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Preparing to Protect: Expanding Peacekeeping Training in the Canadian Armed Forces

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**PREPARING TO PROTECT: EXPANDING PEACEKEEPING TRAINING IN
THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

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PREPARING TO PROTECT: EXPANDING PEACEKEEPING TRAINING IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

AIM

1. This service paper will identify gaps in current Canadian Armed Forces training regarding Peace Support Operations (PSO).¹ It will outline the current operating environment for individual CAF members on PSOs and emphasize threats that require mitigation. The paper will argue the CAF incurs elevated risk and decreases the efficacy of deployed individuals on PSOs due to deficits in pre-deployment training, specifically for United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs). Finally, recommendations to enhance and expand individual peacekeeper training will be made.

INTRODUCTION

2. Canadian troop contributions to United Nations (UN) missions have steadily declined since 1996. In April 2020, the number of Canadian peacekeepers deployed hit a 60-year low of just 25 members.² This decline corresponds with a reduction in both peacekeeping training conducted and peacekeeping experience within the force. The CAF currently conducts only a quarter of the peacekeeping training it conducted in 2005.³ Further, in 2013 the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, a global flagship institution of the study of peacekeeping, was closed.⁴ Canadian Peacekeeping training was consolidated into the Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC) and interoperability training with police and Other Government Departments (OGDs) largely ceased. Despite the efforts of a dedicated cadre of professional staff at the PSTC, the CAF drastically reduced the breadth and frequency of peacekeeping training in the past two decades. This created the current capability gap.

3. Lessons learned from previous CAF deployments are not fully leveraged. This is a missed opportunity that contributes to the capability gap. In 1997 the Somalia Inquiry drew a causal link between a lack of peacekeeping-specific training and shameful conduct by CAF members on a UN operation.⁵ The inquiry also recommended the CAF conduct integrated training with peacekeeping partners such as Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RMCP).⁶ Further, contact and

¹ Peace Support Operation: An operation that impartially makes use of diplomatic, civil and military means, normally in pursuit of United Nations Charter purposes and principles, to restore or maintain peace. Such operations may include conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peace-building and/or humanitarian operations. This paper uses PSO and Peacekeeping operations interchangeably but is written in the context of Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement missions as defined in CFJP 01 – Canadian Military Doctrine 6-9.

² “Number of Canadian peacekeepers deployed abroad hits 60-year low,” Global News, last updated 20 May 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6973212/canadian-peacekeeping-numbers/>.

³ Dorn, A. Walter and Joshua Libben. “Preparing for Peace: Myths and Realities of Canadian Peacekeeping Training.” *International Journal* (Toronto) 73, no. 2 (2018): 257.

⁴ “Pushing peacekeeping off the table,” Canadian Global Affairs Institute, last modified 28 October 2023, <https://www.cgai.ca/inthemediaoctober282013>.

⁵ In 1993 members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment captured, tortured and killed a Somali teenager while deployed on a UN peace enforcement mission. The incident has since become known as “The Somalia Affair.”

⁶ Letourneau, Gilles, Peter Desbarats, Robert C. Rutherford, and Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997. 29, 61.

combat skills⁷ honed during CAF deployments to Afghanistan from 2001 – 2014, such as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and advanced first-aid are essential to modern peacekeeping operations. These skills are not adequately incorporated into peacekeeping training. The Government of Canada currently deploys CAF members on isolated, dangerous peacekeeping missions and has previously expressed a desire to increase this commitment. Therefore, the CAF ignores these lessons from the past at its own peril.

DISCUSSION

4. Despite the recent relative absence of deployed Canadian peacekeepers, Canada has a long history of robust presence in UN operations. Peacekeeping has long held a prominent place in the mythology of Canada, exemplified by former Prime Minister Lester Pearson's Noble Prize for his role in the creation of the inaugural peacekeeping force. Peacekeeping is a part of the national identity. This was reflected in a 2018 Angus Reid public opinion poll which found that 70% of Canadians cite peacekeeping as a source of national pride.⁸ This makes an increase in future CAF deployments on UN operations a distinct possibility.

5. The Government of Canada (GOC) Mandate Letter of 2015, included pledges "to renew Canada's commitment to United Nations peace operations" as well as "leading an international effort to improve and expand the training of military and civilian personnel deployed on peace operations."⁹ *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, Canada's 2017 Defence Strategy, states "the Canadian Armed Forces will be prepared to make concrete contributions to Canada's role as a responsible international actor, particularly through participation in United Nations peace operations."¹⁰ Also, "as a founding member of the United Nations, Canada is committed to the guidance provided in the UN Charter to maintain international peace and security."¹¹ Given the recent rise of Russia in Eastern Europe and China in the Indo-Pacific, the GOC drastically reduced the prioritization of deploying peacekeepers. However, these are all indicators of the probability of an eventual return to increased peacekeeping for CAF members. The CAF is ill-prepared for this possibility.

6. The Somalia Affair clearly outlined the dangerous consequences of entering modern multidimensional peacekeeping missions without adequate preparation. The CAF failed to train "a full range of skills or the appropriate orientation necessary to meet the diverse and complex challenges presented in post-Cold War peace support missions. There was a failure to incorporate the required generic peacekeeping training."¹² Several elements of modern peacekeeping operations add layers of

⁷ Combat skills are those in which basic military skills and physical force predominate. Contact skills are those in which interpersonal communications and personal contact are dominant.

Last, David and Ken Eyre. "Combat and Contact Skills in Peacekeeping: Surveying Recent Canadian Experience in UNPROFOR." *Peacekeeping & International Relations* 26, no. 4/5 (1997): 8.

⁸ "Mali Peacekeeping: Politics divides Canadian support for mission, but majority say Canada should help," Angus Reid Institute last modified 24 July 2018, <https://angusreid.org/mali-mission-peacekeeping/>.

⁹ Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, *Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter*, (Ottawa) 24 November 2015, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2015/11/12/archived-minister-national-defence-mandate-letter>.

¹⁰ Canada. Dept. of National Defence and Canada. Ministère de la défense nationale. *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. Ottawa, Ont.: National Defence = Défense nationale, 2017. 61.

¹¹ "Canada and the United Nations," *Global Affairs Canada*, accessed 10 December 2022, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/un-onu/index.aspx?lang=eng.

¹² Letourneau et al, *Dishonoured Legacy*, 26.

complexity that require skills in addition to the readiness afforded by general-purpose combat skills. These must be identified and mitigated where possible prior to sending CAF members into challenging PSO theatres.

- a. A large civilian component. The large civilian component of modern peacekeeping missions adds a layer of complexity unique in the spectrum of CAF operations. The myriad of UN agencies, humanitarians, Non-governmental organizations, local government and private actors create a bewildering cultural environment. CAF members have few formative experiences in their professional lives that prepare them for the often competing, conflicting priorities and motivations of such a diverse human dimension. Success in this environment requires highly developed contact skills of negotiation, conflict resolution, and collaborative team building, unique from those developed in the hierarchical military culture of the CAF. Canadian UN Military Observers (UNMOs) on mission are required to “facilitate liaison and coordination between the military component of the UN mission and its civilian counterparts and partners.”¹³

Further, the intra-state nature of modern conflict requires CAF members to complete tasks amongst the local population beyond the scope of most CAF Military Occupational Structure Identification (MOSID) Developmental Period training and ongoing professional development. PSOs typically occur in regions suffering a lack of functioning host-nation governance, inadequate infrastructure, and prevalent civil unrest.

The mandates of current missions in which the CAF participates include Civil-Military Cooperation tasks. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) includes “coordinating with humanitarian actors to create secure conditions for the delivery of assistance.”¹⁴ The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is assigned a strategic priority to provide “support for the stabilization and the strengthening of public institutions.”¹⁵ As the military force on modern missions is usually deployed under UN civilian direction and among the population, CAF members must be adequately prepared to liaise, lead, and cooperate with these entities.

- b. A large police component. UNMISS and MONUSCO include substantial UN Police (UNPOL) contingents of over a thousand officers each.¹⁶ UNMO operations are deeply integrated with these contingents and their mandates have substantial overlap. Although operating with police from a myriad of nations, CAF members conduct little to no integrated peacekeeping training with RCMP members in Canada. The Somalia Inquiry

¹³ de Coning, Cedric. "Civil-Military Coordination Practices and Approaches within United Nations Peace Operations." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007). 1.

¹⁴ “UNMISS Mandate,” *United Nations Mission in South Sudan*, accessed 12 December 2022, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/mandate>

¹⁵ “MONUSCO Fact Sheet,” *MONUSCO*, accessed 12 December 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/monusco>

¹⁶ “UNMISS Facts and Figures,” *UNMISS*, accessed 12 December 2022, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/facts-and-figures>. “Facts and Figures,” *MONUSCO*.

specifically recommended the CDS “make greater use of a broad range of sources including... the training provided by police forces.”¹⁷

Although integrated training occurred at the Pearson Centre prior to 2013, this is no longer the case. The RCMP have also identified a desire for cross-training in a recent evaluation of their pre-deployment preparations. “Deployed officers indicated that pre-deployment training could benefit from more mission-specific instruction...such as the roles of other actors in the region.”¹⁸ The CAF does not currently leverage existing relationships with the RCMP to compare best practices in peacekeeping training.

- c. A lack of adequate medical coverage. Modern UN missions suffer from a chronic shortage of medical evacuation and treatment facilities compared to NATO military standards. UNMISS for example lacks any dedicated medical evacuation aviation. Contracted Mi-17 helicopters serve a dual purpose to provide emergency medical support as well as cargo and personnel transport. Further, UN missions in Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) all lack a Level III hospital with definitive medical care or specialist capabilities in the country.¹⁹ Patients must be flown out of the country in the event of serious medical incidents. UNMISS medical evacuation assets only have an extremely limited capacity to conduct air evacuation at night, nor do they have winching operations capability.²⁰ Further, Aeromedical Evacuation Teams are not always co-located with aviation assets. The result is that over 72% of medical evacuations take more than three hours to reach a Level II hospital which might not even have basic surgical capabilities. 74% of all evacuations on this mission take more than seven hours.²¹ CAF members train for NATO evacuation standards where “surgical, resuscitative, diagnostic and specialist care capabilities...should be available within 2 hours of tactical evacuation from damage control surgery.”²² This training is incongruent with mission realities.

CAF UNMOs deploy into this environment with only Standard Military First Aid and Combat First Aid. These total three training days cumulatively. They are issued a Regional Mission Kit containing advanced medicines and some trauma equipment. A half-day briefing is delivered on its contents. In large part due to this unacceptable risk,

¹⁷ Letourneau et al, *Dishonoured Legacy*, 61.

¹⁸ “Horizontal Evaluation of the Canadian Police Arrangement - International Police Peacekeeping and Peace Operations Program (2015-2020),” *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, accessed 13 December 2022, <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/horizontal-evaluation-the-canadian-police-arrangement-international-police-peacekeeping-and-peace?wbdisable=true>

¹⁹ Lesley Connolly and Håvard Johansen, “Medical Support for UN Peace Operations in High-Risk Environments,” New York: International Peace Institute, April 2017.

²⁰ Murtaza, P Biswal, Cas/Medevac in field area: An experience and lessons drawn. *Indian Journal of Aerospace Medicine*, Summer 2019 Volume 63 Number 1. 34

²¹ Murtaza, Cas/Medevac in field area, 35 – 36.

²² North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Military Agency for Standardization and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *Allied Joint Medical Support Doctrine*. Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO Standardization Agency, Edition C, Version 1. 2019. 3-13.

the CAF stopped deploying UNMOs into UNMISS in 2020. This risk must be addressed if the CAF is to deploy UNMOs on multidimensional missions.

7. These elements are further aggravated by other issues within the CAF's control. The Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) deploys officers from all trades and elements as UNMOs on exposed, isolated, land-based missions. Yet, the majority of UNMO tasks include mounted, land-based patrolling amongst infantry Force Protection from Troop Contributing Countries. Force Protection elements are charged with security planning and leading patrols en-route, including navigation and tactical considerations. However, in practice, a vast spectrum of experience exists in these forces, ranging from effective professional militaries to very ineffective ones. In the author's experience, UNMOs are often called upon to plan and lead integrated land patrols, including navigating and directing force protection emergency response protocols. This is a task ill-suited to officers lacking land operations experience and extensive training responding to land-based threats.

8. PSTC conducts one to two five-week serials of the UNMO course per year. This world-class training uses UN Specialised Training Material, as well as additional Canadian content. It is validated by the UN and is a pre-requisite for CAF members deploying in this role. The course objectives are as follows:

- a. Operate Within the UN Construct;
- b. Maintain Force Protection in a UN Environment;
- c. Perform Team Site/Operating Base Function;
- d. Provide Factual Information on the UN Environment;
- e. Conduct Liaison;
- f. Conduct Negotiation; and
- g. Conduct Inspections/Verifications/Investigations.²³

PSTC augments the UN training plan by including lessons on Canadian patrolling doctrine, force protection, Explosive Threat Awareness and Recognition, cultural awareness, and a two-day Combat First Aid serial. It mitigates the CAF's lack of overall UNMO qualified instructors through the extensive use of international exchange instructors and through the temporary tasking of serving officers with former UNMO experience. The training is professionally executed, internationally attended, and well-resourced. Unfortunately, overall CAF attendance is low as demonstrated in 2021, when less than 25% of course candidates were CAF members.²⁴ The rest were exchange officers from foreign militaries. If the CAF continues to deprioritize this training, the pool of suitable CAF instructors will continue to diminish to untenable levels.

9. Some of the training plan is dedicated to Individual Battle Task Standards (IBTS) that CJOC determines are prerequisites for deployment.²⁵ Although formally an L1 Force Generator responsibility²⁶, PSTC provides this training as many candidates come from units lacking the capacity to deliver it. This adds training days to the course and detracts from PSTC's ability to deliver specialized peacekeeping

²³ "United Nations Military Observer Training Overview," *Peace Support Training Centre*, accessed 15 December 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/education-training/establishments/peace-support/courses/united-nations-military-observer-unmo.html>.

²⁴ Peace Support Training Centre, UNMO Course Serial 2201. October – November 2021.

²⁵ "UNMO Training Overview," *Peace Support Training Centre*.

²⁶ Canadian Military Doctrine. B-GJ-005-300/FP-000. Canadian Forces Joint Publication. CFJP 03 – Operations. Para 0315. Examples include Personal Weapons Tests, Fieldcraft, CBRN Training.

training, such as CIMIC, as recommended by the Somalia Inquiry. Although PSTC incorporates a complex civilian scenario into its exercises using contracted actors and language assistants, formal training on CIMIC is limited. The course is a blend of general peacekeeping skills, IBTS, and Theatre Mission Specific Training as directed by CJOC. The UNMO course delivers an impressive suite of UN Specialized Training Materials and Canadian content; however, opportunities exist to enhance and expand the training to better suit the operating environment.

CONCLUSION

10. Given Canada's historic contributions and current public sentiment toward PSOs, the CAF is likely to be called upon to deploy peacekeepers in future. As described in the Somalia Inquiry, modern multidimensional PSOs are complex, challenging theatres. CAF members deployed to these theatres require specific peacekeeping training to succeed. PSTC delivers an effective baseline of training, scoped to prepare officers from all elements and multiple nations to perform the duties of a UNMO. The CAF, however, assumes risk which can be mitigated by expanding and enhancing the current training construct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. The CAF should leverage PSTC's designation as the Centre of Excellence for CIMIC to better prepare deploying members to interact with UN civilian agencies, humanitarians, local government, and the population.²⁷ PSTC should adapt and condense core elements of its CIMIC Operator course for delivery on the UNMO course. A CIMIC instructor from PSTC should be included as part of the UNMO course staff to advise candidates on joint planning with civilian agencies. Proficiency in CIMIC skills such as infrastructure needs assessments and relationship building with civilian officials are essential as UNMO are often the focal point for contact between all partners. Given training tempo constraints, it is unlikely that the length of the course would be increased by adding training days. Therefore, this could be accomplished by holding L1 organizations accountable for their force generation responsibilities and replacing IBTS training with CIMIC content.

12. The CAF should reinvigorate an exchange program with the RCMP to conduct integrated training and share best practices. CAF Instructors should audit and teach on the RCMP's 14-day International Police Support Operations Training in Ottawa, which includes many complementary skill sets.²⁸ RCMP Officers should be offered both candidate and instructor positions on the UNMO course on a regular and reciprocal basis. This will better prepare UNMOs for integrated operations and provide an outside perspective on CAF training. The fact that internal RCMP audits express a desire on their part to collaborate with other actors in the region presents an excellent opportunity for both organizations.

13. CJOC assumes extreme risk by deploying isolated members into theatres lacking NATO standard medical and evacuation coverage. Advanced medical training must be delivered to mitigate this exposure. All UNMOs should conduct Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training prior to deployment. TCCC providers have an increased scope of practice and function as medical extenders, augmenting medic coverage.²⁹ As this training would be beyond the scope of international candidates, it could be added as a 10-day training package at the end of the UNMO course. Although this would extend the pre-deployment training by up to two weeks, 10 training days are a small price to pay to diminish such a high-impact

²⁷ "Peace Support Training Centre - Mission," Peace Support Training Centre, accessed 15 December 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/education-training/establishments/peace-support.html>.

²⁸ IPSOT Training topics included: occupational health and safety; mental health; kits and logistics; finance; security; women, peace and security; international child protection; sex and gender-based violence; international legal framework; cultural anthropology; security sector reform; tactical combat casualty care; and, critical incidents, capture avoidance and survival training.

"Horizontal Evaluation of the Canadian Police Arrangement," *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*.

²⁹ Savage, LCol Erin, et al. "Tactical Combat Casualty Care in the Canadian Forces: Lessons Learned from the Afghan War." *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 54, no. 6 (2011): S119.

deficiency. This could also be mitigated by the removal of IBTS training. CAF UNMOs also conduct extensive continuation training within UNMO cells in mission. This training would deliver a cascading impact for Canada and the UN, as CAF UNMOs would be better enabled to train their international peers to improve casualty survivability.

14. CJOC should restrict force generation for UNMO deployments to the Canadian Army and to trades with extensive training in a field environment. Defining specific suitably qualified and experienced trades is beyond the scope of this paper but warrants further review to mitigate the risks CJOC assumes. UNMOs often operate in remote locations, isolated from any National Command or Support Element. While the diversity of viewpoints and skill sets from Navy and Air Force personnel are of immense value to the mission, the land operating conditions are very exposed. General combat and land-based field skills acquired through Developmental Periods over a career are required to operate in this environment. Despite the notable efforts of the staff at PSTC, the current five-week course construct is insufficient to impart all the operational knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in this environment.

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