



In September 2003, Private Liam McGlynn of Charlie Company, 3 RCR Battalion Group (3 RCR Bn Gp), commences a foot patrol through the streets of Paghman, Afghanistan, as part of Operation ATHENA, Canada's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

PEACEKEEPING AND PUBLIC OPINION

by Lane Anker

Introduction

‘Peacekeeping’ represents a defining aspect of Canadian identity, reflecting fundamental values, beliefs and interests. In fact, it was Canada’s Lester B. Pearson who, during the Suez Crisis in 1956, first proposed the United Nations (UN) force from which peacekeeping evolved. Peacekeeping, in these early years, mainly involved observation and monitoring, both used to freeze brushfire conflicts before they could escalate into clashes between the superpowers. However, in recent years, particularly since the end of the Cold War, *intra-state* conflicts have become increasingly problematic, and the international community has been asked to take on a broader array of peacekeeping responsibilities.

Public support for a strong Canadian role internationally is largely rooted in our proud history of peacekeeping. In fact, many Canadians regard peacekeeping as the most positive contribution that Canada makes to the world. This strong viewpoint, however, does not necessarily translate into strong support for all types of peacekeeping operations. For example, just prior to the Canadian Forces (CF) deployment to Afghanistan (Operation Athena) in June 2003

under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) banner, a study found that only 43 per cent of the Canadian public supported this operation.¹ And, despite increases in support over the first year of this operation, more recent polling reveals that public support for the CF role in Afghanistan is again waning.

While other factors contribute, such as the influence of the Iraq crisis, any study that finds strong support for “promoting world peace” juxtaposed with moderate or low support for “helping to bring stability to Afghanistan” arguably reveals a public opinion disconnect. A plausible explanation for this disconnect is that an anachronistic understanding of peacekeeping influences public opinion: UN missions involving blue-bereted troops monitoring buffer zones. The quandary is that the days when peacekeeping operations meant deploying static observers wearing blue berets along a cease-fire line have, for the most part, passed.

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The Canadian Peacekeeping Monument on Sussex Drive in Ottawa, seen from the northeast.

This article will be presented in four sections. To begin, a brief history of the evolution of peacekeeping is provided. Second, recent public opinion polling is analyzed to reveal that a gap indeed exists between public perceptions and current realities of what Canada's military does overseas. Third, possible explanations for why this gap exists are addressed. Lastly, recommendations are provided to help close this conceptual gap in public opinion.

The Evolution of Peacekeeping

"We need action not only to end the fighting but to make the peace... My own government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force, a truly international peace and police force."

— Lester B. Pearson, 2 November 1956

In 1947, the UN endorsed a plan to separate Palestine, creating within its boundaries the state of Israel and leaving the rest of the region for Palestinian Arabs. Neither Palestinian Arabs nor Arab states accepted the arrangement and hostilities broke out in 1948. Shortly thereafter, the UN deployed its first observers — the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) — to help stabilize the situation and supervise the tentative truce. This marked the genesis of peacekeeping and, over the next few years, UN personnel were sent to other countries, primarily as observers and supervisors.²

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the war erupted again in 1967. Pearson did not "invent" peacekeeping, as some Canadians contend, but the deployment of a peacekeeping force indeed signalled a new generation of peacekeeping — a move from limited observation activities to full-scale peacekeeping forces.

Pearson received worldwide recognition for his diplomatic efforts to contain this conflict, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957. Peacekeeping, in turn, was forever ingrained in Canadian identity and heritage, and the country continued to commit peacekeeping troops, both as observers and also in monitoring roles, to operations around the globe. Since 1947, in fact, more than 125,000 CF members have taken part in international operations.

During the Cold War, the presence of UN blue berets helped to reduce tensions and freeze conflict situations. In this period, the temporary cessation of fighting was usually reached by mutual consent of the parties involved, and international intervention was then generally welcomed and peacekeepers were put in place to supervise cease-fires. Of the 15 UN operations conducted from 1947 to 1986, most were observer missions involving unarmed military personnel who would provide reports on the cease-fire but not interpose themselves between antagonists.³ The success of Cold War-era peacekeeping was evinced in 1988 with the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to all UN peacekeeping forces. The concomitant press release announcement stated: "The Peacekeeping Forces of the United Nations have, under extremely difficult conditions,

contributed to reducing tensions where an armistice has been negotiated but a peace treaty has yet to be established.”⁴

The operational requirements of peacekeeping have significantly evolved and expanded since. In particular, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and dissolution of the USSR in 1991, *intra-state* conflict has become a much greater problem than conventional wars between states. From Somalia to Rwanda to the Former Yugoslavia, these internal conflicts characteristically have no buffer zones, involve non-state actors, and are waged along religious, ethnic or tribal lines. Governments in many of these countries fail to maintain political authority. Failed or failing states, in turn, plant the seeds for threats to regional and global interests, and create humanitarian disasters. The impotence of the governing structures also makes these countries breeding grounds for organized crime and havens for terrorists. According to a UN report, an estimated 3.6 million persons died in the some 53 *intra-state* conflicts during the 1990s, compared to 220,000 persons killed in *inter-state* conflicts.⁵ Consequently, symbolic and non-threatening peacekeepers with blue berets, simply put, were mostly rendered impotent in this new operational environment.

Canada, as did other allies, experienced difficulties adapting to this new reality. According to Dr. John English of the University of Waterloo, although the choice of title of the *Somalia Mission of Inquiry report, Dishonoured Legacy*, was controversial, few took issue with its findings that “new peacekeeping guidelines, updated to reflect the changing nature of peacekeeping, had not been developed or were not in use at the time of planning for the Somalia deployment.”⁶ Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Roméo Dallaire, who commanded the UN force in Rwanda in 1993-1994, states that this new era demanded us to “...jettison old methodologies in policy formulation, leadership, doctrine, training, officer development and civil-military relations. It was a period of trial and error, just as our predecessors in the 1950s and 1960s conceived and developed UN peacekeeping by trial and error.”⁷ UN peacekeeping forces had received the most notable accolade in the world in 1988. Ten years later, following a succession of failed missions, including Somalia and Rwanda, the fundamental tenets of peacekeeping were very much under scrutiny. Further, the UN no longer monopolized peacekeeping as the lead for several operations were turned over to other alliances and coalitions, including NATO.

Nor does peacekeeping now merely entail deploying static observers along a demarcation line. Today, it often begins before a cease-fire is

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secured and in places where there is little or no peace to keep. This is why the complex and anarchic operational context of contemporary peace support operations is sometimes labeled “Three Block Wars.” This analogy depicts a typical operational context in which CF members can be engaged in combat operations against well-armed militia forces in one city block, conducting stabilization operations block, and supporting humanitarian relief in another, with the transition from one role to another occurring instantly. Other non-traditional activities include disarmament functions, de-mining tasks, foreign military training, and so on. These new roles and demands, in turn, call for more robust rules of engagement, as well as combat-capable, responsive military forces and ever-expanding expertise.



A Canadian soldier from Charlie Company, attached to the Third Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, provides perimeter security around a Chinook helicopter before heading back to Kandahar, Afghanistan.



In November 1999, Private Troy Forrester of the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI) Battle Group looks through the sights of his C-9 light machine-gun. The 1 PPCLI Battle Group was deployed on Operation KINETIC, Canada's contribution to KFOR, the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

The United Nations Association of Canada (UNA-Canada) elaborates: "Peacekeeping has evolved to the point where demands placed on peacekeepers transcend their traditional role, rendering it virtually unrecognizable to its founders."⁸ General Dallaire states that we now have "...the task of making peacekeeping evolve to a higher state of conflict resolution, and stabilizing the world from anarchy, warlordism, and ethnic violence... Peacekeeping now must become part of a multi-disciplinary approach: diplomatic, humanitarian, and stabilization fields must work in harmony as they never have before."⁹ As Dr. English succinctly states: "The peacekeeper on the Sinai in 1960 faced much simpler times and tasks."¹⁰

In the aftermath of 9/11, a new dimension has been added. Over 8000 CF members have been deployed on operations in the *War against Terrorism*. At its peak, our naval task group deployment included six warships and approximately 1500 navy personnel. Canada's air force continues to transport military supplies, humanitarian aid and thousands of personnel back and forth into operational zones. In 2002, more than 800 CF army personnel joined a battle group alongside US forces in and around Kandahar, Afghanistan. Beginning August 2003, Canada also committed two rotations of over 2000 troops to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, a UN-authorized but NATO-led operation. Canada has since committed to two additional rotations there through August 2005, albeit with a scaled-down force size, and is also considering future participation in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

In many ways, given the 'failed state' operational environment, and given the range of conflict management tools with which to respond – including

combat, post-conflict peace-building, humanitarian aid, and stabilization activities – Afghanistan represents today's quintessential peace support operation. And not only do peace support operations involve joint army, navy and air force responses, they also demand a pan-Government of Canada (GoC) approach. In Afghanistan, the GoC strategy is called the '3D' approach as it combines diplomatic, developmental and defence efforts. Canadian diplomats are assisting the Afghan people rebuild their country's institutions; Canadian aid workers are undertaking numerous humanitarian and long-term development projects, and CF troops are contributing to the stability needed for the other two groups to succeed in their work. In addition to other governmental departments, CF members also find themselves working alongside members of the news media, non-governmental organizations, other civilians. Simply put, the 21st Century battlefield is no longer a domain exclusive to soldiers, and enhanced civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) is essential.

In a speech given at the Royal Canadian Military Institute in Toronto in September 2004, the Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence (MND), commented upon these security developments: "In a grey zone between war and peace, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between friend and foe, especially when dealing with terrorists and suicide bombers who seek shelter among civilians."¹¹ The MND added: "As a nation, we can – and should – be very proud of the role our country played in developing, and putting into practice, this traditional form of peacekeeping. But equally, as a nation, we must be prepared to play a leadership role in the next generation of peace support operations that have become more common over the past decade."¹² The MND reiterated this sentiment at the Rotary Club of Toronto in January 2005, stating that today's operations are more complex, dangerous and demanding: "They frequently take place in regions where tensions are still high or where there is very little peace to keep... Succeeding in today's 'peace support operations' – or 'three block war' – means that... our men and women in uniform must be prepared to face every type of situation, from combat to building and enforcing peace to humanitarian relief."¹³

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Public Opinion: Peacekeeping Versus Peacemaking

Peacekeeping has indeed evolved. However, it is possible that concomitant public opinion has lagged behind. Public opinion is the collective expression of opinion of a population

at a particular point in time. At the personal level, opinion is largely driven by self-interest – that is, whether an individual can be affected by the outcome of an issue. Events of unusual magnitude, such as 9/11, can dramatically swing public opinion on specific issues, but, generally, the change is temporary.¹⁴ In recent years, the Canadian public environment has been characterized by three major trends related to defence and security: a consistently high level of public support for the CF, sustained since 1999; significantly greater concerns about emerging threats and global security since 9/11; and growing concerns about Canada's defence capabilities.¹⁵

While polls show public support for the CF, other studies reveal that Canadians generally lack awareness of the nation's military operations. According to one study, when asked to name two international military operations or peacekeeping missions that Canada has participated in since 1990, 41 per cent were able to provide two correct answers, while 29 per cent were able to provide only one correct response. Thirty-one percent were unable to provide any correct responses. As for the correct responses provided, the top answer was Bosnia/Yugoslavia (40 per cent) followed by Afghanistan (28 per cent), the Gulf War (14 per cent), Kosovo (11 per cent), Somalia (8 per cent), Rwanda (5 per cent), Haiti (1 per cent), and the Congo (1 per cent).¹⁶ Another study in Fall 2003 conducted by GPC International found that only 44 per cent of Canadians were "familiar" with Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.¹⁷ More than a year-and-a-half later, a 2005 study conducted by Ipsos-Reid found a continued lack of awareness, with 67 per cent admitting to knowing either "very little" or "nothing" about the CF operation in Afghanistan.¹⁸

Notwithstanding this lack of awareness of operations, when asked what the most positive contribution that Canada as a country makes to the world, 'peacekeeping' remains the most frequent selection.¹⁹ Almost nine in ten Canadians, in fact, report that "promoting world peace" is the most important foreign policy objective for Canada.²⁰ Similarly, the GPC-conducted Fall 2003 poll also focused on the "top priorities of Canadians" and found that 81 per cent supported "participating in international peacekeeping operations."²¹ Other studies show Canadians 'feel' a moral obligation to help people living in other countries who are suffering due to war, natural disasters or poverty.²² Also, a recent study conducted by Pollara found that a majority of Canadians feel that the federal government should increase spending on Canada's national defence, and approximately two-in-five Canadians support increased spending on peacekeeping (41 per cent) and foreign aid (38 per cent).²³

Steadfast support for Canadian internationalism and efforts to promote global peace, however, have not translated into the same level of support for military operations in Afghanistan. In June 2003, before the first CF deployment for ISAF in Afghanistan, an Ekos-conducted poll found that

"How much does the Canadian public understand about the evolved role of peacekeeping? Would they support it?"

only 43 per cent of the public supported this operation.²⁴ However, ongoing GoC activities to raise awareness about Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, along with positive media coverage, did result in increased public support at the time. A Communications Canada poll, for example, conducted later in 2003 by GPC International, subsequent to the deployment of troops, found rather solid support for Canada's role

in Afghanistan.²⁵ Nonetheless, in the same study, while 81 per cent of the respondents regarded "participating in international peacekeeping operations" as a top priority for Canada, only 70 per cent agreed that it is "important that Canada play a role in maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan."²⁶

More recently, however, when comparing the 2004 and 2002 Environics-conducted *Focus Canada* studies, public support for the Afghanistan operation appears to be declining once again. The percentage of those who "strongly support" the operation fell from 38 per cent in 2002 to 26 per cent in 2004; those who "somewhat approve" fell from 37 to 35 per cent; those who somewhat disapprove increased from 11 to 15 per cent; and those who strongly disapprove increased from 12 to 20 per cent.²⁷ While it can be speculated that the Iraq crisis is contributing to declining public support, any study that finds strong support for "promoting world peace" along with moderate or low support for "helping to bring stability to Afghanistan" reveals a public opinion disconnect.

A possible explanation for this disconnect is found in the 2002 and 2004 *Focus Canada* polls, as well as the 2005 Ekos-conducted *Canadian Attitudes Toward the CF* study. The studies verify that a majority of Canadians indeed prefer a "traditional peacekeeping role" for Canada. The Focus Canada poll question read: "Some people say that Canadian Forces should adopt a traditional peacekeeping role, which means trying to keep the two conflicting sides apart. Others say that Canadian Forces should adopt a peacemaking role, which might involve fighting alongside other UN troops to force peace in a disputed area. Which view is closer to your own?" In 2002, of the 2021 adult Canadians polled, 52 per cent indicated that they preferred the "traditional peacekeeping role."²⁸ In 2004, the preference for traditional peacekeeping increased to 59 per cent.²⁹ These statistics closely match an Ekos-conducted study in 2005, which found 57 per cent preferred "traditional peacekeeping" versus 41 per cent for a "peacemaking" role.³⁰

It is therefore suggested that some Canadians do not support the operation in Afghanistan on the basis that it does not mesh with their understanding of what peacekeeping entails. They prefer the more traditional – and less dangerous – role of trying to keep two conflicting sides under the UN banner. Given that this type of operation is, for the most part, a remnant of the past, it is apparent that this popular viewpoint does not concur with current realities.

Why Does a Conceptual Gap Exist?

Steadfast public support of promoting world peace, vis-à-vis moderate or fluctuating support for Canada's role in non-traditional peacekeeping roles, such as bringing peace and security to Afghanistan, certainly exposes a public opinion disconnect.

Why does this conceptual gap exist? Carol Off, host of CBC's public affairs program *Counterspin* and author of *The Ghosts of Medak Pocket: The Story of Canada's Secret War*, asserts that Canadians are "squeamish" about war and like to think of the CF as peacekeepers, not warriors.³¹ According to Off, despite what Canada accomplished – and suffered – in the world wars, Canadians still have a hard time with the notion of conflict: "In contemporary society, we want to see our forces as benign peacekeepers, distributing food and protecting the peace." But, according to Off: "Canadian forces have been involved in bloody awful wars and conflicts all over the world under the rubric of peacekeeping. Canadian soldiers take fire and give it back. They are often aggressive and frequently involved in combat."³²

The public shock following the death of Corporal Jamie Brendan Murphy, killed in Afghanistan by a suicide bomber in January 2004, reflects this "lingering misperception," to quote Dr. Rob Huebert of the University of Calgary. "When it comes to the Canadian population, and even our leaders, I'm not entirely sure that we quite grasp the fact that we are now asking the men and women of our service to enter into a much more dangerous occupation and one that comes with substantially more risk."³³ Some believe that CF members are entering the "traditional post-conflict area where the various combatants have exhausted themselves, want to find a solution, and welcome our involvement. What we have to now recognize is that, since the end of the Cold War, this type of operation has almost become non-existent."³⁴

Dr. John English takes this one step further: "Canadian Peacekeeping is not what it used to be; in truth, it never was." The peacekeeping monument in Ottawa, according to English, evokes the image of the peacekeeper that persists in Canadian memory: the determined professional soldier separating "the irrational forces of destruction, much as a strong referee would do in a bantamweight boxing match."³⁵ However, "The Suez dream of UN peacekeepers engaged in non-violent observation and whose presence prevented conflict crumbled in the nineties... Between the ideal of public perception and the reality of peacekeeping operations fall many shadows."³⁶

Despite these new realities, some interest groups advocate a return to traditional peacekeeping. Stephen Staples, Director, Project on the Corporate-Security State, Polaris Institute and author of the report *Breaking Rank: A Citizens' Review of Canadian*

"Thus, another effective way to help close the conceptual gap in the Canadian psyche is to focus upon the educational system."

Military Spending, argues that the CF should return to a positive international role through non-combative UN peacekeeping. Staples writes: "These operations around the world have seen the trademark Canadian peacekeepers: lightly armed and wearing the UN's blue berets... These neutral peacekeepers worked with both groups of previously warring parties to bring a lasting end to the conflict." Staples

further states that UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions are now a myth: "These missions under NATO and US command have come at the expense of traditional UN peacekeeping, so much so that at the end of 2001 only 219 soldiers – fewer than six per cent of deployed Canadian personnel were participating in UN peacekeeping missions."³⁷

Canadian historian Dr. Jack Granatstein, participating in some back-and-forth editorial bantering with New Democratic Party foreign affairs critic Alexa McDonough in the *National Post*, also argues that UN peacekeeping scarcely exists anymore. However, Granatstein arrives at a different conclusion than Staples for the following reason: "The UN proved in a succession of missions, such as Somalia and Rwanda, that it was an abject failure at peacekeeping, so the Security Council turned over the hard tasks to *ad hoc* coalitions or, as in Kabul today, to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization." Granatstein continues: "Since the end of the Cold War, when Canada does peacekeeping, as Ms. McDonough calls it, it's really doing peacemaking or peace enforcement, both of which are just synonyms for war."³⁸ In the same editorial, Granatstein writes that the commander of the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group that made up Rotation 0 of Operation Athena in Afghanistan is blunt on the misuse of the word peacekeeping, and attributes the following statement to him: "God, I hate it when they call us peacekeepers. We loathe the term, abhor it. Peacekeeping can turn into a general war situation in the snap of your fingers."³⁹

Although public perception evolves gradually, in Off's viewpoint, the deployment to Afghanistan might be part of a coming-of-age process where Canadians will be compelled to realize how much the military role has evolved, or has been restored, and will determine what they really expect and want from the military, and what they really see as Canada's role in the world. Off continues: "While the Canadian public likes to bask in the glow of what they perceive peacekeepers are doing, our armed forces often don't even call what they do peacekeeping, but 'Operations other than war.' How much does the Canadian public understand of the evolved role of peacekeeping? Would they support it? Isn't it time for the debate?"⁴⁰

Closing the Conceptual Gap

With the Budget 2005 announcement of 23 February 2005 and the International Policy Review now a reality, it is certainly time for a debate of Canada's international

role, including what is expected and needed from our military. Why is it important to close the conceptual gap between the ideals of public opinion and the realities of current operations? To begin, if people are not aware of the issues or do not understand them, they are not likely to be concerned, much less formulate an informed opinion. Next, questions are also raised about the support for Canadian internationalism if there was a more realistic understanding of the security environment. Most important is that, as a public institution, the DND/CF's ability to operate, including its funding, can be significantly influenced by public support. Outdated ideas and misconceptions about what the CF does at home and around the world can affect this support. For example, some Canadians do not support the need for a multi-purpose, combat-capable military because "Canadians are just peacekeepers," or do not support certain international operations because "it is not traditional peacekeeping." I will now suggest some strategies to help close this conceptual gap, including focusing on effective communications, public discussion and educational activities.

One of the most popular 'quick-fix' solutions for addressing the conceptual gap involves terminology. Canadians often group any CF activity overseas under the rubric of 'peacekeeping,' even full-combat operations such as the 1999 Kosovo War. Meanwhile, some soldiers loathe and abhor the term, others debate definitions, and academics deconstruct the mythology. As a result, additional terms have been added to the operations lexicon. For example, the Somalia Commission of Inquiry report describes multiple types of operations under the rubric of 'peace support operations,' including 'peacemaking,' 'preventive diplomacy,' 'traditional peacekeeping,' 'preventive deployment,' and 'second-generation multinational operations,' among others.⁴¹ To avoid confusion, DND/CF spokespersons should always use the terms 'peace support operations' and 'CF members' in lieu of 'peacekeeping' and 'peacekeepers.'

However, regardless of terminology used, a debate focused on semantics will neither capture public attention nor garner their understanding of the new security environment. Further, the traditional terminology is deeply engrained in the Canadian psyche, and will continue to be used in public and media discourse to 'frame' what the CF does overseas.⁴² Closing the

conceptual gap between public opinion ideals and current realities will, therefore, require effective communications. In his article *What Works for the Military Can Work for Business (and Vice Versa)*, US Air Force Major Ron Sconyers argues that the competition for the public's attention is intense and the attention span is short: "Communication must be focused to capture the public's imagination and provide information about complex issues quickly, yet in an understandable way... Our job is not to intimidate with information, but to entice."⁴³

It is far from enticing to dismissively state that "peacekeeping does not exist" or "we are not peacekeepers." It is also misleading. It may be a truism that the traditional peacekeeping role is rare; however, the rationalization underlying missions – to promote peace and security – remains. Therefore, DND/CF corporate communications must reflect the core values and national interests that continue to underpin today's peace support operations. First, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC) states that Canada's commitment to peacekeeping is aligned with our values and highest traditions of respect for human life: "As a nation blessed with relative prosperity and security, Canadians believe they have a moral responsibility to help others."⁴⁴ Second, international operations are tied to our security interests. By responding to situations like failed or failing states, the CF helps deny terrorist cells the haven and support that sustain them and addresses threats before they reach the shores of Canada. Third, international operations are tied to our economic interests: "Nations at peace are good trading partners. They do not destabilize their neighbours, create refugee flows, destroy the environment, or host criminal organizations."⁴⁵ Lastly, peace support



The Canadian Peacekeeping Monument on Sussex Drive in Ottawa, seen from the south with the Notre Dame Basilica in the background.

DND photo IS2002-9012 by Jacek Szymanski, DGPA/JSPA Combat Camera



Children surround LCdr Lalitha Rupasinghe, an anaesthesiologist, during a visit to the Zainab Cobera girls school in Kabul, Afghanistan.

operations serve our political interests, from collective security and multilateralism to boosting Canada's influence and stature on the world stage.⁴⁶ By focusing communications on the 'why,' Canadians will understand that although the Afghanistan operation is not traditional peacekeeping, any effort to end conflict and restore stability overseas *does* serve Canadian values and interests.

In some ways, the conceptual gap is akin to a branding problem. The values and interests intrinsic to the CF 'brand' remain; however, the image that is evoked is outdated. Hence, DND/CF must reinforce these values while also striving to inform Canadians what peacekeeping, meaning peace support operations, entails today. Visual communications, such as electronic multimedia, will be very helpful in this regard, but the most important channel to foster public understanding is 'face to face.' According to consultant Fraser Likely, the tendency is to migrate communication materials to electronic channels, particularly to websites, which can increase levels of knowledge acquisition but are poor at increasing levels of understanding. Likely elaborates: "If we want to just put information 'out there' electronic is superior. If we want to change people – their attitudes, their opinions and/or their behaviours – then we must first increase their level of understanding."⁴⁷ As Likely expands, understanding comes from opportunities to ask questions, to provide input and feedback, to discuss concepts and to hear various viewpoints. Hence, public opinion on an issue may have its roots in self-interest or in events, but the primary catalyst is public discussion: "Only in this way does opinion begin to crystallize, and pollsters can measure it."⁴⁸

a role to play in this educational process. To help stimulate public discussion, senior Defence and military leaders must continue to channel information through the news media and through the nation's crafters of public opinion about deployments abroad and the capabilities required in today's security environment. DND/CF leaders should also take every possible opportunity to speak with Canadians directly about 'why' the CF is in places like Afghanistan. At the same time, any CF member, from corporal to colonel, particularly those returning from operations, can go to their local community centre, their children's school or any other venue and "tell their story" to Canadians. Lastly, DND/CF must also employ a range of multimedia tools to support this story and to help reinforce the new brand of peace support operations.

Conclusion

The UN forces sent to Egypt in 1956 to subdue hostilities marked a turning point in the evolution of peacekeeping from observation activities to full-scale operations, just as the post-Cold War era has ushered in yet another crossroad. The peace dividend so eagerly sought did not see fruition, and, in the 1990s, Canada and its allies encountered considerable difficulties adapting to the new world order. However, Canada continued to build on its peacekeeping expertise to adapt to this reality, and is now making praiseworthy contributions to global security and stability in places such as Afghanistan. The world today remains an unpredictable and perilous place and is fraught with new and evolving threats, such as global terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the dangers caused by failed and failing states. Looking ahead,

This endeavour will be a long-term process. Thus, another effective way to help close the conceptual gap in the Canadian psyche is to focus upon the educational system. The opinions of future generations of voters and opinion makers take shape during their formative school years. Programming techniques, such as teaching aids, online learning resources and outreach activities can help garner understanding and appreciation among our youth of Canada's role in the world, including the contributions made by the Canadian Forces. By ensuring that our youth are informed, the proverbial seed will be planted for more informed public opinion in the future.

Official DND/CF policy states that *Public Affairs* is a shared responsibility – therefore all CF members have

it is vital that Canadians understand how Canada must respond if it wishes to continue to play a leadership role in promoting peace and security. In particular, it must be realized that conflict prevention in the foreseeable future will entail more than a passive activity fulfilled by the presence of UN peacekeepers wearing blue berets.

At the same time, from Egypt in the 1950s to the Former Yugoslavia in the 1990s to Afghanistan today, while the operations look remarkably different, the historical ‘dots’ can still be connected by underlying purposes, those

of providing peace and security for people afflicted by war and conflict, and protecting Canadian interests. With the 50th anniversaries of the first peacekeeping force and of Pearson’s Nobel Peace Prize fast approaching, and in the midst of Canada’s International Policy Review, it is indeed an opportune time both to celebrate an important aspect of Canadian history and heritage, and to enhance public understanding of how peacekeeping or peace support operations has evolved since its genesis.



NOTES

1. This statistic is based on the Ekos Research Associates Inc.-conducted *Public Security Monitor 2003*, Wave 6 (Part 1): June 2003. The study provides systematic analyses of Canadian attitudes over time. Each week, Ekos interviewed a minimum of 300 randomly selected Canadians. The statistic noted is from a poll conducted June 9-12, involving a sample of 600 Canadians.
2. For a list of all UN peacekeeping missions with details on Canada's contributions, see <<http://www.dfat-maeci.gc.ca/peacekeeping/missions-en.asp>>.
3. Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry. In the report, the statement is attributed to Paul F. Diehl, International Peacekeeping (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 6-7.
4. News Release retrieved from <<http://nobelprize.org/peace/laurates/1988/press.html>>
5. Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. *Canada and International Peace Operations: Is Canada Still a Peacekeeping Nation?* (April 2003), p. 2. This report was presented by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to the Dialogue on Foreign Policy (DFAIT). In the report, the statistics referenced are attributed to: United Nations Development Programme, *2002 Human Development Report; The State and the Progress of Human Development*, New York, 2002, p. 16.
6. John English, *Canadian Peacekeeping is Not What It Used to Be*, p. 7. This is one of 14 articles written as part of a Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) study on future Canadian foreign policy options in anticipation of the defence and foreign policy reviews. The final report was entitled “In The National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy in an Insecure World.”
7. LGen Roméo Dallaire provided the prologue in Sean Maloney's *Canada and UN Peacekeeping. Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970*, (St. Catherine's, ON: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2002), p. ix.
8. See UNA-Canada Fact Sheet: *The UN and Peacekeeping* at <http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/fact_sheets/peacekeeping.asp>.
9. Dallaire, p. ix..
10. English, pp. 7-8.
11. Minister Graham spoke at the Royal Canadian Military Institute (RCMI) on 22 September 2004. The RCMI co-hosted a conference on “The New World of Robust Peacekeeping Operations: What Roles for NATO and Canada?” in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies and the Atlantic Council of Canada.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Minister Graham spoke at the Rotary Club of Toronto on 21 January 2005.
14. Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault, and Warren K. Agee, *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, 5th Edition, (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 2003), p. 209.
15. Based on annual DND/CF baseline survey (*Pollara 2002*), conducted in September 2002. The results were noted in the DND/CF Strategic Communications Plan 2003-2004, May 2003.
16. Ipsos-Reid/Dominion Institute/Globe and Mail poll conducted June 10-12, 2003, with a randomly selected sample of 1055 adult Canadians.
17. GPC International, *Listening to Canadians* (2003). The poll was conducted by Communication Canada (not part of the Privy Council Office) to measure Canadians' views on public policy priorities, and on how the Government of Canada serves Canadians in response to those priorities. The poll was conducted 12 September-9 October 2003. The results are based on over 6300 interviews, with a margin of error +/- 1.2 per cent. All data was statistically weighted to reflect the actual demography of Canada.
18. Canadian Ipsos-Reid Express, *DND Study*. The study was conducted 8-10 March 2005 with a sample of 964 (1000 people were polled, but the base includes those not employed by DND/CF). The question read: “How much do you know about Canadian Forces operations currently taking place in Afghanistan?” The results were: 3 per cent (A great deal); 30 per cent (A fair amount); 55 per cent (Very little); and 12 per cent (Nothing).
19. Environics Research Group Limited, *Focus Canada* reports in 2002 and 2004. The polls were based on public opinion survey data from a modified probability sample of 2021 and 2020 adult Canadians interview 4-24 March 2002 and 9-28 July 2004 respectively. Strict probability samples of this size are estimated to be an accurate representation of the Canadian population to within approximately two percentage points, 19 times out of 20. In 2002, three in ten Canadians reported ‘peacekeeping’ as the most positive contribution that Canada, as a country, makes to the world (up one point from 2000); the second tier was ‘foreign aid’ (11 per cent, down seven points from 2000). In 2004, the ratio increased to 36 per cent of Canadians indicating “peacekeeping” while “foreign aid” also increased, from 11 per cent to 15 per cent.
20. Environics Research Group Limited, *Focus Canada* reports in 2002 and 2004. In 2002, some 88 per cent indicated that Canada's role in promoting world peace is ‘very important.’ This dropped to 81 per cent in the 2004 study, but it remains the top choice.
21. GPC International, *Listening to Canadians* (2003).
22. A survey conducted for the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) by Environics Research Group completed in January 2002 found a ten point increase in the proportion saying Canada should become more involved in providing economic aid to poor countries (39 per cent in January 2002, up from 29 per cent in March 2001), and a five point increase in the proportion saying Canada should become more involved in peacekeeping missions abroad (35 per cent in January 2002, up from 30 per cent in March 2001). At the same time, the proportion saying Canada should maintain or reduce its current level of involvement has fallen. In total, only 12 per cent want to be less involved in peacekeeping, and only 10 per cent want to be less involved in military alliances.
23. Pollara Inc. The poll was conducted for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA) between 29 March-4 April 2004 with a sample of 1268 Canadian adults across Canada. The results are considered accurate to within plus or minus 2.7 per cent, nineteen times out of twenty. Fifty-five per cent of Canadians advocate increased government spending on fighting terrorism here in Canada and 54 per cent believe the defence budget should be enlarged. The poll also revealed strong support for CF deployments on peacekeeping missions, including Haiti (79 per cent support), Bosnia (79 per cent support), and Afghanistan (77 per cent support).
24. Ekos Research Associates Inc., *Public Security Monitor 2003*, Wave 6 (Part 1). The question “Do you support or oppose the recent decision to once again send troops to Afghanistan?” received 55 per cent support in the 24-27 February study (30 per cent opposed, 14 per cent neither), 52 per cent 3-6 March (31 per cent opposed, 14 per cent neither), 53 per cent 7-10 April (18 per cent opposed, 26 per cent neither), and, finally, 43 per cent 9-12 June (25 per cent opposed, 30 per cent neither).
25. GPC International, *Listening to Canadians* (2003). The question “What level of support do you have for Canada's participation in Afghanistan?” finding 57 per cent support, 25 per cent moderate support, and 18 per cent no support.

26. GPC International, *Listening to Canadians* (2003).
27. Environics Research Group Limited, *Focus Canada 2002 and 2004*.
28. Environics Research Group Limited, *Focus Canada 2002*. Forty-four per cent indicated the “peacemaking role,” while 4 per cent reported that they “didn’t care.”
29. Environics Research Group Limited, *Focus Canada 2004*. Thirty-six per cent indicate a “peacekeeping role.”
30. Ekos Research Associates Inc., *Canadian Attitudes Toward the CF*. The poll was conducted between 9-17 February 2005 with a sample of 1500. The question read: “The CF should have a traditional peacekeeping role, which means trying to keep two conflicting sides apart. Or, the CF should have a peacemaking role, which might involve fighting alongside other UN troops to force peace in a disputed area.”
31. Carol Off, *Doing the Right Thing in An Age of Cynicism*, The Ross Ellis Memorial Lecture in Military and Strategic Studies. University of Calgary (1 Mar 2002), p. 5.
32. *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.
33. CBC TV, *Canada Now*, Video ‘Commentary’ (28 Jan 04).
34. *Ibid*.
35. John English, *Canadian Peacekeeping is Not What It Used to Be*, p. 1.
36. *Ibid*, p. 5; p. 1.
37. Staples, Stephen, *Breaking Rank: A Citizens’ Review of Canadian Military Spending* (2002), The Polaris Institute, p. 2.
38. Jack Granatstein wrote an editorial about Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) in the National Post entitled “Layton plays the anti-Yankee card” (January 27, 2004, National Post). Alexa McDonough wrote an editorial response, entitled “Defending Jack” (January 30), arguing that BMD is “un-Canadian” because it is inconsistent with our “proud history” of peacekeeping. Granatstein’s rebuttal in the National Post was entitled “Brush up on our ‘proud history’” (February 3).
39. *Ibid*. This is a quote that is attributed by the author to the Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment Battalion Group (3 RCR BG) during Rotation 0 of Operation Athena.
40. Off, *Doing the Right Thing in An Age of Cynicism*, pp. 15-16.
41. The report uses the term ‘traditional peacekeeping’ to describe only those operations with consent of the parties, impartiality, and use of force only in self-defence.
42. A ‘frame’ is a conceptual structure used in thinking; it describes the context in which an issue is placed and the image that is evoked. Peacekeeping is often used to ‘frame’ CF operations overseas; however, the image it evokes does not often reflect the reality of modern peace support operations.
43. Ron Sconyers, *What Works for the Military Can Work for Business (and Vice Versa)*, Communication World, April/May 1998.
44. Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, p. 4.
45. *Ibid*, p.i.
46. *Ibid*. As several other experts, authors and institutions have recently argued, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre also suggests that there is a growing gap between Canada’s foreign policy objectives (and rhetoric) and the ability to back them up with resources and action. This has resulted in a decline in the country’s reputation as a peacekeeping nation, and increasingly sidelined or marginalized Canada’s influence and stature in global politics. “This comes precisely at the moment when there are significant changes in the dynamic of international peace and security that have implications for Canada’s vital interests... Canada’s ability to influence international events will be proportional to the political, financial, and human resources that Canada is willing to invest,” p. 5.
47. Fraser Likely, *The Latest Trends in Public Affairs*. Speaking Notes for Fraser Likely at the DND/CF Public Affairs Conference 2004, Ottawa, 28 April 2004.
48. Wilcox, Ault and Agee, p. 210.

DND photo KA2005-R105-00138 by Corporal Dan Shouinard



Tired, exhausted and completely worn out, Canadian Forces members from Roto 2 Kabul, Afghanistan, are on the second last leg of their journey to Camp Mirage in Southwest Asia before heading back to Canada.