

**WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT-INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL POLICY
POLICY PAPER**

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CREATING LASTING PEACE: A UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY PEACE SERVICE

SUMMARY

"The UN is the only fire brigade in the world that has to acquire a fire engine after the fire has started."

—Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan—

The World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP) supports and promotes the creation of a *United Nations Emergency Peace Service* (UNEPS). UNEPS would become the first permanent, rapidly deployable, multidimensional, individually recruited and highly trained United Nations emergency force against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. UNEPS would offer a rapid, comprehensive and internationally legitimate response to conflicts and humanitarian crises, saving hundreds of thousands of innocent lives and billions of dollars through early and often preventive action.

In the wake of the comprehensive reappraisal of UN peace operations' doctrine and concepts laid out by the seminal Brahimi Report in 2000, a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals decided to form a Working Group for the creation of UNEPS. Since then WFM-IGP has been acting as an interim co-secretariat of the Working Group along with Global Action to Prevent War and Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

The Working Group has so far organized a series of conferences in North America, Europe and Australia and published a book (*A United Nations Emergency Peace Service: To Prevent Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, 2006) with the objective of enhancing research and analysis on a UNEPS and raising awareness of the UNEPS initiative. WFM-IGP is well aware that many aspects of the UNEPS proposal need to be improved and as many problems remain to be addressed. This is why we seek to continually refine as well as to constructively engage other non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals for consultation on the UNEPS proposal with the aim of propelling larger public debate on the issue.

WFM-IGP believes that it is crucial to prepare a solid and convincing proposal for a UNEPS, so as to be ready whenever the political will arises on the part of the UN Member States to encourage the creation of a UNEPS.

BACKGROUND

The idea of a *United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS)* – a permanent, rapidly deployable, multidimensional, individually recruited and highly trained emergency force to be used for conflict prevention and resolution – is as old as the United Nations itself. In 1948, in fact, the first Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Trygve Lie, called for a “United Nations Legion,” a small, dedicated and quick reaction force for peacekeeping operations. Yet, such a bold proposal made at the very earliest stages of the UN history was not– and still is not – seen positively by the vast majority of UN Member States.

However, this attitude on the part of UN Member States seems to be in sheer contradiction with the dramatic changes the global scenario has undergone in the last two decades. The end of the Cold War has coincided with a multitude of new threats to international peace and security. Although traditional inter-state conflicts are increasingly less frequent today, other challenges to world stability have arisen: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime (particularly the smuggling of small arms and light weapons and drug trade), international terrorism, regional conflicts, and intra-state wars.

The “new wars” of the 21st century provide the context for genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes to occur repeatedly and on a mass scale. These are consistently fought in the poorest areas of the globe and take the highest toll on civilians (not on the instigators), affecting children, women and elders primarily. These conflicts usually take place in failed or failing states, where the government authority is either absent or weak. War lords or rebel and secessionist forces adopt guerrilla-style tactics against governmental armed forces. As a response, governments attempt to use their own military or paramilitary militias to root out these insurgent rebel forces. Paradoxically, it is the civilian populace who suffers the direst consequences when opposing sides avoid major battles and instead attack villages in contested areas: killing, abducting, torturing, raping and looting, as witnessed for example, in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan/Darfur.

In the era of globalization, it should be clear that it is morally and legally imperative for the international community to prevent and stop genocide and crimes against humanity. Firstly, our common humanity urges us to intervene by any means necessary to put an end to the suffering of millions of people hit by the scourge of war around the globe. Since the early 1990s, human security – broadly understood as the right to freedom from fear and from want, that is the right to peace and development – has become more and more important as a conceptual framework whereby to design new strategies for crisis management in the world of the 21st century. Decision-makers increasingly realize that humanitarian assistance and intervention are moral necessities aimed at providing people with the mutually reinforcing conditions of a safe and secure living environment and opportunities and capabilities for cultural growth and economic development. Secondly, states and international organizations have a legal obligation to take action against mass killings and human rights abuses. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 55 and 56 of the UN Charter, and the International Criminal Court remind all humankind that respect and observance of the most fundamental human rights are embedded in the system of international law. Furthermore, the 2005 World Summit witnessed heads of state and governments endorsing a ground-breaking idea: the responsibility to protect (R2P). The R2P concept affirms that it is a primary obligation for every sovereign state to protect its own people from grave human rights violations. Yet, when a state is unable or unwilling to do so, R2P calls upon the international community to intervene, preferably to prevent, react to, or rebuild after such violations. While R2P remains a concept awaiting legal binding, it is increasingly being recognized by decision-makers and civil society as a powerful idea for international politics, deserving careful consideration in order to impede the occurrence of other Bosnias and Rwandas.

However, if morality and legal duty are not enough for some political leaders to take action to prevent or react to international humanitarian crises, they should at least consider national self-interest. Intra-state conflicts too often have devastating spill-over effects in the surrounding countries, creating regional conflicts, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, or in Chad and Central African Republic throughout the course of the Darfur conflict in Sudan. War-torn countries and rogue states easily become a hub for the smuggling of weapons, diamonds and drugs (as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Afghanistan have all shown), as well as an ideal breeding nest for fundamentalism and terrorism (Somalia, Afghanistan).

Moral, legal and national self-interest reasons all demonstrate the need for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service to prevent and stop such crimes wherever and whenever they occur. So far, only a few partial and scarcely effective initiatives have

been undertaken in order to improve the UN peacekeeping and crisis management capacities within the new international security context.

First, a UN Stand-by Arrangements System (UNSAS) was created in the mid-1990s to improve the capability for rapid deployment. This system relies upon *conditional* commitments by Member States of specified resources (troops, equipment etc.) which remain on stand-by in their home countries to be deployed in the event the Security Council sets up a peacekeeping operation. UNSAS is certainly a step in the right direction, but it falls a long way short of meeting the UN's need for rapidly available, well-trained personnel and reliable materiel. Few Member States have provided detailed information on their capabilities which frequently do not even meet the minimum requirements to successfully operate in the field, and even less countries have signed Memoranda of Understanding with the UN. Above all, their pledges are absolutely aleatory, since initially promised resources can be – and often are – retained when it is time to put boots on the ground to stop genocide or crimes against humanity.

Secondly, complementary to UNSAS is the Stand-by High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), a multinational force operational since 2000 and comprising troops from 16 Member States to be made available within 15 to 30 days for UN operations. SHIRBRIG has been so far deployed in 4 different UN missions in Africa (Eritrea/Ethiopia, Liberia and twice in Sudan) and is certainly an important effort to enhance the multilateral nature and the level of coordination and training among different contingents in UN peace operations. Yet, as with UNSAS, there is no guarantee that such force will be put together promptly in the event of a crisis, for, as SHIRBRIG's concept of operations reads, "Member Countries decide on a case-by-case basis to participate on any given mission thereby preserving national sovereignty." Since its inception SHIRBRIG has focused only on deploying operational headquarters elements to start up a mission, thus falling short of making available and utilizing the brigade structure of the force pool, essential to the variegated needs of UN peace operations.

Thirdly, in 2007 the General Assembly approved a major UN peacekeeping overhaul, including a restructuring of DPKO, the creation of a separated Department of Field Support (DFS, to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General), and an increase in resources and capacities in both the departments. Also, a new Office of Military Affairs was established and the Military Adviser's post upgraded. However, these remain a much belated and only partial response to the embarrassing gap between the international community's increasing commitments in peace operations and the actual resources and capabilities made available by UN Member States to DPKO, echoing a general trend within UN system of failing to match words with deeds.

On the one hand, UNSAS, SHIRBRIG, DFS and the broader UN reform efforts demonstrate that the international community acknowledges that UN peace operations' existing doctrine and capabilities need to be rationalized, revitalized and expanded in light of fast-paced changes occurring on the ground since the early 1990s. Such initiatives are all significant steps in the direction set out by Boutros Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report, 2000), and the R2P Report for the ICISS (2001). These all aim to go beyond traditional peacemaking and peacekeeping by adding new goals, approaches, skills and components to UN peace operations. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are today considered fundamental objectives of a peace mission and must respectively precede and follow peacekeeping. Consequently, peace operations adopt a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach. They range from advisory and preventive action, to protection of civilians, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, policing, rule of law, and institution and capacity-building. These efforts tend to encompass military, police and civilian personnel with diverse expertise.

On the other hand, UNSAS, SHIRBRIG and DFS remain partial, incomplete solutions to the urgent need for effective strategies and tactics to quell genocide and crimes against humanity. They simply do not bridge the "time and training gap." They fall short of creating both a rapid deployment capability and a high level of training and coordination, two basic requirements for a reliable and credible multifunctional peace force. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to add an essential instrument to the crisis management toolbox of the international community: a United Nations Emergency Peace Service.

THE UNEPS PROPOSAL

In the wake of the comprehensive reappraisal of the UN peace operations' doctrine and the concepts laid out by the seminal Brahimi Report in 2000, a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals decided to form a *Working Group for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service*.

World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy has agreed to act as interim co-secretariat for the Working Group for UNEPS along with Global Action to Prevent War and Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. The activity of the working group has led to the realization of a well researched and articulated book: *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service. To Prevent Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* (2006). The publication resulted from an extensive, coordinated ongoing research effort, including a number of NGOs activists and academics, and constitutes the foundations upon which to base any further initiative to advance UNEPS' cause and to reach out to UN and government officials, as well as the public opinion.

The UNEPS proposal argues that, although the recent reforms enhance the UN's capacity for peacekeeping, they cannot and will not provide assurance of rapid response to fast-breaking crises, because prompt and effective intervention still depend on national deliberations, decisions, and provisions of personnel. In contrast, UNEPS – a permanent, individually-recruited group of highly trained crisis management professionals, labeled a “service” in part because it is designed to enforce law, not to conduct more conventional military activity – would furnish the international community with an effective rapid reaction capability.

UNEPS would possess a specific set of unique strengths: (1) it would be a permanent standing force, based at UN designated sites, include mobile field headquarters, and be able to act within 48 hours to cope with an emergency; (2) it would be individually recruited from volunteers drawn from many countries so as not to suffer the delays of creating ad hoc forces or the reluctance of UN members to deploy their own national units; (3) its personnel – encompassing 12,000 to 18,000 civilian, police, judicial, military, and relief professionals – would be carefully selected, expertly trained, and coherently organized, so it would not fail in its mission due to a lack of skills, equipment, cohesiveness, experience in resolving conflicts, or gender, national, or religious imbalance; (4) it would be a dedicated service with a wide range of professional skills within a single command structure, prepared to conduct multiple functions in diverse UN operations, enabling it to avoid divided loyalties, confusion about the chain of command, or functional fragmentation; and (5) given its multifunctional dimension and versatility, it could be utilized also in response to environmental crises and natural disasters as well.

With these professional capabilities, a UN agency, for the first time in history, would offer a rapid, comprehensive, internationally legitimate response to crises, enabling it to save hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars through early and often preventive action. Such a service would have at least three positive effects for the future of UN peace operations.

First, it would very likely increase the willingness of the Security Council to rapidly deploy a UN presence which does not directly imply the use of Member States' own personnel and materiel in conflict areas and for reasons not relevant to their national interests.

Secondly, the timely deployment of highly trained personnel, operating with a clear chain of command and using the best equipment available, would effectively prevent or stop at an early stage mass killings and atrocities, avoiding untold human suffering and material destruction.

Thirdly, it would also drastically reduce, if not progressively eliminate, the high costs of post-conflict reconstruction. The final report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts (1997) affirms that in the 1990s the international community spent \$200 billion on conflict management in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Rwanda and Somalia, but \$130 billion could have been saved by major attention to conflict prevention strategies. Moreover, the No Exit Without Strategy Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (2001) notes that reinforcing the peacekeeping force UNAMIR in Rwanda with 5,000 units would have cost approximately \$500 million, whereas the resources spent in the region in the aftermath of the genocide exceeded \$4.5 billion. Finally, in March 2007 the House of Representatives Resolution 213 on a United Nations Emergency Peace Service was introduced by Representatives Al Wynn (D-MD) and James Walsh (R-NY), citing figures from the Congress' General Accounting Office for the year 2006 which revealed that a UN peace mission is eight times less expensive than an American force. That being said, world leaders should understand that UNEPS would be undoubtedly a cost-effective initiative. The estimated start-up expenses and average annual recurring costs (\$2 billion and \$900 million respectively) would be money very well spent as it would create and keep operational a force capable to intervene in conflicts when larger, more complex and much more expensive peace operations and humanitarian missions are not yet appropriate.

Nevertheless, UN Member States have not learned from the tragic lessons of the 1990s, as the crimes against humanity and mass killings continue in the Darfur region of Sudan, where troops and militias supported by Khartoum have been fighting against rebel forces and attacking the local civilian population since 2003. As a response to this, an under-resourced and toothless African Union (AU) peacekeeping force (AMIS) was deployed in Darfur in 2004, but it proved unable to quell neither hostilities

between government military and paramilitary forces and the rebels, nor the massacres of innocent civilians. In a much needed effort to improve the situation on the ground, the Security Council finally determined in July 2007 to establish a stronger and credible UN/AU hybrid peace force (UNAMID) to replace AMIS by the end of the same year. Yet, these promising words of the Security Council resolution S/RES/1769 have not been followed by concrete action. While UNAMID would become the largest peace operation ever undertaken by the UN – including 26,000 police and military officers and a significant civilian component– the UN Secretary-General and DPKO continue to implore Member States for military personnel and equipment which these latter promised on paper in the resolution nearly a year ago. In the meantime, some 200,000 people have been killed and more than 2 million have been displaced. Moreover, the unstable crisis has spread from Darfur to eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic, and the situation has deteriorated to the point that another UN peace operation (MINURCAT) in concert with the European Union (EU) was set up in September 2007 to create conditions to allow for internally displaced persons and refugees to return home.

The tragedy of Darfur is a perfect case study for demonstrating the positive effects UNEPS could have on UN peace operations and, more broadly, why and how it is the appropriate solution to many turbulent crises around the world. If a UNEPS was in place, Member States would not have had to embark on the excruciating and hypocritical exercise of wanting to resolve a conflict without contributing boots, rifles and tents on the field, because a strong and reliable volunteer quick reaction force would be ready to deploy. If a UNEPS existed, 200,000 people might still be alive, more than 2 million could still be living in their homes, and it would not have been necessary to incur one to create several peace operations in succession with enormous expenditure of resources and energy, to neutralize these aggressions at a very early stage.

THE WAY AHEAD

While UNEPS is an advanced and solid proposal for enhancing global peace and conflict prevention, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy is well aware that many theoretical problems and major political obstacles still must be overcome.

As highlighted in detail in the UNEPS book, many questions require further study and analysis: (1) Who should authorize deployment? Though it seems the UN Security Council is the most legitimate and appropriate body for authorization, should other options be taken into account—the UN General Assembly through the Uniting for Peace resolution (1950), the UN Secretary-General, or even other international regional organizations?; (2) How to clarify the differences between a consensual deployment of UNEPS, when a country has consented to intervention on its own soil (Chapter VI of the UN Charter), and a coercive deployment against a government's will (Chapter VII)?; (3) What formal procedures should be used to establish UNEPS? Would it be an independent specialized agency on the basis of an international treaty, a semi-autonomous subsidiary body of a UN organ or something else? These and many other aspects must be researched further in order to develop a full-fledged and multi-optional proposal to be presented to the UN Member States for the moment when the political will for its creation arises.

The political will, indeed, is a major obstacle to the realization of UNEPS. Without the strong political will on the part of UN stakeholders, UNEPS will never come to life. At the UN level, political will coincides with the agglomerate of interests and intentions of its Member States' governments. Only national governments have the legitimate authority to change rules and establish new bodies within the UN. No less important, only national governments hold the fundamental power of the purse, enabling them to influence UN policies and priorities by endlessly delaying assessed, mandatory contributions both to the regular and peacekeeping budget as well as through voluntary contributions to programs and funds according to their preferences. Given the key role played by national governments in sustaining the UN and determining any change within it, it is thus paramount to the working group on UNEPS to develop strategies able to address the main concerns and reservations expressed by Member States.

On the one hand, political opposition arises from the most powerful states, especially the five permanent and veto-wielding members of the Security Council, because they do not want the UN to be strengthened, especially with such a potent politico-military instrument as UNEPS. On the other hand, the "Global South" fears that the same instrument could be used by the great powers to leverage their interests against weaker countries. Ultimately though, both North and South resist the idea of a UNEPS because its very existence would leave many governments with no excuse other than their respective political and/or economic interests when an intervention is necessary to prevent or stop the occurrence of genocide and crimes against humanity.

In the case of Darfur, for example, several Security Council States did not oppose the resolution on UNAMID (even though they were unwilling to contribute to the mission) to provide a fig leaf for themselves before the international public opinion's demand for action in Darfur. Their verbal commitment was not a prelude to concrete action, rather only an attempt to save face. An immediately deployable service such as UNEPS would expose such hypocrisy by making readily available an instrument to fill the "commitment-action" gap. Many states will simply not accept this.

However, it is very likely that this mindset will continue to shift as a result of several factors. First, the increasing worldwide familiarity with and support for R2P, conflict prevention and peacebuilding has laid the theoretical and conceptual groundwork for UNEPS, which is a practical instrument to implement these issues. Second, the eventual creation of UNEPS, unfortunately, will only be sparked by one or more major human rights and/or humanitarian crises that demand new and radical responses. The crises in the Balkans and in Rwanda in the 1990s led to the sweeping and comprehensive reform process of UN and other peace operations, and led to the groundbreaking Brahimi Report. Likewise, UNEPS will become reality only when world public opinion and statesmen feel compelled to change the *status quo* to stop the suffering of millions of innocent people. The third factor for the creation of UNEPS is the fruitful interaction among concerned and well-informed citizens, honest and enlightened politicians and government officials, and independent and objective media and NGOs. This triangle of public actors can start a virtuous circle that would allow journalists and NGO activists to inform citizens of mass human rights violations and citizens, in turn, could press their parliamentary representatives for action. Last, but not least, UNEPS is likely to win acceptance among UN members only after some similar initiatives at regional level prove to be politically worthwhile and economically feasible.

In recent years, there has been increased political discussion and efforts towards strengthening the relationship between the UN and regional organizations – in particular the African Union – in regards to conflict prevention, management, and resolution within the framework of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The Security Council has held several thematic debates and passed resolutions, the latest in April 2008 (S/RES/1809) on this very issue. The Secretary-General proposed in a report to the Security Council (S/2008/186, March 2008) to set up a UN-African Union panel to consider how to support peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organizations, especially with regard to start-up funding, equipment and logistics. The same report also argued that the UN should improve and better coordinate the various peacekeeping training initiatives, including development of regional centers for military and civilian aspects of conflict prevention and peace support. Moreover, a dedicated DPKO team has been established to operationalize the concept of an African Stand-by Force – which would build on the efforts of the AU missions in Burundi, Somalia and Sudan – to provide training, operational capacity and technical advice to the AU in peacekeeping matters. While these and other initiatives (for instance, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center) are very encouraging and must be promoted, supported and enhanced, it is the European Union that is at the forefront of this process of regional activism in international peace and security.

The Peace Facility for Africa – a financing scheme set up by Brussels institutions to strengthen the ability of the African Union to engage in peace support and peacekeeping operations in Africa – is an important sign of such activism on the part of the European Union. The EU Security and Defense Policy is based on a multilateral approach with the UN at its epicenter. In September 2003 the two organizations signed a Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management. Since then, the European Union has conducted twenty-one civilian and/or military peace operations in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe. In particular, operations ARTEMIS (2003) and EUFOR RD Congo (2006) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and EUFOR TCHAD/RCA (2008) in Chad and Central African Republic were launched to support the UN missions in those countries (MONUC and MINURCAT respectively) in achieving their various goals (stabilization of security conditions, protection of displaced persons, emergency relief workers and UN personnel). The UN-EU partnership on peacekeeping issues has been successful so far and constitutes the inspirational model for future analogous initiatives by other regional and subregional organizations, in particular NATO and African Union.

However, the most promising aspects of the EU Security and Defense Policy are certainly the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) and the EU Battlegroups. The former would be a massive peace force modeled after the NATO Implementation Force deployed in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1995-96. ERRF would be capable of deploying 60,000 troops to a theater of operation within 60 days, maintaining them there for one year, and would aim to carry out all the possible functions of a peace support operation: humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement. The ERRF was supposed to become operational in 2003, but it is clear that more time and renewed commitment by Member States will be necessary in order for it to be realized. The EU

Battlegroups are instead smaller multi-national and multi-dimensional stand-by combat units of 1,500 troops each to be rapidly deployed to carry out mainly the most critical crisis management tasks, such as evacuation, aid deliverance and initial stabilization. Since 2007 several EU Battlegroups have already been declared operational, but they have not been utilized yet. Even though only all the “baptism by fire” of a mission will demonstrate their capabilities and effectiveness, the EU Battlegroups are probably the boldest effort made thus far towards a multilateral framework for intervention against genocide and crimes against humanity. Since they can be deployed in response to an urgent request of the Security Council, the EU Battlegroups are potentially a powerful tool for UN use in a crisis. Should they prove to be successful, with or without the Security Council imprimatur, the EU Battlegroups would both prompt the EU to make progress on the creation of an ERRF and encourage further political discussions at UN headquarters on forms of cooperation within advanced crisis management.

While the civilian and police dimension of UN peace operations have marked many important improvements in the last years (for example, the Peacebuilding Commission and UN Standing Police Capacity), the military aspect remains in the realm of political negotiations within the framework of the “Enhanced Rapidly Deployable Capacities” (ERDC) concept. ERDC aims to provide a credible, predictable, and effective response option to reinforce UN-led missions in times of severe crisis. The utilization of EU Battlegroups at UN level would give substance to the ERDC notion and would pave the way, conceptually and practically, for UNEPS.

Furthermore, the EU Battlegroups seem to possess two fundamental qualities emphasized in the UNEPS Working Group’s proposal: “first-in-first-out” approach and complementarity. First, a Battlegroup should be deployed on the ground no later than ten days after the decision to launch an operation and should operate in a crisis area for a maximum period of 120 days. It is the first actor to reach a critical area (first-in) and must leave as soon as hostilities and abuses have been ceased and the situation stabilized (first-out). At that point, a wide array of other actors are to replace a Battlegroup in order to manage the long and complex process of peacebuilding and reconstruction. This strategy complements the second quality highlighted in the UNEPS proposal. Like UNEPS, the EU Battlegroups would not be massive and long-term peace forces, but rather small, dedicated stabilizing contingents whose only purpose is to extinguish the fire of a conflict and prepare the ground for other longer-term peacekeeping operations and political missions.

In the case of UNEPS, this means that such a force would not be created in order to eliminate classic UN peacekeeping operations made up of Member States nationals, but rather in order to help and strengthen them. For instance, UNEPS would not only act as a “bridging” force, rapidly deploying with the objective of providing the UN with the time to mount a new, larger long-term operation (or to reorganize an existing one) but also as a “stand-by” force, on call and able to quickly react when the mandate of a mission is jeopardized by incidents taking place on the ground. More ambitiously, UNEPS could also be utilized as the operational arm of the International Criminal Court and regional criminal tribunals. As with NATO and EU forces in Bosnia & Herzegovina, UNEPS could perform investigative and police activities to detect and apprehend individuals for whom international arrest warrants have been issued. Ultimately, a UNEPS has the potential to complement, strengthen and even minimize the need for complex, expensive, longer-term UN and regional peacekeeping operations.

For the time being however, UNEPS remains a powerful idea trapped between discrete *popular* support and weak *political* endorsement. On the one hand, many citizens around the world agree with the creation of a standing UN force. Strikingly, a 2000 EarthAction-commissioned poll of US voters showed that sixty-five percent of those polled supported the creation of a permanent UN force made up of individual volunteers ready to be deployed quickly to conflict areas to stop violence and crimes against humanity. On the other hand, world leaders do not seem willing to follow their electors on this issue. The US Clinton administration, for instance, repeatedly claimed to back the cause of a UN standing force but such rhetorical support was never put into practice. Though the US pays for 22 percent of the UN administrative budget and about 27 percent of the peacekeeping costs, Washington continues to not pay its contributions to the UN in full, and is currently being responsible for 46% (almost \$2 billion) of the total UN debt as of the end of 2007. Additionally, the US ranks 43rd among contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping operations with 297 units (as of March 2008).

The US case is indicative of a more general gap between civil society and political leadership affecting most UN Member States. While many citizens appear supportive of a UNEPS, their political leaders are much less courageous and forward-looking. In the immediate future, the UNEPS Working Group will thus have to focus on developing appropriate strategies to bridge this gap.

To this end, World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy continues to work along with Global Action to Prevent War, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and other prominent non-governmental organizations to sharpen and consolidate the UNEPS proposal and further promote and enhance global dialogue on it. A series of conferences on UNEPS have been held in North America, Europe and Australia in the last few years, gathering academic experts, civil society activists, military officers and diplomats. The latest major seminar on UNEPS took place in Brisbane, Australia, within a Global Action to Prevent War-organized Workshop on the Eradication of Armed Conflict (Feb 8-10, 2008). The third day of the conference was completely dedicated to the initiative for a standing and rapidly deployable UN peace force. Several aspects of the UNEPS project requiring further research and analysis were considered (current and future regional developments, updates, complex issues and UNEPS' role in the Responsibility to Protect) and a series of "Recommendations" came out of a final strategic planning session.

The Brisbane Recommendations form the core of 2008 UNEPS-related activities and can be summarized as follows: the creation of a global list-serve to provide basic linkage among partners and facilitate "web-like" information and resource sharing; the expansion of regional centers in diverse global regions to enhance research functions, government and NGOs-oriented outreach activities and general project decision-making; regional conferences specifically focused on UNEPS; full development of the International Advisory Committee; well designed and comprehensive project timeline. World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy deems the fulfillment of such recommendations crucial for the progress of the UNEPS initiative. Only a solid, comprehensive and widely supported proposal will convince UN Member States, whenever the political will for a UNEPS should arise. World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy strives to be at the forefront of the civil society movement for such a proposal.