

## ***Canada and Peace Operations 2018 Onwards***

### **The 'civilian' solution to bringing Canada back: Needed – Easy – Low-Cost.**

Seventy years after the first UN mission, Peace Operations in name and operational reality have moved on. Canada seems caught in a Cyprus-type peacekeeping time warp from the sixties and seventies. If we look to the future of peace operations, the blueprint is laid out in the U.N.'s High Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). It's essential reading for anybody wishing to bring Canada back to UN peace operations. HIPPO looks at all aspects of peace operations, military and civilian. This paper will set out how the civilian side of peace operations holds huge potential as the way back for Canada.

As the phrase "way back" implies, Canada has a long way to go. It's not just that our preparation for peace operations has stood still, we have actually taken several steps back. Over the past twenty years Canada has cut back both the military and the civilian components of Canadian peace operations preparation and capacity.

On the military side, over a decade of warfighting in Afghanistan has strengthened Canadian Forces (CF) warfighting capacity but has reduced its UN experience and the ability of the CF to currently excel in peace operations. This is not necessarily a bad thing if the overriding mandate of the CF is to be a strong NATO player. But if the Canadian Forces want to return to peace operations and be effective in what is a very different operational context, it needs to re-tool and re-train. In fact it is possible to apply almost word-for-word the lessons-to-be-learned from what normally would be an out-of-date 1997 assessment of the then pressing post-Somalia need for "Non-Traditional Military Training for Canadian Peacekeepers" by Lt. General Jack Dangerfield et. al.

**The focus of this paper, however, is different: it's about the civilian side of peace operations, an option that holds huge potential for bringing Canada back into peace operations, and doing so at a fraction of the cost of Canadian military options.**

The civilian side of peace operations is the major theme of the High Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO). It makes clear the essential point: peace operations are not military operations, but rather political operations that require military assets. The very first of the four essential "shifts" set out by HIPPO is that ***"First, politics must drive the design and implementation of peace operations. Lasting peace is achieved not through military and technical engagements, but through political solutions."*** Underpinning all of this is the need to expand the civilian side of peace operations. This is precisely where Canada can help.

To spell out the specific requirements, the Panel emphasised that UN peace operations “range from special envoys and mediators, political missions (including peacebuilding missions), regional preventive diplomacy offices, observation missions (both ceasefire and electoral missions) to small, technical specialist missions (such as electoral support missions), multidisciplinary operations both large and small drawing on civilian, military and police personnel to support peace process implementation (and have included even transitional authorities with governance functions), as well as advance missions for planning.” They went on to say that peace operations include “mediation and electoral specialists, and human rights, rule of law, gender, police and military experts.”

If Canada wants to get back into peace operations, the civilian side is the way to go from almost every perspective:

- Need: as HIPPO showed and as the UN Secretary General just reiterated in September, there is a pressing need for more emphasis on the political/civilian side of peace operations.
- Easy: Canada can easily contribute on the civilian side as Canada has a huge roster of experienced individuals with current hands-on UN field experience in all of the areas of expertise set out by HIPPO.
- Low-Cost: this civilian option is of low cost to Canada particularly in comparison to any military contribution.

So how can Canada move forward on the civilian side of peace operations? It’s useful to review some of the civilian peace operations capacities that Canada developed, and then ‘lost’ over the past fifteen years.

### **PPC**

For a short time, Canada had a civilian peace operations training centre. The Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre (PPC) was established in 1994 with a mandate to train Canadian civilians albeit with small numbers of military and police students in order to achieve a degree of joint training. For the first five years the standard model was for a course to run for two weeks with 30 students composed of 26 civilians including diplomats, 2 serving military, and 2 serving police. Over time the federal government started to question the cost of training civilians, and PPC to survive financially started to take on extraneous contracts to train foreign police and foreign military including military exercise support. By 2006 it was training very few civilians, and when it finally closed in 2013 it was not training any civilians. Meanwhile other countries, particularly European, have greatly increased their training of civilians. They recognized that just as the military benefit from training in field leadership, field management, operational planning, etc., so do civilians benefit from field training, to maximize their performance and, incidentally to advance professionally in UN operations. Perhaps it is time for Canada to re-invent that civilian training institution with its original mandate to train Canadian civilians.

## **CANADEM**

Canada's Civilian Response Corps started life as a Foreign Affairs mechanism for Canada to inject more of its best experts into international field operations. For example by 2005 after 9 years of CANADEM efforts, Canadian civilians in UN DPKO peace operations alone reached an all-time high of 287. In a comparative analysis, Canada and the US were tied for the lead as both had 6% of all civilian posts, UK/France had 4%, while Australian/Germany had 2%. And this was inexpensive for Canada as CANADEM merely rostered and advanced candidates, but the UN hired and paid them. In a step backwards in 2007, Prime Minister Harper's government cut the funding for CANADEM to promote UN staffing of Canadians. Now in 2017 after a decade of inaction the result is a drop in the number of Canadian civilians hired by the UN, and a reduction in Canadian presence and impact within the UN. In UN DPKO peace operations alone, Canada dropped by 35% from 287 Canadian civilians in 2007 (see above) to just 187 Canadians by 2016 while the number of Americans and some others went up. Perhaps it is time for Canada to re-establish that showcasing of Canadian field experts.

## **Canada Corps**

This was a concise concept announced by Prime Minister Martin in 2004 that soon had three very different operational visions: by the independent Co-Chairs Gordon Smith and Julie Payette; by DFAIT; and by CIDA. Without clear initiating direction from the PM and the election a year later of a new government inimical to the UN and international service, Canada Corps morphed into a minor CIDA project that duplicated various functions of other parts of CIDA. It slowly disappeared. However, the vision of the independent co-chairs Smith and Payette had been similar to what many European countries have evolved. Entities such as NOREP, ZIF, and Folke Bernadette sit outside of government departments and provide a platform to coalesce, prepare, and advance their nationals in international service with the UN and other international organizations. The Smith/Payette vision of Canada Corps sitting outside of government had four pillars: Rostering, Deployment, Youth, and Training. Their intent was to both increase the number and capacity of mid-level and senior Canadians working internationally, but also to bring along the next generation of internationalists. While Canada failed to fully operationalize Canada Corps, the need remains and the various European models continue to expand and grow. Perhaps it is time for Canada to re-initialize Canada Corps starting from the Smith/Payette vision and draw further from the many advanced European models.

## **UN Youth Field Internships in Challenging Situations**

At the beginning of the DFAIT and CIDA youth internship programs in the late 90's, NGOs like CANADEM had the latitude to send interns to challenging situations that would enable those interns to prove themselves in the field, and enhance their ability to get follow-on jobs. For example, in those early years CANADEM sent over 200 interns to UN field operations for minimum 6 month placements in relatively risky zones, comfortable

in the knowledge that the UN was committed to protecting them and that the interns had received sufficient vetting and preparation in order to further mitigate risks. The results were two-fold.

- The immense challenges facing the UN in those posts almost guaranteed that interns would be encouraged to move into substantive work and the ‘school-of-hard-knocks’, learning invaluable field skills including the ability to handle crises and challenges.
- Then their resumes had hard evidence that they were individuals who could survive and deliver in tough UN field situations. This resulted in a 95% success rate for those CANADEM interns in finding follow-on jobs.

But over time the Canadian government became increasingly risk adverse. At one point CANADEM was even forced by Canada to pull out two interns based with UNDP and UNHCR in a very safe downtown Jakarta Indonesia, all because of a Canadian travel advisory for Indonesia reflecting the situation in far off Aceh province. Meanwhile CANADEM was encouraged to send multiple interns to the UN in Barbados, needless to say none of those individuals was able to get a follow on job as they could not demonstrate evidence of their ability to handle difficult living conditions or crises. Perhaps it is time to bring back challenging UN youth field internships for young Canadians looking to prove themselves and build strong field resumes that will get them hired.

## **Conclusion**

If Canada wants to get back into peace operations, the civilian option is an immediate solution. As HIPPO makes clear, more civilian contributions by member states are needed. Moreover, it’s an easy option for Canada, which has thousands of qualified civilians with current UN experience. And this civilian option is substantially less costly than the military side of peace operations.

How to move forward? Why not look at re-inventing PPC, make better use of CANADEM, do a better job of advancing the next generation of Canadian field experts in international service, and merge all of those efforts into a Canada Corps that emulates many of the European models.

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October 2017