

FOREIGN AFFAIRS CANADA

Policy Position Paper

Topic : FAILED AND FRAGILE STATES

Name of University: University of Windsor

Name of Course: Political Problems and Economic Development

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Summary of Group Discussion:

Issues Identified:

We have an interest and more critically an obligation to provide assistance when possible and when productive. Productive policy must be aware of the following significant issues:

- Balancing a sufficient presence to be effective, without delegitimising local actors
- Ensuring long-term planning has been conducted prior to involvement
- Understanding we do not possess the resources to act unilaterally. Developing specific comparative advantages to maximise our effectiveness.

Areas of Consensus/Disagreement:

The examples listed attempt to highlight the theoretical and practical debates that were explored.

Consensus

- It is imperative to commit fully and with long-term intent. This recognises the risk that partial commitment has to long-term stability.
- A structured set of evaluation criteria is required to determine when and where involvement does occur, establishing a framework for consistent, respected Canadian policy.

Disagreement

- The willingness of the Canadian public to accept long-term commitment without tangible results versus the view that the public will remain predominantly apathetic without significant casualties or costs.
- Whether western, liberal democracy is sufficient as expressed through government elections. This disagreement includes, if democracy is an appropriate governance structure for all nations and if our perception of democracy is truly reflective of a democratic society.

Responses to eDiscussion Questions:

Short vs long-term commitment?

As mentioned there is debate regarding the level of need to acquire public support, however there was large agreement on how support could be maintained working under the assumption of necessity.

- Ensure that a portion of the funding and effort is spent on tangible projects that can be easily grasped and supported by the Canadian public.
- Focus on developing local institutions and mechanisms in the short-term, to allow for Canadian involvement to become less obvious over the long-term.

Response criteria?

The most critical need that was identified was the requirement of an established criteria set to help determine when and where to focus our involvement. Potential criteria include:

- Avoidance of unnecessary risk to Canadian military and civilian personal. This does not preclude involvement in conflict situations but there must be sufficient resources for this operation to be successful.
- Overall potential benefit of the involvement. This category can be further broken down but the absolute populations, the risk they face, etc should all be included to ensure that we are maximizing the benefits from our involvement.
- The overall potential for success according to predefined goals.

Stability vs democracy?

A level of agreement was reached that democracy is often too narrowly defined as a freely elected government. Working with this framework we did find that non-democratic government could be supported under strict conditions:

- They must be impartial or neutral in their decision making process and not guided by tribal, ethnic or religious group identity
- The ruling mode must adhere to Canadian and International standards such as human rights codes.
- Necessary steps must be taken to create democratic institutions and norms, including a free press, separate judicial branches and civil society

Failed and fragile cities?

Securing and developing the urban areas is critical for national development and creates unique requirements for involvement and risk:

- Personal must be able to build and secure infrastructure in a hostile environment
- Requires sophisticated security measures to account for potential threats to people but also systems such as water and power that are required in the urban environment
- Ability to link with rural centres to pull these regions along the development path. This can avoid issues with border security and refugee flows

Policy Recommendations

It is imperative that our policies focus on areas where we can best create positive change that is sustainable and secure. The nature of failed states will entail military, political and societal policies and actions to create a concise and consistent policy.

Military

- Canadian forces must be able to address the multi faceted challenges that are consistent with failed states and urban conflict.
 - Develop military capability that is capable of waging urban conflict, repairing and building infrastructure and maintaining peace

Political

- Work within the multi lateral framework to maximise the effectiveness of our contribution, recognising we cannot act unilaterally. Utilise existing multinational structures and like-minded partner nations.
- Work with existing local structures to build democratic societal ideals, culminating in democratic governance

Societal

- Develop relations with domestic and international NGOs to allow a more easily facilitated transfer of control
- Develop strategies that understand and accommodate for local societal chasms and relationships