IN BRIEF

Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, and Peacemaking: Concepts, Complications, and Canada's Role

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War (1948-1989), states and international organizations have repeatedly engaged in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and peacemaking to help solve international and intra-national problems. But although conflict resolution is a regular feature of the international landscape, these operations have achieved mixed results. Some, such as the Afghanistan operation commanded by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), are making valuable contributions to stability. Haiti, which experienced a new internal crisis early in 2004 after a decade of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, is a less impressive case.

After considering definitions of each activity, this document argues that they can be effectively employed by states in pursuit of international peace and stability. Nonetheless, parliamentarians' discussions on whether Canada should participate in a specific case need to be based on a clear understanding of the risks involved. Contributing countries could find themselves in a mission that fails or one that requires an indefinite commitment of military peacekeepers, civilian peacebuilders, or diplomatic peacemakers. In addition, the democratic and representative governance experience that most peacebuilders bring to the table may not be suitable to some crises.

PEACEKEEPING

Peacekeeping, like the other conflict resolution instruments, is hard to define and may be intended by different users to mean different things. Due to the diversity of operations being described, and the familiarity and favourable resonance of the word itself, "peacekeeping" is used to encompass a wide range of missions that often include peacebuilding and

diplomatic peacemaking components.[1] But in essence, the main function of peacekeeping is to facilitate the transition from a state of conflict to a state of peace; this has earned it the appellation "a halfway house between peace and war." Peacekeeping rests on three principles that are political through and through. It requires that peacekeepers: maintain the consent of the host state(s) and immediate parties to the dispute; act impartially; and behave in a non-violent and non-threatening manner.[2]

These principles emerged during the Cold War and have remained relevant. Cold War peacekeeping usually involved military forces (either individual officers or formed units) under United Nations (UN) command who monitored force separations or cease-fires. With a few exceptions, they were positioned between belligerents who had agreed to stop fighting and to accept the presence of the UN force. Peacekeepers were deployed to stabilize hotspots, defuse tension, and help resolve disputes, but they risked being drawn into the conflict if the three principles were not observed. Since the Cold War, the first two principles – consent and impartiality – have generally been respected by third-party interveners; but the third, non-threatening behaviour, is somewhat less in evidence in more robust missions such as the NATO Stabilization Force (1996-present) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the International Stabilization Assistance Force (2002-present) in Afghanistan.

PEACEBUILDING

In contrast with peacekeeping, "post-conflict peacebuilding" (as it was originally known) is a new concept of which the UN first took note in 1992.[3] It is now a widely accepted part of most UN missions. There are two basic types of peacebuilding: it aims either to reinforce preventative diplomacy (remedying

the root causes of conflict, such as environmental degradation, underdevelopment, and threats to the human security of individuals), or to buttress diplomatic peacemaking (by institutionalizing peace after a conflict).[4] Peacebuilding consists of activities that, during the Cold War, were considered the exclusive purview of states. It can involve democratic institution building, the design and monitoring of elections, training of security institutions (the police and military), and reconciliation and human rights initiatives.

Peacebuilding is linked to peacekeeping and must observe the same principles in order to be successful. Since the late 1980s, military peacekeepers and a growing number of civilian peacebuilders have been deployed inside states to try to maintain order, help implement agreements, and build peace. As a leading panel on UN peacekeeping reform noted in August 2000, "History has taught us that peacekeepers and peacebuilders are inseparable partners in complex operations."[5] This interrelationship is significant, because states and individual Canadian legislators will want to consider the likelihood of success before moving to promote reconciliation. A positive contribution to peace is most likely if an operation maintains the consent of the disputants.

DIPLOMATIC PEACEMAKING

With respect to the two types of peacemaking, the principles are much more important to the first, diplomatic peacemaking, which refers to political mediation, than the second, peace enforcement, which is the use of military muscle to compel disputants to stop fighting.[6] This is because diplomatic peacemaking often precedes or occurs in parallel with peacekeeping, and, like peacekeeping, requires the consent of disputants.[7] It involves negotiations that aim to avoid conflict or to bring combatants to the peace table. The UN would probably welcome assistance in these areas from Canada, because the streamlining of headquarters executive staff positions in the 1990s has removed any excess capacity it had for this type of work.[8] Senior people, with skill in mediation and negotiation and the willingness to commit to conflicts full-time for extended periods, are badly needed.

Canadian legislators may wish to take account of the principles discussed above, given their major role in calling for multifunctional peace operations. According to Bill Graham, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, elected officials are well placed to

lead discussions of peace operations and interventions and help mobilize political will because the public's outrage and demands to "do something" are frequently channelled though them.[9]

COMPLICATIONS

Awareness of the principles upon which peacekeeping rests is not enough to guarantee success. A difficult conflict environment can cause an engagement to fail, as some of the UN's multifunctional missions did during the 1990s. UN operations in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Western Sahara and elsewhere all encountered considerable difficulty. The problem was not that these ambitious operations were incompatible with the principles of peacekeeping. They failed because the civil wars that have preoccupied the world community since the early 1990s are not well suited to the peacekeeping treatment.[10] Canada is among the states that have exhibited a strong interest in the peacebuilding side of such missions,[11] but again the success rate is not high. Of the 18 separate countries that experienced a UN peacekeeping mission with a democratic institution-building component between 1988 and 2002, 13 (72%) were classified in 2002 as some form of authoritarian regime.[12]

Many states have supported peacebuilding, but their democratic experience is partly responsible for the setbacks mentioned above. The reality is that democratization is neither a linear process nor inherently a good, although sometimes this is assumed. In fact, the political competition that characterizes democracy has often sharpened rather than muted conflict in divisive societies (such as in Angola, Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina).[13] Care is needed to ensure that external support for political institution building does not worsen the prospects for peace.

Other factors also need to be taken into account. Perhaps the most important is ensuring that democratic peacebuilding expertise is culturally appropriate to the post-conflict situation. Some scholars have argued that peacebuilding strategies need to be sensitive to local needs and cultural attitudes and avoid imposing an external model. To be sustainable, peacebuilding must be rooted in the country where the conflict raged and be built on the participation of people from that setting.[14] This suggests that Canadian parliamentarians should educate themselves about local requirements, and be open to alternatives when it comes to fostering new

governance institutions. The "cookie-cutter" approach to post-conflict political institution building is to be avoided. As the experiences in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan illustrate, some exploration of traditional forms of governance appears to be warranted.[15]

Another concern, one also applicable to diplomatic peacemaking, is that peacebuilding requires a sustained commitment. As one scholar has argued, peacebuilding is based on the forging of relationships and trust that need to be maintained for extended periods.[16] This is an important consideration for western liberal-democratic states, because the political constraints imposed by liberal institutions of governance make them reluctant to use force or to pay high costs when addressing humanitarian crises or conflicts that are outside of national interests.[17] Canada should prepare for the possibility that a short-term role will not be feasible. It should not lower the bar in terms of seeking to foster democratic and representative institutions; rather, patience and a willingness to extend the bar out over time are required.[18] This may require states to "lock in" a share of their limited resources for longer than preferred.

A case in point is Haiti, which was host to 10 short-term peacekeeping/peacebuilding missions in the last decade. A new round of internal turmoil in early 2004 led to the establishment of a United States-led stabilization mission, to which Canada contributed 450 troops for three months. Ottawa announced a three-month extension in May so that there would be a smooth transition to a new UN peacekeeping force.[19] Striking lessons are being drawn from Haiti's experience. Reginald Dumas, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Envoy to Haiti, has said that international peacekeepers should stay in the Caribbean country for up to 20 years in order to guarantee peace and to break the stop-start cycle of stability-collapse.[20]

Diplomatic peacemakers face similar challenges. The shape and context of a diplomatic peacemaking initiative largely depend on unpredictable political events. However, timing is critical, and this requires an intimate understanding of the conflict. Interested states or international organizations should be prepared to follow conflicts closely in order to anticipate the best moment for third-party diplomacy. They should also be prepared to provide personnel to the UN quickly so that the world body is able to take advantage of the opportunity.[21] Once again, a state may be asked to make a sustained commitment.

CONCLUSION

A measure of uncertainty continues to surround the definitions of the terms "peacekeeping," "peacebuilding," and "diplomatic peacemaking," because many people prefer to use "peacekeeping" to describe operations that often include the other two activities. But that said, peacebuilding is generally understood as being efforts that seek to forge lasting peace, and diplomatic peacemaking can be said to involve negotiated attempts to avoid or end conflict.

Canada's parliamentarians have made and can certainly continue to make positive contributions to these operations. Since 1949, Canada has deployed over 125,000 military peacekeepers and thousands of civilian peacebuilders; and peacekeeping, it is said, has become an integral part of the "national DNA."[22] Of course, Canada is not the only state with a democratic and representative form of government, political will, and past experience in peacekeeping/ peacebuilding in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. This is fortunate, for the UN and NATO need troops. The UN can also use help with diplomatic peacemaking because senior officials able to make long-term commitments are in short supply, and it would not mind sharing the field with governments that have resources to spare.

However, there are significant challenges associated with an active Canadian role. The risks are dramatically revealed by the long duration of some peacekeeping commitments, such as in Cyprus, where Canada deployed a battalion for 29 years, and by the failure of many multifunctional UN operations in the 1990s. Perhaps the greatest difficulty is with respect to peacebuilding. The UN and its partners have not been very successful when attempting democratic institution building. This is because democracy is sustained by political competition that can exacerbate tensions in fragile post-conflict societies. In addition, a contributor's political expertise is not always culturally appropriate in a given situation. Canada and its allies should therefore consider how their representative political institutions could be adapted to more traditional forms of governance. Peacebuilding, like diplomatic peacemaking, may also require a sustained commitment and patience. Both activities should be undertaken only with an understanding of the local situation and confidence that the time is right for a third party to intervene.

(1) Steven R. Ratner, *The New UN Peacekeeping: Building Peace in Lands of Conflict After the Cold War*, St. Martin's, New York, 1996, p. 21; and Alan James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics*, St. Martin's, New York, 1990, p. 9.

(2) James (1990), pp. 1-7.

(3) Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Introductory Note to *An Agenda for Peace*," in *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, ed. Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 469.

(4) Charles-Philippe David, "Does Peacebuilding Build Peace? Liberal (Mis)steps in the Peace Process," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 30, March 1999, p. 26. See also Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Supplement to *An Agenda for Peace*: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations," United Nations document A/50/60 – S/1995/1, 3 January 1995.

(5) Lakhdar Brahimi, "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," United Nations document A/55/305 – S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, p. 5.

(6) Peace enforcement is not discussed in this document. For an example of diplomatic peacemaking, see Brahimi (2000), p. 2. For a work that favours the assertive understanding, see Nicholas Gammer, *From Peacekeeping to Peacemaking: Canada's Response to the Yugoslav Crisis*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal, 2001, *passim*.

(7) Ismat Kittani, "Preventative Diplomacy and Peacemaking: The UN Experience," in *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping for the New Century*, ed. Olara A. Atunnu and Michael W. Doyle, Rowman and Littlefield, New York, 1998, pp. 95, 101.

(8) Boutros-Ghali (1995), para. 30.

(9) Bill Graham, "Address at the Parliamentarians for Global Action 24th Annual Parliamentary Forum on 'The International Criminal Court and *The Responsibility to Protect*,'" Ottawa, 4 November 2002.

(10) Alan James, "Peacekeeping in the Cold War Era," *International Journal*, Vol. 50, Spring 1995, pp. 248, 260.

(11) See Grant Dawson, "In Support of Peace: Canada, the Brahimi Report and Human Security," in *Canada Among Nations 2001: The Axworthy Legacy*, ed. Maureen Molot, Fen Osler Hampson and Norman Hillmer, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 2001, *passim*.

(12) Charles T. Call and Susan E. Cook, "On Democratization and Peacebuilding," *Global Governance*, Vol. 9, April-June 2003, pp. 233-234.

(13) David (1999), p. 33. David's point is based on Ronald Paris, "Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism," *International Security*, Vol. 22, Fall 1997, pp. 54-89.

(14) John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, 1997, p. 107.

(15) Call and Cook (2003), p. 243.

(16) Lederach (1997), p. 131.

(17) Mark Peceny and Shannon Sanchez-Terry, "Liberal Interventionism in Bosnia," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1998. Cited from: http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/index.html. Last visited: 1 May 2004.

(18) Call and Cook (2003), p. 242.

(19) Shawn McCarthy, "Canada's 500 Troops to Remain in Haiti," *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 1 May 2004. Cited from: http://www.theglobeandmail.com.

(20) Warren Hodge, "World Briefing – Americas: Haiti: 18 Months to Elections, U.N. Envoy Says," *New York Times*, 31 March 2004, p. 10.

(21) Kittani (1998), p. 105.

(22) David Kilgour, "Picking up the Pieces," Address at the University of Alberta's International Week 2004, Edmonton, 26 January 2004.