

(Re)Thinking Canada's Role in Peacekeeping

Network for Strategic Analysis

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About the Conference

(Re)Thinking Canada's Role in Peacekeeping was the first annual conference of the Network for Strategic Analysis focusing on Canada's partnerships with international and regional institutions, such as the United Nations, the African Union, and NATO, in its peacekeeping endeavors.

Peacekeeping remains an essential tool for the multilateral management of international peace and security issues. However, this tool has been facing major challenges, including the inconsistent support of Security Council members, the limited means made available, the difficulties related to the protection of civilians and the intertwining of internal conflicts with the dynamics of transnational terrorism.

Canada is closely associated with the birth of peacekeeping; its current government is also a strong supporter of multilateralism. Yet Ottawa has been criticized for its absence from certain geographic areas, for its "limited" contributions and for the choices it has made in its re-engagement. How does Canada position itself in the peacekeeping arena? To what extent is participation in peace operations a priority for the Canadian government? Why should it be or not? If it is, where should Canada be involved and how?

To explore answers to these questions and to assess the extent to which and how Canada can distinguish itself in the field of peacekeeping, practitioners and scholars were invited to discuss the evolving strategic policies of international, regional and sub-regional organizations active in the field, their needs, and ways to align Canadian contributions with their expectations, with academics, practitioners and students in the field.

Acknowledgements

The conference is organized by:

Dr. Sarah-Myriam Martin-Brûlé (Bishop's University, Research Leader, RAS-NSA Axis II)

Dr. Marie-Joëlle Zahar (Université de Montréal, Researcher, RAS-NSA)

The coordinating team is composed of:

Chloé Berland (Université de Montréal, Emerging Scholar, RAS-NSA)

Junru Bian (McGill University, Emerging Scholar)

Corinne Dory (Bishop's University, Student Collaborator, RAS-NSA)

The first panel of the conference, titled *Canada and Peacekeeping in Africa*, was chaired by **Dr. Sarah-Myriam Martin-Brûlé**.

The panelists of the section were composed of:

Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA

Dr. Bruno Charbonneau, Associate Professor, Royal Military College Saint-Jean

Dr. El-Ghassim Wane, J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

Dr. Lise Howard, Full Professor, Georgetown University

The second panel of the conference, titled *Canada and Peacekeeping in Europe*, was chaired by **Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky** of Queen's University and Co-Director of the network.

The panelists of the section were composed of:

The Honorable Kerry Buck, Former Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to NATO

Major-General Denis Thompson (ret.), Canadian Armed Forces

Canada and Peacekeeping in Africa: Engaging with the UN or Building the Capacity of Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations?

Participants of the conference identified three main aspects that make Canada well-placed to participate in peace operations:

1. Canada is bilingual, which is a comparative advantage in participating to the intervention in many host states with English/French as official language.
2. With no colonial past in Africa, Canada's presence in host states tends to be less controversial.
3. Canada benefits from a general image of good global citizenship.

Up until 2012, the Pearson Peacekeeping Center and its activities testified of Canada's commitment and engagement in peacekeeping activities. Canada's collaboration with *l'École de maintien de la paix* in Bamako and its peacekeeping activities in Mali, particularly its contribution to MINUSMA, have also been an example of collaborative success. Dr. Charbonneau believes that Canada's mobile and tactical support to MINUSMA has "enabled European and UN troops to extend their fields of action in the Gao region," although he is still convinced that Canada could benefit from more extensive commitment. For Dr. Charbonneau, Canada can contribute additional materials, equipment, new technologies and trained personnel – such as technical experts and specialized police – to peacekeeping missions.

Technology, training, and intelligence were identified as three key areas in which Canada could boost its contribution. The need for new technologies in UN peacekeeping fosters new venues for partnership and cooperation between Canada and African states. Mahamat Saleh Annadif noted that Canada's engagement with UN peacekeeping in Africa "must place populations at the center of its intervention, as information collected by human sources remains a crucial factor in the acquisition of intelligence within peacekeeping missions." El-Ghassim Wane has

identified five key areas of focus for future Canada-led UN peacekeeping training:

- Community policing;
- Countering Improvised explosive devices;
- Using Unmanned Aviation Vehicles (UAVs) and other new surveillance technologies;
- Clarifying UN rules and principles that serve as the foundation for peacekeeping operations;
- Applying the Principles regarding the protection of women and children, such as those outlined in the Elsie Initiative and the Vancouver Principle.

In essence, Canada can promote concrete understanding amongst peacekeepers regarding the purpose of their presence and actions – which would consequently help peacekeepers to formulate a more locally-recognized imagery of protection.

Canada should also recognize the value of investing in preventative peacekeeping measures. It is often seen that peacekeeping strategies in practice are mostly *ad hoc*, while a considerable number of states intervene only when the constitutional order of the state in crisis is challenged. Canada's political partnership can help states focus not only on urgent issues, but also on underlying ones as well.

Canada has many options in engaging with UN peacekeeping in Africa. Local and regional institutions can benefit from Canadian partnership. Non-state actors offer alternative solutions for ongoing, preventative peacebuilding efforts. For example, in Central African Republic, local institutions have had a strong influence in local governance recognized by local populations as more legitimate.

Canada can expand its support to both UN missions internationally and African states bilaterally by strengthening their capacity in mission management and policy implementation. UN-led interventions may suffer from lack of positive local reception. Institutions that are born in Africa, that are well supported by Africa, can be useful to tackle the root causes of instability and violence, and to promote greater stability. Consequently, facilitating the

pedagogical work of building the capacities of institutions such as the African Union (AU), Economy Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the South African Development Community (SADC), in addition to supporting local civil societies, can encourage positive peacekeeping outcomes.

At the political level, Canada's partnership can reach the root causes of crises – a cycle of instability caused by a lack of legitimacy and insufficient presence of a State amongst vulnerable populations. There are political solutions against systematic issues such as poverty and corruption – and these are the areas for cooperation where Canada can play a leadership role in. It is important that the issues existing in African states that are affecting the peace prospects of the continent are succinctly identified. Ultimately, as El-Ghassim Wane emphasizes, Canada needs to “find ways to better support African efforts to stop violence and instability in Africa,” as “it is not just peacekeeping that matters.”

Canada is equipped to contributing more to UN peacekeeping – and it has the capacity to set more ambitious objectives than the ones determined in its operations in the recent past. Canada can also further advocate for the development of policies in key areas related to peacekeeping, including the protection of civilians, and protection of children in conflict, with the Vancouver Principles playing a leading role. Such political advocacy can significantly influence the directions of the initiatives led by the Secretary General in the action for peacekeeping. Canada's political influence can also impact the budget discussions in the UN regarding peacekeeping operations, and Canadian expertise can also play a key role in the planning and analysis of different missions. In turn, Canada's voice is accepted, objective and should be welcomed, as all such factors that make Canada's participation in UN peacekeeping favored.

Are peacekeepers protecting civilians? Lise Howard's answer is a resounding yes. For her, “UN

peacekeeping has been strikingly effective as a form of intervention. There is no statistical equivalence – even it seems that it is never working, it actually is saving lives... and UN peacekeeping is a worthy investment because of how effective it has been.”

Canada and Peacekeeping in Europe: Alliance Considerations

Canada plays a crucial role in peacekeeping through its contribution to multilateral institutions. Canada's participation in NATO exemplifies that multilateralism is alive and well. Multilateral institutions create a community of values, where like-minded members base their interventions on principles of democracy, individual liberties and Rule of Law. Multilateralism builds, by definition, a network of states that are therefore equipped to work together and offer more comprehensive solutions and approaches to international security issues. On a practical level, multilateral institutions give countries like Canada a broader range of strategic allies on which to count on in times of need. Multilateral institutions provide states with an understanding that military operations and soft security must go hand in hand.

When it comes to capacity building and peace promotion in fragile states, numbers matter. Efforts to establish peace must be both qualitative and quantitative, and troops offered by NATO can, and do, make a significant difference in military and tactical efficiency. In the case of the Bosnian War, NATO's sizable deployment of 6,000 troops was the primary factor behind its engagement's ability to conclude without casualties. Consequently, ensuring sufficient troop deployment needs to be prioritized. Improvements need to be made to better assess the challenges that troops will encounter when on the field, and trainings should be adapted to overcome these challenges.

Conflicts emerge because a part of the population is excluded, therefore, working on improving inclusion programs and initiatives is essential. Canada and

other states need to work on information analysis tools and the creation of women-led NGOs to better assess the need of the population affected by a conflict. Canada has taken symbolic steps to ensure the inclusion of women in peace and security, embodied by its introduction of the Feminist International Foreign Policy and the Elsie Initiative. However, at the operational level, Canada needs to facilitate more extensive pre-deployment capacity-building for peacekeeping troops that address the topic of gender and inclusivity in conflict. Connecting with local populations is also a key element in successful missions. Canada can benefit from prolonged engagement and continued communication with host communities – as such efforts can sustain peacekeeping achievements even after relevant missions are concluded.

To better outline how peacekeeping efforts could be more efficient and long-lasting, there are five recommendations:

1. First, Canada should prioritize upfront investments in order to avoid subsequent additional costs.
 2. Second, Canada and NATO have a mutually beneficial partnership. Canada should continue to contribute experienced commanders and troops, emphasize the importance of oversight from civilian leadership, and work alongside experts, notably in logistical support and information services.
 3. Third, Canada needs to intervene in partnership with local communities to formulate culturally sensitive mission strategies.
 4. Fourth, Canada should implement extensive and inclusive pre-deployment training that addresses the fundamental purpose of missions. Such training should recognize the influence of gender and local inclusivity on the success of peace missions.
 5. Lastly, Canada needs to contribute sufficient numbers of well-trained troops in order to increase the chances of peace sustainability after their departure.
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