

Canada AND Kosovo

A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION ON MANY FRONTS

Canada's efforts to resolve

the crisis in Kosovo have spanned the full spectrum. We engaged in diplomatic efforts to end the campaign of violence by the Yugoslav regime against its own civilians; we took part in military action after the failure of repeated efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement; and we are providing humanitarian assistance to victims of the disaster.

On the diplomatic front, Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy visited Moscow to discuss with Russia's leaders that country's role in brokering a peace deal, and he met with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to discuss the need for UN involvement. The Minister subsequently participated in meetings of G-8 Foreign Ministers; these led to the drafting and co-sponsoring of a resolution put before and adopted by the United Nations Security

Council. That resolution formed the basis of the peace agreement signed by the Yugoslav military on June 9.

A peace agreement is only the first step in what will be a long process of refugee resettlement and reconstruction. The international security force, including Canadian personnel, will monitor and enforce the demilitarization of Kosovo, and it will work to establish a secure environment for the international civil presence. To allow for re-integration into the European community of nations, there will also have to be a focus on strengthening democratic institutions, such as a viable police force and a credible justice system, and on good governance practices, an area where Minister Axworthy has indicated Canada is prepared to share expertise.

An RCMP-led forensic crime scene examination team will spend four weeks in the region assisting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in its investigation of crimes against humanity. The team will include police investigators, pathologists, photographers, and ballistics and mapping experts drawn primarily from the RCMP. Their mission will be to gather forensic and other evidence from the scenes of alleged atrocities, for submission to the Tribunal.

To assist with refugee resettlement, Canada and Belgium are jointly supporting a UN-led mission that will assess the impact of landmines in Kosovo. Mine experts will interview refugees and others



photos: CANAPRESS

to gain as much information as possible about mine placement and priority areas for demining to allow for resettlement.

Military action

Canada's military was praised for its effective contribution to the air campaign. Eighteen CF-18 aircraft of the Canadian Armed Forces flew combat missions from the NATO base in Aviano, Italy. In April, Prime Minister Chrétien announced that Canada would respond to a NATO request by sending 800 ground troops to the region for peacekeeping duty by late June. This figure was later raised to 1300.

Humanitarian assistance

Canada has supported the efforts of the international humanitarian agencies to provide basic necessities, such as food, water, shelter and medical supplies. Canadian Forces aircraft helped moved emergency supplies within the region and airlifted over 5000 refugees to Canada. From March to mid-June, Canada supplied more than \$35 million in humanitarian aid and \$10 million in economic assistance. A total of \$100 million was earmarked under

the Humanitarian Evacuation Program of the UN High Commission for Refugees, to bring refugees to Canada and help them resettle here. The government is also granting permanent entry to Canada to a number of Kosovar Albanians with relatives in this country, under the Family Reunification Program. ●



Minister Axworthy at Stenkovic 1 refugee camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, May 1, 1999

