



DND Photo

Bulgarian and Chilean officers attending a course at the Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston.

THE MILITARY TRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP): AN INSTRUMENT OF MILITARY DIPLOMACY

by Andrew P. Rasiulis

The Military Training Assistance Program (MTAP) has its origins in agreements made in the early 1960s to provide military training assistance to certain newly independent Commonwealth nations. These early agreements included providing training for foreign students at facilities in Canada and providing advisory teams in the countries concerned.

In 1964, the interdepartmental Military Assistance Committee was established to examine requests from non-NATO countries for military assistance. The committee reviewed requests and made recommendations to the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence on what training should be provided and to which countries. The government incorporated funding for the programme in the annual External Affairs budget in December 1970.

In 1991, because of fiscal constraints, the Department of External Affairs opted to withdraw funding from the programme. DND assumed all funding responsibilities and continued to administer the programme. The Military Assistance Committee was then renamed the Military Assistance Steering Committee. Chaired by the Department of National Defence, this committee is composed of representatives from DND, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and other departments as required. The committee supervises the delivery of MTAP to member countries, reviews applications for new memberships and makes recommendations to the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Military Assistance Steering Committee also ensures that programme funds are applied only to the costs of training and education.

MTAP plays a key role in promoting Canadian defence and foreign policy interests worldwide among a selected group of developing non-NATO countries. Specifically, MTAP supports and reinforces the international mission of the Canadian Forces in peacekeeping

by training other military forces in the art of peacekeeping. As a result, the CF benefits by having its burden shared with a greater number of available peacekeeping forces from other countries. In addition, MTAP assists other nations' forces in developing the capability to operate effectively in joint missions with the CF, thereby making burden sharing more effective and efficient. Most importantly, MTAP has broader benefits such as raising Canada's national profile in the international arena and promoting Canadian bilateral defence relations. In all circumstances, provision of MTAP assistance is governed by the principle that their efforts must promote democratic principles, the rule of law, protection of human rights and international stability.

As an instrument of military diplomacy, the application of MTAP internationally corresponds to the government's defence and foreign policy priorities. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the priority has been to stabilize the vacuum left behind in Central and Eastern Europe and to modernize the capabilities of the armed forces of this region. The government provided MTAP with a major infusion of funds to accomplish this objective. As a result, from 1995 to 1999, the annual MTAP budget grew from a traditional baseline of \$1.2 million to \$12.5 million. The difficulties in the Balkans, particularly the situation in Kosovo, prompted the government in 1999 to grant MTAP an additional \$2 million per year for five years to provide further training assistance to select countries in the Balkan region, under the auspices of the Canadian Regional Training and Support Project (CRTSP).

While the focus on Central and Eastern Europe reflects current priorities, Canadian defence interests are worldwide, as is the application of MTAP. MTAP has developed specific assistance packages for key countries within the region of Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Africa, Central and South America and the Middle East.

Andrew P. Rasiulis is Director Military Training Assistance Programme at NDHQ.

Given that demands for military assistance world-wide far exceed the capacities of Canada and its allies, priorities are necessary not only among regions, but among countries within regions. Chiefly, MTAP aims at encouraging long-term and sustainable results. This necessitates strict priorities to determine a select group

attitudes and perspectives. A particularly good example is found in the language training provided under MTAP. As a bilingual country, Canada has the capability to provide training in both English and French. These languages correspond to the two official languages of both NATO and the United Nations, two key organizations under whose auspices Canada often participates in peacekeeping operations.



DND Photo DSCN0079(1)

The Caribbean Junior Command and Staff College in Jamaica is a cooperative venture sponsored by Canada and other Caribbean states.

As knowledge of the official languages of either NATO or the UN is essential for officers participating in peacekeeping operations, MTAP makes it a priority to provide such training. By offering this training in either an English or French milieu within Canada, the foreign officers not only have the ideal cultural circumstances within which to absorb the language training, but in addition, gain insight into the functioning of Canadian society. The fact that the window onto Canadian society is, in part, opened in cooperation with local ethnic communities is another bonus for MTAP students.

In addition to the two main pillars of language and peacekeeping training, MTAP also offers professional development courses, including courses at the Land Forces Command and Staff College, the National Security Studies Course, a defence resource management seminar and a civil-military relations symposium. Additional training within the CF training system is offered on a case-by-case basis according to priorities and available resources.

of countries eligible for assistance. Canada has three primary criteria for determining the priorities of assistance for MTAP nations:

- Canadian foreign and defence policy interests;
- Historic bilateral relations with the recipient country; and
- The ability of a given country to accept Canadian assistance and to develop rapidly.

At present, MTAP is under a membership moratorium. As MTAP has now reached a budgetary plateau, any increase in membership necessitates a corresponding reduction in programmed activity for current members.

In providing training, MTAP offers the type of assistance that specifically reinforces skills necessary to fulfil the functions of peacekeeping operations. Therefore, the two main pillars of the programme are language training and peacekeeping training. MTAP trains over 700 foreign military officers in Canada annually, while also conducting 'Expert Team' visits abroad and providing for foreign delegation visits to Canada. Language training is conducted at Canadian Forces language training establishments. MTAP accomplishes the majority of its peacekeeping training in partnership with the Lester Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre, while also utilizing the Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC) in Kingston.

An important element of the training philosophy of MTAP is that foreign officers are exposed to the broader aspects of Canadian culture and values when they receive their training in Canada. The education received is therefore a well-rounded package of technical and academic skills, as well as an understanding of Canadian

A unique element of MTAP is the assistance Canada provides to its close neighbours in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Junior Command and Staff College (CJSC) based in Jamaica is a cooperative venture between Canada and Jamaica, with support from the UK and other Caribbean states. Members of the CF deploy annually to Jamaica to help administer and run the yearly staff course, while some Canadian officers participate as students. The CJSC provides the only source of in-theatre staff college training for the Caribbean states, and forms a key element in the ability of officers from this region to participate effectively in international peacekeeping operations.

The demand for MTAP assistance from developing states around the world will continue to increase. Similarly, the requirement for peacekeeping forces, including those of Canada, will also likely increase as international instability shows no sign of abating. MTAP will continue to play a key role as a force multiplier in assisting friendly developing countries to train additional peacekeeping forces to meet the demands of the international community. In so doing, closer defence relationships will be built with partner countries around the world, working with the CF to share the common burden of maintaining international peace and security.

