CHAPTER TEN

Preventing Genocide and Crimes against Humanity: One Innovation and New Global Initiative*

H. PETER LANGILLE

What can be done to stem the ongoing crisis in Darfur? For years, the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Janjaweed militia have committed a campaign of systemic mass-murder, gang rape, ethnic cleansing, "scorched earth" tactics, and frequent cross-border incursions to kill Darfur refugees in Chad. Officials in many, if not all, national capitals know that even after signing the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006, the GOS unleashed yet another offensive to conclude its efforts to "cleanse" the region. Yet, rather than the rapid reaction required in a serious emergency, the wider response to Darfur reflects a recurring pattern: routine delays, "too little, too late, too lame," and the increasingly dubious promise of "never again." Following Rwanda and Srebrenica, few can be confident that our existing arrangements are sufficiently reliable to save succeeding generations from the scourge of armed conflict and genocide. Regrettably, there has been little tangible progress in addressing four related challenges:

1) the prevention of armed conflict, including genocide and gross violations of human rights;
2) the protection of civilians at high risk;
3) rapid deployment for prompt start-up of demanding peace operations; and
4) the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a volatile environment.

Once again, we are confronted with familiar questions. First, why are current arrangements insufficient to prevent, stop, or effectively manage armed conflicts? Can any existing service provide an assurance of prompt, appropriate help? Second, given the consistent failure to stop or mitigate such atrocities again and again, what sort of strategy might actually work? Is there a more promising alternative?

This chapter commences with a review of the existing arrangements assigned to help victims of genocide, followed by an overview of strategies that might improve our capabilities to intervene effectively. I argue that our existing "tool box" is far from adequate in addressing the crisis in Darfur or any of the four noted challenges. There is an urgent need to expand our range of instruments and options, and I suggest one key innovation: a permanent United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) that has the capacity to respond to similar crises in a far more reliable, rapid, and cost-effective manner.

Existing Arrangements

THE AFRICAN UNION STANDBY BRIGADES

The initial deployment of African Union (AU) soldiers to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) represented an attempt to deal with a fast breaking crisis on their continent, reflecting both a Western desire to offload a shared responsibility by demanding "African solutions to African problems" and an effort at a compromise that would be acceptable to Sudanese officials in Khartoum. The exercise was premature and flawed. The AU had been formed in 2002, and the development of the AU Standby Brigades was announced the same year. Even before the start of their Sudan mission in 2004, there were legitimate concerns that the AU forces were not ready for such a demanding operation. Those nations participating in the AU simply lacked too many of the required resources: well-trained, well-equipped soldiers; transport and support; and a mandate to protect civilians.

Given the scope and scale of the Darfur crisis already under way in 2004, the AU forces that joined AMIS were essentially assigned a "mission impossible." Darfur is often described as being nearly the size of France or Texas, and this region would pose serious challenges for any multinational force. There is only one major paved road through 200,000 square miles of vast territory. Only those forces with extensive air and land transport, backed by substantive support in communications, surveillance, and logistics, could monitor and patrol such an area. International efforts were made to provide AMIS with
modest military resources, but, even if combined, these efforts were hardly sufficient.8

Gradually, AU forces in AMIS were expanded in response to widespread pressure over a deteriorating catastrophe in Darfur. The initial deployment should have alarmed all from the start: 60 military observers and 310 protection troops (to monitor and observe the compliance of the parties to the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement of 18 April 2004). On 20 October 2004 the AU contribution increased to 2,431 military personnel and 815 civilian police to monitor and observe compliance with the agreement and to contribute to a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. With persistent attacks and a precarious situation, on 28 April 2005 the AU Peace and Security Council bolstered the AMIS force to 6,171 military and 1,560 civilian police.9 At this strength, the AMIS force could conduct daytime observation, monitoring, and reporting in some sectors. But it was hardly enough. While the AU troops attempted to help the suffering inhabitants and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, they frequently could do little more than protect themselves.

As to be expected, the AMIS force also attracted international concern and even hostility. Despite its efforts, AMIS represented a bad political decision, a token contribution that could provide only occasional help to over two million refugees and internally displaced people suffering in squalid camps and thousands in hiding, fearing worse. Inevitably, criticism arose from individuals and organizations attempting humanitarian operations in Darfur; some viewed AMIS as far too conservative in asserting its presence, conducting patrols, monitoring villages, and, in particular, protecting people at high risk.7

Notably, the number of AU member states providing troop contributions to AMIS was hardly representative of the far larger AU, with Nigeria and Rwanda providing the majority of the protection forces. Smaller military contingents were supplied by Gambia, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, and Kenya, and twenty-five AU countries sent military observers. Increasingly, those providing the major funding to the mission were dissatisfied with the return on their investment, and several countries were inclined to curtail the funding as AMIS continued to struggle with even the limited tasks assigned.

The AU had neither the mandate nor the capacity to stop the Janjaweed militia, the Sudanese armed forces, or the ongoing, often joint operations of both.9 At best, the AU contribution in Darfur might be considered partially helpful. In no circumstances could any informed observer deem it adequate to stop this catastrophe. Yet, while it is unprepared for the crisis in Darfur, the AU should not be prematurely dismissed for its potential to help in the future. There appears to be a deep commitment in Africa to do more and to be far more prepared.7 The AU members are engaged in planning five multinational, regionally dispersed, high-readiness brigades for peace operations authorized by the UN Security Council.10 The brigades will be developed by member states within the AU’s five regional economic commissions (RECs), with guidance from an AU planning element and a central AU headquarters. Each brigade will include its own planning elements and its own mobile mission headquarters. Of equal, if not greater, promise is that some also plan to include not only military brigades but smaller task forces, reserve forces, and air and naval forces, as well as police and civilian elements.11 Combined, these efforts appear to be encouraging steps towards ensuring a more comprehensive, well-integrated response to diverse operations. AU reports indicate that all brigades will be listed within the United Nations Standby Arrangements System (UNHAS), which also needs help.

The AU brigade system is still a new arrangement, and its first substantive test continues to be negotiated and coordinated while under trial in a very tough mission in Darfur (where a slow and insufficient deployment should have been anticipated). Irrespective of the shortcomings of AMIS, however, the UN and international capitals continue to support the development of these AU brigades. On paper, the new brigades do look quite impressive. However, as one close to the plans noted, “the devil is in the details.”12 The effort involves numerous countries with divergent interests, as well as different cultures with different military standards and practices. At this stage, there is little assurance that the AU standby brigades will actually come together as planned or with a modest degree of cohesiveness, interoperability, and unity of purpose.

At the outset of the AMIS operation, there was a concern among UN officials that it would not be too long before their organization was assigned the task. There was also a fear that the AU would be “scapegoated” first and the UN second.13 Following the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed on 5 May 2006, there were widespread expectations that the horrid suffering would end. Yet officials were also aware that the AU contribution would not come to a close promptly. Even if a new operation were launched, it would still be largely dependent on
Africans. Although scheduled to conclude in September 2006, AMIS was extended until year’s end, with a modest expansion of the force. For the worst reasons, AMIS had become the preferred option of the Sudanese government; officials in Khartoum knew that AMIS could do little to alleviate the crisis in Darfur.

THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations retains unique authority and legitimacy as the one universal organization dedicated to advancing peace and collective security, human rights, health, sustainable development, environmental protection, international law, and wider well-being. Numerous UN departments, agencies, and officials, at all levels, have worked tirelessly over the course of the Darfur crisis. Their efforts extend far beyond consulting, negotiating, mediating, briefing, gathering information, ensuring support for AU participants in AMIS, providing food and shelter, coordinating humanitarian relief, raising awareness of the situation, and facilitating the DPA. As early as 2004, officials in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) engaged in contingency planning and exercises to help prepare for a potential deployment. Subsequent efforts were made to facilitate the transition from the AU mission to a UN peacekeeping operation.

Unfortunately, within the current UN system, there remain several prominent impediments to the type of response urgently required in Darfur: Security Council authorization; an agreement from national governments to contribute the necessary resources; sufficient national capacity, with appropriately trained and equipped personnel; and competent prior planning and preparation to ensure that everything required is ready.

On issues of peace and security, it helps to recall that the UN is the sum of its parts, including 192 diverse member states and a Security Council dominated by the permanent five (P5) members (China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States). At present, the "sum" is seldom united in perspective, in institutional preferences, or in a desire to move towards prompt responses to international conflict. Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and cross-border aggression are unequivocal violations of international law; in Darfur, over three million people have been the victims of such heinous crimes. On such issues, the UN Security Council has the primary responsibility to authorize action.

If in agreement, the council has several potential ways to respond to these crimes, including a peacekeeping operation under Chapter VI of the UN Charter or a more robust peacekeeping operation— or even a collective-security operation— under Chapter VII.

Over the past six years, robust peace operations authorized under Chapter VII have become the norm, providing peacekeepers with a mandate to use “all necessary means,” including the use of force to protect themselves, the mission, and, frequently, civilians at risk. Force compositions are designed to be strong, with a deterrent capacity to repel or, if necessary, stop violent belligerents. Rules of engagement now offer more flexibility to ensure that peacekeepers can, at least, conduct their assigned tasks without having “one arm tied behind their back.”

Although there has been a marked improvement in UN peacekeeping, valid concerns remain over how this system functions when confronted by a crisis such as Darfur. As stressed by the 2005 Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change:

The biggest source of inefficiency in our collective security institutions has simply been an unwillingness to get serious about preventing deadly violence. This is a normative challenge to the United Nations: the concept of State and international responsibility to protect civilians from the effects of war and human rights abuses has yet to truly overcome the tension between the competing claims of sovereign inviolability and the right to intervene. It is also an operational challenge: the challenge of stopping a Government from killing its own civilians requires considerable military deployment capacity. ... The biggest failures of the United Nations in civil violence have been in halting ethnic cleansing and genocide. ... Prompt and effective response to today’s challenges requires a dependable capacity for the rapid deployment of personnel and equipment for peacekeeping and law enforcement.

With the world summit of 2005 prompting the UN General Assembly to endorse the Responsibility to Protect, followed by the endorsement of the Security Council, public— if not diplomatic— expectations were high. Yet it may have premature to assume that any political agreement over a new principle, or even a doctrine, of protection would immediately change long-standing preferences and practices.
To secure broad-based agreement on a contentious issue, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty had deliberately avoided the more controversial questions of "how" and with "what" to protect. Protecting civilians was a new, largely unexplored task for governments and national defence establishments. Few, if any, aside from independent academics and organizations, had even contemplated the operational or tactical requirements.

After three years of the growing crisis in Darfur, the UN Security Council managed to break a lingering deadlock, with a relatively strong resolution (1709) on 31 August 2006. In brief, the council determined that:

- the situation in Darfur continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security;
- the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) mandate and objectives should be expanded;
- efforts should be made to arrange the rapid deployment of additional capabilities;
- UNMIS should be strengthened by up to 17,300 military personnel and an appropriate civilian component, including 3,300 civilian police and up to 16 police units;
- these elements should begin to be deployed no later than 1 October 2006 to effect the transition from AMIS to UNMIS in Darfur; and
- the mandate would be to support the DPA in twelve general tasks, supplemented by new ones, several authorized under Chapter VII: namely, to use all necessary means in areas of deployment, to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, to prevent disruption of the DPA, to seize or collect arms, and to take strong measures against any individual or group violating or attempting to block implementation of the DPA or committing human rights violations.

The decision to expand the UNMIS mission and move it to Darfur (to effect the transition from AMIS) initially appeared brilliant and, for many, unanticipated. Aside from already operating within Sudan, UNMIS was concluding its assigned task of overseeing the two-year ceasefire agreement between Khartoum and Southern Sudan. Furthermore, personnel within UNMIS were familiar with the environment, and the demanding task of mission-start-up was largely completed, albeit in a different location. Relatively secure lines of communication and supply (logistics) were in place.

On 31 July, UNMIS had a total of 10,253 uniformed personnel, including 8,909 troops, 689 military observers, and 655 police, supported by 636 international civilian personnel and 1,228 local civilians. With a protection force of 4,000 troops, it was, at least, a bridgehead until augmented. If increased to the newly authorized strength, UNMIS would definitely be a robust UN presence, with up to 27,300 military personnel, 4,015 police, 16 police units, and an appropriate civilian component. UNMIS already included very wide representation from sixty-one UN member states. If inclined to stay and rapidly increase their contribution of personnel and resources, the member states within UNMIS might have been adequate to stem the crisis in Darfur, barring any major escalation or threat. From the perspective of operational planners, the expansion of UNMIS likely appeared feasible, if not the only conceivable option, given a very difficult situation. Yet senior diplomats, particularly the P5 members of the Security Council, had to realize that their option was far too vulnerable to stalemate. However appropriate or promising Resolution 1709 appeared on paper, it was too late and it included too many exploitable conditions. The Security Council's delay in authorizing UNMIS limited the UN's prospects in acquiring the necessary assistance to extend the operation. It would also adversely influence any prospect for a prompt expansion of the UNMIS.

With several years of ongoing deliberation and debate, squabbles and trade-offs, reluctance from Russia, and even the threat of a veto from China, the Security Council effectively made it known that any UN response to Darfur would be awkward and slow. In any conflict, such signals reduce pressure on belligerents and officials engaged in violence, who can read it as permission to continue their behaviour or even to become more aggressive. Conversely, these signals may also reduce the pressure on supportive member states to contribute in a timely manner or to contribute at all if the mission is deemed to constitute an unacceptably high risk.

Seldom have the effects been so evident. By the spring of 2007, officials in the Government of Sudan had yet to respect the terms of any of the numerous agreements it made to help stem the crisis in Darfur. With the killing and rapes intensifying in June 2006 (following the signing of the DPA), the UN Security Council rushed a senior delegation of diplomats and ambassadors to Sudan in an attempt to secure
approval for the extension and redeployment of UNMIS. This delegation assured the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, that the full sovereignty of Sudan would be respected, that the UN would not deploy an intervention force, and that al-Bashir’s consent was essential for the UN to do anything. Having been well briefed on his options, al-Bashir promptly vetoed the proposed UN force, specifically any robust operation authorized to protect civilians.30

Within weeks, al-Bashir also warned that any UN deployment would not only be opposed at the political level, it would also be fought by his armed forces. This warning could not be easily dismissed. As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated, “The Sudanese Government ... has ably played on Western fears of entering a military quagmire ... exploiting some of these issues, saying, ‘If you want to have another Iraq, come,’ and this scared away governments.”31 For officials in the various member states who may have been considering a further contribution to UNMIS, the risks were now clear and far higher. As reported, “without Khartoum’s permission, no nation will send troops to Darfur and risk a battle with the Sudanese military, which has increased its troops and aircraft in Darfur.”32 Equally problematic, national officials now had another plausible justification to add to what were frequently their long lists of dubious excuses for ignoring UN requests for help.33

Irrespective of the Sudanese warning or the less-than-compelling diplomatic effort, it was already evident to a few senior sources that the UN would encounter serious difficulties in assembling the more substantive UN force needed for Darfur. Prior to the signing of the DPA on 15 May, quiet consultations between UN officials and various governments were underway in an effort to identify and solicit contributions of the necessary troops and resources. To its credit, on this occasion the UN Security Council responded very promptly with Resolution 1679, formalizing the initial process on the following day, 16 May.34 Darfur needed immediate help and that meant it was critical to avoid the last-minute, ad hoc, improvised response characteristic of peacekeeping in the early to mid-1990s.

On 18 May, the UN under-secretary general (USG) for peacekeeping operations, Jean-Marie Guehenno, publicly stated that “if there is an operation in Darfur, then it would be a UN force, and a UN force which would comprise forces from – should comprise forces from all continents, to really show that the world is coming together.”35 Guehenno definitely had to try to obtain the additional contributions, but he also had to know that this would be a slow, uphill struggle.

The response from national governments was far from encouraging. Most of the northern member states were either already worried about being overstretched in contributing to the NATO operation in Afghanistan and/or the American-led war in Iraq, or they were under NATO and American pressure to do more in one of these wars. Most of the southern troop contributors were also heavily stretched in helping the UN with a major surge in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, for sixteen years the UN has also been confronted with a challenge to do far more with much less.36 To date, the member states have refused to provide the UN with anything comparable to a national-security headquarters or any permanent UN force or dedicated service for responding to violent challenges. Article 47 of the UN Charter stipulates that member states are to provide the necessary support for maintaining international peace and security, but, while it remains an obligation, few, if any governments, are willing to abide by it.37

Prior to initiating any peace operation abroad, the UN still has to plead to borrow personnel and equipment from governments; this process tends to be more cumbersome, complicated, lengthy, and difficult than organizing any sheriff’s posse at the last minute.38 With enthusiasm for the UN waning in Washington (following the American failure in Somalia), competition arising from NATO (following the end of the Cold War), and the Non-Aligned Movements’ demand for equitable regional representation in the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (1997), the governments and defence establishments of the northern hemisphere simply “jumped ship,” leaving the UN with only token troop contributions.39 An undue share of the burden in UN peacekeeping was pushed onto those in the south,40 in effect creating a two-tiered, slow system.41 Even the UN Security Council acknowledged a “commitment – capacity gap,” where those with the capacity seldom contribute and where those contributing frequently suffer from insufficient capacity.42

Would there be sufficient capacity committed to expand UNMIS? Unlikely! Even for the UN and those member states inclined to help, the timing could hardly have been worse. For two years, the UN had been coping with a major surge in peace operations. In May 2006 the organization had almost 90,000 personnel serving in 18 UN DPKO-led operations on four continents in ten time zones.43 Within four months, the UN was heavily challenged by an unprecedented surge in peace operations, with urgent demands for more. In August 2006, confronted with escalating violence in East Timor, war in Lebanon,
and a new offensive in Darfur, the Security Council authorized an increase of 40 per cent in the overall size of operations. Even without UNMIS, this increase would be the largest effort at UN peacekeeping in the sixty-one-year history of the organization, with more than 100,000 troops and police to be deployed by year’s end. By 2007, the total was expected to exceed 140,000 personnel, stretching the UN — particularly the DPKO and supportive national contributors — beyond anything previously experienced.

The short-term implications for UNMIS were serious. Acknowledging a high risk of political neglect, Under-Secretary General Gérard Onesta conceded that “Darfur could be a victim of that overstretch.” At a meeting with forty-nine potential troop contributors for UNMIS on 25 September 2006, the UN received pledges of support for additional troops from only five member states: Bangladesh, Nigeria, Norway, Tanzania, and Sweden. Yet, within ten days, fearing the beginning of a process that might expand to represent a problem, the Sudanese ambassador to the UN responded with a uniquely intimidating letter to potential troop contributors, stating, “In the absence of Sudan’s consent to the deployment of UN troops, any volunteering to provide peacekeeping troops to Darfur will be considered as a hostile act, a prelude to an invasion of a member country of the UN.” This threat created a modest diplomatic storm, with numerous official protests but little more. Once again, the intentional intimidation actually worked and few governments would volunteer to help with the crisis.

The UN system for peace operations has many limits, many that are not easily or quickly overcome, particularly when the organization must deal with diverse emergencies. Numerous reports and studies over the past sixteen years have encouraged an array of necessary reforms for peace operations, preventing armed conflict, and protecting civilians. While more ambitious ideas may attract headlines, the official preference is for pragmatic incremental steps to modify existing arrangements. This protracted approach appeals to the majority of governments — including those of the P5 — because they tend to be very leery of any bold, new shifts entailing a substantive change, especially one that might affect national interests, sovereignty, or control.

Overall, the results of the incremental reform process are mixed. On the positive side, the UN now has a larger department of peacekeeping operations, with six hundred staff who are increasingly capable of planning, organizing, and supporting operations worldwide. Strategic deployment stocks and mission start-up kits are readily available at the UN logistics base in Brindisi, Italy. A forward-thinking Lessons-Learned Unit has helped to institutionalize much-needed change in peace operations. Increasingly, the emphasis has been placed on integrated analysis and planning to ensure well-integrated, multidimensional operations, with civilian, military, and police elements. With the shift to robust operations authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, mandates, rules of engagement, and force compositions have been revised to ensure an adequate deterrent capacity. Such disincentives to non-cooperation are frequently twinned with incentives to cooperation. By addressing critical human needs with quick-impact projects and peace-building efforts, people in need receive help and hope, as well as an interest in sustaining the peace process. Because of the complex nature of contemporary armed conflict, various operational requirements are sequenced throughout the short, medium, and long term. A 24/7 operations unit now maintains contact with those in all operations, channelling information, early warning, and requests to and from appropriate offices in the wider UN system. A standby cadre of civilian police and a strategic reserve of multinational forces were proposed to augment operations needing prompt assistance. The latter would have been very helpful in expanding UNMIS, but it was opposed by the Bush administration.

The UN Standby Arrangements System was repeatedly modified over the past decade to attract additional contributions at higher levels of readiness and competence. This was modestly helpful in informing potential contributors of UN expectations and in generating a list of what might be available. These efforts are among the diverse reforms that have helped to improve current UN peace operations. However, there remain inherent limitations in many critical areas. To cite one example, the UNSAS is an entirely conditional arrangement, one that places no binding obligation on any government to contribute help. Numerous governments volunteer assistance only when they have direct interests or when they are pressured to do so by major powers. Rather than rapid deployment, this system is chronically plagued by routine delays — averaging four to six months but often longer — irrespective of what is happening to people in harm’s way. Even with a new offensive, officials expect that Darfur will be another situation in the category of the slow “routine.” Despite the Security Council resolution for
rapid deployment to expand UNMIS by 1 October 2006. Jean-Marie Guehenno was forced to announce that the planned deployment would have to be delayed until at least January 2007.44

Experience over the past thirteen years has clearly demonstrated that the UN’s member states are either unwilling or unable to provide a reliable, effective, rapid response to diverse emergencies. Although the situation may change, the early indications for UNMIS and the people of Darfur are not comforting. Given the intransigence of the Sudanese government and the related reluctance of UN member states, there was little prospect of UNMIS promptly assuming the lead role in Darfur. In response, the African Union authorized an extended timeframe for AMIS (until the end of 2006). Two days later, the UN Security Council extended the mandate for UNMIS.45

Sudanese officials appear to have calculated correctly in assuming more talk than action, at least in the short term. They understood that governments could simply ignore UN Secretary General Annan’s warning in September 2006 that “Darfur is heading toward disaster unless UN peacekeepers are allowed in.” Chad had also attempted to raise the stakes in warning the UN General Assembly that the crisis in Darfur threatened to destabilize the entire region.46 In a modestly different political environment, this might have prompted a powerful collective response.

Over a three-year period between 2003 and 2006, the Sudanese government has definitely had to worry about increasing public awareness and political pressure for stemming the crisis in Darfur.47 Yet, in the absence of clearly specified demands targeted at UN member states with available capacity, Western public pressure was little more than a protest coupled to general support for doing something more. Arguably, decision makers in Khartoum, Beijing, and Moscow were initially willing to continue with a high-risk strategy because they were confident they could. However, over an extended period, political environments occasionally shift, public pressure can push reluctant governments, dubious deals can become embarrassingly problematic, and the confidence of partners can diminish, prompting a different approach.48 Most governments also know that there are worse options than consenting to a UN peacekeeping operation, particularly when government officials are still in a position to influence the terms on which consent is given.49

On 16 November 2006 the Sudanese government agreed in principle to allow a joint UN-AU peacekeeping force into Darfur.50 The tentative agreement was for a modestly smaller joint force (17,000 troops and 3,000 police officers). A joint UN-AU force was not explicit in Resolution 1706, but it had been central to the planning for UNMIS. If it was deemed a viable compromise, it might have started a promising process. However, officials in Khartoum had simply floated another tentative agreement in order to assess international response. As soon as it became apparent that the UN would encounter problems in raising credible capacity, Sudan’s president reverted to his obstinate opposition to any UN force.

THE STANDBY HIGH-READINESS BRIGADE

The multinational Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) was twice warned to prepare for a UN deployment to Darfur. Yet the requests to prepare promptly were just as promptly cancelled.51 SHIRBRIG is deemed to be the most advanced formation available for UN peace operations.52 The initial objective of the participating member states was to be able to deploy 4,000-5,000 well-trained, well-equipped, self-sufficient troops within two weeks in a coherent, pre-coordinated formation.53 Furthermore, SHIRBRIG has an integrated mission headquarters and planning element, which is maintained for and dedicated to UN operations.54 Fifteen countries now participate in the brigade, with a number of others taking part as observers.55 Overall, it has a relatively broad geographic and cultural mix of participants.

The commanding officer, Canadian Brigadier-General Greg Mitchell, supported the prospect of SHIRBRIG’s deployment to Darfur, as did his multinational staff.56 After participating in the critical start-up phase of the earlier UNMIS, they were confident in knowing both the conflict and the key participants. Likewise, they had already conducted contingency planning and exercises for such a deployment with officials in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Arguably, if supported for deployment to Darfur, SHIRBRIG would have been a very useful complement in the initial expansion phase of UNMIS. Most participants already have experience in demanding Chapter VII operations. Most have a high degree of professionalism and competence, as well as general and specialized military assets. If combined in a sound division of labour as planned, these would provide useful synergies, a very competent mission headquarters, a highly mobile vanguard, and a robust protection force.
Unfortunately, the SHIRBRIG arrangement also looks better on paper than it has in UN operations. Experience in the latter indicates a mixed record, with modest success to date. Since its inception, SHIRBRIG has not managed a deployment at anywhere near brigade strength. At present, there is not sufficient political will or leadership among the participating members to make SHIRBRIG work as intended.66

A relatively small SHIRBRIG team had helped to establish the planning and critical early-mission management for monitoring the cease-fire agreement between north and south Sudan in UNMIS. The participating members had a long lead-time to prepare for that mission. Yet, from ten full members and eight aligned members, the UN secured a rather modest commitment of a mission headquarters (approximately 120 officers) and two security companies (240 troops) to protect it.

Among numerous problems, one constraining fact remains: SHIRBRIG is another conditional standby arrangement. Each participating government retains decision-making authority over any deployment of its national armed forces. Many share a concern over contributing from limited resources, particularly when already committed to allied operations elsewhere. SHIRBRIG is also a very low defence priority of most, if not all, of the participating member states, and even a lower priority of national defence establishments. Another factor compounding the problem is that many of the governments that initially agreed to participate in this arrangement are no longer in power. Their successors appear to share a limited understanding of SHIRBRIG, and less interest in making it work.

Without a political profile or public awareness of SHIRBRIG, the participating governments face little, if any, pressure in domestic or international politics to commit to a deployment. Only a few academics, officials, and journalists were sufficiently informed to raise the SHIRBRIG option as potentially helpful in response to the crisis in Darfur.67 Yet the efforts of a few are seldom sufficient to generate wider awareness, to mobilize sustained pressure, or to influence tangible contributions from reluctant governments.

As a result, the level of commitment among the participants is low, even among those who previously agreed to be lead contributors. Rather than lead, Canada promptly refused to participate in a UN operation to Darfur, effectively stemming the prospect of a SHIRBRIG deployment.68 Had the members met to discuss a SHIRBRIG contribution, it might have been sufficient to send a message, possibly deterring Khartoum from continuing to stymie UN efforts.69

SHIRBRIG remains a “work in progress” although the progress has been unacceptably slow and increasingly directed away from the participants’ initial aspirations of a high-readiness, rapidly deployable brigade.70 At least, the UN now has conditional access to a cohesive, standby, rapidly deployable mission headquarters. To their credit, elements of SHIRBRIG can still claim to be the only multinational mechanism devoted to working exclusively in UN peace operations and in the UN DPKO. As a partnership agreed to in the aftermath of Rwanda – one primarily designed to stop the “next Rwanda” – the SHIRBRIG arrangement and its participating members should have been ready to assume a lead role in UNMIS. Once again, it has demonstrated the extent to which it can be relied upon for rapid deployment to UN peace operations. At best, it may be helpful when the conditions are appropriate. As it continues to stand by, SHIRBRIG is far from sufficient in addressing any of the four challenges noted.

EU Battlegroups

A group of European Union (EU) nations (acting under the EU umbrella) are now preparing thirteen battlegroups for rapid, long-range deployment to robust peace operations, including enforcement to quell or contain a crisis.71 Each battlegroup is to be composed of 1,500 elite troops, kept on standby within national defence establishments. They are supposed to be ready for deployment within five to ten days’ notice and be sustainable within theatre for up to thirty days. In November 2004 the EU approved plans to develop these battlegroups, with its defence ministers indicating that the first one should be operational within one year (late 2005) and others by 2007.72 Following a recurring pattern of delays, it was subsequently announced that the first formation should be ready by 2007.

Three potential frameworks are under consideration by the EU: a participating country deploying alone; a country serving as the lead or “framework nation”; or a broadly multinational format with diverse participants. It would appear that the EU members are drawing on the British experience in helping to stabilize a tough situation in Sierra Leone in 2000, as well as the French experience in leading the EU contingent in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo until the Security Council could assemble a stronger UN force.73

The option of battlegroups initially generated guarded optimism. In the words of the UN U-S-G for peacekeeping operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, “the EU force would not be a standing army, but it would
have a similar function. It would be built around the few countries that have a capacity to deploy troops quickly and over big distances. And its existence would lend some deterrent capacity that a light UN presence on the ground so often lacks. The concept needs to be tested to see its full measure.” An early test in 2005 demonstrated considerable potential, raising wider expectations, and the EU announced plans for further cooperation with the UN and a new partnership arrangement, designed specifically for more demanding, robust operations.

However, this arrangement is also conditional. Any deployment will still be subject to national decision-making processes. The troops will not be designated in advance but remain on standby within national defence establishments. Since the EU also requires a consensual decision-making process, any deployment may be delayed or blocked by an opposed member. In short, the EU battlegroups may be more rapid and effective if deployed, but their availability, as well as their reliability in another conditional arrangement, remains in question. To date, there is also confusion over whether these EU battlegroups are ready, appropriate, or inclined to help under UNMIS or any UN operation. UN Secretary General Annan endorsed this initiative in October 2004, shortly after the initial announcement that there would be EU battlegroups. Yet his endorsement was followed by a subsequent discussion within the EU over the primary institutional affiliation of the proposed battlegroups; a few EU members preferred the UN, while others claimed that these new arrangements might be redesignated for NATO’s Rapid Response Force. This issue has not been clarified.

Further, if the term is related to the intent, an EU “battlegroup” may not be the ideal name for UN peacekeeping operations. Few governments in the south are likely to welcome a foreign battlegroup on their territory, particularly when it comes from those with a history in colonizing the south. As indicated, Sudan’s president was already exploiting such fears to generate broader opposition to any UN mission.”

If the EU members were actually inclined to help in a demanding UN operation, the preparation of their battlegroups could have been advanced for a deployment in September 2006. There was sufficient forewarning of the need to accelerate their operational readiness. Five of these battlegroups might have made a substantive difference in rapidly augmenting other contributions to UNMIS, particularly as a complement to the AU forces. Since the choice was relatively clear by 2005, it would appear that a decision was made within the EU to forego any such effort.

Although it may be modestly premature to judge this EU option, the early indications suggest this arrangement cannot be relied upon for a prompt response to a demanding crisis. Once again, this new arrangement appears as one that may be helpful but insufficient to address the four key challenges.

NATO

With the AU experiencing predictable difficulty in Darfur by 2005, many in the West suggested that the only alternative for substantive help would be with a multinational bridging force from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Few doubt the combined military capacity of this regional military alliance. Aside from fifty years of joint training and cooperation to remain interoperable, the Allies have the most advanced military technology, extensive war-fighting capabilities, and the largest defence budgets. With a recent emphasis on force transformation and modernization, as well as rapid deployment and long-range power projection, NATO is unique in having the potential for prompt intervention worldwide. Had there been a consensus among the Allies, backed by sufficient political will to make it a high priority in each government, NATO forces might have been deployed to assist at any stage of this crisis.

NATO’s interest in participating in peace operations has been evident since the early 1990s. Among the Alliance members, however, there are diverse expectations over NATO’s current and future role. Developed in the initial years of the Cold War as a Western response to the Soviet Union, NATO’s military role became central as the Warsaw Pact expanded. As such, a long-standing focus was on nuclear and conventional deterrence to maintain “transatlantic” security, as well as the national security of its members. National and regional security for this specific community remains a high priority. Yet, with NATO expanding throughout the 1990s, new and former members also expressed interest in extending its reach to out-of-area-operations, with the prospect of a new global role. Given overlapping geo-strategic and economic interests, Alliance officials also conveyed support for a focus on industrial security. NATO is clearly the institutional preference of northern defence establishments, defence industries, and most, if not all, northern governments.

With the United States being the dominant member and unrivalled military power, NATO policy has reflected the official perception of
threats within Washington and the Pentagon. As to be expected, following the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency were elevated to the top of the Alliance agenda. The ongoing war in Afghanistan became a NATO mission (ISAF) in the early stages of the United States' Operation Enduring Freedom. With an attack on NATO's most powerful member obliging Alliance members to respond under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, and with authorization from the UN Security Council, the majority of NATO members contributed troops and equipment to ISAF, albeit at various levels and often with specific conditions attached. The subsequent American-led war in Iraq proved to be the exception, attracting support from less than half the NATO members. By 2006, there was little political consensus within NATO over current and future priorities of the Alliance or the leadership of the Bush administration in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the wider "war on terror."

Was NATO an appropriate arrangement for stemming the crisis in Darfur? As indicated, the NATO option had attracted public and political support in several Allied countries. But was this support premised on a reasonable assessment or wishful thinking? With two ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan requiring substantive troop contributions, as well as equipment, transport, support, and financing, few Alliance members were inclined to open a third military front in Africa. Two of the Alliance's most powerful armies were already heavily engaged in both wars, suffering substantive losses in wounded and casualties. Confronted by an enormous economic cost and the possibility of losing the war in Iraq, with all the political pressure these realities entailed, neither Washington nor London was well positioned to encourage the Alliance to undertake another demanding operation.

NATO was also encountering difficulty in attracting sufficient contributions from Alliance members to maintain or expand ISAF. With even a remote chance of NATO also losing the first land battle in its fifty-seven-year history, a prompt response to the Darfur crisis was unlikely to be at the forefront of Alliance priorities. The long-awaited announcement that NATO's Rapid Response Force was "fully operational and ready to go" was made at the Alliance summit in Latvia on 29 November 2006. However, no mention was made of any deployment to Darfur. Further, as reported by CNN, "allies have been reluctant to commit the necessary troops, in part because of the potential costs of participating in its missions."

NATO may also be inappropriate for out-of-area operations, particularly in the southern hemisphere. For one, the NATO members are all predominantly white, almost all wealthy, and, with the exception of Turkey, all Christian. Furthermore, as an all-northern military alliance, NATO lacks wider legitimacy and political credibility outside its region. Much as the Warsaw Pact was frequently viewed as an instrument for protecting and extending Soviet power, NATO is often perceived as a similar instrument of American power. Irrespective of any intentions, these perceptions combine with former fears of colonialism and imperialism in a manner that inevitably generates scepticism and opposition. A NATO military intervention in the south may now encourage hostilities and an escalation of violence. A NATO military intervention in Darfur would likely give the impression of another American-led war against another Islamic-led state. There is a high probability that NATO would be forcefully opposed, not only by Sudanese armed forces but also by others united in terms of identity, religious cause, values, and interests.

It does not help that the commitment of the NATO alliance and its members to the United Nations is now in doubt. The statistics are difficult to ignore. NATO members are now among the lowest contributors of personnel to UN peace operations despite their capacity and their alleged commitments to the UN. At present, NATO has a mixed, heavily mythologized record in peace operations within its region. It would also be quite difficult for the majority of NATO members to claim a long-standing commitment to the security and development of countries in the south or even previous experience in attempting to stop any genocide. Regrettably, in a world characterized by deep divisions between religious extremes, wealth and poverty, and north and south, NATO is unlikely to be widely accepted or even tolerated as an appropriate arrangement for addressing the crisis in Darfur.

SUMMING UP: SHORTCOMINGS OF EXISTING TOOLS

In short, the existing arrangements may be helpful on occasion when the conditions are conducive, but they are clearly insufficient for addressing the four challenges noted at the outset. There are numerous inherent limitations in the AU Standby Brigades, the UN system for coping with emergencies (particularly the UN Standby Arrangements System), Shirbrig, the EU battlegroups, and NATO. All
these groups still depend on national political will and the provision of
national standby personnel. Frequently, these limitations stymie any
response to fast-breaking crises. Repeated efforts have demonstrated
that conditional arrangements seldom generate tangible contribu-
tions. Our current tools remain slow and unreliable. Worse, the stipu-
lated conditions are unreliable and defy any remedy to obligate or bind
participants.

Several of these arrangements have helped to build a wider founda-
tion for peace operations, which remains an important objective, but
few, if any, will ever provide an appropriate response to real emergen-
cies. Given what is currently available, officials in Khartoum could plan
to do as they pleased in Darfur, with the confidence — if not the assur-
ance — that any UN or multinational intervention to stop them was
exceptionally unlikely. Another horrific precedent with far-reaching
implications has been established. At least for the near future, the
“sovereign right to genocide” appears sufficient to impede all attempts
to stop or constrain another catastrophe. Thousands more are likely
to die, while millions will continue to suffer. Regrettably, Gwynne
Dyer may have been correct in claiming that nothing substantive will
actually be done to avert the crisis in Darfur, that the best anyone can
reasonably hope for is a continuation of the AMIS operation and the
current AU force. In his words, “the end-of-September deadline for
putting a 20,000-strong force of United Nations troops into Darfur,
including large numbers of soldiers drawn from NATO countries, was
always a fantasy. The deadline has passed without any softening of the
Sudanese government’s total rejection of the plan, and no Western
troops are heading for Sudan any time soon.”

Optimism, at least at this point, is increasingly difficult to sustain.
One can only hope that the lessons learned from the Darfur crisis
(and past crises) will prompt wider interest in something more than
continued false promises. By now, most people should understand
the urgent need to develop a viable alternative. Emergencies by their
nature require rapid, reliable, and effective responses. To ensure an
effective response, diverse services must be pre-planned, well coor-
dinated, and immediately available. Currently, a minority of people
have the option to dial 911 with some confidence in knowing that vari-
ous useful services are already prepared and committed to help them
quickly. Elsewhere, the majority of people seldom have such 911 access
or any other decent options. If the objective is to prevent violence and
protect people at risk, an operation should be deployed quickly, with a
legitimate, credible presence to start providing the necessary services
within days and deter the likelihood of mass murder and ethnic cleanc-
ing. Increasingly, we can see a close relationship between preventing
armed conflict, genocide, gross violations of human rights, protecting
civilians at high risk, deploying rapidly, and addressing critical human
needs. These challenges are closely linked and interdependent. Clearly,
there is an evident need for a comprehensive approach to develop one
integrated UN service specifically to deal with the four challenges
noted, and possibly to attend to an even broader spectrum of emergen-
cies.

What Might Work?: A United Nations Emergency
Peace Service

One possible innovation — a UN Emergency Peace Service — is de-
designed to address each of the four challenges noted. As proposed, the
UNEPS would be a permanent UN formation, maintained at high
readiness with pre-trained, well-equipped UN personnel, immediately
available once authorized by the UN Security Council. This service
would be both multidimensional and multifunctional, composed of
military, police, and civilian elements and prepared for rapid deploy-
ment to diverse UN operations. Ideally, approximately 14,800 per-
sonnel would be co-located at a new UN base under a static opera-
tional headquarters (see organizational chart in appendix A) and two
mobile field headquarters (MHQs). Each MHQ would be assigned suf-
icient strength to provide security and protection and law and order,
as well as to address critical human needs within the mission area (see
organizational chart in appendix B).

The UNEPS is primarily intended to be a dedicated “lead service,”
“vanguard,” or “first responder.” Given the nature and size of this new
service, it would be reserved for emergency situations, particularly to
fill the gap in the initial six months when others may be unavailable,
unprepared, or unwilling to help. As a permanent UN service, com-
poneq of UN personnel, lead elements could be deployed within forty-
eight hours. With immediate access to an available service, the UN
would have a credible deterrent capacity. Furthermore, with a priority
on ensuring an effective, preventive, and prompt response in the early
stage of a conflict, it may be sufficient to offset deadly violence. This
approach would help to diminish the need for subsequent efforts and
the almost routine rotation into a larger, longer multinational opera-
tion. Yet the UNEPS would also include elements to establish the groundwork for well-integrated, comprehensive, and sustained efforts when necessary.

Another objective of the proposed UNEPS is to complement, rather than replace, existing UN arrangements. In fact, such a service could not operate without the support of the wider UN system and the assistance of supportive member states. In some cases, the latter may be essential to augment and rotate into an operation after the first six months. This period should be sufficient to secure and prepare national standby personnel as a replacement for the UNEPS. In accord with the UN Charter, the Security Council would retain responsibility for authorizing any deployment and for developing the mandate (in cooperation with the UN secretary general and officials of the secretariat). Once deployed, the secretary general would retain primary responsibility for the mission and UN services within it, reporting on both to the Security Council.

The permanent operational headquarters would have to be directed by a highly qualified special representative of the UN secretary general (SRSG). This individual would be responsible for the administration, oversight, and coordination of the UN base and an integrated headquarters, including those personnel assigned to plan, manage, and conduct operations, support, and training. Both MHOs would be planned and prepared to operate at a similar level of capacity for similar purposes, and each would likely be under the command of two deputy SRSGs and integrated with civilian, police, and military staffs leading their respective deployable elements. Within each MHO, there would also be a need for political and legal advisers, translation, communication, signals, and liaison units, and a defence and security platoon.

Among the deployable civilians (in teams or companies) would be medical and public-affairs units as well as experts in civilian policing; disaster relief and humanitarian assistance; human rights monitoring and education; conflict resolution; peace-building; de-mining; demobilization; disarmament; reconstruction, reintegration, and reconciliation; and environmental-crisis response. In all emergencies, there is a common need for diverse services to address critical human needs immediately. Even at the outset of a deployment, there is a requirement for quick-impact projects and the prompt provision of incentives to restore hope, health, and law and order. Safety and security are also necessary to ensure an environment where people can live free from fear or harm.

A robust military composition is required in contemporary peace operations, particularly when the risks are high and the threats are real. The UNEPS must be capable of deterring belligerents and defending the mission, as well as civilians at risk. As noted, all recent UN peace operations have been authorized under Chapter VII. The deployable military components would include technical reconnaissance units; light armoured reconnaissance units; motorized light infantry battalions; armoured (wheeled) infantry battalions; a helicopter squadron (of utility, heavy lift, and armed scouts); an engineer battalion; a logistics battalion; and a medical unit/hospital. The military elements under each MHO would constitute a robust brigade group of approximately 5,000 troops. When combined, the deployable military personnel of the UNEPS would total approximately 20,000 troops. While this total cannot be construed as another "force" for war fighting, each brigade group should have sufficient capacity to maintain the security and the safety of people within its area of operations. Notably, the UNEPS provides a modular formation, which allows for prompt "tailoring" or selection of elements appropriate to mission-specific requirements.

The UNEPS would be composed of individuals who volunteer for service and succeed in demonstrating dedication, professional expertise, and competence throughout a rigorous selection and training process. There would be no shortage of committed individuals with advanced skills willing to volunteer and participate in such a service on a paid, full-time basis, similar to that of UN civil servants. Applications would be encouraged from all member states to ensure universal representation. The advantages are recognized even within member states. As noted in the 1995 Canadian report Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations: "As professional volunteers develop into a cohesive UN force, they can assume responsibility for some of the riskier operations mandated by the Council, but for which troop contributors have been hesitant to contribute. UN volunteers offer the best prospect of a completely reliable, well-trained, rapid reaction capability. Without the need to consult national authorities, the UN could cut response time significantly, and volunteers could be deployed within hours of a Security Council decision." No matter how difficult this goal now seems, the report states, "it deserves continued study, with a clear process for assessing its feasibility over the long term." This new service would offset much of the burden and pressure on governments, which are now reluctant to prepare and deploy their national citizens at short-notice into environments of
“high risk” and “low interest.” Moreover, as a dedicated UN service, it would not be constrained by the need to acquire approval and meet the conditions of each participating member state. This would ensure that a reliable option was available to the UN when desperately needed.

Rapid deployment is a very demanding task, one that can be easily delayed or stymied by the absence of one component. Is it reasonable to expect success or even a cohesive unity of effort and purpose when requesting various national services with varying levels of training, preparation, and equipment to assemble promptly for the first time into a multinational formation in a foreign environment under extreme duress? The lessons learned from previous experience suggest that this may be exceptionally problematic and a slow process.

Already, there is a recognized need for more cohesive and effective personnel, particularly those with advanced preparation, prior comprehensive training, and “first-rate” equipment for assigned tasks in diverse UN operations. A UNEPS of professional volunteers, co-located and trained at a UN base, would be the optimal way to ensure a higher level of sophistication and competence, which is essential to rapid deployment. Rather than having to organize transportation out of numerous countries around the world, staging and deployment could occur promptly out of the designated UN base. By including a wider range of services within a permanent, modular formation, co-located at a designated UN base, it would be possible to provide a prompt, coherent response to various contingencies. Even small units of specialists in humanitarian, environmental, or health crises may plan and coordinate a larger meaningful effort (each tend to be needed in areas of armed conflict).

The future roles and potential tasks of the new service should include the provision of reliable early warning with on-site technical reconnaissance; rapid deployment for preventive action and protection of civilians at risk; and prompt start-up of diverse operations, including robust peacekeeping, policing, peace-building, and humanitarian and environmental assistance. The threshold criteria for any deployment would be authorization by the Security Council, just cause, right intention, proportional means, and reasonable prospects.” As the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty stresses, there is a responsibility to protect, to prevent, to react, and to rebuild, particularly when there is the potential for large-scale loss of life or gross violations of human rights such as mass ethnic cleans-

ing.” These are obligations that cannot be neglected even in the early stages of a mission.

In short, a UNEPS, as a permanent UN formation specifically prepared for the four challenges identified, is designed to address the current gaps in political will and limited national capacity. By no means, however, will this service be a panacea; there will be situations where it is neither appropriate nor likely to succeed. Given its relatively discrete size and composition, there are recognized limits. There are also likely to be conflicts that are beyond its capacity to prevent or circumstances where it will be unable to deploy rapidly, protect the civilian population, or provide for critical human needs. 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.”

What might have been done in Darfur? There are no easy or accurate answers. At best, one can provide only general speculation for the purpose of illustration. Under the proposal for a UNEPS, it was likely that the UMOs with assigned deployable elements would be available for any specific operation. Had it been available, it might have prevented the start and the escalation of the Darfur crisis. By 2004, it would have been effective at protecting the majority of civilians in Darfur, but it would not have had sufficient capacity to maintain safety or security throughout the region. By 2005, once the violence had escalated and spread, it would have been more effective than the designated AU force but far from sufficient at stemming violence on its own. Similarly, even following the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006, a UNEPS deployment would have furnished the capacity to expand and reinforce UNMIS rapidly, possibly providing other troop contributors with sufficient encouragement and confidence to commit. Yet, even as a vanguard, bridging force, or strategic reserve to complement AU forces, it would not have been adequate to stop any determined mobilization or attack from the Sudanese military. At best, it would have provided a six-month tripping wire that may have deterred Sudanese officials from their current campaign. And it would have required assistance from others to control the region, as well as help to ensure rapid augmentation or rapid extraction.
Costs of a UNEPS

We often hear that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This common medical metaphor also applies to the issue of potential or existing armed conflict. Increasingly, it is understood that early preventive action is more cost-effective than later, larger efforts once a violent conflict has escalated and spread. Aside from horrific human suffering, armed conflict wastes massive financial resources. According to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the international community spent approximately $200 billion on conflict management in seven major interventions in the 1990s (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Cambodia, and El Salvador), but could have saved $130 billion through a more effective, preventative approach.

As with any new service, there would be additional costs in developing and maintaining a UNEPS. It would entail approximately $2.25 billion in start-up costs, as well as an annual recurring cost of approximately $1 billion. Given a zero-growth budget, this may be initially viewed as beyond the capacity of the 192 member states. However, since such a service would likely reduce the number of operations, alleviate the need to deploy as many multinational contingents, and help to prevent armed conflicts from starting, escalating, or spreading, as well as diminishing the high cost of prolonged operations, it would reduce the overall costs of UN peace operations. As such, a UNEPS should be a very cost-effective investment, one that has the potential to save millions of lives and billions of dollars.

The Role of Civil Society: The Responsibility to Assist

With the majority of governments failing to act in humanitarian emergencies, the onus is now on civil society and supportive non-governmental organizations to ensure that the UN receives sufficient support to develop a UNEPS. At this point, however, it is important to realize that the development of a UNEPS is no longer “mission impossible” but an idea whose time has come. While there are risks in being overly optimistic, there are now grounds for some modest hope.

First, historically, only in the aftermath of bad wars and/or genocides has serious public and political consideration been directed towards proposals vaguely similar to the idea of a UNEPS. That interest was temporary, subsiding within a period of two years when new developments arose to capture concern and headlines. Moreover, on no previ-
the model is more appropriate, and, overall, the idea has more political potential. Sixth, some governments may soon be inclined to support this idea and initiative, possibly by 2008. There are a few promising indications. To cite one example, a bipartisan group of American legislators submitted H. Res 180, the United Nations Emergency Peace Service Act of 2005, to the US House of Representatives. The 1995 Canadian government study Toward a Rapid Reaction Capacity for the United Nations acknowledged that, if all existing arrangements failed, further consideration would have to be given to the idea of a standing UN emergency group. By now, it is understood that the existing arrangements have a tendency to fail when most needed. Of course, as with Darfur, governments will not really act until some influential constituency at home and partners abroad compel them to do so. Active support at the local and domestic level will have to influence national governments to form prompt multinational partnerships.

Seventh, over the past decade, civil society has become far more adept at influencing promising change. This initiative links and expands upon the work provided by report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, the earlier multinational efforts to enhance UN rapid deployment, the ongoing emphasis on the prevention of deadly conflict, the treaty to ban landmines, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and the endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect. In each of the three latter examples, civil society demonstrated a capacity to mobilize support at almost every level, propelling previously stalled efforts towards successful outcomes.

The development of a UNEPS is a common-security initiative that will require ongoing, determined efforts from a global constituency. The next step in this process is to expand the network of supportive parties. Help will be needed from diverse sectors of society, particularly academe, institutes, and foundations. There will be a requirement for further efforts to ensure that the constituency is well informed and well organized, and there will be a need for ongoing research, drawing on available expertise to prepare more detailed plans and blueprints. Once organized, it will be important to engage in a wider consultative process with both member states and the UN. Finally, to avoid the long and arduous process of securing consensus from “all,” it will be necessary to initiate dialogue and negotiations outside the established forums and channel them into a treaty process that can “fast-track” this initiative.

Conclusion

The crisis in Darfur continues. Repeated warnings of a rapidly deteriorating situation, marked by more violence, systemic killing, rape, and scorched-earth tactics, have not been sufficient to mobilize an effective response. Regrettably, the AU efforts in AMIS have not prevented these or worse atrocities or protected many innocent people. Despite a late but promising resolution from the Security Council, the UN has not been able to attract adequate national or regional troop contributors. There are few, if any, indications that UNMIS will be expanded rapidly or at a level of strength sufficient to protect civilians at high risk. At this point, the existing arrangements have repeatedly proven that they are not reliable, rapid, or effective in addressing any of the four challenges noted. Even with substantive reforms, there will remain too many inherent limitations in the AU Standby Brigades, the UN Standby Arrangements System, SHIRBRIG, the EU battlegroups, and NATO.

Many are already ashamed of and inclined to lament the crisis in Darfur. Yet “we the people” should also make a far more substantive effort to ensure that the promise of “never again” is accompanied by a UN capacity to enforce “never again.” By now, it is widely evident that governments alone will not save succeeding generations from the scourge of armed conflict, genocide, and war. This responsibility is now shared among us. Rather than await the next crisis, prior preparation has already helped to develop a proposal and a constituency for a UNEPS. Without wider and deeper support, these efforts will also be insufficient. But at least there is now a viable alternative and some hope.

Developing a UN Emergency Peace Service will be a challenging but essential endeavour. In his seminal 1957 study, A United Nations Peace Force, William R. Frye provided an insight that is worth recalling: “Establishment of a small, permanent peace force, or the machinery for one could be the first step on the long road toward order and stability. Progress cannot be forced, but it can be helped to evolve. That which is radical one year can become conservative and accepted the next.” Together, we might make a critical difference.
Notes

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UN DPKO's deputy director, Hedi Annabi, provided an accurate early warning of this development. See Glenn Kessler, "UN Official Warns of Major New Sudanese Offensive in Darfur," Washington Post, 28 August 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/17. By September, it was evident that the Sudanese government was deploying substantive forces into the Darfur region, including larger troop formations, heavier weapons, armoured vehicles, and attack helicopters. Antonov transport planes were also reported to be bombing villages at an increased frequency.


In hindsight, it may appear as if officials in Khartoum were the only ones who knew how complex the AMIS operation would be and how adverse conditions could be made even more daunting. By denying visas and permits, denying access to fuel, denying the use of airports at night, denying telephone and communication access, denying interpreters and translators, and denying AMIS access to the automatic weapons on their loaned vehicles, Sudanese officials effectively destroyed any prospect of AMIS operating effectively.

4. For a brief overview of this dilemma, see Lydia Polgreen, "Obstacles Test African Force in Grim Darfur," New York Times, 17 May 2006. Some have compared the area of operations with the size of AMIS, suggesting that it leaves one AU soldier to patrol an area the size of Manhattan, or one soldier per every twenty-eight square kilometres.

5. Among the international military resources provided to AMIS were: 12 helicopters, 105 armoured personnel carriers, 300 to 400 vehicles, training assistance, fuel, communication, and logistic support. Few could consider this a robust, cohesive, or even competent force.


http://www.refugees-international.org/section/publications/au_troops/
&output. Eric Reeves has repeatedly documented this problem with AMIS: http://www.sudanrefugees.org.

8. Further, by May 2006, the AU participants indicated that they lacked sufficient resources to continue in the AMIS operation beyond October of that year. However, in negotiating the terms for the authorized UN mission (UNAMIS), African Union leaders initially stipulated that AU forces must remain the majority within the wider mission. Avoiding the perception of "failure" in Darfur remained a political priority for several AU governments.


11. Further, aside from a centralized AU headquarters and planning element, they also intend to develop a continental logistics system and a continental command, control, communications, and information system, as well as a continental training system.

12. This point was raised by an officer in the South African armed forces, following a brief presentation on the AU Standby Brigades' potential on 2 November 2005.

13. These concerns arose in an informal discussion with officials in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in October 2004.

14. Prior to the signing of the DPA, AU diplomats had insisted that their armed forces would remain the majority in any future UN operation. That there had been an informal agreement on the issue at a senior level was well known in sectors of the diplomatic community.

15. While the scope of UN activity is exceptionally broad, with specialization in thousands of areas, the organization is unduly vulnerable in
peace operations, particularly given its dependence on national decision making and national personnel and resources.

16 It is worth recalling that, throughout the early to mid-1990s, in a period characterized by broad cooperation, the Security Council worked relatively effectively in setting new precedents to intervene when necessary for humanitarian purposes and to maintain peace and security. Although there were horrific exceptions, the UN system was, at least, capable of responding since the P5 were inclined to avoid any use of threat of their veto power.

17 Currently, decision making in the Security Council is frequently contested as geo-strategic competition has replaced enlightened multilateral cooperation for the common good. In the current political environment, the P5 members have frequently returned to bargaining over their perceived narrow national interests. Oil rights and profits from exports of weapons appear to be a higher priority for most, if not all, of the P5.

One of the more profound changes over the past twenty years has been the shift from a bipolar system in the Cold War to a cooperative multilateral system in the early to mid-1990s, a regionally divided system in the late 1990s, a hegemonic system pursuing global control after the millennium, and a contested, competitive system by 2006. Security Council decision making, particularly by the P5, appears to be directly influenced by the prevailing system. While global human security and an effective United Nations are seldom a high priority for the Permanent Five, the prospects increase with cooperative multilateralism. Similarly, the prospects decrease during periods of intense competition for resources and war. Given the relatively short lifespan of recent international systems, one may anticipate further shifts.

18 This shift has been evident in almost all UN operations since 2001. While such changes were initially recommended in the report of the High-level Panel on UN Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809 (the Brahimi Report of 2000), further elaboration on each was provided in the report of the secretary general’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: “A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,” 1 December 2004, A/59/565, 2005, 58–61.


20 Ibid., para 87, p.34.

21 Ibid., para 217, p.59.


26 Key points summarized from ibid., 3–6.


28 Among the sixty-one member states contributing military personnel to UNMISS as of 31 July 2006 were: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

29 Sudanese officials might exercise their option to deny consent, but they would then be faced by the problematic decision to expel UNMISS from their territory, a move that would only increase international pressure.
Having become a signatory to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the same year that it initiated its plans for Darfur, the Sudanese government could only be relied upon to remain duplicitous. 

For further elaboration on this diplomatic tussle, see Eric Reeves, "The UN Security Council and a Final Betrayal of Darfur," Sudan Tribune, 17 June 2006, http://www.sudantribune.com/imprimable.php?id_article=16239. The appeals and assurances offered to President Omar al-Bashir appear to have encouraged worse behaviour. For one widely alleged to be a war criminal, it must have been comforting to hear that there would be no prospect of any intervention force, that there would be absolute respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sudan, and that no UN operation would even happen without his consent. Having been given the right to veto the UN operation, he accepted the offer and adamantly refused to accept any kind of robust UN force, particularly one authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.


Many national officials know the limits of the current UN system and the temporary nature of public pressure. Among most member state governments, there is a shared preference for duplicist excuses to justify existing arrangements, even when the tools at hand are increasingly recognized to be unreliable and insufficient. While some are interpreting this as a system and believe it too difficult to change, others are simply complying with the way things now work since the system serves their national interests and can always be blamed for their own complacency. There are also those who see pragmatic incremental steps as the only option and view the gradual combination of reforms as a promising evolution towards a new UN system, which should eventually work better than the old one. A smaller number retain a judicious mix of realism and idealism, continuing to work with "what is" while striving to create the conditions that will facilitate more ambitious change and ultimately produce a system that functions as it "could" and "should."


Following a poorly conceived mission in Somalia, with multiple chains of command and authority as well as national interference leading to unnecessary casualties, the blame shifting commenced within the UN's most powerful member state. For an excellent overview of the related problems in this operation, see John L. Hirscli and Richard B. Oakley, Somalia and Operation Restore Hope (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute for Peace, 1995). After failure in Somalia, the political and institutional challenges increased with deliberate misinformation, "scoping out," and a recurring refusal to help.


This comparison was initially made by Sir Brian Urquhart in "Beyond the Sheriffs Posse," Survival, vol. 32, no. 3 (1990).

While there were indications that Washington was intent on shifting Allied support to NATO as early as 1994, the Non-Aligned Movement's demand for the removal of all arms shipments to all countries (allied, non-aligned, neutral) would be the last straw for many northern governments. The defence establishment of the latter had a strong institutional preference for NATO and many were actively encouraging a departure from UN peace operations.

For example, in 2005 the top ten contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping were: Bangladesh (9,520), Pakistan (6,990), India (7,253), Jordan (3,700), Nepal (4,460), Ethiopia (3,410), Ghana (2,520), Uruguay (2,428), Nigeria (2,412) and South Africa (2,103). United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "UN Troop Contributors," Year in Review 2005.

Increasingly, the trend for the majority of northern members is to wait and watch for, defer, and deny UN requests for their national resources, particularly appropriately trained, well-equipped personnel.

For elaboration on this dilemma, see H. Peter Langille, Bridging the Commitment-Capacity Gap: An Overview of Existing Arrangements and Options for Enhancing UN Rapid Deployment (Wayne, N.J.: Center for United Nations Reform Education, 2003).

United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Fact Sheet," prepared in cooperation with the UN Department of Public Information, DPK/2428.


See Colum Lynch, "Peacekeeping Grows."

Cited in ibid., 2.
competing to advance their interests within it, and occasionally even subverting aspects of it when they perceive too much of a problem.


Overall, the reforms proposed in A More Secure World may help address real-world needs as well as meet diverse challenges. Several proposals might even attract the support needed to firm up the foundations of UN peace operations, which also need help. This reflects the sort of modest, incremental progress pursued over the past fourteen years. As was the case with the Brahimi Report, which also focused on the minimum threshold of change necessary within the constraints of existing arrangements and a no-growth budget, the ideas set out in A More Secure World are worthwhile. Yet, even if adopted, this combined package would still remain insufficient to provide any assurance of a dependable capacity for the prevention of armed conflict or genocide, the protection of civilians at risk, or rapid UN deployment to address any urgent crisis.

As reported, Guéhenno stated that "a six-month timeline between the decision to deploy and the deployment is a more practical timeline, especially if you think of the logistical condition in Darfur. January 2007 will be a much more realistic date." Reuters, 13 June 2006. Cited by document released in 2007. The author of "The Secretary-General's Report on UN Peacekeeping Operations, 1995" is Erik Reeves, "The UN Security Council and a Final Betrayal of Darfur."


See Paul Majendie, "Global Protests Call for UN Intervention in Darfur," Reuters, 18 September 2006.

Having seen their country finally reach a new level of international stature, one year prior to hosting the Olympics, Chinese officials had to be alarmed over the prospect of being widely stigmatized for aiding and abetting genocide. Following the US elections in November 2006, the potential for a wider shift in global politics. Sudanese officials would have less support or grounds to blame President Bush for another unwarranted crusade in his war on terror.
Among the full participants in SHIRBRIG are Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada, Austria, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Argentina may soon return. Participating observers include Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Jordan, Senegal, and Japan.

66 In the words of the SHIRBRIG Canadian commander, Brigadier-General Greg Mitchell, “If the political situation clears, we feel the SHIRBRIG could make a huge difference.” Cited in “Despite Our Commitment in Afghanistan, the Canadian Forces Still Have the Capacity to Make a Big Difference in Darfur,” SAYS Conflict Specialist Peter Langille, “Special to Globe and Mail Update,” 27 April 2006, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060427wcomment0427.

67 Since its inception, SHIRBRIG has made the following deployments. In 2000, SHIRBRIG deployed a headquarters, an infantry battalion, and a headquarters company to the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Three participating countries (Canada, Denmark, and the Netherlands) contributed to the SHIRBRIG deployment to UNMEE. A serious review of this deployment reveals a slow response (almost four months), low readiness, and a lack of prior training. Further, since only three members participated in that mission, it raised legitimate questions about the depth of political commitment to the partnership. Regrettably, these issues have not been adequately addressed. In March 2003, SHIRBRIG provided a planning team to assist the Economic Community of West African States in the planning of a peacekeeping mission in Côte d’Ivoire. In September 2003, SHIRBRIG deployed twenty members to assist the UN in forming the core of the interim UN headquarters in Liberia. In 2005, SHIRBRIG’s Planning Element provided the core for the headquarters of the UN mission in Sudan, as well two security companies (i.e., approximately 220 troops).

68 As the crisis in Darfur unfolded in 2004, UNDPKO’s national military advisers confirmed that there was little, if any, discussion or consideration of SHIRBRIG being appropriate for stemming further violence. This may have been due to expectations that SHIRBRIG might be making a small contribution to the forthcoming UNMIS operation.

69 Among those raising the SHIRBRIG option in Canada were Langille (“Despite Our Commitment in Afghanistan”); Senator Romeo Dallaire (“There’s No Time to Wait,” Globe and Mail, 5 May 2006); and Linda McQuaig, “Surely We Can Spare 600 of our 18,000 Troops To Do What They Do Best – Peacekeeping, Says Linda McQuaig,” (Toronto Star, 15 May 2006).

70 It is noteworthy that in 2005 Canada announced it would take a lead role in SHIRBRIG. Yet on 11 May, prior to any formal UN request,
Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper promptly declared that the Canadian Forces would not be making a substantive contribution to a UN mission in Darfur. Harper claimed to have consulted with US President George Bush and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. In explaining his decision, he said, "It is not apparent that there's a desire to have western troops." See "Sudan: PM Rules Out Major Canadian Commitment of Troops to Darfur," Globe and Mail, 11 May 2006. The author relayed options to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a futile attempt to encourage a Canadian contribution to a SHIRBRIG deployment to Darfur. The response from the PMO can best be described as utter confusion; it included a request for clarification of the proposed arrangement, the available resources for it, and its purpose.

The option of a participants meeting to discuss potential contributions was quietly proposed and promptly rejected.

In 2003 the members agreed to consider and prepare for robust operations. However, agreement to engage in missions authorized under Chapter VII is to be decided on only a case-by-case basis. In 2003 there was a wider agreement among the participating members that the deployment of a complete coherent brigade would remain an objective, although it was also recognized to be unlikely. As a result, the various components of SHIRBRIG would be listed within the UNSAS and each would be conditionally available on a case-by-case basis. See Lt.-Gen. (ret) Ray Crabbe, president and chair of SHIRBRIG, "Concept Development for the Employment of the SHIRBRIG," 24 June 2003. Paper prepared for meeting of the SHIRBRIG Steering Committee and UN DPKO, New York.

Aside from the evident need for further assistance, one objective was to provide tangible support to a joint EU-UN declaration on crisis management.


For example, the British deployed fewer than one thousand personnel, which had a calming influence on the savage violence in Sierra Leone. Roughly that number stopped further killing in East Timor. Similarly, France assumed a lead role in an EU mission (UNDOTC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo designed to stabilize the Ituri region. Confronted by direct attacks, UN peacekeepers desperately needed reinforcement as UNDOC began to sustain casualties and lose control of a volatile region. The EU presence, while not specifically designated as a battlegroup, succeeded in restoring and maintaining security as the UN increased its capacity through additional reinforcements from other troop contributors.


77 On an earlier occasion in 2004, the Irish foreign minister indicated that the chosen term "EU Battlegroups" was problematic and not his first preference.

78 In the week following UN Security Council Resolution 1706, President Omar al-Bashir referred to the proposed UN force as "an attempt to re-colonize his country."


80 NATO currently includes the following twenty-six countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. Officials anticipate that Australia and Japan will be included in the next round of NATO expansion. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council includes those noted above as well as Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.


82 For a recent perspective on this, see Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, "Global NATO," Foreign Affairs, September/October 2006, http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20060901faessay85090/ivo-daalder-james-goldgeier/global.


84 Here, it is noteworthy that several NATO members actually left the American-led war in Iraq, despite considerable pressure from Washington to increase their military contributions.

85 See Gloria Galloway, "Silence Greets Call to NATO to Help Canada," Globe and Mail, 14 September 2006. As reported: "A call for additional
troops to help Canadians, British, Dutch and US forces battle the violent Taliban insurgency in southern Afghanistan went unanswered as representatives of NATO countries met in Belgium.” Citing NATO spokesman James Appathurai, the article noted that “every NATO country would have to put such a request to their parliament or cabinet. And every country is stretched in terms of the number of troops it has committed to operations around the world.”


87 Consuming vast global resources, NATO is often criticized as an alliance of the predators, inclined to forceful means to enhance their wellbeing at the expense of others less fortunate.

88 By 1994, it had become evident that the Americans wanted NATO to usurp the UN’s primacy over matters of international peace and security. NATO has always been far easier for the Americans to dominate. Dan Plesch of Britain’s Royal United Services Institute reported on the release of an American “non-paper” at NATO headquarters in 1993, which argued that UN authority should be replaced with NATO’s. Senior defence officials within NATO planned to set the parameters for the UN, largely by denying assistance to the UN when needed. This appears to have been a deliberate attempt to deprive, slowly and steadily, the UN of support, even from traditional troop contributors like Canada. It also appears to have worked.

Military officials, as well as their counterparts in defence industries, had to be worried about keeping the old game alive. The institution of war nurtures a deep dependency and provides substantive benefits for powerful interests. Neither the UN nor peacekeeping could be relied upon to provide the bigger budgets, the advanced war-fighting systems, or the big-league professional soldiering roles. As the largest military alliance in history, NATO had set an all-time record in each respect.

89 Contrary to the notion that NATO stopped the fighting in Bosnia, the largest military alliance in history actually stood by and left the UN to cope with an unmanageable, deadly conflict until most of the fighting, ethnic cleansing, and raping was finished. The warring factions were at a stalemate when they agreed to the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995.

NATO deployed only after the elusive peace agreement was in place. Similarly, the bombing of Kosovo can be cited as only a political success—deterrent Slobodan Milosevic from even worse conduct than he was already guilty of—since the air campaign, conducted at 20,000–15,000 feet, was largely unsuccessful in destroying his military assets. Yet both operations are now frequently cited as examples of NATO success and UN failure.

90 First, as indicated, these are all conditional standby arrangements that lack any binding commitment to participate. Second, all of these arrangements depend upon national political will and national decision-making processes, which tend to be slow and also inclined to assess the national interest first. Third, governments assess the depth of public support and how this is playing in the polls, as well as in the media. Fourth, governments assess the availability of well-trained, well-equipped national contingents and the potential risks to national personnel. Fifth, they also assess the mandate and the prospect of success. Then, before agreeing to join any multinational formation, they assess their potential partners and whether they are sufficiently competent. In short, there tends to be lots of assessing prior to any movement.


92 A similar point was made by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, former minister of external affairs, in his “Remarks to the Commemorative Address at the United Nations on the occasion of Rwanda’s 10th,” May 2004: “If the objective is to protect people and prevent violence you send a legitimate credible UN presence to start a mission quickly— not wait for 4 to 6 months— then there is far less likelihood of people being murdered, or large scale massive ethnic cleansing. That suggests a dedicated UN mechanism including a range of services—military, police and civilian and capable of using force— even when opposed to it—a reality that Peter Langille has called a UN Emergency Service.”

93 This section draws upon and updates the more detailed elaboration of the initial concept, case, model, and plans for a “UN Emergency Service” provided in Langille, Bridging the Commitment.


95 Government of Canada, Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability, 62.
96 Ibid., 60. A Canadian discussion paper on the issue also acknowledges that "it would provide the UN with a small but totally reliable, well-trained and cohesive group for deployment by the Security Council in urgent situations. It would break one of the key logjams in the current UN System, namely the insistence by troop contributing nations that they authorize the use of their national forces prior to each deployment. It would also simplify command and control arrangements in UN peace support operations, and put an end to conflicts between UN commanders and contingent commanders reporting to national authorities." Government of Canada, "Improving the UN's Rapid Reaction Capability: Discussion Paper," 29 April 1995, 3.

97 This is a modified list of criteria derived from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, The Responsibility to Protect, 32.

98 Ibid., xi-xiii.


Among the lessons learned from previous related efforts was the need for a less contentious, confusing concept. A "UN Standing Force," a "UN Legion," and a "UN Army" or any form of permanent "rapid deployment force" are simply inappropriate, insufficient, and unappealing, both globally and in theatre. By now, it should also be evident that any military force alone is also insufficient, even as a rapid-deployment mechanism for emergencies. People in desperate circumstances frequently need more than a military presence. Yet most people tend to be quite receptive to receiving useful services, particularly when they come from a widely respected source. Moreover, when there is an evident, urgent need, such as a real emergency, many expect that the necessary services will be provided. Equally important, at the political level almost everywhere, the concept of a UN Emergency Peace Service should be a lot tougher to argue against.


105 For an overview, see the UNEPS website and links hosted by Global Action to Prevent War, http://www.globalactionwp.org/uneqs/index.htm.

106 As noted above, an overview of the first international conference to focus on a UNEPS was provided in a report by Justine Wang. The second conference on a UNEPS, in Curra, Spain, was the subject of a detailed report by Robert Johansen, available at http://www.globalactionwp.org/uneqs/UNEPS%20Conference%20Report.PDF.


109 Strong support for a UNEPS was expressed by those active in the areas of development; social justice; environment; human rights; disarmament; peacekeeping; international law; genocide prevention; UN reform; cooperation; peace conflict transformation; and common, collective, and human security.