

Peacekeeping, Peace building, Human Security, and Self-Interest: Why Canada Remains the Prolific Peacekeeper

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Introduction

In 1957, the venerable Canadian diplomat and politician, Lester B. Pearson, received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of the role he played in creating the United Nations Emergency Force the previous year. Since then, successive Canadian governments and the public alike have wrapped themselves around the peacekeeping concept. They have yet to let go, as evinced by Canada's participation in nearly every United Nations peacekeeping mission as well as many other missions sponsored by non-UN bodies. Despite the popular belief that it became enmeshed in peacekeeping for altruistic reasons, Canada in fact was not so selfless. Canada's participation in Cold War peacekeeping operations can be explained by the fact that such participation actually served the interests of national security. In essence, Canada sought to use peacekeeping during the Cold War as a means to prevent regional brushfires from becoming superpower showdowns and to avoid breakdowns in the NATO alliance.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, Canada finds itself no longer bound by Cold War security interests. As such, the necessity to send troops on every peacekeeping mission has diminished. Why is it then that Canada remains the prolific peacekeeper? This essay posits that, while Canada's national security appears less threatened in the post-Cold War, Canada's participation in the 'new' era of peacekeeping continues to serve the national interest.

Post-cold War peacekeeping and its integral component, peacebuilding, cannot be viewed in isolation of Canada's current foreign policy focal point - Human Security. Furthermore, despite views to the contrary that label Human Security as incongruent with traditional Canadian foreign policy goals and methods, this is not the case. Human Security actually seeks to achieve many of the same goals, using many of the same techniques as traditional post-war Canadian foreign policy. In essence, Canada continues to be the prolific peacekeeper because peacekeeping and peacebuilding are linked to Human Security, and Human Security serves the national interest. The rationale for participating in the 'new' peacekeeping, like Cold War peacekeeping, is not so selfless.

To prove this thesis, this essay will first summarize the origins of traditional peacekeeping and provide Canada's rationale for participating. Next, the different nature of peacekeeping in the post-Cold War will be explained. For example, peacekeeping has occurred more frequently, in areas where violence is extant, and where no tangible threat to Canada's national security appear to exist. To explain why Canada continues to be involved in the 'new' era of peacekeeping, the link between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and Human Security will be presented. It will be made clear that Human Security, of which peacekeeping and peacebuilding are essential parts, does in fact seek to advance Canada's traditional post-1945 foreign policy goals by using many of the same traditional post-war methods. In essence, whereas peacekeeping during the Cold War

can best be explained as serving the national interest, so too can Canada's continued affection for the concept.

Traditional Cold War Peacekeeping and Canada

The UN conducted modestly staffed peace-observer missions in the Balkans, Korea, the Middle East, and India and Pakistan (Kashmir) between 1947 and 1953. When President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956, a chain of events followed that led to the creation of a peacekeeping operation that rested on a scale never seen before.

While the Arab world rejoiced over Nasser's precipitous action, the British did not, recognizing that they stood to lose out economically as a result. The British government under Prime Minister Eden wanted Nasser to accept the terms of the Suez Canal Users' Association (SCUA) plan, which allowed canal users to employ their own pilots and "pay dues to Egypt as they saw fit." Nasser, of course, refused. The British cabinet equated this refusal as justification for the use of force. The French (struggling to suppress a rebellion in Algeria) and Israel (the Arab nemesis) both eagerly conspired with Britain to attack Egypt and regain control of the canal.

On October 29th, Israel invaded Egypt through the Sinai. With the aid of the French who air-dropped supplies to the Israelis, Egypt was quickly overmatched. Concomitant with the attack and according to plan, the British and French seized control of the canal, ostensibly acting as a 'police force' to keep the canal open during this crisis situation. The US, outraged at the surreptitious actions of its NATO and Israeli allies, introduced a resolution in the Security Council calling for the British, French, and Israelis to withdraw from Egyptian territory. The Russians, allied with Egypt, followed suit by introducing a similar resolution. France and Britain vetoed both Security Council resolutions. Due to the impotence of the Council, the UN General Assembly voiced their opinion, passing a resolution on November 7th, which called for the conspirators to withdraw.

Canadian Under-Secretary for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, devised a plan to rectify the situation by replacing the French and British 'police force' with a UN force. The British were not quite ready to leave, preferring to use their presence as a bargaining chip with Nasser. After the General Assembly passed a motion to censure Britain and France on November 23 by a margin of 63 to 5 (with 10 abstentions), the jig was up. The condemnation of the international community, which included their own allies, finally forced the conspirators "to admit – albeit not always publicly – that their military initiatives had been ill-judged, counterproductive and in violation of international law." After being publicly humiliated on the world stage, the British, French, and Israelis warmed up to Pearson's idea.

Pearson's brainchild, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), was designed to supervise the withdrawal of French, British, and Israeli forces from the Sinai. With Nasser's permission, the UNEF forces were deployed on Egyptian territory, acting as a buffer between the Egyptian and Israeli forces by "patrolling the demarcation line and the international frontier south of the Gaza Strip." The peacekeepers were lightly armed, and only permitted to fire in self-defense. The nations who supplied the peacekeepers were intended to be impartial; the peacekeepers were not in the business of determining an aggressor. The peacekeepers were not there to solve the

conflict, but merely to supervise the withdrawal of troops and give the hostile parties breathing space to find a solution on their own. Although not mentioned in the actual UN Charter (but referred to by many since as Chapters 6½), classical or traditional peacekeeping under UN auspices was born. The overall success of the mission is debatable. While the last Israel soldiers did vacate the area in March 1957, Egypt requested that UNEF leave in May of 1967, when war between Israel and Egypt appeared imminent once again.

In addition to the central role Pearson's played in creating UNEF, Canada contributed heavily to the force, supplying 1007 of the 6073 peacekeepers. The question is why did Canada take such an interest in this conflict? Was it because Canada was/is simply the international 'boy scout', overcome with the desire to do good for the world? No, Canada had very real security interests to protect. Without UNEF, the situation could have easily escalated to the point where the Soviets might get involved in support of Egypt, perhaps forcing the US to react in kind on the part of Israel. A superpower showdown, something that everyone including Canada wanted to avoid, could have resulted. Tom Keating explains:

Peacekeeping was "not designed to be used at all in uncompromising conflicts between the rival power blocs, but instead for conflicts amongst smaller powers, in non-bloc areas, and in situations where the great powers might find their hardcore interests so little threatened that international intervention might be preferable to unilateral interventions which could lead to unwanted superpower confrontations."

Peacekeepers were supposed to be impartial, but Canada possessed strong historical ties to Great Britain. Nasser's demand that the first Canadian contingent sent to the region, the *Queen's Own Rifles*, return home because they looked too British attests to that fact. Furthermore, Canada was clearly sided with the West during the Cold War, and alliance considerations played a role in its interest to resolve this particular conflict. Britain and France were NATO allies and they were in a jam. By alleviating the British and French of their 'police' duties, UNEF allowed them a means to disengage from the situation with perhaps the veneer of honour. Furthermore, as the US was extremely miffed at the British and French for taking military action without their knowledge or approval, relations in the alliance were in a bad state. Pearson's success at stabilizing the situation made it easier for the British and French to repair the damage they caused with the mighty US. Such a rift in the alliance could have easily eroded NATO's effectiveness at a most inauspicious time given the Cold War was at full steam. Pearson's quick thinking provided an opportunity for wounds in the alliance to heal. This was extremely important considering NATO was at the heart of Canadian security.

Future Cold War peacekeeping missions also served Canadian security interests. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNICYP) that maintains law and order (1964-present) is a prime example. In March 1964, a dispute between two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, was coming to a boil in the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. "The Greek Cypriot leadership of the newly independent nation was at loggerheads with the Turkish minority. A war between Athens and Ankara would have destroyed NATO's position in the Mediterranean and gravely weakened the West." When plans for a NATO or Commonwealth force collapsed, Canada played an instrumental role in the creation of a United Nations peacekeeping force, mandated to defuse and stabilize the situation. Canada provided 1126 of the 6410 troops, and succeeded once again to preserve the integrity of NATO as war between the allies was averted. President Johnson of the US was extremely grateful, and asked Pearson "if there was anything he could do for him in

return. Not at the moment was the prime minister's reply." Canada, it appears, could also seek to gain material advantages for its efforts.

Other Cold War missions where Canada employed the traditional tenets of peacekeeping to either avoid a superpower confrontation or provide protection for its allies include: UNIPOM (UN India-Pakistan Observation Mission - supervise cease-fire in 1965-66), UNEF II (supervise deployment of Israeli and Egyptian forces from 1973-79), ICCS (International Commission for Control and Supervision (non-UN) – supervise truce in South Vietnam), and UNDOF (UN Disengagement Force – supervise cease-fire and redeployment of Israeli and Syrian forces in the Golan Heights area from 1974-present).

While this type of peacekeeping has not been discontinued in the post-Cold War era, disputes of a different nature dominated the 1990s. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Canada no longer had an identifiable enemy. One might have concluded that Canada would take advantage of this, and reduce its peacekeeping role. In actual fact, Canada undertook more missions in the first half of the 1990s than it did throughout the whole period of the Cold War. Why? Before answering that question, it is necessary to first describe the features of peacekeeping in the post-Cold War.

'New' Peacekeeping and Canada

The New World Order is not the tranquil place many had hoped it to be, and peacekeeping methods of the Cold War did not suit the new realities. A 'new' form of peacekeeping developed in an era where internal conflicts were prevalent, where cease-fires may not exist, and where success has been hard to come by. As stated by Andrew Cooper, this 'new' form of peacekeeping comprised three major changes compared to peacekeeping during the Cold War: 1) more peacekeeping operations, 2) an expanded and more dangerous form of the operations, and 3) an emphasis on 'humanitarian intervention' in many of the operations.

First, the post-Cold War has seen a significant increase in the number of missions, most involving internal conflicts. "Between 1991 and the end of 1996, 24 new peacekeeping missions were set up, six more than the total established during the previous 43 years. At the peak of UN activity in the mid-1990s, there were 80,000 UN peacekeepers deployed around the globe." Approximately a dozen more missions were established in the latter half of the decade. As of October 1, 2000, the UN was sponsoring 15 peace support missions, utilizing 37,888 military personnel and civilian police. Canada has remained committed, but its overall level of participation has dropped. Canada is now ranked 26th by the UN among contributing countries with 27 military observers, 116 civilian police, and 189 troops in the field. Canada may still be referred to as the prolific peacekeeper however, if you add the 2200 Canadian peacekeepers presently engaged in non-UN peace operations. Furthermore, Canadian personnel are involved in 10 of 15 UN missions in place today.

Obviously, conflict did not disappear with the fall of the Soviet Union. Many disputes, particularly of an intra-state nature and previously restrained by the East/West rivalry, reawakened with renewed vigor. Andrew Cooper elucidates the point: "A variety of new peacekeeping operations were prompted by precisely the kind of disputes that had been frozen by

the Cold War, involving as they did long-suppressed rivalries and urges of self-determination." Bloody tribal, social, and ethnic clashes in Somalia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia are prime examples.

In the early 1990s, a greater willingness on the part of Americans and Russia to co-operate developed. With veto powers set aside, the Security Council became more effective. This increased co-operation led to a more pronounced will to intervene, as explicitly endorsed at the Security Council summit of January 1992. While this accommodating relationship between the US and Russia has depreciated somewhat in recent years, the UN has continued to create new missions.

Second, peacekeeping has moved beyond the traditional tenets laid out in UNEF, and missions have become more dangerous to peacekeepers as a result. It is no longer mandatory for peacekeepers to simply serve as a buffer while the belligerents work out a negotiated settlement. Peacekeepers often intervene without the permission of the belligerents or governments. Unclear boundaries between opposing forces, irregular forces outside central control, and unsupported cease-fires are common traits of modern intrastate conflicts. As a consequence, violence and danger figure more prominently in the 'new' era of peacekeeping. Professor Joseph T. Jockel explains:

First, as in Somalia, international peacekeepers themselves have resorted to the use of violence in order to protect the local population and maintain order. In doing so, they have undertaken functions that normally would belong to local authorities. Second, peacekeeping operations arising from internal conflicts can be much more dangerous for peacekeepers. In Somalia, peacekeepers have suffered from direct, sometimes deadly attack. But it can also be the case even when they are not themselves the direct target of violence, as has chiefly and dramatically been the case in the former Yugoslavia.

It should be noted that intra-state conflicts did exist during the Cold War, but given that the superpowers were often backing opposite sides of the unrest, international responses were for the most part held captive. However, the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC), given the task of maintaining law and order (1960-64) in a civil war, was one Cold War peacekeeping mission that resembled the majority of operations in the 1990s. It is remembered as a massive failure: the conflict was not resolved, many peacekeepers died (along with the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld whose plane was shot down over the Congo in 1961), and the UN almost went bankrupt due to the mission's exorbitant cost. A mere aberration during the Cold War, the Congo mission proved to be a harbinger of things to come.

Third, 'humanitarian intervention' has received wider interest in the post-Cold War era. In the words of Major Brad M. Bergstrand of the Canadian Armed Forces:

In practice the 'new' peacekeeping has been tied largely to conflict resolution through intervention rather than conflict containment, giving rise to infinitely more complex operations, with a far broader scope of action. These operations have been characterized as a combination of effective military and civilian personnel; most likely involved in an internal conflict with human rights aspects; with a time-limited mandate; often leading to democratic elections.

Peacebuilding, the rebuilding of war-torn societies along democratic lines, has become a central feature of the 'new' peacekeeping. In fact, Canada set aside \$10 million each for fiscal years

1997/98 and 1998/99 to support specific Canadian peacebuilding measures. This money has been used to send civilians from Elections Canada to monitor foreign elections. The RCMP have been used to monitor, train, and reform local police forces. Peacebuilding often encompasses instituting democratic values like justice and the rule of law. Hunting down and holding those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity has become a new part of the peacekeeping equation. Non-governmental organizations, like the Canadian Red Cross, have worked with peacekeepers to distribute food and medicine to civilians caught in the middle of hostilities. This has often been a dangerous task, as the warring factions have shown a keen interest in hi-jacking the supplies for their own ends.

During the UN Missions in Somalia (UNOSOM), for example, warlord forces intercepted convoys on a regular basis, stealing supplies and equipment from the peacekeepers. Stymied by the restriction to fire only when fired upon and forbidden to seek out the perpetrators, the peacekeepers could only wait for the next raid to occur. Originally designed to distribute humanitarian aid, mission creep set in, and Somalia became a full-blown peace enforcement mission under Chapter VII with the peacekeepers chasing down warlords. The failure to restore order, concomitant with the death of numerous peacekeepers, led to the mission's demise in 1995. Somalia has only recently begun to rebuild its governmental system.

Why has Canada supported such dangerous operations in areas where threats to its own territory are absent? To explain this, one must not look at peacekeeping and peacebuilding in isolation of Canada's overall Human Security agenda. As stated on Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website:

The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately, peacebuilding aims at building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, the rule of law, sustainable development, and equitable access to resources.

As peacebuilding and its partner, peacekeeping, are intricately linked to Human Security, one must consider why Canada supports Human Security in order to determine why Canada remains the prolific peacekeeper. The next section of this essay will do just that. In the end, it will be made clear that Human Security, and subsequently peacekeeping and peacebuilding, not only serve Canada's interests, but also serve the same goals and utilize many of the same methods of traditional post-1945 Canadian foreign policy.

The Human Security Link: Why Canada's remains the Prolific Peacekeeper

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Lloyd Axworthy's defines Human Security, Canada's current foreign policy focus, as follows:

It is, in essence, an effort to construct a global Society where the safety of the individual is at the centre of international priorities and a motivating force for international action; where international human standards and the rule of law area advanced and woven into a coherent web protecting the individual; where those who violate these standards are held fully accountable; and where our global, regional and bilateral institutions – present and future – are built and equipped to enhance and enforce these standards.

Human Security has been criticized as 'Pulpit Diplomacy', 'foreign policy for wimps', and contra to conventional Canadian Foreign Policy goals and methods. The truth is that Human

Security does coincide with much of Canada's post-1945 foreign policy tradition. Human Security seeks the same self-interested goals and employs many of the same methods to achieve them. The difference is that Human Security broadens the concept of security and employs other methods not used during the Cold War to attain Canada's foreign policy goals. Furthermore, as peacekeeping and peacebuilding are intricately associated with the non-altruistic Human Security package, it logically follows that Canada has remained the prolific peacekeeper because it benefits from doing so, as it benefited from traditional peacekeeping during the Cold War.

Three themes received emphasis over the last fifty years in Canadian Foreign Policy: the promotion of international peace and security, the projection of Canadian values abroad, and domestic growth through trade. To achieve these goals, Canada has worked primarily through multilateral institutions, pursuing a liberal internationalist foreign policy. Decision-makers in Ottawa believed that the interests of a middle-power, trading-state like Canada could best be served by an active foreign policy seeking global stability through the creation and enhancement of an international rules-based system. The functional principle, which takes into account a state's interests and resources when a particular issue area is discussed, has also served Canada well. Human Security does not wish to abandon these traditional Canadian Foreign Policy goals or approaches. It merely seeks to expand upon them in recognition of changes in the global environment.

Human Security certainly aids in Canada's pursuit of global peace and security, but not just in the traditional sense, which focused on military and political aspects of security. During the Cold War, the avoidance of World War III and the destruction of the planet were paramount in the minds of Canadian foreign policy decision-makers, overriding all other issues. Peacekeeping was utilized because it was a realistic option for a middle-power like Canada to use to keep the superpowers apart and the NATO alliance together. The fall of the Soviet Union changed this emphasis, but dangers to global peace and security did not disappear.

Continued inter- and intra-state conflict, along with the negative effects of globalization and rapid increases in technology, has meant that the world remains a dangerous place. To cope with these threats more effectively, Human Security broadens the concept of security to encompass social, economic, and environmental variables in addition to the military and political. Peacebuilding supports Human Security in this regard. For example, the peacebuilding goal of spreading democratic values is a political one. Since democracies rarely fight each other, peacebuilding can be seen here as aiding the effort of global peace. Human Security also deals with the new threats to the peace by elevating the status of individuals to that of states. The 'new' peacekeeping, while not ignorant of inter-state conflicts, has moved with Human Security to seek peace within states and to protect individuals. For example, the recent peacekeeping missions in East Timor and Sierra Leone gave peacekeepers the right to use force to protect civilians for the first time in history. Human Security, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding may not be facing the same threats or respond in the exact manner, but they do seek the traditional Canadian foreign policy goal of global peace and security.

With respect to the promotion of Canadian values abroad, it is undeniable that democracy, good governance, human rights, the rule of law, and prosperity through sustainable development are not only Canadian values, but also goals of both traditional foreign policy and Human Security.

Via the peacebuilding process, which promotes all of these concepts, Canada's is doing more to promote Canadian values than was ever possible during the Cold War.

As for the goal of domestic prosperity through trade, the kind of secure global environment that Human Security seeks to create also benefits trade. In line with traditional Canadian Foreign Policy thinking, an anarchic world with restricted trade routes and severe price fluctuations due to global instability are not conducive to trade, and therefore not in Canada's interest. Also, societies ruined by civil war and environmental disaster are less able to buy the products we wish to export. Peacebuilding, by rebuilding infrastructure and supplying humanitarian aid, serves to help states get back on their feet so they can buy more Canadian goods. In Axworthy's own words: "For Canadians, human security means a safer, less expensive and more receptive world. Our own security and prosperity require global stability."

A liberal internationalist methodology, achieved primarily through multilateral institutions, that encourages rules-based systems have helped Canada pursue increased global stability, global democracy, and domestic prosperity since 1945. This remains true in the post-Cold War. The 1995 DFAIT publication, *Canada and the World*, states:

Clearly defined rules allow us to plan commitments and activities with reasonable certainty that our expectations about the surrounding environment will not be upset by arbitrary and erratic changes. Perhaps even more importantly, agreed rules help to diminish the capacity of those with the greatest raw influence to bend society – and the international community – to their own ends.

Canada will continue to utilize state-dominated multilateral institutions whenever possible, as exemplified by its commitment to UN, NATO, and OAS peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. Human Security will, however, move beyond state organizations to get the job done. Peacebuilding's use of both civilian police to train locals in law enforcement and NGOs to distribute aid are two examples. In complete accordance with the past, peacebuilding strives to establish international rules and norms. The war crime tribunals in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the push for ratification of the Rome Treaty to establish the International Criminal Court are Human Security as well as rules-based initiatives. As such Human Security and peacebuilding do support the liberal internationalist tradition in Canadian foreign policy.

The functional principle is another realistic measure employed by Canada to assert its status as a middle power. According to Alex Morrison, the functional principle:

holds that countries which have played a notable role in any successful and significant event ought to be included, to the extent commensurate with their contributions, in any post-event development. Further, countries which possess expertise in a particular domain ought to be permitted to apply that expertise for the benefit of the international community... The principle has helped smaller-than-major countries such as Canada to ensure that they are represented in international activities at a level consistent with the contribution they are particularly suited to make.

The functional principle has been applied extensively since Canada's sacrifices in World War I earned it the right to sign the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. During the Cold War, Canada gained respect and leadership opportunities around the world as a result of its commitment to peacekeeping. This has not changed. Human Security's activist agenda relies on Canada's continued peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts to attain more influence in the future. "The seat at the table today...comes through being willing to take the severe risks of entering with

military forces into highly dangerous conflict situations, such as Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, to bring protection to the people of those regions." The functional principle is as alive today as it was for Canada at Versailles, with the emphasis now on peacekeepers, both military and civilian, to attain those coveted seats at the table.

Conclusion

Canada is not now, and never has been, the 'boy scout' peacekeeper, driven simply to do good for the world. Classical peacekeeping, since its promulgation in 1956 and throughout the Cold War, served the purposes of Canadian foreign policy well by keeping the superpowers apart and NATO together. The collapse of the Soviet Union transformed the global security environment, and peacekeeping was redesigned to meet the new challenges. By viewing this 'new' peacekeeping and its partner, peacebuilding, as part of the overall Human Security agenda, Canada continues to exploit peacekeeping to promote Canada's self-interested foreign policy goals. Global peace and security, the promotion of Canadian values of abroad, and domestic prosperity through trade were all goals of Canadian foreign policy during the Cold War, albeit survival of the state (and the planet) took centre stage. The difference now is that Canada is permitted, through Human Security, to endorse each goal more or less equally. Furthermore, Human Security has not altogether abandoned the methods of the past, namely the liberal internationalist rules-based approach and the functional principle. Human Security, abetted by peacekeeping and peacebuilding, simply moves beyond the confines of the past in the face of new realities and expanded opportunities.