12. Israel is reported to have sold South Africa such items as complete radar stations, electronic fences, anti-guerrilla infiltration and alarm systems, communications systems, computers and night-vision devices. "Israel's military industry is also providing South Africa with 105 mm. self-propelled howitzers, air-to-air rockets and anti-tank missiles for infantrymen". *Economist*, Nov. 1977, p. 68.
13. It is interesting to note that the South African Army Dog Training Battalion has provided so valuable a product that the 500 dogs and handlers currently trained are to be supplemented by greater numbers.
14. *Military Balance 1980-81*, op cit.
15. In comparison to the 5.98% GNP devoted to defence by South Africa, Canada pays 1.84%.
16. Denis Venter, "South Africa as an African Power: The Need for a Purposeful Detente Policy in Southern Africa", S. A. Institute of International Affairs, *Newsletter*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1976).
17. R.S.A., Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence 1977* (Cape Town, 1977), p.6
18. R.S.A. Department of Information, *South African News*, 16 Sept. 1977, p. 9
19. See, for instance, Jaster, op cit.
20. See *Cape Times*, 27 Oct 1978.
21. Johnson, op cit, p. 320.
22. See Paul Moorcraft, "Towards the Garrison State", in F. Clifford-Vaughan, ed., *International Pressure and Political Change in South Africa*, (Oxford, 1978).
23. Gervenka and Rogers, p. 348.
24. *South African Digest*, (Pretoria), 8 Apr. 1977, p. 3.

ORGANIZATION, SELECTION AND TRAINING OF NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAMS — A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

by

David Charters

In the aftermath of the skilful and dramatic hostage rescue operation at the Iranian embassy in London in May 1980, questions were raised concerning Canada's ability to respond in similar situations. It was pointed out that Canada does not at present possess any force equivalent to the Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, the British unit that effected the London rescue. Government spokesmen expressed confidence that the general military training of the armed forces would provide "the capability to cope with most contingencies".[1] This writer is concerned that Canada should be able to cope with *all* contingencies, and is on record in urging our government to consider the creation of a National Response Team to deal with incidents of politically-motivated violence which exceed the response capabilities of ordinary police forces.[2] In an earlier article in this journal[3] it was noted that rescue operations on the London model were the products of constant individual and unit training to

a high standard — a standard that cannot be met from hastily-assembled volunteers or part-time service and training. This article will outline the organization, selection and training of the SAS and its West German counterpart, with a view to suggesting an appropriate model for a Canadian National Response Team.

The SAS

The Iranian embassy siege was broken by a Counter-Revolutionary Warfare (CRW) team from 22 SAS, a regular regiment of the British Army. First raised to carry out operations behind enemy lines during the Second World War, the regiment was disbanded at the end of the war, then raised again in Malaya where it was employed in deep patrol action during the Emergency. 22 SAS was subsequently active in many theatres, sometimes operating at squadron strength, sometimes as individuals or small teams sent to train special forces and presidential bodyguards in third world countries.[4] Individual members of the regiment served in intelligence staff positions in Northern Ireland from 1972, and since 1976 several squadrons have been deployed in the province, carrying out covert operations against the Provisional Irish Republican Army.[5] Action in the most dangerous areas, such as South Armagh, has kept the SAS up-to-date on anti-terrorist techniques and the CRW teams of 22 SAS provide Britain's domestic anti-terrorist capability.

The regiment has a small headquarters in London, commanded by a brigadier, from which liaison with the Ministry of Defence and other government departments (in particular, the Home Office) is carried out and the regiment administered. 22 SAS is based in Hereford, near the Welsh border, and this base contains the operational headquarters of the regular component, the selection and training branch, a research and development group and 22 SAS itself. 22 SAS is organized with a headquarters, signals squadron and four sabre squadrons. Each sabre squadron consists of about 80 men divided into four troops. The total establishment of 22 SAS is probably no more than 750 men.[6]

The CRW wing was created as part of the training branch in the late 1960's and after 1972 was given responsibility for all aspects of training with respect to hostage rescue, including collection of information about terrorist techniques. The CRW task is assigned to each squadron on rotation, between duty in Northern Ireland and missions abroad. While assigned to the mission, the CRW squadron undergoes a refresher course and carries out a siege-breaking exercise monthly, followed by a prolonged debrief. In order to ensure continuity of readiness and expertise, the departing squadron remains on standby for a limited period to assist the successor squadron as it takes on the CRW task.[7]

High performance is ensured by rigorous selection and training standards. The regiment has only a small permanent command and training cadre; all the rest are volunteers from regular regiments of the British Army. Most who are selected are in their late twenties with several years of soldiering behind them. The SAS looks for a soldier who is assertive, self-disciplined, above average in intelligence, able to work unsupervised and for long periods in isolation, and who has stamina, patience and a sense of humour. Consequently, the selection process emphasizes spiritual or mental toughness as much as physical fitness. The six month selection course includes fitness training, basic fieldcraft and

weapons skills, an army parachuting course and three weeks of combat survival training. During this latter phase, which is designed to stretch men psychologically and physically, the volunteers are taught bush survival, escape and evasion, and are subjected to various interrogation techniques. The final rejection of doubtful candidates occurs at the end of this exercise, and all those who make the grade are "badged", that is, they become members of the SAS. Training goes on within the unit. Specialist courses in signals, languages, medical techniques, explosives, pistol shooting and winter warfare will continue for nearly another eighteen months. During this time the new soldier is assigned to one of the troops of a sabre squadron specializing either in small boat operations, mountain climbing, free fall parachuting or long-distance overland navigation in land rovers. Even after this the new member would probably see active service, in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, before assignment to a CRW team. After a three year tour with the SAS, officers tend to go back to their regiments, while a number of enlisted men "re-up" for continued service.[8]

The high standards and valuable practical experience of the SAS made it an obvious model for other security forces, notably the West German Grenzschutzgruppe 9 (GSG9). The principal difference between the two forces is that the SAS is a regular army unit while GSG9 is a para-military police force.

The GSG9

Law enforcement in West Germany is almost exclusively a provincial responsibility. Each province has its own Ministry of the Interior and several police forces. The primary responsibility for dealing with crisis situations has fallen on the emergency police forces based in these provinces. The federal role in law enforcement is carried out by three agencies: the federal criminal investigation department and the Office for Protection of the Constitution, which are mainly concerned with intelligence collection and analysis, and the Federal Border Guard (Bundesgrenzschutz). Because the West German constitution does not permit the armed forces to undertake internal security duties, the constitution was amended in 1972 to allow the Border Guard to fulfill this role when so requested by the provincial ministries.[9]

Following the terrorist attack at the Munich Olympics in 1972, the Border Guard formed a special unit, known as Group 9, for the purpose of combatting terrorism.[10] The force consists of 177 senior police officers, organized as follows:[11]

1. Command Element — a small headquarters under the direction of a colonel, plus an intelligence section which collects information from federal agencies. If necessary, the headquarters is mobile.
2. Four operational units, each consisting of 30 men, sub-divided into a command section and five special service sections.
3. Communications and documentation unit.
4. Three technical groups, and supply and maintenance services.

GSG9 draws its recruits from the provincial police forces, the Border Guard and the armed forces, on a volunteer basis, for up to five years. A two day selection period eliminates about half the potential recruits. They receive seven and half months of training in two phases; three months of basic physical and

psychological training, and four and a half months of training in specialist skills. The latter include close quarter combat, tactical teamwork, weapons, communications, explosives and disposal, scuba diving and airborne operations. Recruits also take courses in law and police procedures, medical techniques, evasive driving, theories of terrorism and guerrilla warfare, and airport and aircraft familiarization. Training exercises emphasize the psychological aspect and joint exercises are carried out with the security forces from the provinces.[12] The GSG9 has been used only once on its own (the hijack-hostage rescue at Mogadishu), but has been called in to assist local forces in some routine law enforcement operations. Such actions help maintain morale and conditioning, and give practical experience to the unit.

Canadian Considerations

It is possible that Canada may be spared the kind of political violence which has plagued Britain and West Germany, although current international trends give little cause for optimistic assessments. Prudence suggests that our ability to react effectively should not be left to chance: a National Response Team is a necessary investment. If this is agreed, the next decision would concern composition. Should the team be provided by the Canadian Armed Forces or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)? As a federal force the RCMP is in a position analogous to that of the West German Border Guard, but unlike the German force it also provides the provincial police for eight of Canada's ten provinces. The RCMP has already developed Emergency Response Teams to deal with gun calls, barricaded persons and hostage incidents of a criminal nature and these teams are stationed in various regions of the country.[13] On the face of it, a good case could be made to create a National Response Team from RCMP resources. There are, however, practical considerations which mitigate against this course of action. The high standards of performance demonstrated by the SAS and the GSG9 obtained from constant training and practical experience related directly to the hostage rescue/siege-breaking task. In terms of both manpower and finance, could the RCMP afford to detach several hundred policemen for long periods to prepare for a task which bears no relation to normal police work? Such long separations might be harmful to the individual policeman's career, but short-term attachments or intermittent training would not produce a unit of the desired high standard. Furthermore, jurisdictional disputes could arise from deployment of an RCMP-based National Response Team. Provinces and municipalities guard jealously their prerogatives in law enforcement, even where the RCMP itself provides the force of local or provincial jurisdiction. Difficulties could arise easily over command and control of the unit while on operations in a particular province and financial responsibility for its upkeep and operations. Furthermore, any major terrorist incident could quickly involve federal departments,[14] and thus lead to a clash of jurisdiction, command and responsibility. Finally, the assignment of policemen to an essentially para-military task would raise questions about the sort of public image the RCMP would wish to project. The Canadian public may be accustomed to the fact that our policemen carry and use firearms, but one is forced to wonder if they would be prepared to accept an even more violent role for the men in scarlet.

The creation of a specialist unit within the armed forces would, on the other hand, enhance existing capabilities for general war operations by providing a compatible peace-time role and a sense of mission. The more soldiers cycled through the special force the greater would be the benefit to the armed forces as a whole. The siege-breaking anti-terrorist role is, after all, essentially a military one. Many of the skills, techniques and expertise required for such operations already reside in the armed forces, however dispersed at present through different arms and services. Appropriate base and training facilities exist in various parts of the country and military air transport, both tactical and strategic, is readily available to move men, vehicles and equipment. Moreover, the jurisdictional problems associated with deploying the RCMP in such a role should not accrue to use of the armed forces since, under the *National Defence Act*,the armed forces may be used "in aid of the civil power" in any province simply at the request of that government. Channels of authority and responsibility are already defined.[15]

Whatever shape such a force might take, the organization, selection and training would be a lengthy process. It should not be attempted lightly or in haste. At the same time, we may hope that Canada will not have to suffer a Munich-type disaster before the Government decides to act.

Footnotes

1. Quoted Robert Sheppard, "No Canadian Counterpart to Britain's Air Service Commandos", *Globe and Mail*, 12 May 1980.
2. David Charters, Address to New Brunswick Association of Chiefs of Police, 14 May 1980.
3. David Charters, "Swift and Bold: An Appraisal of Hostage Rescue Operations", *Conflict Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 1 (1980), pp. 26-33.*
4. Tony Geraghty, *Who Dares Wins: the Story of the Special Air Service, 1950-1980* (London, 1980) provides a detailed account and analysis of SAS operations since the Second World War.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-52.
6. *Ibid., pp. 214, 216.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-70, 173-74.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-214.
9. "Statement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on Internal Security", 29 Apr. 1975; Udo Philipp, "Combatting Terrorism in Federal Germany", *International Defense Review*, no. 6 (1979), pp. 999-1001.
10. Colonel Ulrich Wegener, Commander, GSG9, in E. F. Gueritz et. al., eds., *Ten Years of Terrorism: Collected Views* (London, 1979), pp. 133-34.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-36; Philipp, p. 1001.
12. Wegener, pp. 135, 137-38; Philipp, p. 1001.
13. See Edward H. Scissons, Frank M. Topp, "Emergency Response Team: Part I: Selection, Part II: Training", *RCMP Gazette*, vol. 40, no.'s 3-4 (1978), for an evaluation of the standards applied by the RCMP
14. See Robin Bourne, "Terrorist Incident Management and Jurisdictional Issues: a Canadian Perspective", *Terrorism: an International Journal.*, vol. 1, no.'s 3 & 4 (1978), pp. 307-13.
15. See Brigadier General H. A. McLearn, "Canadian Arrangements for Aid to the Civil Power", *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, vol. 1 (1971), pp. 26-31.