rapid reaction.

The selection of a rapid reaction base should account for its potential capacity for expansion on the assumption that it will be assigned additional responsibilities. Consideration at the political and strategic level will have to be accorded to a base that can assume responsibility for hosting an expanded standing operational headquarters and two tactical field or mission headquarters with a range of various deployable elements. At the political level, host nation support from a committed Member State and regular troop contributor will be necessary for a facility that has sufficient terrain and infrastructure to accommodate and train approximately 10,000 personnel.

As early as 1957, William R. Frye wrote that, “as a practical matter, the UN almost certainly would have to rent or buy, on advantageous terms, a base already in existence, and this would mean finding a Member State which was willing to dispose of one of its own”. There are new opportunities in this respect. With widespread force build-down occurring in numerous Member States, there are ample opportunities to convert a surplus national defence facility to this task. While a UN base would clearly demand new resources, it need not entail a major capital acquisition and development project.

The operational and tactical requirements of a UN rapid reaction base are straightforward. Site selection can be determined by the need for a secure, supportive, cost-effective, easily-accessible, strategic location. For prompt air-lift, this base should be within an hour of an air base that can assist in staging operations. For concurrent sea-lift of necessary equipment and supplies, it would be helpful if it was located within several hours of a sea port that had a roll-on roll-off capability. Such a location would facilitate stockpiling as well as staging and logistics efforts. Relative proximity to land, air force and naval establishments of the host nation might also offer the potential for joint exercises in a realistic environment as well as valuable assistance in various related areas.

Among the assets required are: officer and other rank quarters, administrative offices, drill and training areas, class rooms, a language training centre, firing ranges, storage depots, hangers, self-contained medical and dental services, recreational facilities and approximately 20,000 acres of varied terrain. While not essential, an urban conflict training site would be a useful complement. The surrounding area should also have the potential to house and provide for the needs of families and dependents. Community support for a large multinational presence will be essential.

**CO-LOCATE STANDING OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL-LEVEL HEADQUARTERS AT THE UN BASE**

A priority should be an expanded headquarters at the designated UN base. Experienced officers and qualified planners would be seconded to the base and co-assigned responsibility to expand the operational and tactical foundation for future operations. Together, this headquarters and base could serve as a focal point for contingency planning, training rapid reaction elements and supporting doctrinal development.

Among the priority tasks of this operational-level headquarters would be: forecasting detailed requirements; coordinating civilian and military aspects of operational planning; confirming standing operating procedures; and recommending rules of engagement for mission commanders. It would continue to work on arrangements for equipment procurement and stockpiling, establishing readiness and training standards, promoting interoperability, and the refinement of training curricula and courses for both military and civilian elements. It would also assume responsibility for deployment of all rapid reaction mission elements thereby easing the burden on the mission headquarters, troop-contributors and UN headquarters.

Only an expanded, static operational headquarters at a designated base would provide the capability necessary. To effectively manage a variety of complex tasks, it is in the common interest of all related parties to shift from a skeletal operational headquarters stationed within UNHQ, New York to an operational headquarters at the rapid reaction base. As in numerous other areas within the larger UN system, some tasks can be better managed when unencumbered by the day to day institutional responsibilities of UNHQ. (See Figure 1).

A headquarters of this nature would, by necessity, be quite large. The example provided estimates a military requirement for approximately 203 personnel not including the base infrastructure and support staff. This number is partly accounted for given the need for a 24/7 operations cell to initiate a rapid response and immediate planning in the event of a pending crisis. As this headquarters assumes responsibility for the details of reconnaissance, force composition and deployment, a 24/7 operations cell will be critical.

The civilian component within this headquarters is projected at 83 personnel (not including base infrastructure). These civilians will be required to ensure a comprehensive approach in the planning of multidimensional operations and to develop the integrated unity of effort which must typify UN peace support operations of the future.

Overall coordination of the headquarters and base might best be assigned to a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) who would serve as the direct link to the Secretariat. This SRSG should have experience in previous operations and be advised by a senior military officer of a general rank. To ensure the appropriate direction and command of future field operations, it may be wise to designate two to three individuals with military and diplomatic experience as Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for UN Rapid Reaction.

The operational headquarters and base would be organized to include: the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General; a national liaison cell; an operations group consisting of military and civilian staff that would conduct
UN Rapid Reaction Capabilities

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

UN RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY
PERMANENT OPERATIONAL LEVEL HQ AND BASE

(INTEGRATED PLANNING FOR MAXIMUM UNITY OF EFFORT)

PERSONNEL: 353 MIL 1583 CIV

NATIONAL LIASON CELL

OPERATIONS

MILITARY STAFF

PERSONNEL: 100 MIL
- CONTINGENCY PLANS
- OPERATIONS
- TRAINING
- LOGISTICS
- NATIONAL DUTY OF STAFF

CIVILIAN PEACE SUPPORT STAFF

PERSONNEL: 50 MIL
- CONTINGENCY PLANS
- OPERATIONS
- TRAINING
- PERSONNEL

SUPPORT

DEPLOYMENT CELL

PERSONNEL: 50 MIL
- CONTINGENCY MOVE PLANNING
- LOGISTICS
- RESOURCES
- ADMINISTRATION PLANNING
- ACTIVITIES/CAPACITY CONTRACTING
- DEPLOYABLE MOVEMENT SUPPORT TEAMS

BASE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

PERSONNEL: 150 MIL 1500 CIV
- ADMINISTRATION
- PERSONNEL
- FINANCE
- HOST NATION SUPPORT

TRAINING

DOCTRINE

PERSONNEL: 10 MIL
- CONTINGENCY
- OPERATIONS
- TRAINING

TRAINING STANDARDS

PERSONNEL: 10 MIL
- SET AND ACCESS STANDARDS
- INTEROPERABILITY
- COURSE AND CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

PERSONNEL: 1 MIL
- LONG-TERM PLANNING
- REQUIREMENTS TRAINEE TRAINING

DEPLOYABLE ELEMENTS

SEE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF DEPLOYABLE ELEMENTS

INITIATE AN ONGOING PROCESS OF DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT

The added complexity and risks of "second generation" UN multinational operations will demand new organizational practices, new methods and new skills. Doctrine is the key to synchronizing multiple elements of a UN rapid reaction capability into effective peace support operations. It establishes the fundamental principles by which the various elements plan and conduct their activities in support of UN objectives.

Among the related doctrinal priorities will be competence, flexibility, mobility, discipline and confidence-building. Detailed consideration will have to be accorded to appropriate rules of engagement, new standing operating procedures, strict control over the use of force, modern command and control procedures as well as common standards for training and readiness.

There is much to be learned and adopted from UN experience as well as established national and multinational doctrine for rapid reaction, particularly in specific areas such as command and control, logistics and staging. However, in other areas, the principles of war and strategy are simply incompatible given the different priorities and objectives of UN operations.

Appropriate doctrine will have to be developed for military and civilian elements participating in multidimensional UN operations. Credible doctrine can be viewed as a pre-requisite to inspiring both the confidence and the financial support of Member States. There are, however, justifiable concerns that the UN is currently "wandering in the void" in charting a new strategic direction. More urgently needs to be done. Further multidisciplinary research and analysis focusing specifically on UN rapid reaction, peace support operations will be necessary. This process must be ongoing.

Operational and tactical doctrine will have to be modified to ensure a more sophisticated response to a wide array of potential tasks. Doctrine must focus on widening the range of available options that minimize the need for force. For example, at the tactical level, doctrine can help to specify a menu of options for the planning and management of deployable elements; a support group comprised of a deployment cell as well as base infrastructure and support components; and a training group with specific offices for doctrine, training standards and research and analysis. It is clear that a headquarters of this size would require the support of a base infrastructure.
deployable elements that will assist the opposing parties in pursuing appropriate solutions. In this respect, confidence building has to be considered an essential element of doctrine as “success” frequently depends on the extent to which a mission establishes the trust of the belligerent as well as that of the local population. Confidence building measures help to ensure consent and to establish the moral authority of related UN efforts.

Another key to widening the range of options is to resolve problems at the lowest practical level, or what is frequently referred to as the “sharp end” between local forces and UN personnel in the field. Low-level problem solving helps to contain minor conflicts and stem the potential for escalation. It nevertheless demands a greater degree of tactical flexibility in doctrine as well as an assurance that all ranks have sufficient understanding and sophistication to handle the various problems that arise in the field.

Doctrine will also be necessary to guide contingency planning and the development of various generic mission models which outline specific requirements, particularly rules of engagement. Consent and impartiality will depend heavily upon discipline and restraint with respect to the use of force. As Charles Dobbie writes:

Doctrine should specify a philosophy towards the use of force that takes account of its long-term effects. Commanders will need principles to guide their use of force and also be made aware of the alternatives to its use. A helpful rule of thumb has been defined as minimum necessary force...

A UN rapid reaction capability will require new rules of engagement, particularly those governing the use of force; rules that are different from either those of peacekeeping or enforcement operations. In the words of former UN Under Secretary-General, Sir Brian Urquhart:

The rapid reaction group will never initiate the use of force, but will be highly trained so that it can take care of its own security and mobility and have the ability and equipment to maintain its operations in the face of harassment and even opposition. It will in no circumstances have military objectives or be required to take sides in a civil war. It will be trained in peace-keeping and problem-solving techniques but will also have the training, military expertise and esprit de corps to pursue those tasks in difficult, and even violent situations.

Contingency planning and appropriate doctrine must be prepared for a new multinational structure and mission. As a UN rapid reaction capability will be a new mechanism for war prevention and humanitarian assistance, one can anticipate the emphasis in doctrinal planning will shift toward dissuasion, de-escalation, non-provocative intervention and the provision of useful services.

The larger task will be one of neutral, and wherever possible, peaceful, third-party intervention. Yet success in future operations will be increasingly dependent upon carefully conceived pro-active and preventive measures. Developing new doctrine and specific skills for areas as diverse as technical reconnaissance deployments, conflict resolution, and well-controlled escalation and de-escalation will be a demanding yet essential task.

**Promote Common Prior Training**

Advance planning must be accompanied by prior training for various rapid reaction contingencies. Training provides a crucial link in the process of understanding doctrine and its implications for individual and common efforts in conducting day to day activities as well as field operations.

Even with the provision of UN standards and training guidelines, the quality and capability of units assigned by Member States varies considerably. In the midst of an emergency, there are serious risks in assigning contingents that have little common experience, inadequate training and insufficient equipment. These problems are unlikely to be quickly or easily resolved without extensive cooperation in the advance preparation of rapid reaction elements.

A dedicated training system that provides a comprehensive approach to the various tasks will be necessary to ensure competence, high standards and interoperability. Cooperation may be extended through the active involvement and support of national military and academic establishments, particularly those engaged in the regional studies, conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, cultural sensitivity training and basic language training. There will also be a need for the ongoing assistance of national peacekeeping training centres and the participation of UN officials working in related fields.

Military credibility and proficiency will be essential for operations in high risk environments. All ranks should also be provided with training in contact skills such as mediation and dispute resolution as these help to ensure that minor conflicts are quickly contained before risking early escalation. Many Member States can assume the responsibility to ensure that their participants are well prepared and of the highest quality available.

Supplementary training efforts should, however, be consolidated at the UN base under the dedicated training group. All participants would be provided with a common understanding of various UN operations and objectives as well as with intensive preparation for their specific roles and responsibilities. There will be a need for comprehensive general, specialized, and mission-specific training programmes. Modern training courses and a wide range of curricula will be required. Participating personnel will need general training in how to manage and diffuse crises, courses in how to conduct themselves with new partners in UN multidimensional missions, as well as specialized training in their assigned tasks. The list of the new skills, methods and tactics required will be rather extensive. At this stage, moreover, it will be important to plan for and secure arrangements to begin...
hosting stand-by vanguard groups and civilian elements for a four-month period of general and specialized joint training and exercises at the designated base.

**Encourage Regional Representation through Partnerships**

Widespread legitimacy and support will be important in determining the further development and success of UN efforts in this field. While the development of a sophisticated capability is to be encouraged, any indication of this being an elite “club” of contributors would be counter-productive. The UN must avoid a two-tiered, Northern-dominated rapid reaction effort.

Regional representation can only be assured by developing the confidence and capabilities of members who might otherwise be unable to participate in such operations. Regular troop contributors can facilitate this process by initiating partnerships with new participants to share expertise, training and, where possible, equipment. Partnership programmes could either be initiated on a multilateral basis within a region or on a bilateral basis between two Member States.

It is widely recognized that a relatively small number of nations have developed niche expertise and special skills in areas such as communications, logistics, engineering and training. Similarly, a number of the larger powers retain a surplus of equipment for transportation, defence and surveillance. Yet UN operations continue to be jeopardized by the absence of appropriate understanding, training and equipment among new trooper contributors.

The twin objectives of initiating a partnership programme would be first, to expand the pool of available expertise and equipment, and second, to foster mutually-beneficial cooperation and the ability to work together toward high UN standards. Participants would simply agree to a programme of sharing (or combining) their respective resources to assist in the ongoing development of UN rapid reaction capabilities.

Options that promote further cooperation and ensure this remains an “inclusive” process warrant serious consideration. In this respect, there may also be significant potential in the gradual consolidation of multiple regionally-dispersed UN bases. These would facilitate broader representation and expand the prospects for cooperation with regional organizations. Aside from demonstrating a tangible world-wide commitment, the UN would have the benefit of wider access as well as a broad range of facilities for regional equipment stockpiling, training and staging. In time, one would expect regional UN bases to help develop a broader pool of participants and qualified personnel.

**Stage 2: Consolidate National Contingents and Civilian Elements at the Designated Base as a UN Standing Emergency Vanguard Group**

To institutionalize a more effective rapid reaction capability, military contingents and civilian elements from committed Member States should be assigned to the designated UN base for a period of two years. Common basing would offer the best prospect of enhancing standardization, interoperability and cohesiveness among various national military and civilian elements. Consolidating these elements at the base would provide the UN with a core capability and help to overcome much of the last-minute *ad hoc* response that has plagued pre-deployment planning of UN missions and constrained field operations. This cooperative endeavor would maximize readiness and help to ensure a relatively reliable and sophisticated response within five to eight days of warning from the Security Council.

Supplementary arrangements could be negotiated at the political level to identify dedicated participants and units for secondment to UN service for this two year period. Common basing need not be an exorbitantly expensive endeavor for either the UN or participating Member States. Committed members would simply re-locate national elements that already exist and assign them to a UN base. In the event of a national crisis, they would be subject to recall. As they would remain under national command, co-assigned to national and UN service, their governments would retain primary responsibility for their administration, pay and benefits.

For the UN, cost-sharing might be arranged on a basis slightly less taxing than that of field operations wherein the Organization frequently assumes responsibility for incremental costs, transportation of national elements to and from the site, operation and maintenance costs, as well as the provision of accommodation and pay equity allowances.

As in the provision of any new service, one can readily anticipate that there will be new expenses. The nature of a UN standing emergency capability will inevitably demand a high level of professionalism and commitment. Aside from assigning additional personnel to one location, there will be a requirement for high quality equipment, prompt air and sea lift, support and appropriate base infrastructure. Yet this initiative can be designed in a manner that appeals to the common interest of all related parties.

Participation would entail considerable recognition and prestige for both the contributing nation and the various services involved. Moreover, a number of Member States might be encouraged to assign units to a standing capability if it held out the prospect of advancing their unit’s training and professional development. Contributors would also retain the option to withhold or veto the deployment of their national contingents. As in current operations, national representatives would be expected to command national elements, with operational control remaining under UN authority.

The general reluctance to move quickly can be partially overcome by stationing multinational elements within a sound operational and tactical structure. Member states will want to be assured of command arrangements and well represented within them. Naturally, they will want checks in the system as national safeguards. Yet several governments would likely set aside their former reservations over a UN standing capability if they were confident that it was professionally organized and well managed. Competent leadership would be widely regarded as a pre-requisite of participation. At this stage, the UN Security Council would only have the
authority to establish and deploy rapid reaction capabilities pending national approval.

At the operational and tactical level, the UN would be increasingly assured of a broad range of well-trained military and civilian elements to draw from for future operations. Common basing offers the potential to conduct joint staging, field and command post exercises in a multinational and multidimensional training environment. Controlled simulations in a realistic milieu are among the better tests of various operational conditions and tactical innovations. Doctrine, strategy, tactics, standard operating procedures, and rules of engagement could be developed and refined in both contingency planning and on-site training. In turn, one could also foster a higher degree of confidence, group cohesiveness and the necessary unity of effort.

Comprehensive, prior training is an essential foundation for rapid reaction, particularly in demanding roles such as preventive deployment. If it is achieved to a high degree, a shorter programme of mission-specific training and briefings could commence on site immediately, with all required elements at the first alert provided by the Security Council. Concurrent staging efforts could proceed. The net result would be a faster and more effective response.

**Composition of Deployable Elements**

To ensure the prompt provision of sufficient personnel at the operational and tactical levels, there will be a need to build in, and maintain, a considerable redundancy of personnel and units from various troop contributors. This redundancy would also provide the UN with the option of selecting those national contingents deemed suitable for operations in regions having particular political, ethnic, cultural or religious sensitivities. As in other UN peace support operations, impartiality and neutrality must be maintained to ensure legitimacy.

The military elements stationed at the designated UN base are, therefore, projected at approximately 6,250 personnel. Whereas the majority of battalions will be kept on a relatively high state of readiness, contingency planning should account for deployments that are limited to roughly 3,000 military personnel. This 2 to 1 ratio could facilitate deployment of tasked elements as those that remain on site might assist with logistics and support functions while continuing preparation for future missions.

At this stage, the operational headquarters would be expected to ensure the two tactical field headquarters (mission headquarters) were fully functional and capable of assuming operational control over the deployable elements. When deployed, these mission headquarters could be placed under the direction of a Deputy Representative of the Secretary-General supported by a military commander. Each of the two headquarters would include military and civilian staff, political and legal advisors, a translation cell, an NGO liaison team, a communications and signals unit and, a defence and security platoon. This would be a multinational, multidimensional headquarters of approximately 275 personnel with the capacity to act as a vanguard HQ, a sector HQ, or a mission HQ for a limited period of time.

The deployable military elements assigned to each mission headquarters are projected to include: high readiness, technical reconnaissance units; a light armored reconnaissance squadron; light infantry battalions; light-armed (wheeled) infantry battalions; a helicopter squadron; an engineer unit; a logistics battalion; as well as a medical unit.

Among the deployable civilian peace support elements recommended are: a disaster relief and humanitarian response team; civilian police; a conflict resolution team; a peacebuilding advisory team; medical teams; an environmental crisis response team; a transport team; and a public affairs team. The combined strength of the civilian peace support elements that might be assigned to the two mission headquarters is estimated at approximately 550 personnel.

An example of the deployable elements, including the mission headquarters is outlined in Figure 2. Overall, a standing UN rapid reaction capability is projected to require a total of approximately 10,000 personnel.

The posting of dedicated personnel to the UN base might be initiated bi-annually with rotation of personnel staged at six-month intervals. Provision can be made to ensure the necessary overlap of new and experienced contributors. Similarly, periods of leave can be arranged four times throughout the year at staggered intervals to assure an adequate strength remains on site for rapid deployment. Those individuals and units that have served for two years in UN stand-by or standing elements and participated in the general and specialized training programmes and operations in either stage 1 or stage 2 could be encouraged by the UN and supportive Member States to serve as reserve or augmentation groups.

**Equipment, Support and Lift**

Three generic components of rapid reaction will require a sustained effort. First, is the need for high readiness—all deployable elements, equipment and supplies must be ready for prompt staging. Second, they require a unique degree of self-sufficiency—a capacity to operate on their own for a period of 60 to 90 days. Third, they must have prompt transportation to the mission area and within the specific theatre of operations.

To react rapidly, equipment must be ready to go, pre-packed and prepared for immediate deployment. Similar equipment must also be available at the UN base for training. Current arrangements stipulate that the troop contributors provide nearly all that is necessary. While this results in minimal cost to the UN, it would undermine readiness if a wide array of disparate equipment and parts from various participants had to be loaded, supplied for, and designated to distinct national elements at the last minute. Partnerships may provide an initial foundation for equipment sharing between several participants, but they cannot be expected to provide a standard source of supply for all.
Ultimately, the UN will require its own modern equipment if the deployable elements of a standing rapid reaction capability are to be interoperable and standardized. Standardization of equipment (particularly with respect to vehicle fleets) across a multinational UN capability would greatly reduce overall costs, manpower, overhead and efficiency.

Although each of the two mission headquarters will have responsibility for deployments of up to 3,250 personnel, one set of the more costly standard equipment such as vehicles might be shared in training while a second similar set was either being used in a mission or pre-packaged ready for immediate deployment. Overall, this will entail roughly thirty percent more equipment than might be required for a high-readiness, brigade-size formation.

At the political level, one can readily anticipate initial reservations over the cost of providing the UN with its own new equipment. In the long-term, however, there might be considerable savings for those participants that provide personnel but would no longer have to supply, maintain and replace similar equipment from their own stocks.

At the operational level, the complex job of coordinating and maintaining appropriate equipment for training and missions might be considerably less taxing. At the tactical level, the benefits of standard and interoperable equipment would provide an added measure of safety and reliability. Personnel would be familiar with the tools of their trade and assured of support and immediate re-supply out of reserve or training stocks at the UN base.

Logistics efforts would be considerably streamlined. One deployment cell could oversee mission requirements with a view to ensuring self-contained, smaller logistics elements and self-sufficiency for 60 to 90 days. Planning would be simplified with the development of fully-integrated, task-organized mission support teams capable of managing operations from deployment to the field and early withdrawal.

Similarly, one might anticipate fewer problems in arranging immediate transportation and lift requirements. The ability to move personnel and equipment quickly into and out of any mission will be critical. Coordinating lift out of one airhead near the UN rapid reaction base would be considerably less expensive, quicker, and easier to plan than picking up nationally-based vanguard groups located world-wide. Units on high readiness would have all necessary material pre-packed and ready at the airhead.

Rapid deployment (and the potential need for rapid extraction) inevitably points to a requirement for immediate strategic and tactical air-lift as well as sea-lift that are unencumbered by delays and conditional arrangements.

Large powers such as the United States and Russia are uniquely positioned to provide air and sea lift. These lift capabilities as well as their crews and maintenance personnel might be assigned priority responsibility to the UN operational
the UN would have a highly competent nucleus for the training and development of experienced individuals would overcome numerous problems that would otherwise impede start-up and the generation of a dedicated UN capability. By initially drawing on qualified personnel from participating national contingents, the UN would have a highly competent nucleus for the training and development of new recruits. These individuals would be required to meet high qualifying standards and display unequivocal dedication to the principles and objectives of the Charter. As this will be an elite UN capability, there should be few problems in acquiring outstanding officers, other ranks and civilians from a wider pool of UN personnel.

Stage 3: Integrate Professional Volunteers into a United Nations Standing Emergency Capability

While the previous proposed stage of standing national elements would represent a vast enhancement of the UN’s capacity to react rapidly, it will continue to be restrained by one critical limitation: the requirement for prompt prior Member State approval for deployment of their contingents. Members should not be asked to relinquish national control.

Therefore, to ultimately guarantee that the UN is able to respond rapidly and reliably to a crisis, consideration must be accorded to standing UN volunteer elements that would be under the exclusive command and control of the UN Security Council.

Approximately 5,000 personnel volunteering for professional UN service could be integrated into a composite capability including national contingents, civilians and dedicated UN elements. The overall ratio of national contingents to professional UN volunteers should be roughly equivalent. The size and general structure of the rapid reaction capability would remain largely intact. It would continue to entail a standing operational-level headquarters and two mission headquarters at the designated UN base.

At this stage, however, the UN would assume sole control and responsibility for one of the two mission headquarters and its deployable elements. Volunteers would be developed into cohesive UN units under this headquarters. Planners would have to ensure that the UN volunteers were also equitably represented in the operational-level headquarters as well as in base infrastructure support, administration, training and deployment cells.

UN personnel might be selected from an established registrar within the operational headquarters of volunteers demonstrating competence in the preliminary stages or in previous national commitments to UN service. The gradual integration of experienced individuals would overcome numerous problems that would otherwise impede start-up and the generation of a dedicated UN capability. By initially drawing on qualified personnel from participating national contingents, the UN would have a highly competent nucleus for the training and development of new recruits. These individuals would be required to meet high qualifying standards and display unequivocal dedication to the principles and objectives of the Charter. As this will be an elite UN capability, there should be few problems in acquiring outstanding officers, other ranks and civilians from a wider pool of

Member States in the years ahead. The long-term objective would be to ensure dedicated UN elements were of a heterogeneous composition with no overbearing, distinct national representation.

Any arrangement of this nature would also entail the development of new command and control procedures, comprehensive insurance programmes, specific codes of discipline, as well as status-of-forces and act-of-service agreements. The UN has sufficient experience and expertise to direct the recruitment, administration and management of new personnel.

Constituting approximately fifty percent of the capability’s normal strength, UN elements would have a credible stand-alone strength for emergency deployments of approximately 3,250 personnel. By conventional military standards, however, it would represent a discreet capability; one that could effectively manage many of the potential peace support roles assigned, but insufficient in size and composition for peace enforcement.

Moreover, as this would be a composite UN rapid reaction capability, including national contingents, UN volunteers and civilian elements, one might allay fears of a significant, new supranational force. Contributing Member States would retain decision-making authority over the deployment of their national contingents. The Security Council would, however, have sole authority over decisions to deploy UN volunteer personnel. Responsibility for operational command and control as well as day-to-day preparation of the UN volunteers would be vested in the Secretary-General.

A dedicated UN capability would serve many of the long-term interests of Member States. Such an arrangement would help to offset the public and political pressure many contributing governments now confront when faced with difficult decisions over participation in new, potentially high-risk operations. The 1993 report of the US Commission on Improving the Effectiveness of the United Nations highlighted this problem in the following recommendation:

To strengthen the U.N.’s peacekeeping and peace enforcement capabilities the Commission proposes the creation of a 5,000 to 10,000-(man) blue helmet rapid deployment force of volunteers...The Commission believes that a UN rapid-reaction force is necessary because no nation likes to send its soldiers into potential combat zones when its own interests may not be directly affected by the outcome...On its own (a small international) force has limited value if a large scale conflict breaks out, but a U.N. legion would...be a useful arm of the Security Council for deterring conflict or providing early on-site reconnaissance. It could also be used to give the U.N. an immediate presence in a troubled region while a larger force is formed using units contributed by member nations.10

As professional volunteers were developed into a cohesive UN capability, the burden of responsibility for managing peace and security would be more equita-
bly shared and gradually shifted toward the one Organization initially designed for this purpose.

A composite rapid reaction capability may also be viewed as a cost-effective development—one that would partially offset the need for, and expense, of major peace support and enforcement actions, as well as the heavy financial burden now frequently shouldered in rebuilding war-torn societies. In the words of Sir Brian Urquhart:

A rapid response group, whatever its basis and nature, should be seen as a vital investment for the future, and one which by its nature, is designed to act at the point where action can be most effective, thus eliminating or reducing the necessity for later, larger, less effective, more costly options.¹¹

Although there would be approximately 5,000 new personnel on the UN payroll as well as new equipment, managerial and administrative requirements, the overall costs incurred would likely be reduced with the ongoing participation of national elements. This would continue to be a cost-sharing arrangement whereby committed Member States assumed all but the incremental costs of their assigned contingents, and the UN covered the expense of its own volunteer personnel as well as the various costs associated with accommodation, equipment, transport, operations and maintenance.

The financing requirements for a standing UN capability will be qualitatively different than those related to peacekeeping, as costs will be recurring, rather than episodic. While it is difficult to project even a notional estimate of total costs, Dr. Jean Krasno estimates the start-up costs for a UN base facility capable of sustaining a rapid reaction unit of 10,000 personnel (operations and support) at approximately US $400 million. On the basis of Krasno’s figures for recurring costs, this composite capability proposal can be roughly estimated at US $253 million per annum. Overall, it is apparent that this new UN capability would not entail a significant financial burden if shared proportionately among over 180 Member States. For example, the initial start up cost to Canada under the present scale of assessments, would be roughly US$12.3 million with annual recurring costs of approximately US$7.8 million. By way of comparison, the Canadian government spent $35 million in emergency assistance in Rwanda from April to September 1994; an expenditure than many have argued could have been largely avoided if the UN had the capability to respond quickly to the crisis.

Enlisting 5,000 personnel into UN service would constitute little, if any, drain on the existing defence resources of a particular nation. There are, however, those who dismiss the gradual integration of UN volunteers into a composite group on the grounds that it would be fundamentally incompatible with national elements. Some have claimed it simply will not work. Clearly, there are few, if any, equivalent precedents. The former experience with the French Foreign Legion and the British experience with the Gurkhas is noteworthy. Through ongoing participation, these forces were able to prove, largely on the basis of competence and loyalty, that they were capable of being successfully integrated into various missions over an extended period. Although of a different nature, there was similar resistance towards the integration of civilian personnel into UN multidimensional operations. They have since proven to be a net benefit and an essential contribution to numerous successful missions.

The integration of UN volunteers into this composite group can be viewed as a complementary and mutually reinforcing stage in the development of an increasingly effective UN rapid reaction capability. This option may yet offer the UN the best prospect of a dependable and sophisticated rapid reaction capability. With dedicated UN personnel, the response to a pending crisis would be shortened considerably. Initial deployments could occur within 18 hours after a decision of the Security Council.

Aside from the potential to fill an apparent gap in the UN’s mechanisms for preventive deployment as well as prompt assistance for disaster and humanitarian relief, considerable advances could be anticipated in peacekeeping and in the new grey area of “second generation” multinational operations. By expanding the operational and tactical structure of this rapid reaction capability to include dedicated UN personnel, one would also expand the range of options at the political and strategic level. As the 1995 Commission on Global Governance reported:

The very existence of an immediately available and effective UN Volunteer Force could be a deterrent in itself. It could also give important support for negotiation and peaceful settlement of disputes. It is high time that this idea—a United Nations Volunteer Force—was made a reality.¹³

Conclusion

The primary focus of this paper has been the further development of a multinational and multidimensional UN rapid reaction capability; the requirement for a designated UN base; the organization of a static operational headquarters and two mobile mission headquarters; the composition of deployable military and civilian elements; and the modernization of appropriate doctrine and training.

As proposed, this will entail an evolution from an initial reliance on home-based, stand-by contingents to standing national elements assigned to service at the UN base for a period of two years and, ultimately, to the integration of dedicated UN volunteers into a composite United Nations Standing Emergency Capability. This would offer the optimum prospect of assuring reliability and readiness for a wide range of UN peace support operations.

After 50 years of growth and development, there can be little doubt that the international community has the ability to develop an effective UN rapid reaction capability. When previously confronted by urgent requirements, numerous UN Member States have demonstrated their ability to respond promptly. It is evident that there are now few, if any, insurmountable operational or tactical impediments.
Once again, the international community is confronted by a unique opportunity at a critical juncture. Once more, there is a need for vision, new thinking, and bold initiatives. The further development of a multidimensional UN rapid reaction capability will not be a cure-all; there will be situations where it is neither appropriate nor likely to succeed. In this respect, Nobel Laureate, Dr. John Polanyi presents a fitting analogy:

Fire departments and police forces do not always prevent fires or crime, yet they are now widely recognized as providing an essential service. Similarly, a rapid reaction capability may confront conditions beyond its capacity to control. This should not call into question its potential value to the international community. It is a civilized response to an urgent problem.14

At the very least, the UN would have an effective new mechanism for war-prevention and humanitarian assistance—a civilized response to the emerging challenges of a very uncertain future.

Summary Recommendations

- Pursue a comprehensive and cumulative development process;
- Institutionalize and consolidate UN rapid reaction efforts to bridge the capability gap;

Stage 1: Establish a Dedicated UN Rapid Reaction Base;

- Co-locate standing operational and tactical headquarters at the UN base;
- Initiate an ongoing process of doctrine development including the refinement of standing operating procedures, rules of engagement, command and control procedures as well as common standards for training and readiness;
- Solicit the support of peacekeeping training centres and encourage stand-by vanguard and civilian elements to commence general and specialized training as well as joint exercises at the designated UN base;
- Encourage partnership programmes to ensure a wide range of Member States participate in the development of UN rapid reaction capabilities;
- Initiate preliminary planning and site identification for the potential establishment of five additional UN rapid reaction bases in various regions.

Stage 2: Assign national vanguard groups and civilian elements to the designated base for a two-year period of service in a UN Standing Emergency Vanguard;

- Accord a priority in the development of doctrine and on-site training to fostering an integrated unity of effort and purpose between all elements of the UN capability;
- Provide all participating personnel with advance preparation and comprehensive general, specialized and mission-specific training programmes;
- Initiate further research into the acquisition of appropriate standard and interoperable equipment for a UN standing capability;
- Secure arrangements for immediate air and sea lift.

Stage 3: To guarantee a reliable and rapid response, integrate professional UN volunteers into a composite United Nations Standing Emergency Capability;

- Commence further detailed study of the United Nations’ options for enhancing a rapid reaction capability.

Notes

3. The lack of appropriate UN doctrine for current operations is highlighted by John Gerald Ruggie in "Wandering in the Void: Charting the UN’s New Strategic Role", *Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. 1993, pp. 26-31.
5. Charles Dobbie, “A Concept for Post-Cold War Peacekeeping”, *Survival*, vol.36, no. 3, Autumn 1994, p.137. Dobbie draws from "Wider Peacekeeping", (Fourth Draft) Army Field Manual, to elaborate on minimum necessary force as "the measured application of violence or coercion, sufficient only to achieve a specific end, demonstrably reasonable, proportionate and appropriate; and confined in effect to the specific and legitimate target intended."
8. Several options warrant consideration as a means to speed up and enhance the process of consultation and decision-making at the political and strategic levels. Among the various related proposals are the development of an alert system, the establishment of a strategic consultative mechanism, a liaison office for troop contributors and a rapid reaction planning cell and crisis management team within the UN Secretariat. For further elaboration, see the expanded text of this chapter.
9. In current stand-by arrangements, those nations that have the resources to deploy well-equipped personnel often find themselves faced with the prospect of providing national logistics units to provide support. The logistics tail is often quite large and invariably unforeseen. National support elements are required to provide spare parts for their own vehicle fleets, maintain and resupply specific items including ammunition. Each large contingent deploys its own logistics support, thus increasing the manpower requirement in the mission area and the cost.
10. See James A. Leach and Charles M. Lichenstein (co-chairs), *Final Report*, ("Defining Purpose: The UN and the Health of Nations"), US Commission on Improving the Effectiveness of the

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Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

UN rapid reaction capabilities: requirements and prospects

Includes some text in French.

ISBN 1-896551-01-7


This publication was made possible through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.