



CIGI PAPERS  
NO. 2 — APRIL 2012

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# UN PEACEKEEPING: 20 YEARS OF REFORM

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with the assistance of Amanda Kristensen





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CIGI would like to thank the Government of Ontario for its support of this project.



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## ACRONYMS

DFS	Department of Field Support	PPC	Pearson Peacekeeping Centre
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations	PRF	Peacekeeping Reserve Fund
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General	SHIRBRIG	Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade
IMTF	integrated mission task forces	SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ITS	Integrated Training Service	UNLB	United Nations Logistics Base
NGO	non-governmental organization	UNSAS	UN Standby Arrangements System

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peacekeeping is as old as the United Nations (UN). For many decades, it consisted essentially of the interposition of lightly armed troops to act as neutral observers of a truce or a peace agreement. The end of the Cold War opened a new chapter in the history of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping operations have expanded dramatically in the last two decades and are now multidimensional, with complex mandates in increasingly difficult, and often dangerous, environments.

This new era of peacekeeping required fundamental changes in UN peacekeeping policies and practices as well as a myriad of administrative reforms over the last 20 years, to enable UN peacekeeping operations to adapt to these new conditions and challenges. This paper reviews key peacekeeping reforms implemented by the UN, discussing in particular:

- the change in peacekeeping doctrine stemming from the lessons learned from its experiences in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia;
- the changes in organizational structure within the United Nations to improve the administration and management of peacekeeping operations;
- the systems put in place to recruit and deploy a vast number of military, police and civilian personnel;
- the improvement in training to adequately prepare people for field duty;
- the modifications made to the budgetary and financial rules within the organization to facilitate expenditures for the rapid start-up of new missions; and
- the revision in logistics and procurement procedures to provide missions with basic equipment and commercial services required for new operations.

What emerges from the analysis of these reforms is that, while the reform process is often tortuous at the United Nations, real progress has been achieved in strengthening the UN machinery's capacity to implement the complex mandates given by the UN Security Council. Serious weaknesses remain, however, and the United Nations must make every effort to continue to improve its performance and learn from its experiences, as it has done in the past 20 years of peacekeeping reform. This process of transformation is essential for the United Nations to be able to live up fully to its mission of ending conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Madame Fréchette** is a CIGI distinguished fellow. She is also currently the Chair of the UN Senior Advisory Group on reimbursement to troop contributing countries. She joined the Canadian Foreign Service in 1970, and held diplomatic posts in Athens and Geneva. In 1985, Madame Fréchette became Canada's ambassador to Argentina and Uruguay, later serving as the Department of External Affairs and International Trade's assistant deputy minister for Latin America and the Caribbean. Canada's entry into the Organization of American States was the culmination of her efforts in this role. After serving as Canada's ambassador and permanent representative to the UN from 1992 to 1994, Madame Fréchette became an associate deputy minister in Canada's Department of Finance. She was the deputy minister of Canada's Department of National Defence from 1995 to 1998. From 1998 to 2006, Madame Fréchette served as the first-ever UN Deputy Secretary-General, where she assisted the Secretary-General in the full range of his responsibilities and oversaw UN reform.

Madame Fréchette started a new phase in her career when she joined CIGI in 2006 as a distinguished fellow. Her first major contribution was chairing the Nuclear Energy Futures project, which considered nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation and made recommendations for strengthening global governance in these areas. Madame Fréchette is an active commentator on international affairs and Canadian foreign policy and the chair of the board of directors of CARE Canada. She is a member of the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations board of directors, the Security Council Report international advisory group and the Global Leadership Foundation.

In 1998, Madame Fréchette became an Officer of the Order of Canada. She holds honorary degrees from universities across Canada, as well as Kyung Hee University in Seoul, South Korea, and the University of Turin in Italy. She has been named one of Canada's top 100 most powerful women, has been honoured by the Public Policy Forum, was the 2008 recipient of the UNIFEM Canada Award and the 2005 recipient of the Distinguished Canadian Leadership Award from the University of Ottawa.

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## INTRODUCTION

UN peacekeeping has been a key instrument of international governance for many decades, but never more so than since the end of the Cold War. Although much has been written about UN peacekeeping efforts, most often it has been to disparage the problematic experiences in Bosnia, Somalia and, today, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the Congo) and Haiti, rather than to applaud the many successful missions in places such as Mozambique, Burundi, El Salvador, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste.

Less has been said about the administrative and management underpinnings of the peace missions. Yet, without clear policies, adequate command and control structures, efficient recruitment, training and deployment of qualified personnel, and without sufficient financial resources and procedures adapted to the complex universe of peacekeeping, it would simply be impossible to meet what are often extremely ambitious goals set by the UN Security Council. Peacekeeping always presents significant political challenges, but the operational and managerial challenges it entails are just as complex.

Building up the United Nations' operational peacekeeping capabilities over the last 20 years has required institutional transformation on a colossal scale, made more challenging by the necessity of servicing and supporting an ever-increasing number of deployed missions, while also carrying out successive waves of reform and innovation. It is worth looking at the "underbelly" of UN peacekeeping in some detail, because it illuminates some of the reasons for the continuing weaknesses in UN mission performance, and also provides insights into the tortuous process of reform in the United Nations.

## PEACEKEEPING FOR A NEW ERA

Peacekeeping is as old as the United Nations. As early as 1948, a mission composed of unarmed military personnel and civilians — United Nations Truce Supervision Organization — was deployed to the Middle East to observe a truce between the new state of Israel and the Palestinians and Arab States. The first full-fledged peacekeeping mission was established in 1956 as a temporary solution to the Suez crisis. Armed troops were deployed along the ceasefire line to act as neutral observers and report any breach of the truce conditions agreed to by the parties.

Over the next 30 years, a limited number of similar missions were deployed (13 in total until 1988). Although the mandates and operations were tailored to respond to each specific set of circumstances, the same basic principles were followed: consent of the parties; lightly armed troops; limited observation mandate; use of force only in strict self-defence; and absolute neutrality. The sole exception was the 1960 UN mission to the Congo, which was authorized to use force to implement the extensive security mandate it had been given.

Towards the end of the 1980s, three developments converged that transformed the peacekeeping landscape. First, the Cold War came to an end. The rivalry between the American and Soviet superpowers that had paralyzed the Security Council gave way to a more cooperative climate. The agreement to authorize the use of force to expel Iraq from Kuwait in the fall of 1990 signalled the start of a new chapter in the Security Council's history.

Second, a large number of countries overthrew authoritarian regimes to embrace democracy and human rights. Democratic forces took hold of Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and parts of Africa and Asia, joining the ranks of the recently democratically elected governments in most of Latin America. Together with the traditional group of Western countries, these new democracies formed a broad coalition of like-minded countries committed to defending democracy and human rights, not only at home, but also outside of their borders.

Third, the ability to travel easily, 24-hour news coverage, the Internet and other features of an increasingly globalized world made the reality of conflict and human suffering more vivid to distant observers. Around the world, people responded to the shocking images of civilian victims caught up in conflicts by demanding that their governments “do something.”

The impact of these three new trends on peacekeeping practices manifested in two main ways. First, the Security Council began to give peacekeeping missions more ambitious mandates than it had previously. The mission that was established in Cambodia in 1992, following the conclusion of the Paris Peace Agreement,<sup>1</sup> is a good example of the kind of multi-dimensional, multi-purpose mission that was to become the norm over the next two decades. In Cambodia, the UN mission was responsible for maintaining a secure environment, disarming combatants and reintegrating them into civilian life, overseeing national elections, providing support to returning refugees, helping to reconstruct the economy and overseeing the operations of five key ministries. Over the years, many more tasks, such as training and monitoring police and armed forces and reforming judiciary institutions, were added to the mandates of UN peacekeeping missions, as different situations required.

Second, the Security Council deployed peacekeeping forces in situations where combat was still raging, for the purpose of escorting the delivery of humanitarian relief and deterring, by their presence, abuses against civilian populations. While formal consent of the key governmental authorities was obtained, peacekeeping forces met with strong opposition from warring parties on the ground. Such was the case in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995.

Between 1989 and 1994, the Security Council created more than 20 new peacekeeping missions. Disenchantment set in, however, after the frustrating experiences in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, where traditional UN peacekeeping doctrine proved woefully inadequate to deal with the situation on the ground. The 1994 Rwandan genocide, which unfolded under the eyes of a small, impotent UN mission, led many to despair of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping. But, after a few years when few new peacekeeping missions were created, the tempo picked up again, with seven new peacekeeping missions launched in 1998 alone. At the end of 2011, there were 15 peacekeeping missions still in operation involving close to 120,000 people, of which about 100,000 were uniformed personnel, with a budget of nearly US\$8 billion a year.

The dramatic expansion in the number of peacekeeping missions and their more ambitious mandates, severely tested the United Nations' capacity to command, control and manage these new types of missions. At the end of the Cold War, the UN Secretariat had only limited capacity among its civilian staff and could only count on the advice of a lone military adviser to oversee existing peacekeeping missions. Neither traditional peacekeeping doctrine nor the United Nations'

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1 On October 23, 1991, in Paris, France, the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict were signed by Cambodia and 18 other nations in the presence of the UN Secretary-General.

administrative systems — designed to support static, conference-oriented work — were adequate to meet the challenges of this new generation of peacekeeping mission.

Over the last 20 years, the United Nations has introduced numerous fundamental reforms in the way it carries out its peacekeeping responsibilities. Some of these reforms were embodied in comprehensive proposals submitted by the Secretary-General for approval by Member States, but many others were the result of incremental improvements that did not make headlines, yet made a real difference in the United Nations' peacekeeping performance. The analysis that follows highlights only the key peacekeeping reforms implemented by the organization in the course of the last two decades.

## DOCTRINAL SHIFT: LEARNING FROM TRAGEDY

The United Nations' first attempt to reflect the emerging trends in a coherent policy document was *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, a seminal report issued by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on June 17, 1992. The report had been requested by the Security Council at the historic first meeting held at the level of heads of state and government on January 31, 1992.

*An Agenda for Peace* situated peacekeeping on a continuum that included conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace building. On the subject of peacekeeping, Boutros-Ghali stated that the United Nations had adapted flexibly to the new demands placed on it, but argued that “basic conditions for success remain unchanged: a clear and practicable mandate; the cooperation of the parties in implementing that mandate; the continuing support of the Security Council; the readiness of Member States to contribute the military, police and civilian personnel, including specialists, required; effective United Nations command at Headquarters and in the field; and adequate financial and logistic support” (UN, 1992a: 14-15).

Acknowledging that situations might arise where the UN's presence would be challenged by hostile forces on the ground, the Secretary-General proposed the establishment of so-called “peace enforcement units.” These units would be “available on call” and would consist of troops that had “volunteered,” would be “more heavily armed than peacekeeping forces” and would require “extensive preparatory training within their national forces” (UN, 1992a: 13).

*An Agenda for Peace* was reasonably well received by Member States and the conceptual framework proposed by the Secretary-General was widely supported. Many countries were, however, distinctly uneasy with the concept of peace enforcement units and the various General Assembly resolutions adopted in response to *An Agenda for Peace* make no mention of them, although Member States recognized “the importance of according special considerations to mechanisms and means of deterring a potential aggressor and procedures for a prompt and effective response to acts of aggressions” (UN, 1992b: para. 48).

Developments on the ground, particularly in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslav republics, quickly demonstrated the limitations of the general policy framework laid out in *An Agenda for Peace*. The distinction between peace enforcement and peacekeeping proposed by Boutros-Ghali was impossible to maintain when UN forces were under attack, especially in the absence of the proposed “peace enforcement units,” which never materialized. Furthermore, *An Agenda for Peace*, with its focus on the parties to a conflict, did not address the question of the responsibility of peacekeeping missions vis-à-vis civilian populations. The massacre of civilians under the watch of UN peacekeepers in both the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica and the Rwandan genocide, underlined, in the most tragic way possible, the inadequacies of the traditional peacekeeping doctrine in such situations.

Two reports, both initiated after Kofi Annan became the UN Secretary-General on January 1, 1997, reviewed in detail these two catastrophic events and offered new insights into the doctrine underpinning peacekeeping operations. Both reports challenged the United Nations' aversion to the use of force when innocent civilians were being deliberately targeted.

The first report, *The Fall of Srebrenica*, was prepared by the UN Secretariat at the request of the Security Council and published in November 1999. It affirmed that “peacekeepers must never again be deployed into an environment in which there is no ceasefire or peace agreement” (UN, 1999a: 107), but it also argued forcefully that “a deliberate and systematic attempt to terrorize, expel or murder an entire people must be met decisively with all necessary means” (UN, 1999a: 108).

*The Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda* (also known as the Carlsson Report), issued in December 1999, was even more explicit about the dichotomy between peacekeeping principles and the protection of civilians at risk. “Faced in Rwanda with the risk of genocide, and later the systematic implementation of a genocide, the United Nations had an obligation to act which transcended traditional principles of

peacekeeping. In effect, there can be no neutrality in the face of genocide, no impartiality in the face of a campaign to exterminate part of the population” (UN, 1999b: 50).

Upon receipt of these two reports, Secretary-General Annan initiated a comprehensive review of UN peacekeeping policies and practices. For this purpose, he assembled a panel of eminent persons under the chairmanship of Lakhdar Brahimi, a distinguished diplomat and former UN official of Algerian nationality. *The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (also known as the Brahimi Report), tabled in 2000, echoed the conclusions reached by the reports on Srebrenica and on Rwanda mentioned above. “Where one party to a peace agreement clearly and incontrovertibly is violating its terms, continued equal treatment of all parties by the United Nations can in the best case result in ineffectiveness and, in the worst case, may amount to complicity with evil” (UN, 2000: ix). Recalling that, in the past, the United Nations had often been unable to respond to challenges to its mandate, the Brahimi Report declared as “a fundamental premise” that the organization had to be given the means to do so in the future: “United Nations military units must be capable of defending themselves, other mission components and the mission’s mandate. Rules of engagement should be sufficiently robust and not force United Nations contingents to cede the initiative to their attackers” (UN, 2000: x).

The UN’s doctrinal posture on the protection of civilians was developed further in a series of normative Security Council resolutions that spelled out general principles and approaches to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. These principles found their application in provisions of country-specific peacekeeping mandates, which authorized the use of force by UN troops to protect civilian populations within the means at their disposal.

In 2008, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) published a comprehensive presentation of modern-day peacekeeping doctrine entitled “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines.” The publication corroborates the basic principles of peacekeeping as consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except for self-defence and defence of the mandate, but each of these principles is defined on the basis of the experience gained since the end of the Cold War, confirming the approach promoted by the Brahimi Report. It then defines, in more specific terms, what a peacekeeping mission can and cannot do, presenting a comprehensive description of policies and practices sanctioned for UN missions, not an easy task since conditions and challenges vary so widely from mission to mission.

“Robust peacekeeping,” as the new practice was often described, elicited, and continues to elicit, reservations on the part of some Member States, particularly in the developing world. Nevertheless, “protection of civilians” clauses can be found in the mandates of the majority of current peacekeeping missions.

In July 2009, the UN issued a consultation document, *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping*, under the authority of Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support — the two senior officials in charge of peacekeeping within the Secretariat. This document has been instrumental in generating much-needed discussion among Member States on the issues facing contemporary peacekeeping missions, particularly the protection of civilians.

In early 2011, the Secretariat submitted for consideration by Member States, a draft strategic framework on the protection of civilians and developed comprehensive strategies for individual missions, in concert with human rights and humanitarian partners.

Work is also underway to clarify, in practice, the concept of a “robust approach” to peacekeeping and Member States have indicated a desire to conduct comprehensive discussions on how to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. In this context, deterrence, the use of force and operational readiness are some of the issues that will be addressed.

The doctrinal architecture of peacekeeping has been informed by the experience gained with peace building, since the two activities are closely connected on the ground. In 2006, the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission along with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund has given birth to a new body of principles and practices that guide activities in the field. The role of peacekeepers in peace building has been clarified as consisting of three elements: helping national authorities to identify priorities; enabling the efforts of others; and implementing directly a limited set of actions.

## **ADAPTING ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

Up until 1992, peacekeeping operations were managed by a section of what was then the Office for Special Political Affairs, which was also responsible for all other UN Secretariat activities related to conflict prevention and management. As one of his first acts, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali transformed the peacekeeping section into the DPKO, a separate department. The other political functions were regrouped into the new Department of Political Affairs.

A number of smaller structural reforms followed over the decade. These included the creation of specialized units within the larger department structure — for example, the establishment of the Situation Centre to provide 24-hour coverage of peacekeeping missions' activities and easy access to headquarters in case of an emergency — as well as the transfer of pre-existing units into the new department — for example, in September 1993 the Field Operations Division was moved from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to be incorporated into the DPKO.

Following the release of the Brahimi Report in 2000, a new round of structural reforms were implemented. A significant number of new posts — military planners, police, political officers, and logistics and finance experts — were added to the DPKO. Military and police functions were separated into distinct units within the DPKO, in recognition of the unique role and growing importance of police contingents within peacekeeping missions. In addition, the establishment of a Criminal Law and Judicial Advisory Unit was an innovation that became particularly relevant in Kosovo and East Timor, where the United Nations had assumed executive authority. The Secretariat also acquired specialized expertise in the crosscutting areas of gender, HIV/AIDS, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The creation of a Peacekeeping Best Practices Section enhanced the Secretariat's capacity to gain systematic learning from its experiences.

The concept of integrated mission task forces (IMTF) also began to develop in the post-Brahimi Report period. These task forces were designed to involve all relevant UN entities in the planning and coordination of a peace operation. In 2005, the Secretary-General reported that these IMTFs had proven to be useful vehicles for sharing information and improving coordination, but had largely failed to provide integrated strategic planning and management — their stated mission. There have been improvements in how IMTFs function since 2005, but their record remains mixed, with some IMTFs — for the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the UN Integrated Mission in Timor Leste, for instance — performing particularly well.

In the field, the authority of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) over all aspects of a peacekeeping operation was strengthened by the addition of the post of a Deputy (DSRSG), charged with overseeing the activities of all UN entities present in a country. The first DSRSG was named in the UN's first mission to Haiti in the mid-1990s, but having a DSRSG only became the standard model with the mission in Sierra Leone in 2000. This arrangement fell short of providing full decision-making powers to the SRSGs over the aid and humanitarian programs of the various UN agencies, but it nevertheless enhanced their capacity to influence all UN activities in their territory and ensure some degree of coherence.

To further enhance the UN's ability to manage peace and security operations, and reduce unnecessary duplication, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon decided, after his arrival in 2007, to split the DPKO into two departments: the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support (DFS). The DPKO retained responsibility for planning, directing and managing peacekeeping operations, as well as for providing political guidance to peacekeeping operations. It consists of four pillars reporting to the Under-Secretary-General: the Office of Operations; the Office of Military Affairs; the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions; and the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division, which is shared with the DFS. The DFS became the service provider for all peacekeeping operations, as well as to field offices managed by the Department of Political Affairs. It looks after such areas as logistics, personnel, finance and communications, and is also responsible for the UN Logistics Base (UNLB) situated in Brindisi, Italy.

## **FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE JOB**

With the rapid increase in the number and size of peacekeeping operations, the UN needed to rapidly recruit new personnel for both its headquarters in New York and its field missions.

The increase in the number of posts authorized by the General Assembly could not keep pace with the relentless increase in demand at its headquarters. In its early days, the DPKO therefore turned to Member States to obtain personnel on loan, in particular, military officers who could help plan and set up the new missions. Given that only developed countries could afford to pay the expense involved in lending staff to the United Nations, the DPKO staff primarily comprised nationals from those countries, which meant other parts of the world were disproportionately under-represented. This practice was dramatically curtailed by the decision of the General Assembly in 1999, which was instigated by developing countries. A number of new posts were authorized, so that the Secretariat could make up for the loss of free resources by recruiting staff to be paid out of the UN budget.

The problems of recruitment and staffing at headquarters paled in comparison with the enormous challenge of finding the necessary military, police and civilian resources for the many large peacekeeping missions coming on stream after the

end of the Cold War. A number of innovations and reforms were introduced over the years to try to improve the capacity of the United Nations to obtain high-quality human resources in a timely fashion.

## MILITARY PERSONNEL

Ensuring the necessary number of troops are on hand to respond quickly to peacekeeping needs around the globe has been a persistent problem for the UN. In December 1989, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution inviting all Member States to provide the Secretary-General with detailed information related to personnel, material and technical resources, and services that they would be ready to contribute, in principle, to UN peacekeeping operations. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General set up a registry of the potential resources available for a peacekeeping operation, based on the responses of Member States. This registry eventually evolved into the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS).

There is (and never was) no automatic obligation on the part of Member States to provide the resources identified under the UNSAS. As of December 31, 1999, eight months prior to the release of the Brahimi Report, there were 87 Member States participating in the UNSAS, with approximately 147,500 personnel identified, but this number did not necessarily translate into personnel with the appropriate military capabilities being available at the right time and in the right numbers.

Following the publication of the Brahimi Report, new steps were taken to try to improve on the usefulness of the UNSAS. Member States were encouraged to work within the UNSAS to form partnerships with other countries to build several coherent brigade-size forces, which would be ready to deploy within 30 days for traditional peacekeeping operations or 90 days for more complex peacekeeping operations. Three years later, the Secretary-General reported that no such arrangements were in place, although the Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), an initiative of the Danish government launched in 1996, came closest to what the Secretary-General originally had envisaged.

Under SHIRBRIG, the 16 countries that signed on to the concept retained their ability to decide whether or not to participate in a given operation. The brigade could be deployed in full or in part for a maximum of six months. The SHIRBRIG headquarters could be called upon to form the nucleus of a UN force headquarters, and its planning element could be used to assist UN headquarters with the start-up of a new peacekeeping mission. Since its creation, SHIRBRIG has been called upon to assist in setting up a number of missions, notably in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan. SHIRBRIG ceased to be operational in 2010.

In addition to forming units, the UN recruits a large number of officers on an individual basis to serve as military observers and in other capacities. Under the UNSAS, a revolving “on-call list” of military officers, who would be available to set up a mission headquarters for a new peacekeeping operation, was established. The Secretary-General reported that as of January 1, 2003, 32 Member States had offered candidates for such positions, enabling the Secretariat to earmark two sources for each of the standard 154 positions required for start-up headquarters.

## POLICE PERSONNEL

Police officers have been a part of peacekeeping missions for many decades. The demand for qualified police personnel began to grow rapidly in the late 1990s, as missions in Kosovo and East Timor required the deployment of thousands of police officers. Police personnel can be recruited as part of a formed unit or on an individual basis.

The Brahimi Report recommended that each Member State designate a single point of contact within their government structure to be responsible for coordinating the provision of civilian police to UN peace operations. Member States were also strongly encouraged to establish a national pool of civilian police officers. These officers would be ready to deploy to UN peace operations on short notice, and would be organized through the UNSAS. A roster of on-call civilian police officers was established by June 2002.

The concept of compiling national pools of officers continued to evolve and, in 2004, Member States were encouraged by the Secretary-General to develop mechanisms that would generate national, skill-based pools of civilian police advisers, mentors, trainers, reform and restructuring specialists, as well as specialized crimes, judicial and correctional experts.

In addition to the national pools, a revolving on-call list of approximately 100 police officers and related experts was created within the UNSAS. Unfortunately, the on-call list did not have as significant an impact in accelerating the deployment of police to new peacekeeping operations as originally expected. The Secretary-General determined, in December 2004, that there was a need to create a Standing Police Capacity in order to provide the level of expertise for the length of time required by UN operations. Introduced in December 2005, the Standing Police Capacity was initially composed

of 25 professional experts, serving for a period of two to three years. This group was designed to perform a number of functions, including the provision of a rapid start-up of the UN police component in new peacekeeping operations, as well as assisting UN police units in existing peace operations, by providing advice and expertise. Just over a year after its establishment, the initial Standing Police Capacity was viewed as an achievement. But, the police personnel requirements of peace operations had, by that time, already surpassed the initial planning assumptions.

In order to avoid the risk of overwhelming the Standing Police Capacity in its first year of operation, the Secretary-General recommended its gradual expansion. By 2009, however, the Standing Police Capacity was still operating with its starting capacity of 25 professional officers, and was still unable to respond effectively to all requests for police assistance. The continued absence of standing teams to provide parallel capacities, such as the rapid deployment of justice and prisons experts, threatens to lead to an imbalanced and disjointed approach to the rule of law in the field. The Standing Police Capacity was relocated to Brindisi in mid-2009, in order to be closer to the majority of existing peacekeeping missions.

## CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

The need to identify, recruit and quickly deploy thousands of civilian staff for a variety of specialized functions, such as civil administration, human rights and electoral assistance, has been, and continues to be, a major challenge for the United Nations. The dramatic increase in the number of civilian personnel in field missions has raised numerous questions with respect to their status and conditions of employment, as well as their long-term career prospects within the UN system.

UN staff rules were designed for a largely static workforce, who were, for the most part, dedicated to supporting the UN's norm-making function. Major changes were necessary to adapt these rules to meet the need for rapid recruitment and deployment requirements, and to provide adequate reward for service in hardship conditions.

To build a pool of possible recruits for new peace missions, a roster of civilian experts was created in the early 1990s. As of March 1994, the roster of external candidates contained over 5,000 names. The first revision of staff rules allowed the United Nations to adapt its short-term recruitment processes to meet the requirements of a peacekeeping operation. Following the publication of the Brahimi Report, the expert civilian roster was further refined and integrated within the UNSAS.

It was also at that point that the UN developed an Internet-based recruitment system called Galaxy. This new system automated UN staff recruitment procedures, including job profiles, vacancy announcements, applications and selection processes. Galaxy facilitated applications for UN employment to a much larger community of interested people. Soon after its introduction, the Galaxy system required modifications in order to speed-up screening of the almost 150,000 applications received, on average, every year. By 2006, it still took an average of 174 days to complete the recruitment process, leading many qualified applicants to accept other offers.

The management of human resources for peacekeeping missions was also plagued with a plethora of other problems: too many different categories of contracts and conditions of service, leading to inequalities among peers serving in peace missions; too many barriers to mobility between field and headquarters, despite a number of changes introduced to promote it; and almost non-existent career prospects for civilian peacekeeping staff, the vast majority of whom were serving on short-term, less than one-year, contracts.

In his last comprehensive set of reform proposals in early 2006, Kofi Annan put forward a far reaching program of changes in the management of human resources with the aim of breaking the barriers between field-based and headquarters-based personnel, and putting in place the necessary support systems to facilitate the mobility of all staff.

One of Annan's key recommendations was to reduce the number of contract types, to simplify an overly complex system that lacked transparency and generated inequalities among staff doing the same kind of work. The General Assembly approved the proposed reform of contractual arrangements in December 2008 (UN, 2008b). The resolution created three types of contracts — temporary, fixed term and continuing — for all staff, whether they serve on peacekeeping missions or not, and the conditions attached to each type of contract are clearly spelled out. This reform allows civilian personnel serving in peacekeeping missions to be hired for longer periods than the previous one-year contract that was customary, and for them to be more easily redeployed between missions and between UN headquarters and field missions. A system of rosters of pre-qualified candidates for different professional categories was also established over the course of 2010–2012, to shorten the timeframe for recruitment and deployment, and improve the overall quality of staff deployed to the field.

The General Assembly did not, however, approve the full harmonization of field benefits for peacekeeping staff with those offered by UN funds and programs (for example, UNICEF and the UN Development Programme), presumably because of the financial implications of including provisions such as the possibility of moving family members to a peacekeeping mission duty station when security conditions permit. Nevertheless, in mid-2011, a harmonization of duty stations (family and non-family) was approved, along with a modest financial compensation for maintaining two households when deployed to non-family duty stations (which are the majority of peacekeeping locations). In 2012, the Secretariat is developing further incentives to encourage mobility and rotation among its various duty stations, in an attempt to attract quality personnel to difficult, hardship postings.

Efforts are also being undertaken to improve the retention rate of qualified personnel. As part of its “Peace Operations 2010” strategy, the DPKO has implemented programs to: provide career advice to staff in the field; offer career support workshops, training and online learning modules; provide information on a broad range of career issues through its website; and create career resource centres in the field.

In 2011, the Secretary-General issued proposals aimed at reinforcing response capacities in peacekeeping and peace building, through standby arrangements with external contractors, military support organizations and short-term consultants who can be rapidly deployed for a range of different specialized functions.

## **PREPARING PEOPLE FOR FIELD DUTY**

Training military personnel for peacekeeping service is primarily a responsibility of Member States, with support and guidance from the United Nations. The United Nations does not train military contingents, nor do those contingents have an opportunity to train with contingents of other nations. The same is true of police contingents and of most civilian staff deployed to peacekeeping. Most of them receive only minimal UN training before arriving at their duty station. There is now a one-week induction program held in Brindisi for civilians who have not been in the field in the last two years. It relates mostly to security procedures and codes of conduct and behaviour.

Canada took an early lead in promoting the better preparation of people destined to serve in peacekeeping missions with the creation of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC) in 1994. Originally set up to prepare Canadian and foreign military personnel for peacekeeping duties, the PPC gradually developed curricula to train police and civilian personnel for peacekeeping work as well, pioneering training curricula involving all three types of personnel to prepare them to operate as an integrated team.

In 1995, the PPC took the initiative to bring together a broad cross-section of institutions, organizations and agencies from around the world to form the Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres. This collaboration among troop contributors, with assistance from the DPKO, helped to gradually develop common standards and curricula to prepare officers who were being sent to occupy command posts in UN missions.

The United Nations’ training efforts concentrate on establishing standards and learning materials to be used by individual countries, and on conducting pre-deployment training sessions for staff at a mission’s main headquarters. These efforts, which were haphazard in their early stages, became more systematic following the publication of the Brahimi Report.

The Brahimi Report recommended that the UN establish minimum training requirements for troops who would be taking part in peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat was also called upon to confirm the preparedness of each troop-contributing country to meet the required level of training prior to any and all deployments. In order to evaluate and monitor the results of peacekeeping training, the DPKO developed an evaluation methodology and monitoring system to increase peacekeeping training efficiency and success.

In 2004, the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations recommended that the DPKO develop a comprehensive training strategy and policy that would act as a foundation for the delivery of police and military training, as well as substantive and specialist civilian training. An Integrated Training Service (ITS) was established in November 2005, and given the responsibility for overseeing all UN peacekeeping training. The ITS comprises the former Civilian Training Section of the Office of Mission Support, the Training and Evaluation Service of the Military Division, and other components from the Police Division.

The ITS was later relocated in the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division as a shared capacity between the DPKO and the DFS, following the restructuring of the DPKO in 2007, and it “has assumed responsibility for the oversight of all UN peacekeeping training and the provision of relevant policy, training standards, guidance and support to field missions, Headquarters components and national and regional peacekeeping training partners” (UN, 2009). The creation of the ITS

was an important step in ensuring a comprehensive, integrated training policy for all UN peacekeeping personnel. The ITS provides policy, training standards, guidance and support to all relevant actors, including: field missions; national and regional peacekeeping training partners; and UN headquarters. A new, comprehensive training strategy was completed and published in 2008 (UN, 2008a).

In 2006, following reports of serious sexual abuses and exploitations by UN peacekeepers, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, then Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, to conduct a comprehensive review. His report found the UN's capacity to investigate and hold its agents accountable to be seriously deficient, particularly in regard to military personnel, since disciplinary authority rests with the contributing Member State. As a result of this review, the capacity of the UN to investigate was subsequently reinforced, and standards of conduct regarding sexual exploitation and abuses were explicitly included in the memorandum of understanding the UN signs with Member States that contribute troops, to ensure that the national disciplinary authority prosecutes the offenders.

Training efforts were also stepped up and management tools put in place to ensure proper oversight of all UN employees. The General Assembly adopted two resolutions in 2007 regarding assistance to victims and the criminal accountability of UN personnel.<sup>2</sup>

## MANAGING GROWING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The size of the United Nations' peacekeeping budget has grown dramatically since the end of the Cold War — far exceeding that of the UN's regular budget for many years — thanks to the number of missions established by the Security Council and their unprecedented size and complexity. The pace of peacekeeping operations requires the commitment of very large sums, often on an emergency basis. To meet these new demands, UN budgetary and financial rules have had to be adapted.

### PEACEKEEPING SUPPORT ACCOUNT

As the number of UN peacekeeping missions began to increase and the costs began to rise, in 1989 Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar suggested the establishment of a peacekeeping support account to allow for temporary increases in headquarters staff and expenditures required to support field missions. Since funding for a new peace mission could not be authorized until a formal decision had been made by the Security Council, it was proposed that the support account also be used to fund necessary peacekeeping support activities prior to the formal start-up of a new operation.

In order to procure the funds for the peacekeeping support account, the Secretary-General recommended that a financial provision be included in the budgets of all future peacekeeping operations. Pérez de Cuéllar suggested the amount be set as a percentage of the total salaries and related costs of the civilian establishment in the respective mission areas. Although this method for calculating the budget level for the support account was not accepted, the General Assembly nevertheless approved the establishment of the peacekeeping support account in May 1991, effective January 1, 1990.

The size of the support account has grown significantly, keeping pace with the increase in peacekeeping activities, and reflecting the strengthening of peacekeeping management functions at UN headquarters. For example, the support account stood at about US\$60 million in 2000-2001, but grew to US\$90 million the following year, in part, this increase was due to the new personnel resources required to implement the Brahimi Report. The support account reached the historic high of US\$325 million in 2009-2010.

Steady improvements have been incorporated into the methodology used to establish and justify support account budgets. The idea of fixing the level of the support account as a set percentage of total peacekeeping expenditures was revisited in a comprehensive review carried out in 2010. This would have significantly simplified the preparation of budgetary support documentation that the Secretariat is required to submit annually for approval by Member States. After reviewing the results of the 2010 study, however, Member States concluded it was not desirable to move to a fixed percentage system, and decided they would continue to base their decision for support account levels on detailed justification submitted by the Secretariat, signalling their continued desire to keep tight control over peacekeeping expenditures.

<sup>2</sup> See *Comprehensive Review of a Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. (UN, 2007a) and *Comprehensive Review of a Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (UN, 2007b).

## PEACEKEEPING RESERVE FUND

To provide for the early and rapid expenditures required to start up a new mission, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar proposed the establishment of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund (PRF) in November 1991. This fund, with the proposed amount of US\$50 million, would be available to cover expenditures while waiting for the assessed contributions to be received from Member States. The PRF would also be used to meet start-up costs for new operations from the moment the Security Council created a new operation up until the time when the General Assembly approved a full budget and appropriations.

The PRF was established by a General Assembly Resolution on December 23, 1992, and went into effect on January 1, 1993.<sup>3</sup> The General Assembly decided that the fund's level would be US\$150 million, instead of the proposed US\$50 million, and it would have a US\$50 million cap for the initial establishment or expansion of any individual peacekeeping operation. The PRF was to be financed by transferring the balance of excess income from the special accounts of the UN Transition Assistance Group and the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group, as well as through surpluses in the regular budget. While the idea behind the PRF was a good one, it had the immediate problem of being short on funds. There was only US\$60 million available initially, because the amount that was to be covered by regular budget surpluses was used instead to cover Member State arrears in the late 1980s. The missing US\$90 million would only become available to the fund when Member States paid all past arrears. At that time, the costs of peacekeeping were hitting US\$1.4 billion per year — US\$60 million was simply not enough to provide for the projected needs.

Attempts were made in the years that followed to establish a much larger fund. In 1993, an Independent Advisory Group on UN Financing recommended that the fund be increased to US\$400 million. The following year, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali went even further, suggesting US\$800 million as the appropriate level. Member States, however, felt that any large increase in the PRF would not alleviate the cash flow problems, and more effort was needed to fully capitalize on the available existing funds. The General Assembly, therefore, made the decision to maintain the PRF at the level of US\$150 million, which is still in force today.

## BUDGET CYCLES

The budget for each peacekeeping mission is submitted and authorized separately, and the contribution of Member States assessed accordingly. An Independent Advisory Group on UN Financing first recommended moving to a single, unified annual peacekeeping budget in 1993. A single annual budget would allow the United Nations to deal in a holistic manner with the costs common to all peacekeeping missions — for example, training, communications and maintenance of equipment stocks. It would also put an end to the need to go to Member States on short notice throughout the year in order to fund individual missions, as the annual budget could include projections for costs associated with both on-going missions as well as a margin to cover the costs of one or two larger unexpected missions. Member States did not accept this proposal, most likely so they could keep close control over budgets of individual missions and prevent budgetary fluidity between missions.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali also proposed in 1994 that peacekeeping budgets be delinked from their respective mandate periods.<sup>4</sup> At the time, financial cycles of all missions were linked to the dates of the peacekeeping mandates approved by the Security Council, most of which were for a six-month duration. With a performance report required at the end of each mandate period as well as each extension to the mandate, which could be a shorter period than six months, a single operation could require that several assessments (notices of contributions due by each Member State) be issued during any given year. This process resulted in the budgets for peacekeeping operations coming before the General Assembly throughout the year, and the constantly shifting dates made it very difficult to complete the necessary planning.

The General Assembly agreed in 1994 to make the financial cycle for each peacekeeping operation run from July 1 to June 30. At the same time, it was decided that those peacekeeping operations considered to be maintaining the status quo and, therefore, not subject to a fluctuation in its budgetary requirement, could move to an annual budget cycle. Other operations would have their budget estimates considered and approved biannually, for periods running from July 1 to December 31, and from January 1 to June 30.<sup>5</sup>

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3 See *Establishment of a Peacekeeping Reserve Fund* (UN, 1992c).

4 See *Improving the Capacity of the United Nations for Peacekeeping* (UN, 1994a).

5 See *Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (UN, 1994b).

## FINANCIAL AND COMMITMENT AUTHORITY

The level of commitment authority given to the Secretary-General (that is, the amount he can commit without prior specific authorization by the General Assembly) was set at US\$10 million in 1961. As the number of peacekeeping activities undertaken by the United Nations grew, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali proposed in 1994 that the General Assembly increase this amount to US\$50 million. This increase would help to ensure a timely and effective response before the approval of the budget for a new peacekeeping operation by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly agreed to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments, not to exceed US\$50 million per decision of the Security Council. The cumulative total of outstanding commitment authority given to the Secretary-General was not to exceed US\$150 million at any one time. It was also decided that, should a decision of the Security Council result in the need for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments related to peacekeeping activities exceeding US\$50 million, or exceeding the total amount of US\$150 million, the matter would then be brought to the General Assembly for a decision.

A 2002 Secretary-General report, *The Concept of Strategic Deployment Stocks and Its Implementation*, proposed to extend the spending authority of the Secretary-General of \$50 million to engage funds prior to a Security Council decision when it was determined that a new peacekeeping operation requiring rapid deployment was imminent (UN, 2002). The cumulative total of outstanding commitment authority would continue to be limited to US\$150 million. The Member States did not accept this recommendation, reflecting again their desire to keep close control of peacekeeping spending, rather than delegating authority to the Secretary-General.

As part of the 2010 Global Field Support Strategy, further steps were proposed to improve the usefulness and adaptability of the PRF to address rapid deployment needs. On June 24, 2010, the General Assembly finally agreed to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to US\$100 million from the PRF, as well as commitments of up to US\$50 million of the available balance of the stores available from the organization's strategic deployment stocks. This decision has enhanced the Secretariat's ability to access start-up funding for the deployment of a new operation, prior to the development and approval of a fully-fledged budget.

## REIMBURSEMENT OF TROOP CONTRIBUTORS' COSTS

Member States that contribute troops are reimbursed for their costs per soldier deployed according to a set scale. They are also reimbursed for the depreciation of the equipment they bring to the field. In the early 1990s, the General Assembly agreed on a methodology to standardize the assessed value of depreciated equipment for reimbursement purposes. This system seems to be working satisfactorily. The main bone of contention concerns the rate of reimbursement for troops, giving rise to acrimonious negotiations within the General Assembly at regular intervals. A special Senior Advisory Group, composed of 15 individuals named by Member States and five individuals chosen by the Secretary-General for their personal experience, was formed in late 2011 to come up with proposals for the possible solutions to compensation for troop contribution going forward.<sup>6</sup>

## PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR UN OPERATIONS

One of the biggest challenges facing the United Nations has been, and continues to be, the need to deploy the required personnel and equipment quickly and in sufficient numbers along with the appropriate support systems needed to allow them to operate. The Brahimi Report defined "rapid and effective deployment" as "the ability, from an operational perspective, to fully deploy traditional peacekeeping operations within 30 days after the adoption of a Security Council resolution, and within 90 days in the case of complex peacekeeping operations" (UN, 2000: 16). This was, and remains, a very tall order, rarely satisfied up to now.

It is hard to exaggerate the magnitude of organization and logistics involved in procuring, transporting and maintaining equipment, and the other material requirements for operations in countries devastated by war, with little or no capacity to provide basic services such as electricity, clean water, adequate supplies of food, banking services, public transportation and so on. Numerous reforms and innovations have been introduced with a view to accelerating deployment times and improving the logistics involved in planning and executing a new peacekeeping operation.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Fréchette is Chair of the Senior Advisory Group on reimbursement to troop contributing countries.

## PEACEKEEPING RESERVE STOCKS

The call to establish a peacekeeping reserve stock began with a Secretary-General report<sup>7</sup> released in 1989. It was hoped that the establishment of a reserve stock of UN-owned equipment and supplies common to peacekeeping operations would help improve the response capabilities of new peacekeeping operations. New operations were commonly bogged down by long lead times in the procurement of commonly used equipment and supplies. The Secretary-General felt that establishing a peacekeeping reserve stock would relieve these delays to a significant degree.

## MISSION START-UP KITS

The strategic reserve stock, approved by the General Assembly on December 22, 1995, took the form of mission “start-up kits,” which, by the mid-1990s, seemed to be the fastest and most efficient solution for providing missions with the basic equipment and commercial services necessary for new operations. Each start-up kit would be packed and ready to deploy at a moment’s notice, and include the equipment needed to establish a 100-person mission for 100 days, while the remaining items needed would go through the procurement process. These kits were intended to cut down on extensive lead times — some as long as 27 weeks — before equipment such as heavy vehicles, generators and communications equipment would reach the mission area.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on November 23, 1994 between the Secretary-General and the Republic of Italy, leading to the creation of the UNLB at Brindisi, Italy. This was the first permanent logistics base set up to support UN peacekeeping operations, and the UN was able to acquire the premises of the base at no cost. The memorandum of agreement was amended on December 7, 2001.<sup>8</sup>

The UNLB is used to store the start-up kits and other provisions. The budgets of new missions are used to replenish the UNLB start-up kits if they have already received the kits stored at the UNLB. Durable and non-disposable equipment are returned and held at Brindisi.

Since its creation, the UNLB has expanded its operations beyond a simple logistics base. By 2010, it was also being used as the hub for: all peacekeeping communications and IT operations; the location for pre-deployment training; and certain centralized personnel management functions. It is now the home of the Standing Police Capacity.

## STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT STOCKS

The start-up kit system worked very well for the smaller missions deployed in the mid- to late-1990s. By the turn of the century, however, demand for this equipment greatly outpaced supply, and the UNLB was completely depleted of its resources, with no budgetary tools in place to replenish them. A critical review of pre-deployment resources was undertaken, culminating in the March 2002 Secretary-General’s report, *The Concept of Strategic Deployment Stocks and its Implementation*, proposing the creation of strategic deployment stocks (UN, 2002).

Under the strategic deployment stocks concept, the UN would acquire and warehouse, at the Brindisi base, a reserve of key pieces of equipment — vehicles, communications and engineering equipment, accommodation and ablution units — for rapid deployment to new peace missions. Other basic requirements, such as strategic lift, fuel, rations and water, would be met through standing contractual arrangements. The role of the Brindisi base would be expanded to include responsibility for maintenance, shipment and inspection of reserve equipment. The General Assembly was asked to approve the one-time cost of creating the reserve, after which a number of replenishment policies would come into effect to, hopefully, prevent the depletion in resources that had occurred with the mission start-up kits.

Of particular concern was the United Nations’ ability to keep up with the constant change in technology. To keep the stocks up to date in light of these advances, the composition of the strategic deployment stocks would have to continuously be updated when more advanced models are released and other models become obsolete. As was the case with the mission start-up kits, the strategic deployment stocks would be replenished through the budgets of receiving missions, which would cover both the equipment replacement costs as well as the cost of shipping from the provider to the UNLB.

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7 See *Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (UN, 1989).

8 See UN Logistics Base. “History UNLB.” Available at: [www.unlb.org/history\\_unlb.asp](http://www.unlb.org/history_unlb.asp).

The Secretary-General's proposal was approved by the General Assembly on July 18, 2002. To guard against the risk of stockpiling large quantities of high-tech equipment that would become obsolete in a short period of time, it was agreed that the Strategic Deployment Reserve would be established for only one complex mission, with the one-time cost of US\$146.2 million.

By 2004, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported that the stocks were once again severely depleted, and a search was under way for a new funding mechanism to provide for rapid replenishment, as the stocks were in great demand. As a result, the DPKO conducted a review of the equipment lists and holding levels, due to the continued need for replenishment of stocks.

## PREDEFINED MODULES AND SERVICE PACKAGES

Proposals put forward by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his 2010 Global Field Support Strategy, were aimed at improving the speed, quality and cost-effectiveness of deploying missions to difficult locations, through the development of predefined modules and service packages. The General Assembly agreed to an initial first phase, developed from existing strategic deployment stocks, which involved the design of a 200-person camp including accommodations, a medical facility, a rapidly deployable security perimeter system, water treatment, waste management and energy systems, along with on-call technical support. At the same time, the composition of the strategic deployment stocks was to be reviewed to ensure that the requirements for modularization would be met.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE AT ENTEBBE

Another element of the 2010 Global Field Support Strategy was the development of a service hub in Entebbe, Uganda, to provide centralized support services to the four different peacekeeping missions in that region. The key justification for this innovation was to improve efficiency and overall delivery of support services, by combining expertise, reducing support infrastructure and staffing in individual missions, and optimizing the use of high-value assets such as aircraft and ground transportation through centralized management. This concept is still under close review, but the possibility of developing other regional service hubs is currently under consideration.

## TRIGGERING CHANGE IN OTHER UN POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

There are a number of UN policies and systems affected by the rapid and dramatic increase in the number of people deployed in peace operations in addition to those discussed in this paper. These include:

- The United Nations' procurement rules and procedures had to be revised and tightened to avoid the greatly increased risks of abuse, favouritism and corruption, given the volume of procurement required for peacekeeping missions and the conditions under which some procurement has to take place.
- Audit and inspection functions were significantly strengthened starting in the early 1990s. The post of Inspector General was created in 1993, and this office has seen its staff and capacities steadily expanded.
- The United Nations' disciplinary system was also challenged by the rapid expansion of the UN workforce. It was thoroughly overhauled in 2007.

The expansion of peacekeeping also had a profound impact on staff security. Starting in the early 1990s, the number of UN fatalities increased dramatically — 70 percent of UN casualties have been incurred after 1990. Following 9/11, the United Nations embarked on a major program aimed at strengthening security at its headquarters, particularly in New York. Many security posts were added both at headquarters and in field missions. In 2001, the job of coordinating the UN security in New York, which had until then been occupied on a part-time basis, was changed to a full-time post. A formal coordination mechanism — the Inter-Agency Security Management Network — was established, and considerable efforts were made to strengthen the capacity of security services through recruitment and training.

The 2003 attack against UN headquarters in Baghdad, which killed 22 people including the head of the mission and injured hundreds, triggered a second round of reform aimed at correcting the weaknesses revealed in the subsequent investigation. The UN staff security system was found to be overly fragmented, under-resourced and poorly managed. Furthermore, the essential premise upon which the system had evolved needed to be revisited. The United Nations had assumed that its mission headquarters was protected by its flag, and the increased number of UN casualties was not due to violence directed at the United Nations itself, but simply that UN victims were "in the wrong place at the wrong time." The explosion in Baghdad put this assumption to rest.

The first package of measures was submitted to the General Assembly for approval in April 2004.<sup>9</sup> The total cost was US\$92.4 million, US\$70 million of which was for one-time expenditures such as upgrading physical and security infrastructures of headquarters and field missions, and for acquiring related equipment. The second phase of the reforms was submitted to Member States in October of the same year, with the aim of improving and simplifying the organization and management of security services and to bring real professional expertise into the system. Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed the establishment of a Department of Safety and Security, headed by an Under-Secretary-General, the highest echelon in the UN bureaucracy, reporting directly to him. This new department would regroup the office of field security coordination and the previously separate corps of headquarters security guards and security services of the peacekeeping department under a single authority. The Department of Safety and Security would acquire significant new capabilities to conduct threat and risk assessments, provide operational support in the field, establish policies and standards, monitor compliance, and recruit and train a cadre of professional security experts. The General Assembly accepted the proposed reform and authorized another significant increase in the number of security personnel.

Following further security incidents involving UN facilities in high-risk locations in recent years (for example, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan guest houses in Kabul and UN facilities in Algeria), a new Security Level System was introduced in 2011 to assign a security level to each area where the United Nations operates. This reform seeks to achieve a more objective, globally comparable and responsive system, based on a structured assessment of different types of threats — armed conflict, terrorism, crime, civil unrest and hazards — to enable staff and managers to develop mitigation measures accordingly.

## **NAVIGATING THE TORTUOUS PROCESS OF REFORM**

This survey of two decades of UN peacekeeping reform illustrates that the United Nations has learned from its experiences, both good and bad, in carrying out its peacekeeping responsibilities. Deficiencies were recognized and serious efforts were made to address them. A number of remarkably introspective studies — all except one initiated by the UN Secretariat itself — suggest a genuine commitment on the part of the UN bureaucracy to improve performance.

Almost all of the proposals for reform originated with the Secretary-General. A close examination of the debates within the Special Committee on Peacekeeping and the Fifth Committee (budget and finance) of the General Assembly reveals that interventions by Member States were more apt to focus on identifying weaknesses in performance than to put forward specific remedies. While the formal relationship between the Secretariat and Member States consigned the latter to a more reactive role, there often was very productive informal interaction between the Secretariat and interested Member States, with many countries bringing forward reform ideas and offering expert advice.

Reforms were also shaped by numerous informal encounters organized under the aegis of think tanks, research institutes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as Member States. These meetings provided a neutral space for government officials, academics, NGO representatives and UN bureaucrats to explore innovative ideas, free from the political constraints that are inherent in formal UN meetings. Such informal meetings were an unacknowledged, but essential, phase in building consensus for change.

Post-Cold War UN Secretaries-General have often called on eminent persons and outside experts to advise on reform. This has proven to be enormously beneficial for the organization. The recommendations crafted by these panels and commissions have invariably served to push the envelope further than a Secretary-General could have done on his own, and have contributed to raising the political profile of reform proposals. Although political leaders constantly call for reform, the subject does not actually receive a great deal of political attention. Reform proposals, particularly those of a more technical or managerial nature, can easily get bogged down in bureaucratic considerations. Reform proposals that are backed by well-known personalities attract greater political and public attention, helping to generate the necessary momentum in the decision-making organs of the United Nations.

Reaching agreement on reform takes time at the United Nations. The history of peacekeeping reform suggests that while Member States will, on occasion, react quickly to reform proposals, the standard pattern is for several years to elapse before decisions are reached — preceded by seemingly endless debates among Member States and requests for additional information from the Secretariat. Consensus is, however, eventually reached, and major reform measures are approved. Although they may not reflect fully the original proposals, they nevertheless bring about real improvements to UN operational systems. Whether on peacekeeping or on other issues, reforms, at least those of a practical nature, are entirely possible within the United Nations.

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9 See *Strengthening the Security and Safety of United Nations Operations, Staff and Premises* (UN, 2004).

The test of any reform does not end with the design of reform proposals and their final endorsement by the powers that be. The next step, implementation, is the most difficult in many respects. Any change to the status quo upsets staff and their routine, and can, at times, threaten job security, a particularly acute concern at the UN, where staff often live away from their home base for many years and may not be able to find employment readily if they are forced to return home. Seeing reform through to the end requires firm leadership from the top and strong managerial capacity. When both have been present within the peacekeeping department and outside, reform has progressed well. When it has been lacking, the pace of reform has suffered. Built-in rigidities in the system — a poor tradition of performance evaluation and resistance from staff associations — as well as managerial weaknesses, have often diluted the impact of reform.

The defence by Member States of what they perceive to be their national interests is never far below the surface. Modifications to staffing and promotion procedures, staff cuts or reorganizations, for instance, may meet resistance from certain Member States if there is a risk that these changes will affect the posts occupied by one of their nationals in the Secretariat. Commercial or financial interests can often be at the root of a Member State's opposition to changes in, for example, procurement procedures or budgetary allocations.

Reform often requires the jolt supplied by crisis and emergencies. Neither the Secretariat nor Member States are particularly good at pressing for reforms that anticipate future needs. They are, however, much more willing to contemplate radical change when a crisis threatens and disaster strikes. The United Nations is not unique in this respect.

Reform also requires that political stars be aligned. The United Nations is an intensely political institution and the state of relations among its key members sets the tone for even the most mundane debates. When there are deep tensions within its membership, making progress on any kind of reform can be agonizingly slow and difficult. For instance, the polarization in the General Assembly after the US invasion of Iraq produced an unreceptive environment for considering Secretary-General Kofi Annan's last package of managerial reform in 2006. The Brahimi Report, in contrast, owes its success in achieving reform, in part, to the particularly positive political atmosphere prevailing at the time of the Millennium Summit.

## THE NEVER-ENDING REFORM

UN peacekeeping has come a very long way from the immediate, post-Cold War days when both the Secretariat and Member States were experimenting with new forms of intervention. If the missions in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda gave the impression of improvisation, it was because all involved were indeed improvising — making the rules and developing the operational tools as they went. Today, the United Nations conducts its peace missions in a much more professional way and does so with a relatively small amount of resources: US\$8 billion per year is not an insignificant amount of money, but considering that amount sustains close to 120,000 soldiers, police and civilian officers deployed in the field, it is in fact quite a modest amount. Time and again, peacekeeping has proved to be a cost-effective response to human and political crisis and, for all its flaws, it is still the best tool available to the international community to help countries emerging from conflict.

Although the UN capacity to command, control and manage its peacekeeping missions has improved considerably over the years, it remains underdeveloped and fragile compared to that of modern, capable military organizations. The mandates set for peace missions have become extraordinarily complex and demanding, often entailing significant levels of risk for troops. Yet, peacekeeping missions often lack the necessary military capabilities to effectively implement their mandate. UN missions continue to be assembled on an ad hoc basis, often without the benefit of fully integrated battalions and adequate equipment. Joint pre-deployment training remains minimal, and involves only headquarters staff. While many peacekeeping contingents perform admirably, there continue to be recurring problems of conduct and discipline, over which the United Nations has limited control.

There are also significant challenges in the non-military dimensions of peace missions. Achieving a consistent and high-quality performance from civilian police, who are drawn from dozens of different countries and often do not master the local language where they are stationed, presents an almost insurmountable problem. The recruitment of civilian staff continues to be slow and cumbersome in spite of the many reforms implemented to improve this situation. Coordination among the numerous players on the ground, both within and outside of the missions, still leaves much to be desired.

The United Nations — including not only the Secretariat but also the Member States acting through the Security Council and the General Assembly — should critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of the peacekeeping approaches and strategies developed over the last two decades. It must be ready to contemplate new, far-reaching changes to ensure that peace operations produce optimum results. Peacekeeping is the most visible part of the United Nations' *raison d'être*,

and public support is greatly affected by its perception of how peacekeepers are performing — both within the country in which they are deployed and through the global media. Expectations are extremely high, often unreasonably so, and even the best and most comprehensive reforms will not provide instant solutions to the intractable problems facing countries emerging from conflict. But the United Nations must make every effort to continue to improve its performance and learn from its experiences, as it has done in the past 20 years of peacekeeping reform. This process of transformation is essential for the UN to be able to live up fully to its mission of ending conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

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