

AFRICAN GREAT LAKES STUDY

Executive Summary

Introduction

This study, conducted under the Executive sponsorship of MME, sought to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of DFAIT's management of the African Great Lakes Crisis.

Profile

DFAIT mobilized a Task Force of key Functional and Geographic staff in response to the Prime Minister's announcement that Canada would pursue a United Nation's mandate to lead a multinational force in the African Great Lakes region. Working in cooperation with PCO, DND and CIDA, this department fulfilled a broad range of management, coordination, communication and analytic activities to gain approval of UN Resolution 1080 (1996) and corral the international community for the purposes of averting a humanitarian crisis.

Analysis

Objectives - The national goal (to mobilize a MNF) was interpreted with different slants, or emphasis within DFAIT. Agreed upon, DFAIT-specific objectives were not set, causing the focus to shift between the international community (and coordinating the MNF) and the contextual environment and events on the ground (in the AGL region). The issue can be represented in the question - '*was the department responding to a multinational crisis on African soil, or an African crisis requiring multinational involvement?*' This speaks to a 'duality of focus' which was represented in tensions between the Functional and Geographic divisions.

Results such as the return of the refugees and the avoidance of a humanitarian crisis are difficult to attribute. However, DFAIT's contribution, and success, is measurable in drafting the UN Resolution, providing political advice to the MNF Commander and Interdepartmental Task Force, as well as convening and chairing the International Steering Group.

Structure - DFAIT's Task Force was importantly non hierarchical, involving key staff and management in a collaborative decision making and delivery process. Some delay in formalizing the structure pointed to issues of a geographic versus multilateral lead role and the level of resourcing was not sustainable. The DFAIT Task Force was well linked to the Interdepartmental Task Force and International Steering Group.

Delivery - The delivery of DFAIT activities served to highlight DFAIT's value added, demonstrate concern with information and intelligence, and portray both strengths and weaknesses in communications.