

## THE *POLICY OPTIONS* SPECIAL DOSSIER “PEACEKEEPING REIMAGINED”

### DOSSIER SPÉCIAL D’*OPTIONS POLITIQUES* « RÉINVENTER LE RÔLE DU MAINTIEN DE LA PAIX »

It’s been 60 years since Lester B. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work during the Suez crisis and for establishing the world’s first peacekeeping operation. The image of the global peacekeeper is now woven into the Canadian identity, and it is a continuing source of national pride. Yet peacekeeping has changed dramatically over the years – as has Canadian influence among those donning blue helmets. Today’s peacekeepers come predominantly from the developing world, and they are often drawn in to the use of force. Moreover, Canada’s contribution of personnel to missions is at an all-time low. As delegates from around the world are about to converge on Vancouver for the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, *Policy Options* shares expert analysis on such questions as the shape of modern peacekeeping, how Canada can best contribute to international missions, and the representation of women in operations.



Lester B. Pearson recevait il y a 60 ans le prix Nobel de la paix pour son rôle dans la crise de Suez et la création de la première opération de maintien de la paix au monde. Depuis, l’image du Canada comme gardien de la paix international est indissociable de son identité et reste une source de fierté nationale. Pourtant, le rôle du maintien de la paix a radicalement changé, tout comme l’influence du Canada auprès des Casques bleus. Ceux-ci proviennent majoritairement de pays en développement et doivent de plus en plus recourir à la force. En termes de personnel, la contribution canadienne aux missions de paix est en effet plus faible que jamais. En vue de la Réunion 2017 des ministres de la Défense sur le maintien de la paix des Nations unies, qui accueillera bientôt à Vancouver des délégués du monde entier, *Options politiques* propose l’analyse de ses experts sur des enjeux comme la forme à donner au maintien de la paix actuel, la contribution du Canada aux missions internationales et la représentation des femmes dans les opérations.

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SPECIAL DOSSIER

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# Protecting those at risk by protecting peacekeepers



*Any international conversation around how best to protect those at risk, must also consider how to protect the peacekeepers themselves.*

LARISSA FAST

This month's UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference includes a set of thematic discussions on "protecting those at risk." The goals for this theme are laudable and diverse, including better integration of strategy and operational realities such as engaging with local populations; furthering best practices for the protection of civilians, as laid out in the Kigali Principles; and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers and UN personnel. I'd like to suggest three areas as central to these discussions.

## **Supporting existing protection efforts**

First, and at the risk of stating the obvious, protecting civilians is complicated. Who counts as a civilian is not always immediately apparent in a war zone, where fighters use civilians as human shields or shed their uniforms to blend in with the population. Some analysts have pointed out that the emphasis on protection via military force in the Kigali Principles might produce counterproductive results, particularly when missions lack appropriate resources or mandates. Importantly, however, many approaches to protecting civilians from harm do not rely on force. Human rights groups document harms to civilians and name and shame perpetrators. Humanitarian organizations provide medical assistance, shelter or food as well as legal and other forms of protection. In some places, third-party unarmed civilians accompany individuals at risk, and in virtually all conflict zones, communities have become adept at finding ways to provide protection for themselves.

None of these approaches, whether armed or unarmed, is effective all the time; the horrendous number of civilian deaths in armed conflict is testament to this fact. Nor should the deployment of unarmed protection serve as an excuse to do nothing. Yet peacekeeping interventions must support and not undermine these unarmed or nonviolent efforts where they exist. To do so, peacekeeping interventions cannot be one-size-fits-all endeavours; each must be tailored to context and appreciate the local capacities for protection already in place.

## **Accountability to local populations**

Second, the conference goals that highlight engagement with the populations affected by armed conflict and the push to outline new approaches to accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse by both peacekeepers and UN personnel are welcome — and much needed — developments. To

accomplish these, the conference discussions and outcomes must consider multiple accountabilities and the ways they reinforce and undermine each other.

Increased engagement with local populations comes with benefits as well as potential costs. Research has highlighted the linkages between peacekeeping operations and disease, from HIV to cholera. Stories of exploitation and abuse cross borders and undermine the effectiveness of the UN and its peacekeeping operations; more generally, they weaken trust in these institutions and public support for them. Thus, engagement with local populations requires accountability, both individual and institutional: individual in the sense of ensuring that individual peacekeepers treat populations with respect and in accordance with relevant legal frameworks, and institutional in the sense that states hold accountable those individual peacekeepers who violate these obligations. Doing so is an ethical, legal and pragmatic obligation, one that must feature prominently on the agenda.

### **Protecting the peacekeepers**

Finally, protecting those at risk must also mean the protection of peacekeepers themselves. In the past few months, UN peacekeepers have been killed or injured in Mali, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. UN statistics indicate just over 1,800 UN civilian personnel were affected by safety and security incidents in 2015, including 23 dead and 99 injured as a result of violence.

For decision-makers, the fear of soldiers returning home in body bags and of the associated domestic political costs constitutes a significant obstacle to UN members, including Canada, making new UN peacekeeping commitments. Yet even though narratives abound about the increasing risks to peacekeepers over time, the empirical evidence to support these claims is scant. In fact, analyses of UN peacekeeping fatalities over the last 20 years suggest overall stability in the number of attacks, in both absolute and relative terms (see work by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Marina Henke and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program). As with aid workers, the patterns of attacks on peacekeepers differ from country to country, and even within a country. In several ongoing research efforts, my colleagues and I are comparing patterns of attack against aid workers and against peacekeepers (see the Peacemakers at Risk project and the Making Peacekeeping Data Work for the International Community project). Understanding these patterns is important for effective operational security management.

To protect peacekeepers, member states and the UN must first ensure that peacekeeping mandates and resources match the context. Moreover, member states must promote respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and end impunity for attacks on peacekeepers (and on others working to protect civilians). Respect for IHL provides protection for those affected by armed conflict, whether the wounded and sick, civilians caught up in the violence or aid workers. Common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions requires not only that states respect IHL but that they hold other parties accountable for respecting IHL in armed conflict, even if they are not involved in a particular conflict.

The UN and contributing states have a duty of care to the peacekeepers who serve under the UN flag. A commitment on the part of the participating states at the 2017 conference to identify, prosecute and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions under applicable domestic or international law frameworks would represent a significant step toward ending impunity for attacks. From my own research on the causes and consequences of violence against aid workers and other interveners, I know that efforts to prosecute or otherwise hold perpetrators accountable are appallingly scarce.

Such efforts could have important spillover effects as well. Cultivating an institutional culture that demonstrates respect for the UN's own peacekeepers, through accountability and efforts to counter impunity, will implicitly foster respect for the civilians whom peacekeepers are supposed to protect.

## Les options d'un réengagement dans le maintien de la paix



RÉINVENTER LE MAINTIEN DE LA PAIX  
DOSSIER

*Quel que soit le réengagement du Canada, différentes options au-delà de l'envoi de Casques bleus s'offrent à lui pour soutenir les missions de paix.*

MARIE-JOËLLE ZAHAR, SARAH-MYRIAM MARTIN-BRÛLÉ ET DAVID MORIN

**P**resque deux ans jour pour jour après son arrivée au pouvoir (le 19 octobre 2015), le gouvernement du premier ministre Justin Trudeau n'a pas encore concrétisé sa promesse faite en campagne électorale et réitérée lors de la visite du secrétaire général des Nations unies Ban Ki-moon à Ottawa en février 2016, celle de réengager le Canada au sein des missions de paix de l'ONU. À la veille de la réunion des ministres de la Défense sur le maintien de la paix des Nations unies, l'urgence d'une annonce se fait sentir, alors même que les pressions contraires des partenaires augmentent. D'une part, le secrétaire général des Nations unies António Guterres appelle à un renfort des troupes en République centrafricaine, d'où 600 Casques bleus de la République du Congo ont été rapatriés en août 2017 après avoir fait l'objet d'accusations d'abus sexuels ; d'autre part, l'ambassadrice de France à Ottawa Kareen Rispaal a exprimé le souhait de voir le Mali faire partie des options que le premier ministre devrait présenter sous peu.

Il importe de réfléchir aux options qui s'offrent au Canada en fonction de la plus-value qu'il peut apporter aux missions de paix et des facteurs qui influencent sa politique étrangère. À cet égard, toute analyse doit reconnaître que le Canada sera l'un des derniers arrivés à la table. Plusieurs pays occidentaux se sont déjà réinvestis dans le maintien de la paix onusien. Lors du sommet de 2015 sur le maintien de la paix, qui s'est tenu en marge de la réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU à New York, une cinquantaine d'États, parmi lesquels les pays scandinaves, les Pays-Bas, le Royaume-Uni, l'Italie et les États-Unis, se sont notamment engagés à envoyer 40 000 militaires supplémentaires dans les 16 opérations en cours. Le retard du Canada réduit sa marge de manœuvre ; Ottawa doit désormais contribuer en répondant aux besoins qui n'ont pas encore été comblés. De plus, le réinvestissement de plusieurs pays occidentaux réduit l'avantage comparatif associé à un réengagement de troupes canadiennes. L'atout de la langue par exemple, souvent souligné comme un avantage dans les missions déployées en Afrique, est partagé notamment par la France, qui promettait en 2015 d'offrir des formations linguistiques à 25 000 Casques bleus.

### **L'engagement onusien et le soutien aux alliés**

Pour Ottawa, en dépit de l'attachement supposé des Canadiens au maintien de la paix, le coût politique d'un engagement militaire demeure élevé. D'une part, le déploiement de troupes canadiennes dans un contexte asymétrique et très hostile est une opération toujours risquée, comme l'engagement en Afghanistan l'a démontré, qui peut se solder par des pertes de vie ou de séquelles laissées par des interventions. D'autre part, le Canada doit baliser ses promesses de manière à ne pas hypothéquer sa capacité d'intervention sur d'autres théâtres d'opération, comme en Lettonie et en Irak. Il lui faut notamment respecter ses engagements envers l'OTAN et soigner sa relation avec Washington, plus incertaine depuis l'élection de Donald Trump.

Certes, il n'est pas impossible de concilier les deux, par exemple en mettant en œuvre une mission de paix onusienne en Ukraine dont on parle de plus en plus à New York et dont le principe a été fortement appuyé par notre premier ministre. À en juger par la revue de sa politique de défense de juin 2017, il est néanmoins clair que le Canada n'a actuellement ni les capacités ni les ressources pour assurer d'importants déploiements simultanés dans la durée.

### **Une contribution au-delà des Casques bleus**

Dans ce contexte, le Canada, qui demeure avec une prise en charge de 2,92 % du budget des opérations l'un des principaux contributeurs au maintien de la paix de l'ONU, pourrait décider de diversifier sa contribution plutôt que d'envoyer exclusivement les 600 Casques bleus annoncés par le gouvernement. L'appui aux missions est un sujet brûlant à l'ONU, et il exige des capacités de pointe et des compétences hautement spécialisées dont les principaux pays contributeurs de troupes (Éthiopie, Bangladesh, Inde, Pakistan, Rwanda, etc.) ne disposent pas. Le Canada pourrait miser sur un soutien technologique et devenir ainsi un « pays à contribution technologique » (« *technological contribution country* »), une notion avancée dans le rapport final du Panel de haut niveau sur les opérations de maintien de la paix de l'ONU.

La mise en place d'hôpitaux mobiles, un soutien aérien logistique et stratégique, un appui technologique et logistique visant à créer des conditions de vie appropriées pour les troupes dans des environnements hostiles (déploiements en zones géographiquement isolées, climatiquement ardues et dépourvues d'infrastructures de base) sont autant d'atouts que le Canada serait en mesure de faire valoir. Il pourrait également envisager une contribution dans le domaine du renseignement dans le cadre de la Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy, une politique développée en avril 2017 par le Département des opérations de maintien de la paix de l'ONU. Les compétences acquises à l'intérieur du pays, où la diversité des conditions géographiques et climatiques a obligé les Forces armées canadiennes à développer une expertise, permettraient à Ottawa d'offrir une plus-value tout en minimisant les risques politiques associés au déploiement de troupes.

Les missions de paix sont désormais mises sur pied dans des contextes où il n'y a pas vraiment de paix à protéger. Les crises d'aujourd'hui sont caractérisées par des tensions intercommunautaires et des accords de paix obtenus à l'arrachée entre protagonistes réticents. Elles exigent un investissement accru dans des modalités alternatives de résolution des conflits, notamment dans la médiation. Elles nécessitent également des capacités de sécurisation des villes bien plus proches du travail de la police que de celui des Forces armées. Il serait donc judicieux qu'Ottawa ne définisse pas son réengagement dans le maintien de la paix onusien uniquement en termes militaires. Les capacités civiles sont essentielles au succès des missions de paix contemporaines, et le Canada peut faire une contribution notable grâce à son expérience en médiation (que reflète notamment le nombre de Canadiens ayant fait partie de l'équipe volante d'experts en médiation de l'ONU) et la longue expérience de déploiement de corps policiers, acquise entre autres Haïti.

### **Le Mali ou la République centrafricaine ?**

Point névralgique du Sahel et pays francophone avec lequel le Canada a des relations de longue date sur le plan diplomatique et commercial ainsi qu'en matière d'aide au développement, le Mali est souvent considéré comme un lieu de prédilection pour le réengagement canadien dans le maintien de la paix. Il rappelle l'Afghanistan à certains égards. Pour plusieurs, la présence de djihadistes, les dynamiques de radicalisation et la lutte contre le terrorisme font du Mali la suite logique de

l'expérience afghane, qui a été formatrice pour les troupes canadiennes pendant les quinze dernières années. L'engagement dans une région où sont présents des alliés traditionnels du Canada, tels que les États-Unis, la France et d'autres pays européens, et la proximité d'autres pays francophones de l'Afrique de l'Ouest constituent d'autres critères rassurants pour Ottawa.

Ces similarités cachent toutefois d'importantes différences et une situation plus complexe. Au Mali, la dimension islamiste se greffe sur des problèmes politiques et socioéconomiques inter-maliens ayant déjà fait l'objet de plusieurs tentatives de résolution qui ont échouées, en raison, entre autres, d'un manque de volonté de la part des autorités étatiques. Si la mission de l'ONU au Mali, la MINUSMA, qui a connu de lourdes pertes, a assurément un rôle à jouer dans la stabilisation du pays, la solution doit néanmoins être politique d'abord. Dans un contexte où le processus de paix piétine et entraîne la résurgence de groupes radicaux, le risque d'enlèvement est réel. Compte tenu de la multitude d'acteurs régionaux et internationaux déjà impliqués dans la gestion de la crise, la valeur ajoutée d'un engagement canadien ne semble pas évidente.

Bien qu'à première vue plus éloignée des intérêts canadiens, la République centrafricaine pourrait être une autre option pour un réengagement canadien. La mission de l'ONU en République centrafricaine, la MINUSCA, a comme priorité la protection des civils aux prises avec des cycles récurrents de violence intercommunautaire. Dans la mise en œuvre de son mandat, elle fait face à d'énormes défis technologiques associés à la géographie du pays et à l'absence quasi totale d'infrastructures routières entre la capitale et la périphérie. La dissolution des Forces armées centrafricaines et l'absence de forces de sécurité intérieure compliquent également son action.

Dans un tel contexte, l'envoi d'un bataillon d'intervention rapide serait une option si on a établi un tel besoin et si la mission ne dispose pas suffisamment de moyens à cet égard. Au-delà, le déploiement de corps policiers canadiens serait avantageux pour le Canada. Premièrement, la police canadienne, dûment formée, est en mesure de reconnaître le rôle important que joue l'insécurité communautaire dans les dynamiques de conflits. Deuxièmement, l'envoi de policiers pour aider au rétablissement de l'ordre soulignerait l'importance d'éviter une militarisation de la sécurité nationale. Troisièmement, les corps de police canadiens sont aussi formés et sensibilisés aux questions de genre, les violences et abus sexuels étant l'une des dimensions de l'insécurité en Centrafrique. Dans la mesure où la MINUSCA explore une implication accrue dans le soutien aux processus de médiation locale à l'échelle du pays, le Canada apporterait également un appui précieux. En choisissant la République centrafricaine, malgré la complexité de ce théâtre d'intervention, le réengagement canadien pourrait faire une différence et permettre à la MINUSCA de pleinement remplir son mandat. Cette option semblerait, de prime abord, relativement moins coûteuse pour Ottawa sur le plan politique.

Alors qu'il a fait du réengagement au sein des missions de paix de l'ONU un argument central de son discours de politique étrangère au pays et à l'étranger, notamment en vue d'obtenir un siège non permanent au Conseil de sécurité en 2020, le gouvernement Trudeau se doit désormais de passer de la parole aux actes. Reste à savoir comment il parviendra à concilier sa promesse avec les différentes contraintes qui pèsent sur lui. À vouloir plaire à tout le monde, le risque est grand de ne satisfaire personne.



## UN peace operations and Guterres's reform agenda



*The UN Secretary-General has laid out a comprehensive set of proposals for reform. Some of them will have implications for peace operations.*

ARTHUR BOUTELLIS AND ALEXANDRA NOVOSSELOFF

**A**fter more than nine months of gestation and suspense, the new United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, has put on the table a comprehensive set of reforms for the UN's peace and security operations, aimed at ensuring the UN is fit for contemporary challenges and able to engage early, flexibly and effectively across the spectrum of conflict. His vision is for a renewed focus on prevention and political strategies to guide the design and conduct of UN missions (what the UN calls "the primacy of politics") in order for the organization to "significantly reduce the need to intervene through large-scale peace operations and large-scale humanitarian responses." The reform is also directed at creating an organization that is more coherent, operates less in silos, where duplication is avoided, and where decision-making power is devolved to those working in the field.

The reform package comes on the heels of major reviews of the UN's work in 2015 — particularly the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). Guterres's predecessor could not fully implement the recommendations of that panel. Part of the intent of the current Secretary-General's proposed reforms is for the UN to move toward more modest and realistic endeavours. At a time of severe budget constraints, these goals make eminent sense. They would mean having less focus on heavy multi-dimensional operations (such as the large missions in Mali or South Sudan), and more investment in lighter and more creative preventative options (such as the more politically focused mission in Colombia).

But Guterres's proposals on the peace and security pillar are also part of a much broader package of interrelated reforms that he envisions for the global institution. The proposals that will potentially have the most direct and far-reaching consequences for the design and conduct of UN peace operations are (1) the restructuring of the peace and security architecture (i.e., the way the departments of the UN Secretariat are organized to deliver on mandates given by the Security Council); and (2) system-wide management reform designed to decentralize decision-making, empower managers and reduce duplicative structures and overlapping mandates. The risk is that such reform proposals will be too centred on structures, processes and individuals in headquarters and will have limited impact on the ground for the UN staff who need to be empowered and on the populations for which the missions are there in the first place.

Other reforms include: (3) the Secretary-General's renewed focus on prevention and sustaining peace (as opposed to large multidimensional operations), with the recent establishment of a High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation. The board is composed of 18 current and former global leaders who can help the Secretary-General navigate big-power politics; (4) a newly established UN Office of Counter-

Terrorism. The impact the office will have on peace operations is unclear; and (5) an ambitious reform of the UN development system proposing a “new generation” of UN country teams and empowered resident coordinators who will be directly accountable to the Deputy Secretary-General.

Guterres also launched initiatives aimed at stamping out sexual exploitation and abuse, achieving organizational gender parity and advancing the women, peace and security agenda in UN peace operations.

The challenge (described in our recent report) for the UN will now be to translate the parallel tracks of reform into a concrete and coherent plan that not only stays true to the Secretary-General’s vision but also has a real impact at headquarters and in the field. To be successful this time around, the proposals will need not only to increase efficiency and effectiveness, but also to demonstrate the continued relevance of the organization. This at a time when member states are divided over the very nature of peace operations, and when peacekeeping operations are confronted with ever more complex operating environments in the field, and carry the burden of scandals such as cholera in Haiti and sexual exploitation and abuse in the Central African Republic.

Guterres’s plan involves getting the consent of member states this year, their formal approval throughout 2018 (based on a detailed cost breakdown presented to the General Assembly), and having a new system in place by January 2019. Guterres is, however, both a pragmatic and a skilled politician and may adjust and refine his proposals along the way based on feedback he’s received, particularly from member states.

While reception of the initial reform proposals has been lukewarm from some UN bureaucrats wary of pay cuts and layoffs, member states have generally been supportive of the broad strokes of the Secretary-General’s reform package, including through a Declaration of Support to UN Reform at a high-level event signed by some 129 member states on the margin of the General Assembly in September.

It remains to be seen whether this enthusiasm will be matched by support for more detailed (and costed) reform proposals that will arrive down the road. The risk is that Guterres loses momentum and misses out on the honeymoon period during which a reform package might encounter less opposition — often seen as the first six months of the term. Member states might start getting frustrated by the complexity of the proposals and the slow pace of implementation, particularly if by fixing old problems new ones are created.

But Guterres is right to think that change does not happen easily or overnight at the UN, and that process matters and expectations should be managed. While the temptation will inevitably be to focus on short-term structural reorganizations and what they mean for power relations within the bureaucracy, the Secretary-General has already insisted on multiple occasions that change will need to come from improvements in working culture, methods and processes over time. This change will also require a new generation of empowered UN leaders who are less risk-averse and more accountable for results, rather than simply adhering to processes and rules.

The Secretary-General will need to rely on senior officials and heads of new departments to faithfully implement the spirit and the letter of these reforms on his behalf. He will also need to remain personally involved, because this is what member states expect from him, and because it might be the only way to avoid new turf wars between departments around the implementation of reforms.

UN peace operations and their successful reform require support from a broad range of member states — the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and financial contributors — and continued engagement with the UN Secretariat on a range of issues. The UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Vancouver will be a good opportunity to continue such engagement, primarily around peacekeeping capabilities and performance (i.e., the military tools that allow peacekeeping missions to be more efficient and accountable for actions on the ground). It should also be an opportunity to continue discussions around the broader strategic shifts the 2015 HIPPO report called for: the primacy of politics, a continuum of peace operations, regional partnerships, and a greater focus on the field and on the people. This approach will be much more valuable than narrow discussions around some of the technicalities of UN peacekeeping only.

## Aligning goals and core principles in UN peacekeeping



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*Controversial practices are straining the three principles of UN peacekeeping: impartiality, consent of the parties and the non-use of force except in self-defence.*

MARION LAURENCE

The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO report) is the first comprehensive review of UN peace operations since the Brahimi Report in 2000, the 2015 highlights a variety of logistical problems and resource constraints. Rapid deployment remains a challenge, for example, and many missions lack the personnel and equipment required to effectively implement their mandates.

The discussions at the 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference being held this month in Vancouver will likely include these issues. Yet the HIPPO report also points to a more fundamental problem. Contemporary UN missions are plagued by underlying disagreements about their proper role in managing armed conflict. These disagreements are especially acute when it comes to the use of force. To paraphrase a diplomat I spoke with in New York before the report was released, UN member states no longer agree on what peacekeeping should mean.

Historically, such disagreements were rare. During the Cold War, peacekeepers were prohibited from taking sides, promoting any particular ideology, or involving themselves in the domestic affairs of host states. The first peacekeeping mission, deployed during the Suez Crisis, was ordered to avoid any action that might tip the military scales of the conflict. There were exceptions to this rule — the United Nations Operation in the Congo is a notable one — but most peacekeepers were expected to serve as disinterested intermediaries. Peacekeeping meant passively monitoring cease-fires and liaising between parties to a peace agreement. These activities were grounded in three guiding principles: impartiality, consent of the parties, and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

Contemporary peace operations have placed these principles — often referred to as the “holy trinity” of peacekeeping — under strain. UN personnel now take sides, militarily and ideologically, in ways that would have been unthinkable for traditional peacekeepers. In some cases they use deadly force to support one party to a conflict and oppose another. In 2011, for example, UN helicopters in Côte d’Ivoire launched air strikes and helped remove the incumbent president from power after he lost a UN-certified election.

In 2013 the Security Council deployed a Force Intervention Brigade, composed of infantry battalions, special forces and an artillery company, to “neutralize” nonstate armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). UN troops in Mali are currently working with the central government to extend state authority and confront armed groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. In doing so, peacekeepers have effectively become involved in counter-insurgency and counterterrorism operations, often with deadly consequences. More than 80 peacekeepers have been killed since the mission was

deployed four years ago, including three who died in late October when their vehicle hit an explosive device while escorting a convoy in northern Mali.

Activities like this remain the exception not the rule in UN missions. Still, they mark a radical departure from traditional peacekeeping practices, and they fly in the face of what most people believe they know about UN peace operations. Critics argue that they are completely at odds with the holy trinity and that they erode the UN's ability to serve as a credible, third-party mediator. For others, the "robust" posture adopted by some missions is a welcome change from the disastrous passivity that characterized missions in places like Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. In this view — relatively common in Canada and other Western countries — forceful action is necessary to protect civilians from harm and uphold institutions that will foster peace over the long term. These debates hinge on divergent beliefs about the goals and purpose of UN peace operations. Should they be primarily concerned with mediation and with promoting negotiated solutions to armed conflict? Should they take decisive action against anyone responsible for serious human rights violations? What steps should they take to prevent attacks on civilians in the first place? Should they provide direct support to institutions that are considered essential for lasting peace?

Facilitating peace negotiations, protecting human rights and supporting democratic institutions all sound like desirable and reasonable goals. It is easy to understand how they came to be layered on top of one another in mission mandates and policy documents, which often present them as interlocking, complementary tasks. The problem is that these goals are not always compatible. How should UN personnel respond when — as has been the case in the DRC — they are supposed to conduct joint military operations with state security forces that are also responsible for egregious human rights violations? How should the mission in Mali support reconciliation and dialogue with all stakeholders when it routinely acts to suppress and displace some of those stakeholders? Practices on the ground vary widely because mission personnel reach different conclusions about how to balance these competing imperatives. This variation in practices has concrete implications, and is often a source of confusion, frustration and disappointment among populations in host countries.

Many UN officials are reluctant to openly acknowledge these dilemmas. They take cues from member states, which may assign conflicting responsibilities without reaching any formal agreement on how to square them with core principles. When asked about controversial practices, UN officials often downplay their significance. They insist, for example, that targeted offensive operations against "negative forces" in the DRC are perfectly in line with the organization's long-standing commitment to impartiality. The HIPPO report provides some basis for this claim; it notes that core peacekeeping principles should be interpreted "progressively and with flexibility" in the face of new challenges. But core principles are not infinitely flexible. There is a clear disconnect between the holy trinity and many of the assertive peacekeeping practices described above.

There are two ways to resolve this disconnect. The first involves a major overhaul of the core principles that guide UN peace operations. Member states and UN officials would have to revise their formal commitment to impartiality, consent and the non-use of force except in self-defence. A departure from these principles is not likely to find favour among traditionalists concerned about state sovereignty, nor will it appeal to large troop-contributing countries like India. Losing their support could exacerbate the logistical challenges already facing UN peace operations.

The second option would involve stepping back from some of the more controversial practices, especially targeted offensive operations and de facto counter-insurgency activities. This option is politically more feasible, though it would also come with drawbacks, including concerns about ineffectiveness and irrelevance in contemporary conflicts. Either way, the coherence and credibility of future peacekeeping missions will depend on states' and officials' willingness to openly acknowledge these normative contradictions. Failing to grapple candidly with the current disconnect between rhetoric and action will gradually erode the legitimacy of UN peace operations. It will also damage their standing in the eyes of those who matter most: the people who are forced every day to live with conflict and instability.

## Gender and peacekeeping



PEACEKEEPING REIMAGINED  
SPECIAL DOSSIER

*The UN links the number of women in peacekeeping to operational effectiveness, but it's the institution's broader culture that needs a gender perspective.*

STÉFANIE VON HLATKY

conference in mid-November in Vancouver. In a UN peacekeeping context, integrating a gender perspective will be one of the main objectives of the 2017 UN peacekeeping conference. Integrating a gender perspective means understanding the differentiated impacts of conflict on women, men, girls and boys and designing policies, programs, operational plans and missions that take these differences into account. Global Affairs Canada goes a step further, arguing that “post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building is more effective and long-lasting if gender analysis takes place from the outset. It has been recognized internationally that this significantly improves peace-building operations.”

This statement echoes the principles enshrined in the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000. The resolution commented specifically on the under-representation of women during all phases of conflict and called for the increased participation of women at all stages, from conflict prevention to peace processes and postconflict reconstruction. This objective is perfectly intuitive from a gender equality and human rights perspective, but the narrative that has been adopted by the UN and countries like Canada is one of policy and operational effectiveness. Is this the right approach? Let's take the example of increasing the number of female peacekeepers in UN operations, which has become an important goal for UN Women and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The argument here is that increasing the number of women as part of the military and police personnel deployed on UN operations will lead to tangible improvements in the way these missions are run and to better service provision for women and girls in the host countries.

The UN articulates this by stating, “Female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their own rights and for participation in peace processes.” With the same enthusiasm, the UN states that, by their very presence, women peacekeepers can “help to reduce conflict and confrontation.” According to available UN data, there are currently 4,059 uniformed women on operations, out of 94,154 total peacekeepers. That means fewer than 5 percent of police and military personnel on UN missions are female.

To put things in perspective, let's see how this might play out in specific missions. For MINUSMA (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), 10,891 troops are deployed, of whom 226 are women and 10,665 are men (excluding staff officers and police forces). It might strike some as unreasonable to place such high expectations on 2 percent of the troops. Yet that is the prevailing narrative. Senator Mobina Jaffer made a similar argument last year, posting that “women on the ground during peace operations foster greater trust in the communities in which they serve, leading to an increased reliability in intelligence and opportunities for capacity building.” The logic is that even a token number of women in operations can lead to improvements in mission capacity and outcomes.

With these types of arguments, linking gender with operational effectiveness, the focus inevitably shifts to the evidence, which is necessarily hard to come by. Not only is it difficult to track the impact of individual women as they perform their day-to-day tasks, but how would these causal connections even be verified? According to what metrics? The participation of men in operations is not made contingent upon some evidence-based claim about their effectiveness.

Sure, the argument about gender and operational effectiveness is one way to get buy-in from the predominantly male spheres of national militaries and police forces, but it places unfair scrutiny and attention on the few women who are just trying to do their jobs like everyone else on the mission.

If Canada is to place such strong focus on integrating a gender perspective in UN peacekeeping, it might be worth broadening the argument about operational effectiveness to put less emphasis on women (whether those women are portrayed as victims trapped in conflict or as the stoic female role models who come to their rescue) and more on enabling peacekeeping personnel to have a common professional culture and training experience. This culture should be shaped to internalize principles of gender equality and human rights and to recognize the diverse manifestations of sexual and gender-based violence; perhaps most important, this effort should be supported by tools to perform gender and social analysis tailored to the UN's operational contexts.

Instead of this balanced and skill-based approach, the UN is telling the world that women have the ability to transform peacekeeping — and Canada is endorsing the message. Over time, no doubt, there will be more women in peacekeeping. But the UN (and national armed forces) will get there faster if they don't rely on the very women they are trying to recruit to improve their practices and operational outcomes.



## Replacer la paix au cœur des opérations de l'ONU



*Le Canada doit réinvestir l'ONU en se concentrant sur la nature politique des conflits violents pour contrer la militarisation des opérations de paix.*

LOU PINGEOT, VINCENT POULIOT

Les 14 et 15 novembre 2017, le Canada accueillera à Vancouver la réunion des ministres de la Défense des pays participants aux missions de paix des Nations unies. Cette initiative s'inscrit dans la lignée du retour à l'ONU annoncé par Justin Trudeau dès l'automne 2015. L'été suivant, le Canada promettait de fournir 600 Casques bleus militaires et 150 policiers aux missions onusiennes. Ses alliés occidentaux le pressent de s'engager au Mali, en République centrafricaine ou encore au Soudan du Sud, mais aucune décision n'a encore été prise.

Bien que le Canada soit critiqué pour son indécision, une certaine prudence s'impose devant l'évolution récente des opérations de paix onusiennes. Sur plusieurs théâtres d'intervention, le Conseil de sécurité exige de ces opérations non pas de maintenir une paix par ailleurs inexistante, mais bien d'entrer en conflit ouvert avec certains groupes armés. Ces mandats s'accompagnent d'une militarisation des opérations de paix, qui deviennent de plus en plus « robustes ». Or il est irréaliste de donner ce rôle aux opérations onusiennes, puisqu'elles ne sont pas outillées pour mettre fin aux conflits par la force. Une telle approche ne favorise pas non plus la recherche d'une solution pacifique à long terme. Plutôt que de contribuer à cette tendance délétère par son retour à l'ONU, le Canada devrait s'intéresser prioritairement à la nature politique des conflits violents, afin de replacer la paix au cœur des opérations de paix.

### **Des missions politiques avant tout**

En se réengageant auprès de l'ONU, le Canada doit garder en tête la nature propre de l'ONU et des opérations de paix. L'ONU n'est pas l'OTAN ; il ne s'agit pas d'une alliance militaire au sein de laquelle les États membres attaquent (ou se défendent contre) un ennemi commun. En ce sens, l'expérience afghane du Canada ne saurait servir de modèle. Par ses opérations de paix, l'ONU joue le rôle de tierce partie dans des conflits aux ramifications complexes. Son travail consiste à soutenir des processus de résolution de conflits armés touchant divers acteurs locaux, dont les mérites et les torts historiques sont la plupart du temps aussi ambigus qu'équivoques. Les opérations de paix ont donc une fonction politique avant de jouer un rôle militaire ; l'usage de la force, lorsqu'il est nécessaire, cherche à garantir un certain équilibre dans la recherche de solutions pacifiques et de long terme.

En vertu de cet objectif, il est souvent contreproductif d'aider une partie au conflit à vaincre les autres, même lorsque celle-ci a des liens privilégiés avec les puissances occidentales. Une telle ingérence génère de nouveaux griefs, déstabilise le paysage sécuritaire et retarde l'émergence de compromis entre les factions. La logique est pourtant implacable : aucun conflit aux racines endogènes ne peut être réglé de façon purement exogène, à l'aide d'une intervention militaire extérieure. Une paix juste et

durable ne saurait être imposée ; elle doit émerger d'un processus politique impliquant les parties en conflit.

Malheureusement, la tendance récente des opérations de paix à « s'allier » avec le gouvernement en présence rend cet idéal de neutralité inatteignable. Avant même d'arriver sur le théâtre des opérations, les forces de l'ONU sont déjà attachées à l'une des parties au conflit, la plupart du temps l'État en place. Celui-ci, bien que juridiquement reconnu par la société internationale, n'en demeure pas moins un acteur belligérant. Or, en soutenant militairement l'une des parties au conflit au détriment des autres, les opérations de paix se privent de leur seul véritable outil : la capacité de dialoguer avec tous les protagonistes, avec le poids politique du Conseil de sécurité en arrière-plan.

### **Les limites de la militarisation**

De même, il est essentiel de garder en tête que l'ONU n'a ni la capacité, ni la machine administrative pour jouer un rôle militaire offensif. L'idée d'employer la force de manière proactive pour « neutraliser » certains groupes armés au nom de la protection des civils est profondément mésadaptée, tant au plan opérationnel que politique. Avec ses problèmes structurels de financement comme de personnel, le maintien de la paix doit être limité à un rôle d'appui. En lui demandant trop, comme c'est le cas depuis une vingtaine d'années, on condamne l'ONU à l'échec tout en engendrant des opérations de paix aux conséquences souvent douteuses sur le terrain. En ce sens, l'objectif politiquement noble mais opérationnellement insoutenable de protéger des civils à l'aide de contingents militaires renforcés semble pointer dans la mauvaise direction.

De fait, non seulement les opérations de paix ne sont pas équipées pour assurer la protection des civils militairement, mais l'outil militaire peut même être contreproductif. Les actions offensives risquent de mettre les civils en danger, comme on l'a vu en Haïti, où l'on accuse la MINUSTAH d'avoir tué ou blessé des douzaines de civils lors de ses opérations musclées. Les civils peuvent être pris en tenaille entre les actions offensives de l'ONU et les représailles des groupes armés qui les affrontent, comme cela a pu être le cas en République démocratique du Congo. Dans des sociétés traversées de conflits complexes, où des factions multiples se livrent des luttes armées quotidiennes, il est impossible de protéger les civils par la seule voie militaire.

Si Ottawa souhaite se réengager dans le maintien de la paix pour protéger les civils, ce sont donc les efforts diplomatiques qui sont le plus à même de produire des effets positifs durables. Le Canada a un rôle à jouer ici, que ce soit directement à la table du Conseil de sécurité (s'il est élu membre non permanent en 2020) ou en périphérie, en appuyant le secrétaire général et le Département des opérations de maintien de la paix et celui des affaires politiques dans leurs efforts de médiation et de prévention. Dans son évaluation des opérations de paix en 2015, l'ancien secrétaire général Ban Ki-moon regrettait d'ailleurs le peu de soutien politique des États membres pour ce genre d'initiatives pourtant essentielles. Le Canada pourrait ici s'inspirer des efforts d'autres « puissances moyennes » comme la Norvège, qui a joué un rôle de premier plan dans le processus de paix au Sri Lanka.

### **Grandeurs et misères du Conseil de sécurité**

Cela dit, on ne saurait réduire les problèmes du maintien de la paix à des enjeux d'inefficacité administrative ou de sous-financement. Aussi criants que soient ces problèmes, ils sont éclipsés par les limites inhérentes à la nature fondamentalement intergouvernementale de la gouvernance mondiale de la sécurité. Après tout, les résolutions que vote le Conseil de sécurité sont le produit de marchandages

et de procédures diplomatiques qui répondent à des logiques souvent étrangères aux besoins sur le terrain. Il est dans la nature même du Conseil de sécurité de permettre d'abord et avant tout de résoudre les désaccords entre les grandes puissances.

Certes, cette fonction est importante, mais elle n'a souvent que peu à voir avec la résolution des conflits armés sur le terrain. Les négociations entre les cinq membres permanents sont bien sûr au cœur de cette dynamique, mais d'autres forces, comme le besoin de paraître proactif pour répondre à une opinion publique émue par des médias plutôt sélectifs, jouent aussi un rôle. Or, en l'absence de ressources et d'une volonté politique suffisante, lancer des opérations de paix à des fins de relations publiques peut s'avérer désastreux. Il est donc primordial de se rappeler que les forces qui président à la mise sur pied des opérations de paix n'ont souvent qu'un lien indirect avec celles qui nourrissent les guerres civiles et autres conflits armés.

Or ce décrochage est durable et structurel : rien ne laisse présager que les dynamiques intergouvernementales du Conseil de sécurité passeront au second plan dans le futur. Il s'agit donc, pour le Canada et ses partenaires, de trouver le moyen de travailler à partir de cette réalité plutôt que contre elle. En priorité, il faut s'assurer que les demandes et exigences des populations concernées par le conflit soient non seulement entendues mais aussi dûment prises en compte. Ottawa pourrait faire entendre la voix non seulement des civils en danger, mais aussi des groupes politiques en conflit ouvert, afin que les diverses revendications en présence soient connues des décideurs internationaux. Dans un contexte où l'on accuse de nombreuses opérations de paix onusiennes d'abus des droits de l'homme, le Canada pourrait aussi jouer un rôle important pour faire reconnaître les responsabilités et procéder à des réparations.

En définitive, remettre la nature politique des opérations de paix à l'avant-plan, c'est chercher à contrer la tendance va-t'en-guerre de plusieurs États occidentaux au cours des décennies récentes. Trop souvent, l'outil militaire se voit employé, alors que d'autres moyens moins lourds sont à la disposition. On notera par ailleurs que cette proposition de miser sur les outils politiques trouve un large écho auprès des pays du monde entier, incluant les nouvelles puissances du Sud, qui rechignent à la militarisation croissante des opérations de paix de l'ONU. Or la réticence de ces puissances, notamment de grandes démocraties telles que l'Afrique du Sud, le Brésil et l'Inde, ne peut plus être rejetée du revers de la main comme s'il s'agissait d'un réflexe passéiste contre l'ingérence extérieure. Délégitimer ainsi la prudence relève de la démagogie. Il existe de très bonnes raisons de mettre un frein aux opérations de paix de plus en plus militarisées sous le mandat de l'ONU. Le Canada peut et doit aider à porter ces arguments jusque dans les arcanes de puissances occidentales.

## UN peacekeeping: Canada's back? When? How?



PEACEKEEPING REIMAGINED  
SPECIAL DOSSIER

*New opportunities should be explored to better equip peacekeeping personnel with key enablers, but will the Liberal government really seize the day?*

WALTER DORN

Emphatically that peacekeeping “is something that a Canadian prime minister [Lester B. Pearson] in the foreign policy debate of the 2015 election campaign, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau declared started, and right now there is a need to revitalize and refocus and support peacekeeping operations.” On election night, Trudeau proudly declared that Canada is “back” as a compassionate and constructive force in the international community, and he soon mandated his defence and foreign ministers to reengage in UN peace operations. However, in the two years since, there has only been dithering and delay. In fact, the number of Canadian uniformed personnel in UN operations has fallen to a historic low, with just 29 military personnel and 44 police deployed, fewer than Stephen Harper’s government provided.

The Trudeau government made an impressive pledge in August 2016, just before the 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London, UK, to provide up to 600 troops and 150 police. But over a year later the government still has not decided when or where to deploy. With Canada hosting the follow-on 2017 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, which includes reviewing implementation of previous pledges, it is embarrassing that the host has yet to fulfill its own pledge. Furthermore, with “rapid deployment” to crises a key item on the agenda of the Vancouver conference, Canada has set a particularly poor example by taking years to increase its troop numbers, even though the UN has a desperate need.

Still, Canada can make good on its pledges and regain some prestige, something it needs in order to win a seat on the UN Security Council, which is another of the Trudeau’s government declared aspirations. And there is much that Canada can do. It can immediately double or triple the number of uniformed personnel from the current 70, even as it decides on how to deploy the 750 it pledged. The UN has pressing needs in Africa, such as in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan.

The UN wants Canada back. As a favour, in early 2017 the UN even held open the position of force commander of the UN’s mission in Mali to allow Canada to submit a candidate for the position, as well as an accompanying “force package.” But Canada could not decide on the force contribution, so that position, the most senior military position, was given to a general from Belgium. Canada can still fit into the troop rotation pattern for the Mali mission (with Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden among the European nations now deployed) and seek the force commander position in the future. It can also look at other UN missions to fill senior positions, like that of special representative to the SecretaryGeneral, the diplomat who heads each mission.

The UN also desperately needs heavy-lift aircraft (such as Canada's C-17 jets and Chinook helicopters), expert medical units (which Canada ably demonstrated in Afghanistan) and advanced technologies for monitoring (such as Coyote/TAPV reconnaissance vehicles). It also needs disciplined, experienced and well-trained troops, which Canada has, although they are not yet experienced in UN missions or trained on them. So more training is needed. In fact, Trudeau's mandate letter instructs the defence minister to lead an international training program in peacekeeping, but that has yet to materialize. For a decade Canada led with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre but it was closed in 2013, leaving no place in Canada for civilians, military and police to train together for peace operations.

The UN desperately needs heavy-lift aircraft (such as Canada's C-17 jets and Chinook helicopters), expert medical units (which Canada ably demonstrated in Afghanistan) and advanced technologies for monitoring (such as Coyote/TAPV reconnaissance vehicles).

The UN is making a major push to upgrade its field technology to better meet its ambitious mandates and bring the world organization into the 21st century. Canada could become one of the leading technology-contributing countries, in addition to being a troop-contributing country and a police-contributing country. So far, Canada has not participated in the UN's partnerships for technology in peacekeeping, but there are many opportunities for Canada to offer capabilities like anti-mortar radars, unmanned aerial vehicles and reconnaissance vehicles. These technologies serve not only as "force multipliers" for uniformed personnel but also as "mission multipliers" for all components of UN missions, including those involved in protecting civilians, in humanitarian assistance, in protecting human rights, in reconciliation and peace processes, in nation building, and in promoting the rule of law. Recently the UN has made remarkable technological progress, but it has only partly met the requirements in the field. More help is greatly needed.

Technology can assist with all of the themes highlighted on the agenda for the Vancouver conference. For one theme, "Protecting those at risk," peace operations need better situational awareness and rapid response. In the fog of conflict, the UN has all too often been unaware of current attacks and imminent threats. The UN is struggling to create a real-time tracking system for its own vehicles and personnel, and it should eventually have the means to track locals in danger. With "precision peacekeeping," using GPS location devices for peacekeepers and local populations, it is easier to send the right peacekeepers to the right places to do the right things. For population-centric operations, UN missions need "human security intelligence" — analyzed information on the wide range of threats and opportunities. Gathering such information is a huge task, requiring both human and technological intelligence. To achieve "participatory peacekeeping," the local population needs to provide UN missions with inputs and warnings, thus contributing more directly to local security, much like "community policing." In the digital age, it is possible to create a "coalition of the connected" that includes local populations, thereby providing protection through connection. Using the smartphone revolution (including translation software) and social media, the UN can be in more frequent contact with local people and stay better informed. UN missions can provide SIM cards to selected local people to enable "crowd seeding," where specific individuals are rewarded for information provided to the UN. For another conference theme, "Early warning and rapid deployment," human information together with UN monitoring devices can help to determine when and where conflicts will escalate.

For the theme of "innovation in training and capacity building," Canada and other pledgers can help the UN develop its decision-making and planning software, systems for e-learning, and exercises and

simulations, so peacekeepers (Canadian and others) can be better prepared before and during missions. Electronic “peacekeeping games” could be introduced, or existing war games modified, to include peacekeeper roles.

One of the cross-cutting issues in Vancouver, the “empowerment of women,” includes making women safer in conflict zones. Canada can help the UN explore better tracking and communications. Whether they are for women peacekeepers working in danger zones or for local women collecting firewood near refugee camps or internally displaced persons’ camps, GPS trackers with a distress signal capability can provide alerts and real-time location in emergencies. Also, better tracking of mission personnel can increase their accountability, to reduce sexual exploitation and abuse. For conflict-related sexual violence by locals, forensic kits (including DNA technologies) can help identify perpetrators, obtain evidence and increase accountability.

More generally, Canada and the nations at the Vancouver meeting could each develop a catalogue of commercial technologies proven by their militaries in field operations that would be useful in peace operations, similar to the Obama administration’s Technology Source Book.

A year after Canada led the creation of the UN’s first peacekeeping force in 1956, Lester B. Pearson eloquently called in his 1957 Nobel Lecture for greater commitment and action: “We made at least a beginning then. If, on that foundation, we do not build something more permanent and stronger, we will once again have ignored realities, rejected opportunities, and betrayed our trust.”

There is so much Canada can and should do to enhance peacekeeping. Missing these opportunities is ethically negligent. To use these opportunities is to save lives and alleviate human suffering. Canada is not yet “back,” but it can and should be.

## Pearson and Canada's peacekeeping legacy



PEACEKEEPING REIMAGINED  
SPECIAL DOSSIER

*Canada's leadership in peacekeeping has been a source of national pride for 60 years, but will Ottawa commit to a serious reengagement?*

COLIN MCCULLOUGH

On October 20, just a few weeks before the start of the UN Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, the 60th anniversary of Lester Pearson's being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize passed with little fanfare. Pearson was given this distinction for his role in the international action that resolved the Suez Crisis and created the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), that world body's first-ever peacekeeping operation. This anniversary does, however, offer a moment to look back on Canada's peacekeeping past and to look ahead to how Canada might reengage with this vital UN activity.

The Suez Crisis grew out of the long-standing colonial influence of Britain and France in the operation of the Suez Canal, and the decision by Egypt to nationalize the canal on July 26, 1956. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden was incensed at Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser and secretly planned, along with the governments of France and Israel, for the latter to engage in open warfare with its neighbour. On October 29, 1956, the Israelis sent an invasion force into Egypt. The French and the British quickly landed an Anglo-French force in the Canal Zone. The actions of Britain and France infuriated the United States and Canada, among others, whom they had conveniently not bothered to inform about their plans.

These events are best known in Canada for the role played by Pearson, then secretary of state for external affairs. Pearson had been an important member of Canada's UN delegation since 1945 and had served as president of the General Assembly in 1952. In the early morning hours of November 2, he rose in the General Assembly and told his audience that the world needed action, "not only to end the fighting but to make peace." He then made his case for the creation of an international peace and police force that Canada would help supply with troops and equipment. When the resolution calling for the creation of UNEF passed unanimously, an act of inspired diplomatic manoeuvring became a reality. It was a timely solution to an international conflict that was growing tenser by the hour, as the United States and the Soviet Union both denounced the British and the French despite their own Cold War antagonism.

Daily newspapers across Canada quickly framed UNEF as either a symbol of Canadian independence or a sign of Canada's having turned its back on its "mother countries." In Conservative-supporting papers, Pearson was called a "chore boy" of the Americans, and the signallers who were selected to be the Canadian contingent were derided as the "1st Chairborne" because they were not traditional soldiers.

Few people, Pearson included, would have guessed how strongly some Canadians would come to align their national identities with peacekeeping in the decades that followed. Indeed, in the fall of 1956, many Canadians who were polled seemed to feel that although Pearson's actions at the UN were laudable, Canada's foreign policy should not have deviated from the British line. The Progressive

Conservatives would make considerable political hay out of this issue and it became one of the reasons the Liberals lost the June 1957 federal election.

Almost all of these criticisms disappeared when Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize that fall. By that time, UNEF had shown itself to be a competent and capable force that had helped to reopen the Suez Canal to shipping and had kept the Egyptians and the Israelis from being openly at war. John Diefenbaker's newly elected Progressive Conservative government also embraced Canada's UN engagement as a functional one, meaning that no political party in Canada opposed the country's peacekeeping role. Pearson was hailed internationally for his role in bringing an end to the Suez Crisis, and he parlayed this acclaim into his bid to become the next leader of the Liberal Party. He remains the only Canadian to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Subsequently, Canada's peacekeeping past, and more specifically Pearson's triumph during the Suez Crisis, became shorthand for a high point in the country's history. The 1950s came to be considered the height of Canadian international influence, and Pearson's efforts a marker of a real "golden age" in foreign policy, when the other countries of the world listened to what we thought, and we were capable of backing up this talk with helpful action. This view of Canada's position in the world was taught in most English and French Canadian high school classrooms. This history contributed to peacekeeping becoming a marker of Canada's national identity, particularly outside of Quebec.

Many Canadians continue to regard UN peacekeeping as the most important international action this country undertakes. The actions of Lester Pearson in the Suez region, Lewis MacKenzie in the former Yugoslavia and Roméo Dallaire in Rwanda, as well as Canada's leading role in the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, provide reminders of how Canada's international identity is tied to the successes and failures of the UN. These factors provide some indication that the renewed government interest in the UN — in a peacekeeping capacity as well as one where this country devotes its energies to aiding international development, among other issues — is still welcomed by many Canadians.

The shared timing of the 60th anniversary of Pearson's Nobel Prize and the Defence Ministerial, therefore, provides a moment in which to address Canada's affinity for peacekeeping from a number of perspectives. The Defence Ministerial will see attending nations being asked to make new pledges and contribute to UN peacekeeping reform efforts, hopefully improving the organization's capacity to plan and perform where needed around the world. Among the more welcome areas of emphasis are targets for increased female participation in all aspects of peace building.

Canada's government has openly pledged increased support for peace operations, to the tune of 600 members of the Canadian Forces, but has, to this point, balked at sending them abroad. It is time it did so. Current peacekeeping operations in need of assistance include those in Mali, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Colombia. While peacekeeping might represent a pillar of this country's national identity, it is for others the difference between life and death.

The collective energy of the world is necessary to fix the myriad of problems that continue to plague almost every department of the UN, and peacekeeping is no exception. So let's get to work. As Pearson often noted, the UN is only as good as its members will allow it to be.