

# Creating a U.N. Emergency Capacity

## What Is The United Nations Emergency Peace Service?

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In order to address ever-increasing needs for the international community to respond rapidly and effectively to emerging crises, the United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) was proposed as a permanent emergency response service designed to complement, *not replace* existing peace operations. UNEPS would have first in – first out capabilities, designed to supplement the UN's capacity to provide stability, peace, and relief in deadly emergencies.

The need for UNEPS was best explained by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He compared his job of building support and raising funds for each new UN peacekeeping mission to that of a volunteer fire chief who is forced to raise funds, find volunteers and secure a fire truck for each new fire. “The core challenge to the Security Council and to the UN as a whole in the next century,” he declared, is “to forge unity behind the principle that massive and systematic violations of human rights – wherever they may take place – should not be allowed to stand.”

As envisioned, UNEPS would individually recruit, train and employ 10,000 - 18,000 personnel with a wide range of skills, including civilian police, military, judicial experts and relief professionals. This ensures that missions would not fail due to a lack of skills, equipment, cohesiveness, experience in resolving conflicts, or gender, national or religious imbalance. The service would have special expertise in conflict resolution, environmental crisis response and emergency medical relief. Its military component would have two complete mission headquarters with military, police and civilian staff, technical reconnaissance units, light armored reconnaissance squadrons, motorized light infantry, armored infantry, a helicopter squadron, an engineer battalion and a logistics battalion.

In Darfur, the Sudanese government has effectively prevented the UN from deploying peacekeeping forces, which has contributed to the unraveling of the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement. If the international community had UNEPS in its arsenal during negotiation of the peace accord, the deployment of a UNEPS mission to Darfur could have been included in the Darfur Peace Agreement. By the time national peacekeepers were ready to replace UNEPS, the situation on the ground would have stabilized or, at minimum, become more manageable.

UNEPS would help prevent early stage crises escalating into national or regional disasters. It is a timely and important step in providing the world community with the international emergency service it desperately needs in order to fulfill its “responsibility to protect.”

## Talking Points

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- **The need for rapid response**

UNEPS will be *immediately* available to respond to a crisis. Currently, “rapid deployment” is defined as 30 days for a “traditional” peacekeeping mission (where all parties agree to allow in peacekeepers) and 90 days for “complex” missions (where spoilers attempt to derail a peace

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agreement). This delay not only proves fatal for civilians whose lives depend on fragile accords, but also for the strength of the accords themselves.

- **A better tool for the international community**

The United Nations Emergency Peace Service will be equipped:

- To take action in face of serious threats to human security and human rights;
- To offer secure emergency services to meet critical human needs;
- To assist in the establishment of institutions to maintain law and order;
- To initiate peacebuilding processes with focused incentives; and
- To restore hope for local people that their society and economy have a future.

- **Rapid response to crises is cost-effective**

- The amount of money saved on post-conflict reconstruction will exceed the startup and operational costs of the UNEPS. According to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the international community could have saved nearly \$130 billion of the \$200 billion it spent on managing conflicts in the 1990s by focusing on conflict prevention rather than post conflict reconstruction.
- A 2006 General Accounting office (GAO) study concluded that UN *peacekeeping is eight times less expensive than funding a U.S. force* – the UN is half as expensive and the U.S. only pays a quarter of the costs of a UN mission.
- UN Peacekeeping has a record of success: A 2005 RAND report suggests the UN is better suited for peacekeeping missions than unilateral U.S. action. The study compared 16 U.S. and UN nation-building missions and found that of the “eight UN-led cases, seven are at peace. Of the eight U.S.-led cases, four are at peace; four are not—or not yet—at peace.”

- **The importance of UNEPS support**

Supporting the creation of a rapid deployment force enhances security of the United States. Fragile states provide breeding grounds for terrorism and international crime; preventing destabilizing events is in the interest of the United States and the rest of the world. No Congressional effort to reform the United Nations is complete unless Congress explores ways to enhance the U.N.'s ability to *effectively* prevent and respond to natural disasters, violent conflict, and humanitarian emergencies. Sharing innovative solutions and inspiring international teamwork is the American way.

- The creation of UNEPS is already supported by the following organizations:
  - Save Darfur
  - Refugees International
  - Center for American Progress
  - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
  - Presbyterian Church, USA
  - Human Rights Watch.
- Support for a permanent peacekeeping force by the public is increasing. A recent poll showed 64 percent of the population in 14 different countries agreed that the UN should have a permanent peacekeeping force. In the United States, an impressive 72 percent were in favor of such a force.

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