

From

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Peacekeeping: The Canadian Context

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Canadians were at the beginning of peacekeeping. You might say that peacekeeping is in the Canadian DNA. It is similar to diplomacy, mediation, conciliation and understanding other people's points of view in an international context: we just happen to be good at it – or we used to be. Let us look at the historical record, the current complex situation and finally at Canada's present embarrassing position.

At the height of the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, with our allies invading Egypt, Canada's foreign minister, Lester B. Pearson, proposed a resolution at the UN to set up a peacekeeping force to separate the belligerents and help ease Britain and France out of the war. As the former President of the UN General Assembly, Pearson was listened to. It took only a week to create the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) and, in effect, to save a critical situation at the time. Today it can take up to a year to put an emergency force in the field. Pearson and Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld together set up the parameters for the new type of force which was not even contemplated by the UN Charter. It would be based on the principles and practices of consent of the belligerents, monitoring, impartiality, non-use of force, and lightly- armed peacekeepers.

Such peacekeeping operations would have the multiple benefits of being impartial, being confidence-builders in conflict zones, providing transparency, and establishing and policing a buffer zone. They were designed to combine war-like enforcement with peace-like negotiation. They became a signature activity of the United Nations.

In the 1990s the Security Council went beyond the narrow task of 'keeping the peace' to actually using force for 'peace-making' or 'peace enforcement'. More recently, a third generation of multidimensional 'peace-building' has evolved which includes in its operations not only peace-enforcement but also long-term international support for the redevelopment of institutions and finances in failed states and the monitoring of elections.

This multidimensional approach aims to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, promote human rights, support elections, restore the rule of law, and assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. In most instances peace operations are to overcome civil wars.

Peacekeeping has become an essential element of international security in a globalized world. That is why an October 2016 CTV survey indicated that almost 70 per cent of Canadians supported deploying Canadian forces in UN peacekeeping missions.

By August 2017, there were 16 UN-led missions in the field at an annual cost of \$8.2 billion U.S. They include 112,000 military, civilian administrators and police. Thus, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the UN Secretariat now supervises more personnel in the field than any single country. For years Canada contributed the largest contingent. But since the 1990s, Canada's numbers have dwindled to 30 military personnel and 58 police. We now rank 71st among contributors. It was no doubt to rectify this embarrassing situation that more than a year ago the Trudeau government promised to create a contingent of 600 military and 150 police with a three year budget of CAD \$450 million. Apparently there have been several requests from the UN but at the time of writing (October 2017) Canada has still not sent a contingent to fulfil its promise. This is despite the fact that in November 2017 Canada will be hosting the 3rd UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Forum in Vancouver, with the participation of hundreds of delegates from around the world.

So there we have the context for the Canadian experience in peacekeeping – past, present and future. There is a compelling case for Canada doing more to fulfil its responsibilities. We are needed by the UN and by the world. We have special capabilities. Canada has never been a colonizer. Our forces speak two languages and are trained for both peace and war. We can handle modern communications. We have the planes, helicopters, land transport and specialized personnel. Around the world, people are not averse to welcoming Canadians – especially when they are in need. Doing more will make Canadians proud.

In an interview published on Sept. 28, 2017, the Globe and Mail asked the former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, why Canada had failed to win a seat on the Security Council in 2014. He replied that members of the UN did not much appreciate the foreign policy of our former Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. Then he added, "I am hopeful Canada can be elected next time (for a two-year seat in 2021-22). That's the general expectation. Prime Minister Trudeau has been seen as a leading voice in the international community on humanitarian and peace and security issues, and even refugee issues." We should note that the former Secretary-General specified peace and security issues. Justin Trudeau and the Liberals should note it also. How can we hold up our heads, how can we fulfil international expectations, if we do not soon carry out our promises to provide peacekeepers, policy, money, equipment and up-graded training. Only then, as Trudeau promised, will we be able to claim that "Canada is back."

In this short publication, our authors tell us the why and how of peacekeeping. Canada's former Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy links peacekeeping with the problems of refugees and migration. Prof. Jocelyn Coulon, former advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, tells us why Canada should send its peacekeeping mission to Mali. Monique Cuillerier of the World Federalists discusses Canada's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. WFM – Canada President, Prof. Walter Dorn writes about Canada's peacekeeping past and the need to fulfill current commitments. Peter Langille, a leading thinker on the challenges faced by the UN, discusses standing forces and rapid deployment. Former Disarmament Ambassador, Peggy Mason, writes about the UN organization's comparative advantages as a peacekeeper. And two of Canada's best-known former "uniformed" peacekeeping personnel, RCMP Chief Superintendent (Ret.) Dave Beer and Brigadier-General (Ret.) Greg Mitchell, discuss Canadian contributions to UN police peacekeeping and to peacekeeping training,

respectively. And Beth Woroniuk discusses how the UN can do more to address sexual abuse on peace operations. But all these specialized topics should not impede us from raising our voices to remind the government about Canada's responsibility for peacekeeping.