

FOREIGN AFFAIRS CANADA
Policy Position Paper
Topic: FAILED AND FRAGILE STATES

Name of University: Saint Mary's University
Name of Course: POLI 2315- Canadian Foreign Policy
Name of Professor: Dr. E. Keeble
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**“The Necessity to Focus on Conflict Prevention”
Michael Hughes and Bridget Spicer
with**

**Christopher Hattie
Laura Houlihan
Jennifer King
Brian LeBlanc
Christopher Merritt
Christeen Moore**

**as rapporteurs for the Canadian Foreign Policy class at Saint Mary's University,
Halifax, Nova Scotia**

In order to abide by the specific requirements established by Foreign Affairs Canada, this class policy position paper was a product of a three-fold process:

1/ each member of the class wrote a properly referenced, academic paper assessing the emphasis on failed and fragile states in Canada's *International Policy Statement*

2/ the class was broken up into small groups; and, there, the groups attempted to reach a consensus based on their individual assessments, and then empowered a rapporteur to report for and help write the class policy position paper

3/ these small group reports were then drawn together and the class policy position paper was written by Michael Hughes and Bridget Spicer with the help of the rapporteurs

Canadian Foreign Policy (POLI 2315) is a second-year course in political science at Saint Mary's University with 36 students enrolled.

In 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) released the Responsibility to Protect doctrine. The *International Policy Statement* (IPS) recently released by the federal government reflects many of the ideas and principles put forward by the earlier document. We believe that the government's emphasis on failed and fragile states is in many ways consistent with this doctrine and is the right approach for Canadian foreign policy. However, while we support the premises behind the Responsibility to Protect, we believe that the government should be more proactive by placing a greater emphasis on the responsibility to prevent rather focusing primarily on the responsibility to react.

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine clearly states that the "responsibility to prevent" is the most important and most effective mechanism by which to protect civilian populations. Although, the IPS does address the responsibility to prevent, our position is that it does not place enough emphasis on it. Preventing the failure of states reduces security threats to Canadians, protects the civilian populations in the fragile country, and promotes the building of institutions and social frameworks. Not only does prevention provide this opportunity for the government to act proactively in the international community, prevention is also consistent with the Canadian values of peace, order, and good government.

One aspect of prevention is education. The IPS addresses the importance of education for development but does not make a link between education and the emphasis on failed and fragile states. Education is a key to prevention as it fights intolerance, which breaks down racial barriers and can be an important factor in preventing occurrences of genocide such as in the case of Rwanda. Moreover, education is vital to

stem the spread of AIDS, a disease that is rapidly spreading and is capable of inducing enormous economic crises on developing countries. Economic collapse is a primary characteristic of a failed state. Finally, education is crucial for economic development as it increases productivity and the development of stable, growing economies. A focus on stability can prevent the failure of fragile states and prevent extreme poverty and intolerable acts against humanity.

Peacekeeping has been entrenched in Canadian values and has been an important aspect of Canada's foreign policy for the past fifty years. We are concerned that the IPS signals a shift away from peacekeeping as an important foreign policy option. Canadians treasure Canada's image as a peacekeeping nation and peacekeeping is also an important option for dealing with failing states. We believe that promoting peacekeeping as an option to prevent fragile states from failing is both in the interests of Canada and the people of the world. Peacekeeping can play an integral role in the responsibility to prevent, as a committed peacekeeping mission can stabilize fragile states and prevent internal conflict. Acting with our military to prevent conflict rather than to react to it reduces the risks to Canadian soldiers and the costs associated with action. In other words, peacekeeping is crucial in prevention and provides benefits both domestically and internationally.

While we generally support the ideas put forward in the IPS, we are concerned about a lack of effective action on these principles and initiatives. In particular, we are concerned with the situation in Haiti and Sudan and we believe that Canada can do more with respect to diplomacy and development in order to act more effectively. In addition, we are concerned with the vague nature of these principles which could create the

possibility for ineffective or inconsistent action. Our support for the emphasis on failed and fragile states is based upon the expectation that effective, integrated action will be taken, with a goal of real results that benefit humanity. This means an emphasis on diplomacy and development, not just defence. We also believe that all three of these “D’s” must be used for prevention, not just reaction.

Our class, therefore, offers three recommendations to strengthen the IPS and make it more consistent with Canadian values. First, Canada must link education to the prevention of failed states and provide specific initiatives for promoting education. Second, Canada must keep peacekeeping in the context of conflict prevention at the forefront of policy options for dealing with failing states in the future, rather than shift the focus primarily to reaction. Finally, Canada must establish clear indicators of what constitutes a failed or fragile state. In addition, Canada must create a specific framework for action, with an emphasis on preventing failed states, in order to ensure that Canada’s response is effective, consistent, and fully integrates all three “D’s” to ensure real results that benefit humanity.