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CANADA'S RE-ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS: LET'S THINK THIS THROUGH MR. PRIME MINISTER

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Exercise Solo Flight

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The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.

- Benjamin Disraeli

During the elections of 2015, the Liberal Party campaign strategy outlined in the Real Change document included its intent to re-engage with the United Nations (UN) in a comprehensive manner. This would include specialist capabilities such as policing, airlift, medical and engineering contributions but also the traditional commitments of troops, mission commanders and headquarter elements.¹ This was further spelled out in detail in the mandate letter sent from Prime Minister Trudeau to the newly appointed Minister of National Defence (MND), Harjit Singh Sajjan when they took office.² The desire to re-establish a more active relationship with the UN by the Liberal Party focuses on their aspirations to take a leadership role in both the provision of personnel and policy objectives. Forgetting the short duration deployment in 2004 as part of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which itself was over a decade ago, Canada has not contributed a large contingent or taken a lead role in a UN mission since before the operations in Afghanistan started 2002. And it is even longer since the golden age of Canadian Peacekeeping when Canada participated in every UN mission and could rightly boast an expertise shared by few other nations.

Despite indicating a desire to return to blue beret peacekeeping, it is incumbent on Canadian civilian and military leadership to carry out a fulsome assessment of what that means and to prepare accordingly. The decision to re-engage with the UN is indeed a political one but it comes with the obligation to understand what that entails, and with that understanding, prepare

¹Real Change: A Plan for the Middle Class, "Promoting International Peace and Security," last accessed 4 May 2016, <https://www.liberal.ca/realchange/promoting-international-peace-and-security/>

²Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau. *Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter*. Ottawa: 13 November 2015.

the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and members of Global Affairs Canada with the skills and capabilities to translate that decision into tangible action with the best chance of success. This paper will consider the peacekeeping landscape with a view to articulating the complex, multi-dimensional missions that are characteristic of current UN interventions before in order to bring out lessons and considerations for a re-engagement strategy with those missions. With this understanding, both the Government of Canada (GAC) and the CAF can ensure the training and equipment necessary for mission success is provided to the men and women provided to UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

In *Understanding Peacekeeping*, Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams describe seven types of peace operations based on the intended outcome (preventative deployments, traditional, wider, peace enforcement, assisting transitions, transitional administrations and peace support operations) which map closely to the categories outlined by the UN itself (conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace building).³ In both explanations, the term multi-dimensional is either stated explicitly or is implicit in the definitions to describe the interactions between the belligerents, populations, peacekeeping forces and the various UN and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) within the complex situations being addressed. As the context or event gets more severe, the degree to which the problem and its potential solution can be considered multi-dimensional is more pronounced. The difference between traditional peacekeeping of military observers and interposed forces with the environment Canadian personnel will find themselves involved can best be encapsulate in the idea of active versus passive participation. That is not to say that Canadians will become one of the belligerents but the era of simply

³Alex Bellamy, Paul Williams and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 8 and United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2008), 17.

creating a space and reporting on infractions has largely given way to actively setting the conditions for a lasting peace through the interdiction of elements that work against that goal. Canadians must be keenly aware of the nuanced difference between neutrality and impartiality. The former implies no active intervention in the status quo whereas the latter, as taken from the UN principles of peacekeeping, implies actively correcting wrongs without bias to whichever belligerent is the aggressor. The re-emergence into UN peacekeeping needs to be considered in this context by the GAC and CAF in order to establish the preliminary actions required to make it successful.

Force Size and Composition

The GAC will need to take note of the Post-Cold War PKOs that have continued to undertake more challenging missions with broader mandates, including a commensurate increase in personnel in order to achieve those mission objectives. The number of peacekeepers rose from just over 10,000 in 1985, when Canada supplied a significant portion of the deployed troops, to a current deployed strength of almost 105,000 spread across 16 missions.⁴ Over this same time period, Canada, like most Western nations, took advantage of the anticipated peace dividend by slashing the size of the CAF. This has several implications as Canada announces its return to UN peacekeeping. First, there will be pressure to contribute more than a simple light infantry battalion as was the case during Canada's participation in Cyprus. If Prime Minister Trudeau's stated aim of taking a leadership role is to be realized, limited troop deployment is not sufficient, especially if his intent is to focus on the reacquisition of a seat on the Security Council

⁴United Nations, "Peacekeeping Fact Sheet," last accessed 4 May 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml>.

(SC).⁵ Enablers and headquarter elements that will rival the recently terminated Canadian contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan will be the price to pay to be considered on par with countries such as Brazil and India who have long produced sizable contingents and specialized capabilities such as attack helicopters (India in Congo) and frigates (Brazil in Lebanon). If Canada wants to compete then it will require both a quantitatively large commitment in addition to providing technology and specific skill sets that are not readily available from other Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs).

Canada has been singled out as fertile ground as a source of French speaking and female soldiers. The benefit of French speaking peacekeepers in missions deployed to countries where French is spoken is self-evident and need not be expanded on here but the more interesting and likely less intuitive line of investigation is the growing body of research that emphasizes the importance and utility of women. The UN identifies women peacekeepers as critical for interacting with the local population, in particular by acting as role models in overly patriarchal societies, providing female mentors to training institutions and providing a voice to victims of gender based violence.⁶ Doctor Judith Stiehm, a noted author and professor of political science with extensive experience with the American Army and Air Force, goes further to state that the presence of women is a tangible statement of the UN principle of non-discrimination and the absence is a non-verbal denial of this principle before echoing the benefits the UN identifies for having women participate in peacekeeping.⁷ It is true that given the multicultural heritage and fully integrated military that both pools of potential peacekeepers exist in Canada but emphasising this capacity must be from an informed and realistic perspective. The composition

⁵“Trudeau says Canada will seek seat on UN Security Council,” CBC News, 11 February 2016.

⁶United Nations, “Women in Peacekeeping,” last accessed 4 May 2016.
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>.

⁷Judith Hicks Stiehm, “United Nation’s Peacekeeping: Men’s and Women’s Work,” In *Gender Politics in Global Governance*, ed. Mary Meyer and Elisabeth Prügl (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1999), 55-56.

of the CAF includes 54% of soldiers identifying as English only, 12% as women with only 10% of those employed in the combat arms trades.⁸ These demographics reduce the available pool of these niche peacekeepers dramatically and in the worst case, shift an unacceptable burden onto them. When exploring the options for Canada's re-engagement with the UN, military and political leaders will need to remain cognisant of their implied responsibility to their own citizens and balance that with the duty to the world as a whole.

Interposed Forces to Multi-Dimensional Peace Operations

The evolution of mandates from observer and interposed forces into more comprehensive operations that seek to create a sustainable peace by addressing the underlying issues will place Canadian peacekeepers in far more complicated situations. Two senior members of the UN Division of External Affairs, B.S. Prakash and K. Nandini, summarized this when considering India's role in peacekeeping operations, "With the recognition that conflicts are likely to recur in the absence of a long-term effort aimed at sustainable political, economic and social reconstruction, peace operations are increasingly tasked with wide-ranging multi-dimensional mandates involving these elements".⁹ They go on to outline some of the actors that will be involved to address these mandates which will include NGOs, humanitarian agencies, police, legal experts, electoral officers among others. This trend is understood by the UN as it explains that:

Peacekeeping has evolved from primarily military model of observing cease-fires and the separation of forces after inter-state wars, to incorporate a complex model of many

⁸Jungwee Park, "A Profile of the Canadian Forces" in *Perspectives* (Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2008), 18-19.

⁹B.S. Prakash and K. Nandini, "Issues and Challenges in Modern Peace Operations," *Strategic Analysis* 29, no. 1 (January-March 2005): 6.

elements – military, police and civilian – working together to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace.¹⁰

The resulting web of organizations involved in multi-dimensional PKOs, all operating in the same battle space, will require a much higher level of coordination and an ability to work together, if not to a common mission statement at least along mutually supporting intents. This is a departure from earlier generations of peacekeeping in which Canadians had a great deal of experience where the PKO was indeed a military mission and the Force Commander held primacy. The multi-disciplinary nature of current PKOs is visually evident by considering the organization of MINUSTAH where the military Force Commander is only one of almost twenty elements that report directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in addition to the ever expanding list of NGO and UN agencies that may or may not report through one of these offices. Clearly, in order to operate in this more complicated environment, Canadian peacekeepers will need a far more refined ability to work in a Joint, Multinational, Interagency and Public (JIMP) environment than was the case in the past. Canada has already made progress in recent years in this area with world event experiences held in Canada, such as the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and the G8 conference in Ontario that same year, where the military successfully provided a supporting role to civilian lead agencies. In addition to domestic experiences, a decade of counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan developed doctrine towards an appreciation of a holistic approach to operations which is summed up in some of the most recent publications:

Adoption and effective application of this JIMP framework will not only enhance the prospects for cooperation and the development of unity of purpose among diverse partners towards desired end states, but will also better ensure an approach to operations in which diverse resources can be more effectively utilized to create intended effects.

¹⁰United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2008), 18.

Indeed, a JIMP approach to operations will involve diplomatic, defence, development and commercial resources, aligned with those numerous other agencies, coordinated with an integrated campaign plan and applied in areas of operations as needed.¹¹

What remains crucial to integrating into UN PKOs is the maintenance of momentum on this concept and a concerted effort to avoid skill fade by keeping it at the front of military doctrine and expanding it to other agencies.

Nature of Operations

Contemporary multi-dimensional PKOs will challenge Canadian perceptions of the role of the blue helmet soldier-diplomat through the conduct of concurrent operations across the entire spectrum of intervention including humanitarian assistance, nation building, traditional peacekeeping and combat operations in what has been described as the Three-Block-War.¹² This dynamic repeats itself across most UN missions but is particularly evident in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) where Security Council Resolution 2098 specifically created an Intervention Brigade.¹³ The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) suffered through two civil wars between 1996-1997 and 1998-2003 during which, rebel forces attacked civilians, rape cases were rampant, as were abductions, destruction of entire villages and forcible conscription of child soldiers.¹⁴ Additionally, government forces were cited for carrying out many of the same human rights abuses against the civilian population.¹⁵ Into this the UN deployed MONUSCO with peak

¹¹Department of National Defence, *Land Operations 2021: The Force Employment Concept for Canada's Army of Tomorrow* (Kingston: Directorate of Land Concepts and Design, 2007), 26.

¹² Three-Block-War is an unofficial phrase that rose in popularity in American, British and Canadian military circles to describe a force that is concurrently conducting peacekeeping operations, high-intensity operations and delivering humanitarian aid.

¹³United Nations Security Council Resolution 2098 of 28 March 2013

¹⁴Sijuade Sunday Kayode, "Intervention Brigade for the Congo: A Precedent for UN Peace Enforcement?," *Uluslararası hukuk ve politika* 10, no. 38 (April 2014): 102.

¹⁵Sijuade Sunday Kayode, "Intervention Brigade for the Congo: A Precedent for UN Peace Enforcement?," *Uluslararası hukuk ve politika* 10, no. 38 (April 2014): 106.

strength of 22,000 personnel including ten battalions of infantry, formed police units and the Intervention Brigade.¹⁶ The addition of this new actor on a UN mission, with its almost diametrically opposite *raison d'être*, adds considerably to the already complex web of parties involved in deployed UN operations, which may prove overwhelming to a new player believing they can re-assume a previously held leadership role. Despite considerable challenges and considerable progress in the DRC, the most recent report from the Secretary-General identifies many of the same human rights violations continue to happen and implicates seven separate belligerent forces in the crimes.¹⁷ The remainder of the document is a report card of all the challenges facing MONUSCO and the DRC, including elections and election reform, humanitarian crisis, economic developments, human rights, and the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the rebels among other issues. Certainly the situation in DRC bears little resemblance to Canada's participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and even similarities drawn to its experiences during the Balkan deployment with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) are 15 to 20 years old. The CAF has started to acknowledge this growing complexity as it describes, "the future security environment will demand land forces that are capable of rapid transition from one operation to the next (offensive, defensive and stability operations), as well as conduct of the three types of operations simultaneously if and when necessary".¹⁸ However, the translation of high level doctrine manuals into tangible training regimens, afforded the appropriate resources and effort, to produce tactically competent organizations will remain a challenge. This will be particularly

¹⁶According to UN Security Council Resolution 2098, the Intervention Brigade mandate is the neutralization of armed groups through the execution of targeted offensive operations.

¹⁷United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (New York: 2015), 4-6.

¹⁸Department of National Defence, *Land Operations 2021: The Force Employment Concept for Canada's Army of Tomorrow* (Kingston: Directorate of Land Concepts and Design, 2007), 7.

challenging as Doctor Walter Dorn, a professor of defence studies at the Royal Military College and the Canadian Forces College and a recognized expert in UN operations, recently noted in an article that, “the CF provides only half the peacekeeping training activities that it did 10 years ago” while lamenting the decline of institutions like the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre where military and civilian operators could train for complex PKOs.¹⁹ The GAC and the CAF will need to quickly recognize that the country cannot simply rely on a largely obsolete legacy of expertise in UN operations and that institutional changes need to pre-empt actual deployments.

PKOs that include the entire spectrum of humanitarian to combat operations will demonstrate the criticality of intelligence and intelligence led operations which will lead to the prioritizing of intelligence assets and capabilities from TCCs. The importance of intelligence assets and processing are taking on greater importance for UN missions which will require the addition of these specialized capabilities to PKOs for which Canada must be prepared. As the UN adopts more Chapter VII mandates and takes an active role to enforce its impartiality, the requirement to conduct complex operations similar to those in Congo as part of MONUSCO, are becoming the norm. In order to respect the UN’s desire of using the minimum force required to achieve a desired effect while also maintaining a reputation as peacekeepers instead of an occupation army, operations will need to be conducted with the precision of a scalpel and not the blunt force of a hammer. The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of intelligence led operations in his 2007 report on MINUSTAH when he attributed the return of control of the Cite Soleil area of Port-au-Prince to, “intensive and intelligence-driven security operations”.²⁰ This forces several immediate considerations for Canada’s re-emergence as a leading peacekeeping

¹⁹Walter Dorn, “Unprepared for Peace: A Decade of Decline in Canadian Peacekeeping.” in *The United Nations and Canada: what Canada has done and should be doing at the United Nations*, ed. John Trent (Ottawa, ON: World Federalist Movement – Canada, 2014).

²⁰United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti* (New York: 2007), 5.

nation: the practical aspects of intelligence operations in a UN mission and the importance placed on human intelligence (HUMINT) capabilities in the CAF. When considering the intelligence environment, Canada will not enjoy the same level of information security it found in the NATO deployment to Afghanistan with its Five-Eye partners.²¹ Canadian Intelligence organizations will need to reconsider what may qualify as actionable intelligence and how one operates in an environment where information security cannot be assumed, let alone guaranteed, amongst the diverse partners in the mission. Additionally, if Canada wishes to be successful in intelligence driven operations on PKOs, there will need to be additional consideration of the importance of HUMINT as Patrick Cammaert articulates:

HUMINT, on the other hand, gathered by well-trained troops in an area of operations, from interacting with the complete range of local human sources, provides this nature of critical information from which a complete picture can be developed. It is the major contributor to understanding the population, its culture and needs and how these relate to the operational environment.²²

Despite this assertion, there is only a very limited HUMINT capability currently in the CAF which is manned by the Reserve Force. This limited institutional HUMINT capability will be quickly overwhelmed in a sustained deployment which may force a reconsideration of basing Canada's contribution on the number of available battle groups in the Canadian order of battle. The full breadth of intelligence activities in multi-dimensional PKOs is beyond the scope of this paper but there is a growing body of work that investigates the requirement and the means by which TCCs and mission staff need to address that requirement. For Canada's re-engagement in PKOs to be effective, the GAC and the CAF must take these lessons into consideration early so

²¹Five Eyes is an intelligence arrangement comprising Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States and Great Britain.

²²Patrick Cammaert, "Intelligence in Peacekeeping Operations: Lessons for the Future." in *Peacekeeping Intelligence Emerging Concepts for the Future*, ed. Ben de Jong, Wies Platje and Robert Steele (Oakton, VA: OSS International Press, 2003), 13-14.

the force generation and institutional support are established prior to the assumption of responsibility in a theatre of operations.

Conclusion

The platform presented by the Liberal Party before the election, the subsequent direction provided within the mandate letter to the MND and in conjunction with the rhetoric during the visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in February 2016 makes it clear that the current government is quite serious about re-engagement with the UN. The manner in which the PM intends to meet this intent has even been given form with the promise of specialist capabilities like airlift and engineer support along with the subsequent deployment of full contingents and the eventual lobbying for a seat on the Security Council. The challenge now is to develop a fulsome appreciation of how this intent will translate into action and the training and equipping of forces to meet the contemporary challenges of modern, multi-dimensional peacekeeping. The nature of PKOs has changed considerably since Canada was rightly considered an expert in the field and a return to them must be preceded by a thorough appreciation of what these changes are and what actions need to be implemented to best prepare for success. The nature of conflict has changed from interstate to intrastate with a dynamic that more closely compares to counter-insurgency operations than it does to the traditional PKO of interposed forces and military observers. This necessitates a blend of the old with direct combat action while ensuring the free flow of humanitarian and nation building expertise. Canada's experience in Afghanistan will set a strong foundation for adapting to the requirements of modern PKOs because of the extensive focus on the population and the experience of working in a JIMP environment but that does not waive the obligation to conduct a thorough consideration of the contemporary operating environment before committing the nation's blood and treasure to the UN.

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