

and expertise providing the ability to bridge political, humanitarian and military concerns in strategic and operational terms, for one; and for another, in its established diplomatic **networks**, i.e. its relations with African and contributor countries' and partner organizations' counterparts.

Knowledge and Expertise

From the moment the Prime Minister's initiative was declared, DFAIT's senior management began recruiting its task force members, and many of them were selected on the basis of relevant professional experience and established expertise. The previous section examined the crisis management structure and indeed underlined the department's favourable disposition to seek out experienced resources.

It is important to recall that DFAIT had at headquarters, on November 10th 1996, seasoned personnel with expertise and operational knowledge of African conjunctures and issues, multilateral institutions, and crisis management. The existence of such a significant resource pool certainly points to the benefits of the department's rotational career path system.

If one is to speak of departmental readiness in terms of knowledge and expertise, then it is fair to say that neither the geographic nor the functional streams had, at the start, a clear sense of the requirements, new and familiar, which the Prime Minister's declaration of leadership would demand. Most interviewees agreed that the initiative's visibility placed unprecedented pressure and expectations on those involved.

Although prior crises had mobilized and challenged DFAIT's resources, this one required DFAIT to service the Prime Minister directly, rally the international community, set the stage for military deployment, and to deal with the field situation's unexpected and brisk twists and turns - all in a very short time frame and not least, under close domestic and international scrutiny.

Was DFAIT ready, in terms of knowledge and expertise, to tackle the multinational operation?

In many respects it was.

- GAF/GAFX and Posts had been keeping a close watch on the