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The Secretariat of the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the Security Council Resolution 1497 authorizing the establishment of a United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), to succeed the ECOWAS (ECOMIL) deployment, no later than 1 October 2003 and also refers to Security Council Resolution 1509 deciding to establish UNMIL consisting of up to 15,000 United Nations military personnel.

The deployment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force, considering its authorized troop strength of 15,000 and the situation in the Mission, will be a very demanding exercise requiring considerable resources. Although a small Interim Force Headquarters has been deployed and the entire ECOWAS force has been re-hatted to a UN force, deployment of the remainder of the UNMIL troops must occur between 1 October 2003 and 1 March 2004.


The Concept of Operations for this Mission requires the simultaneous deployment of three brigade headquarters and their lead battalions and engineer support groups throughout the Mission area. This roughly equates to the deployment of a division from a standing start. To accomplish this deployment as soon as possible, we envision the use of various port facilities and marine craft.

The Secretariat has previously discussed the use of a Combat Support Ship at Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) meetings in August and September. Recently during discussions with the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, the Secretariat mentioned a possible participation of the LPD HMS Rotterdam. We consider this asset vital for the deployment of the UNMIL force. The tasks for the ship range from providing medical cover for the units ashore till the time they have their own medical cover, transporting equipment and vehicles from Monrovia to the ports of Buchanan and Harper, the use of the embarked helicopters for medical evacuation by day and night, transporting troops when required and providing fresh water if required.

The rapid deployment of the UNMIL force is based on the availability of this vessel and its characteristics will allow the Secretariat to prioritise and sequence the units to be deployed. Should the vessel not be available, the deployment plan cannot be implemented in the required time frame, seriously delaying of the full operational capability of the Mission.

Consequently, the Secretariat should be grateful if the Government of the Netherlands could consider providing the LPD for the United Nations Mission in Liberia, arriving in the area of operations around 25 October 2003. In addition to the vessel itself, a liaison officer should also be made available to the Mission Headquarters in Monrovia, for the duration of the ships deployment, to assist in coordination of tasks.

The Secretariat of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to express its appreciation to the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations for its continued support to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and to renew the assurances of its highest consideration.


3 October 2003