



THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Jeffery has over 39 years of service in the Canadian Forces. He started military service as a Rifleman in the Essex and Kent Scottish, but soon joined the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery under the Canadian Army Soldier Apprentice Programme. After his commissioning in 1967, he served in a variety of command and staff positions both in Canada and overseas. These included Commanding Officer of Third Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, Canadian Contingent Commander to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, Commandant of the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College and Commander of the 1st Canadian Division. He served as Chief of the Land Staff from August 2000 to May 2003. He retired from the CF, in the rank of Lieutenant General, on 1 August 2003. Mike is a graduate of the Long Gunnery Staff Course (Field and Locating) (UK), the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, The US Army Command and General Staff College and the National Defence College. In 2000, he was promoted in the Order of Military Merit to the grade of Commander. In 2004 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Royal Military College. Mike runs his own consulting business, focusing on defence, security and strategic planning. He is also the Honorary Campaign Chairman for the Royal Canadian Artillery Heritage Campaign.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the nature of foreign military training, Canada's history in the provision of military training assistance, including its training mission in Afghanistan, evaluates the success of these commitments and assesses the future of such missions. It concludes that, as a professional force, the Canadian Forces has excelled at providing foreign military training. However, the effectiveness of such assistance is limited by the nation's lack of a strategic focus and the consequent short term provision of training. The process of developing a professional military capable of defending the nation and supporting the government is a long one, and only through consistent and trusted mentoring can nations like Canada expect to achieve the influence essential for success. The paper suggests that foreign military training is a very effective diplomatic tool and should form a key component of Canada's long term focus for international development.

SOMMAIRE

Cette étude examine la nature de la formation militaire à l'étranger et l'histoire de l'aide militaire fournie par le Canada, y compris sa mission d'entraînement en Afghanistan, évalue le succès de ces engagements et juge l'avenir de telles missions. Elle conclut que, comme force professionnelle, les Forces canadiennes ont excellé dans la prestation de formation militaire. Cependant, l'efficacité de telle assistance est limitée par le manque de focalisation stratégique du pays et la prestation conséquente à court terme de la formation. Le processus de développement d'une force militaire professionnelle capable de défendre le pays et de soutenir le gouvernement est un processus de longue haleine et ce n'est qu'à travers un mentorat constant et digne de confiance que des pays comme le Canada peuvent s'attendre à acquérir l'influence essentielle au succès. L'étude suggère que la formation militaire étrangère est un outil diplomatique très efficace et qu'elle devrait former une composante essentielle de la perspective à long terme du Canada en matière de développement international.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian transition from combat operations to training assistance in Afghanistan has placed the spotlight on the military training mission. While such tasks are not new to the Canadian Forces (CF), the mission has led some observers to ask whether this portends a new role for Canada's military. This paper will look at Canada's history in the provision of military training to other nations, including its recent training mission in Afghanistan, as well as assess the success of these commitments and the future of such missions.

FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Foreign military assistance covers a spectrum of support, including the provision of training, and is provided by many nations to developing countries.¹ Foreign military training encompasses a variety of activities. It can pertain to the basic training of soldiers, the advanced training of Non Commissioned Officers, or the development of senior military commanders. It can focus on technical or language training at service schools or the mentoring of military commanders in an operational setting. And such training can take place in the sponsor nation's military centres or in the receiving nation.

Broadly, the intent of foreign military training is to raise the effectiveness and capacity of military forces so that the receiving nation may achieve internal security and stability, which in turn should contribute to regional stability. There has long been debate over the wisdom of training foreign militaries and there is no question that such support is often intended to advance the donors national interests in the region. But there can be little doubt that, for many nations, the development of a professional military is a central pillar of nation building.

In practice, such training has widely different objectives. The provision of military training can be used to develop bilateral relations. Given the disciplined organization of military forces, military training is often one of the simplest and quickest ways of improving capabilities in developing nations. With such success and, over time, the development of a supportive military leadership, the donor nation's influence can be considerable. Indeed, in some circumstances the influence is such that the receiving nation is largely dependent on the donor nation for sustainment of its military capability. Often the motive for providing assistance is capacity building to advance burden sharing. This sees increasing the ability and capacity of nations to undertake increasingly more complex military operations so those nations can take on a greater share of the international load in maintaining peace and security. Military training has also been used routinely as a means of entry for domestic defence industries with the aim of selling arms. Finally, there is the perpetual hope that military training will promote democratic principles, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights in the international arena.

There are many variables influencing the degree of success of foreign military training and whether the stated objectives are achieved is a subject of some debate. But the most important factor in realizing success has to be the adoption of a long term strategy in the provision of assistance. Military skills and expertise can be imparted relatively quickly. But the development of the expertise and wisdom essential in a professional military force takes time and nurturing. In addition the real influence that is essential to bilateral relations is only achieved when relationships are developed between the respective nation's senior military and government officials. This is the essence of military diplomacy. Too often, nations believe naively they can achieve their aims without the long term investment essential to build those bonds.

¹ Foreign military assistance can include financial assistance, the provision of services, military training, military advice and the loan, donation or sales of military equipment and weapons.

CANADA'S HISTORY OF MILITARY TRAINING ASSISTANCE

The Early Years

Canada's involvement in providing military training to foreign forces started in the early post WWII years, albeit quite reluctantly. In the 1950's the many requests for Canadian military assistance were routinely turned down by the Defence Department, citing security concerns, lack of organizational compatibility, and resource limitations. The reality was that, despite a desire on the part of External Affairs to expand Canada's international influence through the provision of military training, helping developing countries was not a priority for the military leadership.²

There were, however, some exceptions and Canada did provide training and other assistance to a variety of developing nations.³ The most notable examples were the provision of military training to Ghana and Tanzania. Prompted by its NATO allies to help in countering communist influence in the region, and after significant debate within the government and a general resistance with the military, Canada undertook to assist these nations in their transition to independence.

Military assistance to Ghana started in 1961 and saw Canada deploy 30 officers to provide training assistance to the Ghanaian military in a number of different army and air force schools. Despite two coups and considerable pressure to reduce funding, the Canadian training mission remained until 1973. Ultimately, the mission fell victim to a lack of political commitment and money. Assistance to Tanzania started in 1964 and at its peak included close to 90 officers and NCOs focused on both army and air force training. The mission ended in 1970 due to increased costs and political concerns over the Chinese presence in Tanzania. These two programmes were the longest and most consistent foreign military training programmes in which Canada would be involved.⁴

There is clear evidence that Canada's contribution to both Ghana and Tanzania made a valuable contribution to those nations' militaries. Indeed, reports from the period stress the positive effect Canadian training was having on the host militaries.⁵ However, the Canadian government of the day questioned the value of such targeted support and preferred to spread the limited military assistance dollars they were prepared to spend over a larger number of recipient nations. In addition, there is clear evidence that the government was not prepared to make the commitments necessary to achieve real success. As these nations faced difficulties and needed additional support, the reaction was one of stepping back instead of increasing support to help them through the period. The result arguably was a failure to achieve a positive strategic outcome and a largely wasted investment.

The Military Training Cooperation Programme

In 1964 the government formed an Interdepartmental Military Assistance Committee to provide a more disciplined approach to planning military assistance.⁶ In so doing, the government decided that it would provide a "modest contribution to the establishment of efficient and stable military forces in friendly countries where armed forces are often the single group of disciplined and trained personnel, and usually a good influence for law and order."⁷

2 C.R. Kilford; "The Other Cold War, Canadian Military Assistance in the Developing World", Thesis submission, Queen's University; May 2009. Page 138.

3 Ibid Page 325. As of 1971, some level of training assistance was being provided to Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, Malaysia, Jamaica, Kenya, Uganda, Korea, Trinidad & Tobago, Singapore & Nigeria.

4 Ibid Chapters 8 & 9.

5 Ibid.

6 Now called the Military Assistance Steering Committee (MASC).

7 C.R. Kilford; "The Other Cold War, Canadian Military Assistance in the Developing World", Thesis submission, Queen's University; May 2009. Page 160.

In parallel with the creation of the committee, DND created the Military Training Assistance Programme (MTAP) subsequently renamed the Military Training and Cooperation Programme (MTCP). The purpose of the programme has evolved over the years as it attempted to support Canada's domestic and foreign policy interests. Currently it provides three main areas of training⁸ and has four stated objectives: to enhance peace support operations' interoperability among Canada's partners to lessen the operational burden on Canada; to expand and reinforce Canadian bilateral defence relations; to promote Canadian democratic principles, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights in the international arena; and to achieve influence in areas of strategic interest to Canada.⁹

The majority of training under MTCP takes place at Canadian schools and training centres but the programme also sponsors training activities in other locations around the world including Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. While the training in Afghanistan nominally comes under MTCP, in reality most aspects of this support are managed and funded separately.

Since its inception, MTCP has provided training to more than 70 nations, including the NATO Partnership for Peace nations and a number of UN countries. In addition it has enhanced the ability of approximately 750 foreign persons per year to communicate in English and/or French. Recent DND evaluations state these initiatives have enhanced interoperability among Canada's partners and improved Canada's profile and bilateral defence relations.¹⁰

Afghanistan

"They have already achieved much. They are in the lead for the security of three quarters of the population. And where they are in charge, violence has gone down."

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Afghanistan was a watershed for the CF. It honed the fighting skills of a military force that for many years had been struggling to maintain its combat capabilities and it saw the development of CF capabilities in counter insurgency operations. As its combat mission came to an end, the CF stood as an effective and credible military force. It was well positioned to see its role in foreign military training increase significantly.

In April 2009 the NATO heads of state decided to establish the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) with the objective of increasing the capacity of the Afghan security forces as a means of realizing full Afghan responsibility for security by the end of 2014.¹¹

Canada was an initial contributor of training assistance for the Afghan military, providing officers and NCO's to the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT) in early 2006.¹² With the decision to withdraw combat forces from Afghanistan, the Canadian government responded to pressure from its allies and committed to providing major support to the NATO Training Mission.

8 MTCP's activities fall under three main pillars: Language Training, to facilitate communication and interoperability among international forces; Professional Development and Staff Training, to improve the professionalism of foreign armed forces; and Peace Support Operations Training, to enhance the capacity of military participants to undertake multi-lateral peace support operations.

9 Directorate of Military Training and Cooperation 2009-2010 Annual Report

10 Department of National Defence, Chief of Review Services, Military Training Assistance Program (MTAP) Formative Evaluation (1258-117-2 (CRS)), May 2008.

11 NATO Summit Declaration on Afghanistan, 04 April 2009. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52836.htm.

12 Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams | Fact Sheets | International Operations | Canadian Expeditionary Force Command. <http://www.comfec-cefcom.forces.gc.ca/pa-ap/ops/fs-fr/omlt-eng.asp>.

The Canadian Contribution to the Training Mission in Afghanistan (CCTM-A) saw CF personnel serving as mentors working with high-ranking Afghan military personnel and government officials as well as with Training Advisory Groups and embedded Training Teams attached to the Afghan National Army (ANA), Air Force (AAF), and Police (ANP) schools and training establishments.¹³ This saw Canadians serving as an instructor cadre for many basic and advanced courses and working in Training Advisory Teams serving both the schools and operational formations.

Canada's military training assistance has been excellent. The CF has maintained a professional Officer and NCO cadre that is very well equipped to undertake both individual and collective training and to impart its skill and knowledge. Indeed, CF officers and NCO's are seen as credible and effective instructors and advisers by the national leaders they support. As Colonel Mike Minor, Commander Kabul Military Training Center Training Advisory Group said *"We have young junior leaders advising Afghan senior officers sometimes 20 years their age, and they are being listened to."*¹⁴ The assessment of recent commanders in Afghanistan is that this training assistance is having a very positive effect and they view the capabilities of the Afghan security forces as good with quality expected to improve over time.¹⁵

AN ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING

*"Here at KMTC, we are involved in 'war winning' rather than battle winning. We are helping build an army at the grass roots level; this is crucial nation building work, and in this we shall not fail. But our effort will not guarantee success in Afghanistan. Others must do their part to help build their national institutions."*¹⁶

Colonel Mike Minor, Commander Kabul Military Training Center Training Advisory Group.

Given the long and varied history of Canadian foreign military training, an objective evaluation of Canada's contribution is difficult. Few studies on the effectiveness of that training have been conducted and the perspectives of the participant's have a naturally positive tone. But the evidence supports the view that the CF has been very effective in providing valuable training to foreign militaries wherever they have been tasked. This is clearly supported by the recent CRS evaluations of MTCP and the anecdotal evidence from instructors and students alike.¹⁷ As stated earlier the members of the CF are professionals who have been effective and credible in providing foreign military training.

Determining the overall effectiveness of these programmes is less clear. While success in imparting military skills to foreign military leaders and soldiers may improve their performance, it does not guarantee achievement of the national strategic objectives. In evaluating Canadian success, we need to look at two components of Canadian delivered foreign military training; MTCP and the larger training missions such as Afghanistan.

MTCP is very effective at imparting certain skills and knowledge and, by virtue of the nature and location of most training, exposes foreign military personnel to Canada and a professional military. While it is a low key programme, its long term consistent approach results in officers and NCOs from many non NATO and developing nations having personal knowledge of Canada and the CF. Such exposure is often a once in a lifetime event that can be very important to the recipients. However, that training has been spread over many nations

¹³ Canadian Joint Operations Command Website (<http://www.cjoc.forces.gc.ca/exp/attention/index-eng.asp>).

¹⁴ Minor, Colonel Mike, "Advising in the cradle o the Afghan army" Vanguard Magazine, Issue 5, August/September 2012.

¹⁵ Interviews LGen Stuart Beare, Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command; Colonel Mike Minor, Commander Kabul Military Training Center Training Advisory Group & Colonel Greg Burt, Commander Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team.

¹⁶ Minor, Colonel Mike, "Advising in the cradle o the Afghan army" Vanguard Magazine, Issue 5, August/September 2012.

¹⁷ Department of National Defence, Chief of Review Services, Military Training Assistance Program (MTAP) Formative Evaluation (1258-117-2 (CRS)), May 2008 and Summative Evaluation of the Contribution Agreement with the Military Training Assistance Program (MTAP) (1258-117-3 (CRS)), March 2009.

thereby diffusing its effectiveness. Consequently the programme does not normally develop specific long term relationships between the CF and other military forces. So, while the programme is positive at an individual level, its impact at a national level is questionable.

Potentially, specific training sessions are more strategically effective, for example the mission undertaken in Afghanistan. These missions have a more intimate working environment that brings leaders at all levels together and is ideal for building the trust essential to achieving sound relationships. However, such programmes require a long term focus if they are to achieve lasting results. The reality is that developing effective military organizations takes time. While the basic skills can be imparted relatively quickly, the professionalism essential to running an army effectively and, more importantly, defending the nation and a democratically elected government takes considerably longer. Only through consistent and trusted mentoring can nations like Canada expect to truly influence this dynamic.

Canada's military training assistance to Ghana and Tanzania was positive and the credibility established by CF personnel provided a foundation that could have been built on for the long term. However, the government's unwillingness to commit to the long term relationship building and accept the risks inherent in assisting these developing countries resulted in a lost opportunity. Similarly, the work done by the CF and our allies to improve capacity of the Afghan security forces has advanced their effectiveness. But the long term success of this investment is still uncertain and one must question Canada's long term military commitment.

THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING

What then is the future of foreign military training? There is no doubt that Canada has a professional force in the CF that is highly capable of providing effective military training and assistance to foreign militaries. Whether providing basic or advanced levels of training or high level operational mentoring, military training assistance is a role at which the CF excels. However, translating this capability into a national strategy is another matter.

The history of Canada's involvement in foreign military training is largely one of short sighted commitments, as evidenced by such experiences as Ghana and Tanzania. The establishment of the Interdepartmental Military Assistance Committee was meant to bring more discipline to the process but no policy was adopted to guide military assistance—instead, each request was considered on its merits. Even our support to Afghanistan, while claiming a long term commitment, is much more focused on short term outcomes than acknowledged. It cannot be ignored that Canada was planning to withdraw its military forces from the country and only agreed to the training mission under duress.¹⁸

The real benefit from foreign military training is achieved by focussing on long term objectives. Programmes such as MTCP, while limited in scope, are proof that a little effort applied consistently over time can have a positive impact out of proportion to the investment. In contrast, short term programmes are less likely to have a lasting effect. Canada's commitments to Ghana and Tanzania, while tactically very effective, did not see Canada with any lasting influence, as the government did not exploit the potential that was created through the established credibility of the military trainers. We may face a similar outcome in Afghanistan. NATO and Canada's objective is building Afghan capacity to permit the withdrawal of allied forces. If that means the withdrawal of all military forces and we do not sustain the relationships established with the Afghan National Army, there is no assurance that we will create the desired environment to ensure continued peace and stability.

¹⁸ Canada announced on 9 December 2010 that it had agreed to a NATO request to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2011 and contribute to the NTM-A, but it is generally accepted that this was the result of considerable pressure from the US.

The reality is that Canada does not take a strategic perspective on the provision of military training. Notwithstanding the MTCP stated objectives, decisions on military training assistance are made on a case by case basis with little thought to long term Canadian interest. An expectation that we can influence foreign militaries and shape culture with respect to democracy and human rights following a few months of training is naïve. Such shifts require long term exposure and understanding as well as the development of lasting relationships based on trust to see any real change.

Other nations such as the US, UK and France have undertaken an aggressive role in the provision of foreign military training as a key tool in implementing foreign policy. The US for example includes such initiatives as part of their national security strategy.¹⁹ Canada on the other hand does not have a long term strategic position on military capacity building. While Canada's National Security Policy speaks to restoring peace, order and good government in failed and failing states and infers the provision of assistance to other countries, there is no apparent connection with a commitment to military assistance.²⁰ While MTCP's stated objectives vaguely imply a strategic context there is little evidence of an overarching strategic vision for the programme. In any event its limited resources are too widely dispersed to have a truly strategic effect.

What is really required to make military training an effective tool of Canadian diplomacy is a clear strategy that takes a long term focus on certain states or regions of the world, much like that adopted in Canada's International Development Programme.²¹ In this manner Canada would not only develop the capabilities and capacity required of a modern military, but more importantly, develop the long term relationships essential in imparting the professional values and ethics vital for a military in a democratic society. Equally important, such training should be part of a coordinated whole of government approach to development of the respective nations.

An Opportunity

Foreign military training is not a new role; indeed the CF has a proven ability to undertake this task which offers a valuable option for international development assistance. As a middle power, with a track record for balanced developmental assistance, Canada would be a preferred choice for many nations seeking military assistance.

But military training is a means to an end and must not be seen as an end unto itself. Canada should consider military training assistance as more than just another tool in the diplomacy bag. Rather it should see it as a fundamental part of Canada's foreign policy and long term international development programme—one that is specifically targeted to countries that can benefit from the development of effective professional military forces.

Canada's National Security Policy states that the assistance we provide to countries is an expression of our values. As such, the provision of foreign military training should contribute to international peace and stability by fostering the development of democratic and accountable militaries while promoting long term stability. The CF has the ability to undertake that role but does the nation have the will to make the lasting investment essential to achieving success?

19 US National Security Strategy, May 2010, Page 27.

20 Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy, April 2004. Page 50.

21 CIDA's Policy Statement of September 2002 on Strengthening Aid Effectiveness stated it will select a limited number of countries for an enhanced partnership relationship. See CIDA Website <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/STE-32015515-SG4>.

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