



# Permanent United Nations Military Intervention Capability

## Some Practical Considerations

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The development of a military intervention capability specifically owned by the United Nations (UN) has been a significant issue from the early days of the organisation. In 1948, the first Secretary General, Trygve Lie, proposed a small, dedicated 'United Nations Legion'. The Military Staff Committee of the UN established in Article 45 of the UN Charter is the Security Council's subsidiary body whose role is to plan UN military operations for envisaged forces provided at high levels of readiness by the five Permanent Members of the Security Council. These aspirations remained dormant because of the divisions of the Cold War. Today, there are no such vested interests arising from the ambitions or fears of great powers.

However, the issue continues to be one that is fundamental to the purpose and effectiveness of the UN and the broader matter of an international basis, framework and capacity for the rule of law. It would be easy to characterise the debate as between the political left and right, internationalists and isolationists, or, in the language of international relations theory, liberals and realists. The historical narrative does not reflect these divisions so neatly. From time-to-time, parties representing most of these factions have advocated a UN Army in some form or another.

There have been a large number of studies and initiatives addressing this subject and proposing UN owned forces from 6,000 to 500,000 people in number with capabilities ranging from essentially symbolic, to constabulary, to seriously military to UN possession of nuclear capability. Much of the intellectual argument is powerful. The problems are in the implementation and

they are two-fold – the politics and diplomacy of the time on the one hand and practicalities of implementation on the other. The continued lack of a genuine form of global governance is among the first set of problems. This short paper addresses the second set and identifies the range of practical issues that must be addressed in developing a military force which would have supranational ownership. It is not intended to be a fully analysed and argued study. It is rather a scoping paper, which may spawn lines for further research.

### Historical Background

This section reviews selected national and international initiatives, academic studies and reports in this subject area in the latter part of the twentieth century. In 1957, William R Frye made a case for a small permanent 'United Nations Peace Force'.<sup>1</sup> The size of his force was 6,000 to 7,000 men. He concluded that the concept was probably impractical at the time. In 1988, when the end of the Cold War was for once clearly in sight, it was the Soviet Union, perhaps aware of its weakness, that proposed a strengthening of the UN's intervention capacity including 'a reserve of military observers and armed forces of the UN with countries allocating part of their forces on a standby basis for peacekeeping duties. Designated units would be mobilised for peacekeeping service on demand'.

In 1992 the then Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, issued *An Agenda for Peace*<sup>2</sup> in which he envisaged a renaissance of the UN's capacities following the end of the Cold War. In particular, he identified the sequence of



A personnel carrier in UN colours parked by a peacekeeper's base in Liberia. Any permanent UN force would require integrated light armour capability. Photo courtesy of Greg Mills.

processes of preventive diplomacy including preventive deployment, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace enforcement. He envisaged that member nations would hold forces permanently assigned to the UN on stand-by at high readiness to be available for interventions. In the same year, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was founded and there was, for the first time, an identifiable organ within the UN staff to take forward these proposals. Boutros Ghali's vision of a reinvigorated Military Staff Committee was not to be realised.

In 1994, a Netherlands study, *A UN Rapid Deployment Brigade: A Preliminary Study*,<sup>3</sup> proposed a permanent, rapidly deployable brigade that would guarantee the immediate availability of troops when they were urgently needed. The scale was approximately 5,000 persons. The study recommended adoption of the force by one or more member states, or by NATO or some other organisation to reduce costs.

The next year, 1995, was seminal in defining the needs of UN intervention. Sir Brian Urquhart, an advocate of an independent UN military force, outlined urgent roles for a UN presence in a crisis area. These roles are listed later in his paper.<sup>4</sup>

Also in 1995, a Canadian Government study, *Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations*,<sup>5</sup> analysed existing UN capability and access to national capabilities and recommended building on existing arrangements to improve peacekeeping capacity. It envisaged a permanent operational-level rapid reaction headquarters cadre which could conduct contingency and rapid deployment planning and training. The proposals included national 'vanguard component groups' that would be available to this UN military headquarters.

In the same year, a Danish government led study<sup>6</sup> involving thirteen nations proposed the formation of a UN

Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) providing a rapid deployment capability for deployments of a limited duration providing effective presence at short notice solely for peacekeeping operations, including humanitarian tasks. SHIRBRIG forces have since been deployed to Sudan.

Finally, 1995 saw the publication of a comprehensive study by the Project on Defense Alternatives of the Commonwealth Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, entitled *Vital Force: A Proposal for the Overhaul of the UN Peace Operations System and for the Creation of a UN Legion*.<sup>7</sup> The authors, Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, proposed reform and development of UN elements leading to the formation of a Military Advisory and Co-operation Council as an adjunct to the Security Council; the formation of a multinational Field Communication and Liaison Corps to serve as a modular command, control, and communication framework for multinational operations; the development of a UN staff structure



in the Secretariat that is sufficiently large, articulated and integrated to be able to plan and manage joint and combined efforts across the full spectrum of peace operations; and the formation and development of a permanent UN standing force comprising four brigades and a field support structure to complement and augment member state contributions to peace operations.

***The UN-Shield concept made a considerably more extensive proposal reflecting the intellectual upper end of the debate over UN military capability***

This 'UN peace operations field force' would number in total approximately 30,000 allowing 15,000 to be deployed continuously. This agile 'middle-weight' force should have mechanised or motorised units with higher levels of protection and firepower than is common for modern light forces, and a high proportion of cavalry<sup>8</sup> units, anti-armour units; special intelligence and engineering assets; substantial light artillery, and armed reconnaissance and anti-tank helicopters.

The UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) was initiated in 1997 and has since gained the support of some eighty-three registered member states.

In 1997, a concept conceived earlier by a private British individual, Paul Stonor, which has become known as 'UN-Shield' was further developed by him and three colleagues. Published in the *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*<sup>9</sup> the article carried a foreword by the former Prime Minister, Lord Callaghan and was subsequently raised in a House of Lords debate.<sup>10</sup> The UN-Shield concept made a considerably more extensive proposal reflecting the intellectual upper end of the debate over UN military capability. The proposal envisaged a supranational Shield Council of Monitors

elected under the supervision of the UN but empowered to take decisions in relation to military enforcement with accountability to the UN, but without the requirement for a specific UN mandate. The Shield Council would control a powerful force of some 500,000 capable of the full range of military activity and, indeed, possessing nuclear capability. The military force would be recruited directly from member nations on a voluntary basis.

In the same year, a Global Policy Forum study, *Conflict Prevention: Options for Rapid Deployment and UN Standing Forces*,<sup>11</sup> authored by Peter Langille, proposed an incremental plan of evolution from a developed and expanded SHIRBRIG concept employing an operational headquarters and dispersed regional facilities to directly recruited UN military forces.

In 2000, James McGovern led in the presentation of a Bill to the US House of Representatives calling for 'the US representative to the UN to use the voice, vote and influence of the United States to urge the UN to establish a United Nations Rapid Deployment Police and Security Force' of some 6,000 persons strong.

**2006 UN Emergency Peace Service Proposal**

The UNPROFOR intervention in Bosnia in 1992 following the break-up of Yugoslavia provoked an extensive re-examination of presumptions about UN peacekeeping. A distinction was drawn in academic discussion and military doctrinal development. On the one hand, traditional UN peacekeeping involved the intervention of an international force followed by some truce or agreement between antagonists and broad assent among all parties for the intervention. If assent was subsequently withdrawn by any significant party, the peacekeeping force could no longer perform its function and would itself be withdrawn. On the other hand, 'wider peacekeeping' involved interventions in which assent had not necessarily been fully established. The intervening international forces required the capacity and authorisation to dominate any escalation of violence and deny this option to

antagonists through the threat of combat. Peace support operations were seen as a spectrum of activities from conflict prevention through traditional peacekeeping and wider peacekeeping to peace enforcement where the intervening forces might need to use combat to establish or restore conditions for lower levels of peace support. There has been an emerging presumption that UN led forces were likely to be suitable for operations at the lower end of the spectrum and that it would require UN mandated coalition forces led by a multinational military organisation such as NATO or a framework nation to tackle the higher end of the spectrum.

Two events of the 1990s in particular have been catalytic in challenging this presumption that the UN led role should be restricted to the relatively safe end of the spectrum. The first was Srebrenica: UN forces from a militarily highly competent nation made a humiliating withdrawal leaving Bosnian Serbs to conduct a massacre. The second was the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which was permitted by the inability of the UN to make an adequate intervention because nations were not willing to commit troops. Although Srebrenica stimulated the wider peacekeeping debate, it also demonstrated the uncertainties in the matters of consent, assent and acquiescence which a UN led force must be prepared to face. The Rwanda massacre posed the hitherto unanswered question of the UN's responsibilities when no nations are willing to commit to a robust coalition for reasons of risk or lack of direct national interest among others.

In June 2006, a book was presented to the UN entitled *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service to Prevent Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*.<sup>12</sup> The authors represented three advocacy groups: the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Global Action to Prevent War and the World Federalist Movement. The editor was Robert C Johansen.

The report which drew on the outcome of a conference held in the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Cuenca, Spain, proposed a 12,000 to 15,000 person permanent UN Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) based

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at a number of designated locations and able to 'quell an emergency within 48 hours after United Nations authorisation'. It would be individually recruited from volunteers from many countries and would be an expertly trained 'integrated service encompassing civilian, police, judicial, and military personnel'.

### Present Considerations

The evolving security environment has revealed some specific considerations that shape the present debate. Recent crises have exposed the complexity and changing nature of the parties in specific conflicts. It is not possible, in many cases to identify two specific antagonist entities between whom some peace accord might be agreed and subsequently reinforced by UN military intervention. Factors such as failed states, enforced regime change and fundamentalist ideology have hugely complicated the challenges of intervention. The realities and perceptions of terrorism, and, more generally, the increased potency of irregular activity by insurgents, militias and organised criminals have blurred the distinction between the activities of a combat capable intervention force and a 'traditional' peacekeeping force whose capabilities are essentially constabulary. There is also wide acceptance in the security community that none of the traditional instruments of power – the diplomatic, economic or military – can alone address instability and create peace. A 'comprehensive approach' is essential. None of these factors is new but it is a feature of organised violent behaviour that it will mutate to achieve its ends. Security will inevitably be more complicated and peace support more difficult in the future.

It would be wrong to conclude that the concept of UN owned military forces has dwindling relevance. On the one hand, the opportunities are fewer for a UN constabulary force in the future to be able to operate effectively and safely without recourse to combat capability. On the other hand, the uncertainties of intervention make it difficult for individual governments to commit forces, except where national interest is

clearly at stake. The problems of recent interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan are likely to weaken nations' enthusiasm for humanitarian intervention however powerful the moral arguments. Multinational organisations such as NATO may have a consensus of members favouring intervention, but there is not the necessary consensus toward committing national forces to risky military operations. Western nations are reluctant to commit forces to complex emergencies in Africa because, however great the human suffering, there is neither a clear narrative for effective military intervention nor an obvious association with national interest.

There is therefore something of a paradox. The complexities of the present and emerging security environment are such that a traditional UN peacekeeping force is not suited to the worst of humanitarian crises. Peace enforcement is generally accepted to be a matter for NATO or ad hoc coalitions led by a powerful framework nation. However, the governments and electorates that own the more competent and combat capable of military forces may be unwilling to commit to elective operations with uncertain outcomes. A second problem is the need for proactive intervention early in a developing conflict situation. Neither multinational organisations nor, in most cases, national governments, are typically able to commit forces sufficiently early in support of diplomacy to exclude the development of violence.

So an argument bears serious consideration for a combat capable force, the ownership of which is distanced from national interest. There are two broad options. One is for a multinationally owned force. The other is private security. There are proponents for UN certification of private security companies and employment of their forces on contract to the UN instead of nationally owned military forces. There are of course a number of actual and perceived moral and political problems in this option and it is not the purpose of this paper to explore this alternative.

Organisations such as the European Union, NATO or the African Union could

own forces centrally: that is, recruit, command, train and operate forces independently of national contributions. There are advantages in regional forces. They may also bring unhelpful political issues to some theatres. There are also the circumstances in which an obvious regional organisation does not exist or in which the governing council of the organisation does not agree to commit its force. In any event, the considerations in developing regional centrally owned forces are similar to those that might be owned by the UN.

### Developing a UN Force – A Pragmatic Approach

Whatever the strength of objective argument for a UN owned force, the impediment is implementation in the present political environment. The Shield vision mentioned earlier, involving the wholesale transfer of national military power to a UN entity, is a long-term aspiration dependent on a number of presumptions about the evolution of international relations. In the medium term, a robust combat capable capability, of the scale of the 1995 UN Legion of 30,000 troops capable of a large range of operations currently undertaken by national forces, may be feasible. However, member nations of the UN and, under present arrangements, the Permanent Members of the Security Council in particular, would need to be confident that the model would work. There would of course be big financial implications. National subscriptions to the UN would need to increase considerably and nations would presumably contribute at the expense of their own national defence spending.

An incremental approach, whereby the UN sets up a relatively small force capable in particular of proactive deployment in support of preventive diplomacy, would address the urgent need for forces that might avert crises such as the Rwanda massacre. It would be wrong to overburden that tragedy with counterfactual narratives involving early deployment of a small UN force. Nevertheless, the argument for the generic preventive mission is very persuasive. It is important that the two



strands of this argument are recognised in the context of this paper. The force would address an urgent and widely accepted need on the one hand. On the other hand, it would be a practical experiment with a view to expanding capability in the medium term as the usefulness of the force is demonstrated. It bears mention that the concept is similar to that mentioned earlier and proposed by Sir Brian Urquhart in 1995. The roles he identified would form the basis for further study of the range of missions for what we might call the Phase 1 UN Intervention Force (UNIF1). The 1995 Langhill paper proposes an incremental approach.

To what extent should this concept address the proposals of the 2006 UNEPS study? UNIF1 would of course be much smaller and would be a specifically military force. That is not to say that it might not be part of a larger capability that included civilian, police and judicial capability even at the outset. It is a premise of this paper, however, that the military capability would require a specific command and force structure and the concept raises specific issues of military mission analysis, equipment, recruiting, training, education, basing, logistics and related cultural, ethical and legal considerations. The remainder of the paper will examine these elements and consider in broad terms how larger Phase 2 and 3 Forces (UNIF2, UNIF3) might evolve.

### Phase 1 UN Intervention Force (UNIF1)

#### *Roles and Missions*

The 1995 Urquhart roles still form a good basis for further study to define roles and missions for a contemporary force. They are:<sup>13</sup>

- Prevent violence from escalating
- Assist, monitor, and otherwise facilitate a cease-fire
- Provide the emergency framework for UN efforts to resolve the conflict and commence negotiations
- Secure a base, communications and airfield for a subsequent UN force
- Provide safe areas for persons and groups whose lives are threatened by the conflict

- Secure humanitarian relief operations
- Assess the situation and provide first-hand information for the Security Council so that an informed decision can be made on the utility and feasibility of further UN involvement.

Roles and missions would expand and be redefined in steps as UNIF1 increased in size to UNIF2 and further.

#### *Size and Composition*

This concept envisages a land force of the smallest scale that would permit independent intervention into a theatre. This force would be very different in composition and capability from a typical UN interposition peacekeeping force of similar size. One comparator model might be that of the US Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The MEU is the smallest expeditionary unit that the US Marine Corps deploys independently into a theatre.<sup>14</sup> At its core is a ground combat element, a reinforced infantry battalion of some 1,200 troops. The MEU is designed to be deployable amphibiously but this would not be a requirement for UNIF1. The MEU also has an aviation combat element, logistics combat element and command element. The total size of force is approximately 2,200 and is commanded by a colonel.

### ***Although Srebrenica stimulated the wider peacekeeping debate, it also demonstrated the uncertainties in the matters of consent, assent and acquiescence***

Further study would be required to establish the exact size of a UN Military Intervention Unit (UNMIU) to be deployable by UNIF1 and the overall size of UN owned forces to support a single UNIF1 intervention. It is likely to be of the order of 10,000, to permit a reasonable roulement of forces and allow for adequate training and rest and recreation.

#### *Capability*

An MEU is composed of highly trained troops specialised in early intervention into unprepared environments. In this respect, it ranks as one of the most highly trained and expert in the world. It would be important for UNMIU to have as its core similarly highly trained 'specialist' infantry. This category is distinguished on the one hand from general infantry and on the other, special forces, and lies between the two in capability terms. Highly trained infantry of this type will be essential to convey diplomatic message that they genuinely represent a potential more powerful follow-on capability that could be deployed by UN sanctioned national combat forces. They must also have the capability to respond tactically to aggression and to effect a fighting withdrawal if the situation deteriorates. This is not to say that they will be inserted for combat purposes, but that they will convey perceptions of competence and will.

An MEU-like non-amphibious UNMIU would comprise the following elements. An infantry battalion reinforced with an artillery battery, combat engineering platoon, light armoured reconnaissance company, tank platoon, reconnaissance platoon and other units as the mission and circumstances require.

A logistics element including combat service support, medical, dental, maintenance, transport, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), military police, water production, distribution engineering, fuel storage, and other technical experts. It would consist of approximately 300 troops. It would have the ability to support the force for fifteen days in an austere expeditionary environment

An aviation element comprising attack and support helicopters with indigenous front line support capability. The manpower requirement would be approximately 700.

A command element including the commander and his supporting staff would provide command and control of the other three elements and would include detachments for reconnaissance, surveillance, communications, electronic warfare, intelligence and counter-intelligence, and public affairs missions.

The overall strength would be about 200. A proportion of the command element would be capable of advance deployment into theatre to complete theatre planning and to prepare for the arrival of the main force.

Further study is required to establish specific capabilities for an agreed range of missions. By way of example, typical MEU capabilities, excluding amphibious capability, fixed wing air and strategic lift, would be:

- Light armoured vehicles
- General purpose personnel carrying vehicles
- Land-based anti-air missile launchers and anti-tank missile systems
- Howitzers and mortars
- Main battle tanks
- Helicopters (attack, utility, medium- and heavy-lift)
- Indigenous unmanned air vehicle (UAV) surveillance capability
- Engineering vehicles such as forklifts and bulldozers
- Logistic vehicles
- Capability to purify and store water.

UNMIU is likely to be essentially a land-air force. Capability to operate in internal waters is likely to be a requirement at the UNIF2 stage. In the later stages of development (UNIF3), a maritime littoral requirement may emerge. Strategic lift is addressed below.

#### *Command arrangements*

Military operational level command in theatre would probably be at the one-star (Brigadier-General/Brigadier) level supported by a small theatre operational level staff. This post would be distinct from the Colonel level commander of UNMIU itself who would be responsible for tactical level command. The operational commander would typically report to a UN Special Representative (UNSR) in theatre. The UNSR would also direct other UN agencies in theatre and would be responsible for liaison with other agencies (non-governmental organisations, local civil and military authorities and other actors in theatre). This simple model implies that there are no other multinational military forces in

theatre. In other situations UNIF1 could be under the command of a UN force comprising otherwise of nationally owned forces. In other situations UNIF1 might be operating alongside UN sanctioned multinational forces of other organisations such as NATO or the EU, particularly if these are follow-on forces or which are handing over to UNIF1 in an improving situation.

### ***Whatever the strength of objective argument for a UN owned force, the impediment is implementation in the present political environment***

Outside particular theatres of operations, the UN would require a military command structure to command the entire UNIF1 force including home bases and training facilities and services. Likely elements would include the following.

A military strategic headquarters (within the structure of the UN Headquarters) reporting administratively to the Secretary-General. In the short term, commitment of the force would be by Security Council decision. The headquarters would comprise operations, planning,<sup>15</sup> personnel, acquisition, logistics, communications and intelligence divisions. There would be an overall military strategic commander of the force at the three-star (Lieutenant-General level) initially to take account of the envisaged expansion in scale. The rank would rise as the force evolved. Further study would be required to explore the detail of possible structures, the relationship between this headquarters and the Security Council and the possibility that the UN Military Staff Committee might be developed into a functioning entity.

The military strategic headquarters would contain an embedded operational cadre staff commanded by a Brigadier-General/Brigadier. This cadre would form the core of the theatre operational level

staff. It could also be available to provide professional staff support for UN commanders of UN forces composed of national elements. Indeed, it could have a liaison role within a non-UN coalition headquarters to ensure a close relationship with UN civilian agencies in theatre. The commander would typically be the theatre operational commander of a UNIF force.

A monitoring board within the UN Headquarters would set standards for UNIF and would propose and draft Resolutions for the UN General Assembly to provide a legal framework for the operation of the force.

An integration structure would ensure that UNIF activities at the strategic level be integrated fully with those of Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other non-military organs and agencies of the UN. This structure would ensure proactive outreach to other non-UN agencies and organisations that might be engaged in interventions. It would also include other elements which are discussed in subsequent sections.

#### *Equipment Acquisition*

It would be important for the effectiveness of UNIF for equipment to be acquired on the basis of cost effectiveness with a view to providing the best quality for the force. It would be inappropriate for there to be regulation to ensure that equipment was purchased from sources that represent the nations of the UN at the expense of quality. On the other hand, it would be inappropriate for all equipment to be obtained from a single nation. The overseeing board would have a role in striking this balance. Other factors that would affect the diversity of sources are technical interoperability and logistical simplicity.

UNIF must have equipment, particularly for C4ISR<sup>16</sup> capability, which will facilitate interoperability with other militaries with whom UNIF may be required to work in theatre. International standards such as those of NATO would be helpful in developing acquisition policy and practice in this respect.

There would also need to be some rationale across the capability areas of



UNIF that would allow for an elegant system for maintenance and stores support. International standards would similarly be useful.

#### *Logistics*

The MEU model for a UNMIU includes indigenous logistic capability for fifteen days. An MEU typically (but not always) has recourse to afloat support from an amphibious and naval task groups and this would not be available to a UNMIU. Further study would be required to establish additional theatre logistics capability to the UNMIU's indigenous capability. The logistic structure of UNIF1 would in addition require the capability to develop lines of support within the readiness levels of deployable formations. In the longer term, these could include permanent intermediate bases or permanent arrangements with stable host nations to provide these bases.

In particular, there is the need for strategic lift which would usually be by air for high readiness deployments supported by sealift. For UNIF1 it is not envisaged that the forces would have indigenous air or sealift. UNIF1 forces would not be used in the context of opposed entry. There are a number of ways of arranging lift. There could be provision by national military carriers – there is of course the issue of guarantee of supply but the service would not usually be at high risk to the supplying nation's forces. Commercial carriers are possible, but with which there is also the problem of guarantee of supply. Lastly, there is public-private partnership arrangement with commercial consortia under which lift would be contracted for 'by the hour'. The contractual arrangements would address the matter of military risk. The consortia could use capability already acquired for similar arrangements with national military forces such as the United Kingdom roll-on roll-off ferries or Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft arrangement currently under negotiation. It would be important that commercial services to the UN were not widely perceived as a national monopoly and this would be a consideration for companies tendering for contracts.

In the longer term, UNIF would probably acquire a proportion of its own strategic lift capability. UNIF may make use of outsourcing to commercial companies for in theatre and rear area support of its capabilities such as aircraft maintenance. There would be similar considerations to those for strategic lift.

#### *Recruitment*

In the short and medium term UNIF is likely to draw most of its personnel from individuals who have served in national forces. In the longer term, UNIF may be able to recruit directly from young civilians. It would be preferable for UNIF to offer proper careers for personnel. However, in the short term a proportion might be seconded through career break arrangements with a view to permanent transfer. It would be important that they would be under full UNIF command and that they were under no continuing legal adherence to national forces. Their loyalty would be solely to the UN. There are direct comparisons with the status of UN civilian staff. However, military obligation extends beyond that to which civilians are subject.

It would be important for the force to be representative of the member nations of the UN. However, quality and potential of individuals would be of paramount importance. It is likely in the short to medium term that there will be some restriction in avenues of recruiting from the more competent and experienced militaries. But source nations would need to be representative of source culture and geography globally as far as possible.

UNIF would require a single working language which would inevitably be English and this would restrict the recruiting pool somewhat. However, English language training would be included in initial training of recruits.

Bearing in mind factors of nationality and culture, there is likely to be a need in the short to medium term to enhance small group cohesion by structuring intervention forces by nation or nation group probably at the platoon level. This arrangement is not ideal because it would technically limit the number of participating nations in the earlier stages of development and of movement of

individuals within the force. Nevertheless, an initial force of some 10,000 could theoretically contain 'platoon' sized elements from most nations in the UN. Also, individuals would after time and experience in UNIF and after promotion become more adaptable.

UNIF is likely to find itself in competition with private security companies for the pool of younger retired military personnel. The armed forces of member nations of the UN should be encouraged to view transfer to UNIF as a respectable career move. The comparison of civil servants' career paths from national employment to the UN is useful.

#### *Training*

In the short to medium term, recruits would enter UNIF having received national training. After joining, they would undergo individual role and mission focused training which would prepare them for the particular doctrine and culture of UNIF. They would subsequently undergo unit training up to the level of intervention force. As elements of the force would be required to be at high states of readiness, they would require generic scenario based training and operational rehearsal. Synthetic environments would be an essential component of training.

Larger unit training could be an important element in projecting the purpose and profile of UNIF. Companies could be dispatched to train in a range of environments in representative parts of the world. They could train alongside local forces thereby demonstrating their expertise and significant aspects of their military culture. Indeed, they could take part in the training of national forces. Personnel from national forces could also undergo training within UNIF's training organisation.

UNIF will require permanent dedicated training facilities in its home base areas.<sup>17</sup> As it increased in size, it would have permanent training facilities in other regions around the world. These facilities could provide services to national and multinational forces as well to make use of excess capacity and to project the profile of UNIF.

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### *Doctrine*

UNIF would require its own military doctrine that would draw on the best available from competent national militaries and multinational organisations. UNIF doctrine would be at the forefront of the evolution of military doctrine for specialist intervention forces. Its military doctrine would need to be coherent with its ethos and culture.

The initial base and training organisation would require a doctrine centre which initially could be quite small and be primarily engaged in defining best practice. As UNIF expanded, it would develop the ability to lead the development of doctrine in its specialist areas.

UNIF would, in particular, be adept at multinational military interoperability behaviourally as well as technically. Furthermore, it would lead in the pursuit of multi-agency coherence – the ‘comprehensive approach’.

### *Ethos and Culture*

From the outset, UNIF would need some clear guidelines for the development of a distinctive ethos and culture which was independent of particular national or regional cultural stereotypes, but which incorporated the most effective military behaviours within a robust legal and moral framework. The overseeing board would have responsibility for shaping this development.

Recruitment of more senior officers in the early stages of the development of UNIF will have a particular effect on the development of ethos and culture. The overseeing board would have a role in this.

The intention would be for UNIF military personnel and civilian support elements to have full careers in the service. It would be necessary to make provision for dependent families in the home base area(s). One aspect of ethos and culture will be the mutual support that families will be able to provide during deployments.

### *Legal Status*

UNIF would not operate within any national legal framework and would require international law developed by the UN to govern all aspects of military

behaviour including a disciplinary code and regulations for sanctions for military offences. There will of course be national law considerations where bases are located and status of forces agreements will be required. During interventions, there would be local law considerations but these would in essence be no different from those affecting any UN or other multinational force.

### *Locations*

In the early stages of establishment, UNIF1 would have a small number of home bases with, probably, a single facility for basic and intermediate training. The strategic military headquarters would in this period best be located in the UN Headquarters in New York. The home bases should be in other countries to ensure that the force is perceived to be independent of particular local influences. There will therefore be a challenge for cohesion of the force at the outset which bears further study. In the early stages, units may need to share facilities with national forces to avoid unnecessary costs.

During the evolution of UNIF, dispersal of bases globally will be a consideration. If high-quality personnel are to be recruited, they will expect a reasonable standard of living in home bases which will need to be in countries in which families would wish to live for long periods and which would be able to provide high standards of education through international schools.

Choice of locations will be very sensitive diplomatically. The overseeing board would need to establish clear rules and standards which do not present a cultural prejudice. Ideally, there would be a permanent UNIF presence in all continents.

As UNIF expanded, it would be possible to develop a base structure including intermediate deployment bases and training camps which allowed for greater global dispersal.

### *Costs*

Further study would be required to establish enduring costs for UNIF1 and specific intervention costs which could include short-notice capability enhancement costs. The exact costs will

depend on the precise size, structure and capabilities of the force. The costs will necessarily be high in comparison with equivalent national costs partly because the forces will be specialist, highly capable and equipment rich. The particular conditions of service involving long-term overseas deployment for families and long periods of separation on intervention and training duties will require financial compensation. There will also be a need to provide regular leave to return to home countries with families.

### ***In the short and medium term UNIF is likely to draw most of its personnel from individuals who have served in national forces***

The force would be funded through national contributions to the UN. Of course, if the force proves to be effective, it may reduce the need for UN forces formed from national units and there will be savings. In the longer term, a large effective UN owned force may reduce the need for nations to maintain and develop intervention capability. There would be savings in their national defence spending which could compensate for increased contributions to the UN.

Indeed, some nations may conclude that direct funding of UN capability is a preferred alternative to maintaining national intervention forces and may, for internal political reasons, provide greater funding proportionately to the UN for UN owned forces.

### **Phase 2 and 3 UN Intervention Forces (UNIF2, UNIF3)**

One feature of a pragmatic incremental approach is that the evolution of longer term capability will depend on the experience of use of initial capability. One cannot therefore be too specific about the expected capabilities of UNIF2 and UNIF3. The US Marine Corps model provides illustrative examples of larger formations.



A Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) has at its core a specialist infantry brigade with the necessary combat support and logistic support for independent operations. This could be a model for a UNIF2 UN Military Intervention Brigade (UNMIB).

***While it would be self defeating for the force to be perceived to be a product of the culture and thinking of a small number of Western expeditionary nations, it must have at its intellectual core values that reflect liberal democracy in as wide an international context as possible***

A Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) has similarly at its core a specialist infantry division which could be a model for a UNIF3 Military Intervention Force (UNMIF).

Earlier discussion indicates how UNIF2 and UNIF3 would expand the capabilities, roles and missions and profile of UN owned forces in the longer term.

### Conclusions

This paper presents a particular model by which the UN might adopt its own military capability. It focuses very specifically on the military element of a UN intervention presence which is intended in no way to marginalise the development of a multi-agency capability including civilian elements. It draws on a number of previous studies and reports but specifically proposes a pragmatic incremental process which is more likely to receive political support

than an attempt of wholesale conversion to multinationally owned forces.

In particular, the proposed outline capabilities are designed to address the present and emerging strategic environments in which traditional constabulary UN peacekeeping operations will have a very limited role. The emphasis is on early proactive deployment. The small initial UNIF1 force would first and foremost be an instrument of preventive diplomacy. However, for it to be effective, it must display robust specialist intervention capability. Its international profile will be very important and will be enhanced by training and exercises in locations around the world alongside national forces.

It would be necessary for UNIF to be exemplary in military behaviour and ethos. While it would be self defeating for the force to be perceived to be a product of the culture and thinking of a small number of Western expeditionary nations, it must have at its intellectual core values that reflect liberal democracy in as wide an international context as possible.

This paper is intended to provoke discussion of the broad subject of UN-owned military capability anew and to scope the range of issues that would need to be addressed in the broadest outline. Each aspect and element of UNIF would require detailed further study. ■

#### NOTES

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- 4 Brian Urquhart, 'For a UN Volunteer Military Force', *The New York Review of Books* (Vol. 40, No. 11, June 1995).
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- 7 Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, *Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph 4: Vital Force*, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Commonwealth Institute, October 1995).
- 8 *In the US meaning of highly mobile light armoured ground reconnaissance units.*
- 9 *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* (Vol. 127, No. 1, 1998).
- 10 *Hansard, House of Lords* (Vol. 589, No. 146, 30 April 1998).
- 11 H Peter Langille, 'Conflict Prevention: Options for Rapid Deployment and UN Standing Forces', in Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse (eds), *Warlords, Hawks and Doves: Peacekeeping as Conflict Resolution* (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 2000).
- 12 Robert C Johansen (ed.), *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service to Prevent Genocide and Crimes against Humanity* (New York: World Federalist Movement, 2006).
- 13 Urquhart, *op. cit.* in note 4.
- 14 *Another comparator in scale might be NATO's Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force (AMF) created in 1960 as a small multinational force which could be sent at short notice to demonstrate the solidarity of the Alliance and its ability and determination to resist aggression. The land component of the force consists of about 5,000 troops assigned to it by NATO nations. However, AMF's role is essentially symbolic and it would not be an appropriate comparator for military capability.*
- 15 *Operational planning is an important consideration. The UN does not presently have the expertise or resources to plan operations adequately to support early interventions envisaged for UNIF. The military strategic headquarters would be a substantial addition to the existing UN headquarters staff.*
- 16 *Command, control communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.*
- 17 *The training capacity would need to be substantial and comprehensive even for a small initial UNIF. There would otherwise be a dependency on the training facilities and military education colleges of individual nations and multinational military organisations and their influence may be politically unacceptable to some nations.*