

**Canada's Involvement in Failed and Fragile States:  
Capitalizing on Limited Resources via Multilateral Organizations**  
Policy Position Paper by POLI 5531: UN in World Politics – Dalhousie University  
October 31, 2005

**Introduction**

In responding to failed and fragile states in the face of limited resources, Canada should channel its efforts through multilateral organizations to capitalize on the benefits of co-deployment. The United Nations represents the best forum for Canadian involvement as it provides direction on threats to international peace and security, and allows for pooling of resources to tackle complicated problems. Nevertheless, when the UN identifies but cannot agree on appropriate responses, Canada can complement the UN by contributing to more immediate action via regional organizations. Collaboration can bolster Canada's commitment to the holistic '3D' approach by enabling Canada to concentrate on areas of expertise, hence mitigating the problem of limited resources. To highlight this potential, this paper will provide examples of comparative advantage within the areas of security, governance, and development in the nations of Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan. By becoming involved in these areas, Canada can better manage our resources and still make significant contributions in the response to and prevention of future crises.

**Security**

When attempting to re-establish government structure in a failing state, security is a vital component to the success of all aspects of involvement. By establishing relationships with regional organizations under the cooperative framework of the United Nations, this process can be accelerated, with successes seen in the Provincial

Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that are helping to establish federal authority and law in the rural regions of Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of rebel movements is a crucial obstacle to security for many UN operations and an area where Canada should become further involved. In the face of resurfaced marginal armed factions and militias in Sudan, Canada could commit diplomatic resources towards negotiations, mediation talks, and field-conferences to address issues such as power sharing between major rebel groups and the central government. Upon success, Canada could transition to a focus on the millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The protection and safety of IDPs is currently inadequate, as the International IDP Guiding Principles lack legal reinforcement and is frequently overlooked by governments. Canada could promote and institutionalize these principles by creating IDP country committees to monitor conditions, similar to our action with the Angola Sanctions Committee. Where government forces are involved in the violence, these committees could assess whether international “peacekeeping police forces” need to be deployed in displacement camps, ensuring the maintenance of security for the rebuilding process.

## **Governance**

Promoting good governance through the UN is one of Canada’s primary commitments in assisting failed and fragile states. In the case of Haiti, Canada has allocated 17 million dollars in an effort to ensure successful elections in Haiti. Canada has also provided an additional twenty-five police experts to support local Haitian

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<sup>1</sup> Peace Operations Working Group of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee. “NGO/Government Dialogue on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan and the Militarization of Humanitarian Assistance.” 4 December 2003. <http://www.peacebuild.ca/whatsnew/PRT-Dialogue-FinalReport.doc>.

National Police in providing election security. Fair and legitimate elections will be an extremely important milestone in the democratization process in Haiti.<sup>2</sup> Since Canada has demonstrated strong leadership in fostering sound electoral processes in Haiti, Canada should transfer this expertise to other situations.<sup>3</sup>

## **Development**

Socio-economic development is a key component to mitigating a crisis and preventing future problems. Haiti provides a striking example for the potential impact of strategic involvement along developmental lines. Haiti is not only a nation wrought with severe underdevelopment exacerbating the decade-long chaos, but is also of particular interest given Canada's long-standing involvement and the considerable Haitian diaspora within Canada. Developmental efforts could incorporate the Canadian-Haitian community in the rebuilding process, such as consultation between Haitians in the Ministry of Education in Quebec and education professionals in Haiti to help reform the educational system in Haiti.<sup>4</sup> This would capitalize on Canada's comparative advantage and work towards the reconstruction of the Haitian state and prevention of future problems.

Another development challenge is to establish sustainable livelihoods for the populations devastated by unrest. Most economic activity in Afghanistan that is not linked to international aid is directly related to the drug trade. Farmers are implored to

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Damren. "Haiti in the Balance: Implications for the UN and OAS." INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> "Canada Announces Funding for Election Security in Haiti" Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade News Release #167, 21 September 2005.  
[http://w01.international.gc.ca/MinPub/Publication.asp?Language=E&publication\\_id=383065&docnumber=167](http://w01.international.gc.ca/MinPub/Publication.asp?Language=E&publication_id=383065&docnumber=167)

<sup>4</sup> Carlo Dade and John W. Graham, "The Role for Canada in Post-Aristide Haiti: Structures, Options and Leadership." FOCAL paper prepared for the House of Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, April 2004.

maintain cultivation operations due to the ubiquity of poverty and the lack of viable economic alternatives. Nation-building policy in Afghanistan must be balanced with a comprehensive policy to introduce new agricultural initiatives for farmers. Such ventures may include training programs and the provision of seeds, fertilizer, and equipment, as outlined by UNODC.<sup>5</sup> Canada should play a pivotal role in empowering the Afghan people to make positive changes.

### **Conclusion**

In deciding when to respond, Canada should consider where its efforts will be most effective. In doing so, Canada should favour cases where international cooperation is likely and our capabilities are in demand, as demonstrated in the cases of security, governance, and development.

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<sup>5</sup> The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem. [UN Office on Drugs and Crime Website](http://www.unodc.org). United Nations. 7 October 2005. <[www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)>.

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