

# Peacekeeping Realities and the Future of Peacekeeping

Alex Morrison, MSC, CD, MA<sup>1</sup>

Founding President of the  
Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (1994 – 2001)  
sandym@mail.com

Peacekeeping has changed and has been enhanced significantly since its invention by Lester B. Pearson, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs at the time of the Suez Crisis in the autumn of 1956. In order for it to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future, it will be necessary for national governments, the UN and other organizations that sponsor and conduct peacekeeping, conceptualists and practitioners to adapt and implement attitudes and practices to reflect more accurately the present and future necessities of conflict resolution. This paper will review peacekeeping from a historical and practical point of view, discuss some peacekeeping realities and offer some suggestions for improvement. The main point to be made is that peacekeeping policy, planning, implementation, assessment and refinement needs to be imbued with a universal sense of professionalism and multi-disciplinary positive cooperation. Unless this happens, unless nations accept the realities of peacekeeping, it will not realize its true potential.

In the autumn of 1956, the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis, individually and combined, challenged national and international policy makers to devise and implement responses that would improve each situation. Mr. Pearson made the following suggestion during an Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly one day after the General Assembly had approved the establishment of the first peacekeeping mission: "Why should we not now establish a United Nations mission or United Nations supervisory machinery of an appropriate kind for the situation in Hungary?" Unhappily, the UN Member States were not as ready to intervene in Hungary against the Soviet Union as they were in the case of Suez. Further discussion of the Hungarian situation is outside the scope of this paper, however, it must be noted that the response of the western community of nations was less than inspired and much less than hoped for by many. The refusal of democratic countries to come to the aid of the Hungarians who were courageous in their uprising ensured they would be repressed for decades to come.

The invasion of Egypt and the occupation of the Suez Canal in October of 1956 by the United Kingdom, France and Israel precipitated a number of reactions. The Americans were angry and upset that they had not been consulted or informed. The Third World nations were on the side of Egypt. The USSR was very bellicose and threatened to attack France and the UK. Canadians were angry at not receiving any advance indication. In his memoirs, Lester Pearson recalls that he had never seen Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent in "such a state of controlled anger; I had never seen him in a state of any kind of anger." The Opposition Progressive Conservative Party advocated standing firm with "the Mother Country" as did many other Canadians. The government, however, advocated taking action to assist in the devising and conducting of a solution. Pearson flew to New York and took charge of the Canadian actions at the United Nations.

During a number of days of intense diplomatic activity, Pearson and other members of the Canadian delegation lobbied hard with national delegations, particularly those of the UK, USA and France, and the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. The latter was mildly in favour of the Canadian suggestion from the outset but had to be convinced that the practical difficulties could be overcome. They were convincing in their arguments and in the early morning hours of 4 November 1956, the General Assembly established the first peacekeeping mission. It was known as the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Later, after the establishment of another Middle East mission in 1967 it would be called UNEF I.

For his invention of peacekeeping, Pearson was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize, the only individual Canadian to be so honoured. His writings and speeches at that time and later are clear on one basic point: what had been accomplished in the autumn of 1956 with the creation of UNEF was a foundation for future advances. He was convinced that if the foundation was not built upon then his efforts would have been in vain. During the General Assembly debate, he drew the attention of delegates to his view of what must be done in the future

*What is the use of passing a resolution which brings about a ceasefire and even a withdrawal? What are we withdrawing to; the sane state of affairs? In six months we'll go through all this again if we do not take advantage of this crisis to pluck something out ... if we do not take advantage to do something about a political settlement, we will regret it. The time has come for the UN not only to bring about a ceasefire, but to move in and police the ceasefire and make arrangements for a political settlement.*

In other words, Pearson knew that his work would be expanded to meet changed circumstances. Peacekeeping as practiced in 1957 would be the model for the future. It would be stretched, challenged, abbreviated and enhanced, but its basic outline of countries acting together under the banner of the United Nations and authorized by the Security Council, to prevent or deal with the effects of conflict would remain unchanged to this day. He made his view even plainer in December of 1957 in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture: "We made at least a beginning then [in establishing UNEF]. If, on that foundation, we do not build something more permanent and stronger, we will once again have ignored realities, rejected opportunities and betrayed our trust. Will we never learn?"

The word "peacekeeping" was not used in the early days. It would be the late 1950s before it came into vogue. From that time until very recently, it has been unchallenged as the term according to which the international community responded to crises it was capable of attempting to resolve by means somewhat less than general purpose conflict. During his time as UN Under Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, Brian Urquhart was fond of saying that "peacekeeping works in practice but not in theory." During the past few years, there has arisen a growing group of academics, military and government officials who have determined that the simple word – peacekeeping – does not do justice to the complex array of activities conducted in its name. They have devised many terms: peacemaking, peace establishment, peace enforcement, peace restoration, peace operations, peace building, peace support operations, preventive diplomacy, dealing with complex humanitarian and other emergencies and various others. Each of course has its place in the compendium and a discussion of the terms and their meanings has been quite beneficial. Many attempts have been made to construct a continuum paradigm of the whole range of peacekeeping activities.

However, as we contemplate the future of peacekeeping, we must take great care not to expend time and energy on the creation and justification of new terms to the detriment of the saving of lives and the alleviation of human suffering which, after all, is the true aim of peacekeeping. In addition, governments in democratic countries depend on the support of their citizens and citizens like policies to be described and carried out in a plain, apparent manner. To confuse with a seemingly endless array of new and unfamiliar words and phrases is to risk erosion of support and interest.

These new appellations are useful in that they draw attention to the main subject and even may result in new adherents to peacekeeping and its many forms. Yet, they do sow confusion and detract from the main task.

What is truly important is that military and civilian organizations and individuals are given clear tasks and are provided with the necessary numbers of persons, the requisite finances and the required equipment to enable them to accomplish the mission.

Thus, for ease of comprehension, this paper will use the definition of peacekeeping developed and taught by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre:

*Actions designed to enhance international peace, security and stability which are authorized by competent national and international organizations and which are undertaken cooperatively and individually by military, humanitarian, good governance, civilian police and other interested agencies and groups.*

Let me now set out some ideas and suggestions in the areas of attitude regarding planning about, and implementing peacekeeping missions.

There is still extant a belief on the part of some members of some nations' military forces that peacekeeping is less than a fully-honourable activity, that somehow, engaging in it robs one of essential human features. Some believe that participating in peacekeeping is a less than a worthwhile military activity, that combat effectiveness is the only standard by which a military ought to be judged and that peacekeeping degrades this capability and thus it ought to be high on a list of proscribed activities. It is clear that any discussion of these beliefs must start with agreement on the role of the military in a democratic society.

There are those who maintain that the sole role of the military is, or if it is not, it ought to be, to be able to fight and win wars. That is an admirable aim and indeed all militaries must be able to engage in, at the very least, general purpose combat or low to mid intensity conflict. Yet, surely, the true role of the military in any democratic society must be to carry out the will and direction of that democratic society through the directives of its elected government representatives. From that role then flows the capabilities which necessarily must be possessed by the armed forces.

The overwhelmingly majority of national armed forces, if not all of them, are routinely engaged in operations other than those of general-purpose combat. They include search and rescue, aid in dealing with natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires and floods, internal security duties, ceremonial occasions, drug interdiction and, of course, peacekeeping. Members of a democratic society have the right to expect that their militaries will approach any and all tasks allocated by government, including peacekeeping, with the same degree of

professionalism they devote to any of the other tasks mentioned above. If this professionalism is not forthcoming in a positive manner, then the government concerned ought to examine the ethics and dedication of its military personnel.

It is absolutely true that after a long period, say six months or more, of peacekeeping operations, military units, individual soldiers and, for that matter, NGOs will probably not be able, without some refresher training and education, to carry out other roles for which they are required to be qualified. Planners must accept that when peacekeepers return to parent units and organizations, it will be necessary to assess the state of their overall abilities and capabilities and take restorative action.

Here is a statement which may shock those who are accustomed to a strict division of military and civilian approaches to peacekeeping in all its aspects. It is quite simply this: In the context of international conflict resolution as carried out by peacekeeping units and organizations, there is no such thing as a purely military operation.

The implications of this statement are clear. Peacekeeping operations are best conducted, and must, in virtually all circumstances, be conducted by civilian and military in a cooperative manner and within a positive atmosphere. There must be a “planning and conduct participatory partnership” (what the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre calls the New Peacekeeping Partnership.) Anything less will jeopardize true success and will ensure that lives are needlessly lost, injuries suffered unnecessarily, starvation encountered where it need not be and disease allowed to grow unchecked and uncured. It is of the utmost importance that adherents of each discipline: military and civilian alike, recognize, accept in the best possible way, and implement with the best possible spirit and with all the means at their disposal the necessity of civilian military combined operations in the widest sense.

Canada’s first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald maintained that “forms are things.” The meaning of that phrase must be learned, absorbed and practiced by all who engage in any peacekeeping activity. Once military and civilian genuinely accept that full and efficient, unselfish cooperation is necessary and imperative, attitudes will change. When others see them changing, they, too, will embrace the new philosophy. These pockets of success will spread until all are united in their desire to use all available personnel and materiel resources to accomplish the task at hand. Peacekeeping is attitudinal in nature. Participants must possess a positive attitude towards their work and must exude confidence in all their undertakings. There are those who criticize peacekeeping; in a sense they are correct, nothing is perfect. Peacekeeping can be improved, it must be improved. However, we must not let the negative criticism overwhelm and detract from the fact that there are millions of people alive today because of the efforts of military and civilian peacekeepers.

This attitude of unselfish cooperation must be adopted and put into practical terms not just in the peacekeeping theatre of operations. It is likewise essential that those who teach the background to, the underpinnings of, and the current state of peacekeeping understand the need for cooperative planning, action, assessment, and refinement. Officials of all types in all manner of governments and organizations must involve members of the other discipline early. They must, of course, be vigilant about safety and security but must not allow this concern to be the ruling imperative. Non-Governmental Organization, international organization and other appropriate bodies must be represented on national and international military planning staffs as a matter of course. The same holds true for military members on civilian staffs. Only in this manner will one discipline truly understand the mind set of the

other. This cross-fertilization will result in better preparations, more far-reaching plans and a more successful mission.

There is a definite need for all organizations, whatever their size, concerned with and regularly engaged in peacekeeping to maintain planning groups composed of an interdisciplinary membership. In order for this idea of a permanent grouping of planners to be put into effect on a wide-spread basis, there will need to be an acceptance of the fact that they must be allowed to be true planners and not be over burdened with day to day affairs. This may well entail a division of the group into those who are engaged in the business of “what if?”, involved with hypotheses and setting out conditions that would have to be in place for certain events to take place and those who are concerned with the planning of current and short term future operations. It is best also if those involved with the planning of a current operation are part of the initial deployed organizations or forces. In this way, they can be intimately involved in the operationalization of their plan; can easily suggest refinements and can, when they return home, profit from their experience when planning future endeavours.

It is realized that there are places and organizations which are now practicing this suggestion. They are to be commended. Yet, sadly, the practice is not as widely embraced, either as theoretically or as practically as it deserves to be.

In early 2000, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, commissioned a team of peacekeeping experts to study how peacekeeping could be made more effective. The Brahimi Report, so called after Lakhdar Brahimi, the chairman of the team, was delivered to the Secretary-General in the late summer of 2000. It is tightly written, coached in direct, often non-diplomatic language and makes a number of pointed recommendations concerning the future of peacekeeping. For the purposes of this paper, the main recommendations are four in nature. First, peacekeeping must be accepted as a proper and ordinary activity of the UN. It must shed its *ad hoc* place in the UN organization. Next, peacekeepers must be more professionally trained and must be professional in carrying out assigned tasks. Third, less than fully-trained troops offered by UN Member states for peacekeeping missions must not be accepted. Fourth, peacekeeping must be placed on a solid financial footing by having the costs of mission planning and conduct included in the regular UN budget. The current system of a mixture of donations, assessments and regular budget must be replaced with one which is rational and consistent.

Ever since its inception in the autumn of 1956, peacekeeping as an effective and efficient instrument of conflict prevention and resolution has been accepted by the majority of United Nations Member States. It is recognized that conflicts can be prevented and resolved through the timely, and at times necessarily lengthy and perhaps permanent, deployment and employment of peacekeeping missions. The UN, as a whole, is rightly and justly proud of its peacekeeping endeavours and accomplishments. The awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to all UN peacekeepers and the similar award in 2001 to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to the UN as a whole have done much to draw attention to the question of peacekeeping, its accomplishments, and, rightly so, the areas in need of improvement. The international community is, in the majority, of the view that peacekeeping ought to continue and be improved. A recent public opinion poll commissioned by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre shows that the majority of Canadians approve of that country’s continued participation in peacekeeping and that Canada ought to continue to share its expertise with other countries.

Yet, there is opposition to peacekeeping from a number of areas. First, there are national governments not in favour of peacekeeping as a matter of principle. They are not convinced of its impartiality and objectivity. They realize that, in certain situations in which they may be involved in conflict with their neighbours, advantages gained may be lost as a result of a peacekeeping mission. Some governments believe that peacekeeping costs ought not to be borne by all Member States. This latter group would like “the aggressor” to be clearly identified and compelled to pay all costs. Others may be in favour of peacekeeping in principle, but object to deployment of advanced technology. Such items are non-discriminatory in their application and will enable peacekeepers, and the wider international community, to obtain information which a host country may wish to keep confidential.

More work needs to be done to change these negative attitudes. The UN, Member States, and peacekeeping missions themselves must become more pro-active in publicizing successes, in drawing attention to shortcomings and the corrective action needed to rectify them.

Ensuring that peacekeepers are professionally trained and equipped to carry out assigned tasks has not always been uppermost in the list of necessities for a mission. Until very recently, ensuring that there was “equitable geographic representation” among the members of a UN military force took precedence over virtually everything else. Countries would offer contingents, have them accepted and then ask the UN for clothing, equipment, food and transport to and from the theater of operations, with the condition that all be free or the offer would be withdrawn. The UN did not want to embarrass the countries concerned and so would obtain those resources from one or more of its more affluent Member States. It is true that participation in peacekeeping, in and of itself, will improve abilities of national contingents and allowance must be made for that professional development to take place. However, there must be a certain, minimum level of professionalism displayed before deployment can take place. There is now a move to establish standards or guidelines for military forces; however, this idea is not receiving the universal acceptance it deserves.

The International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres, established by and at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in the early summer of 1995 is a non-directive, informal, non-governmental gathering of training centres, academic organizations, UN, NATO, NGOs, civilian police officials and others interested in exchanging information with a view to improving all aspects of peacekeeping. Some IAPTC members have been advocating, for a number of years, that the association agree on a set of professional guidelines that could be used by national militaries and the UN to ascertain whether contingents are trained sufficiently to be accepted as a mission component. There is some agreement on the desirability to have the guidelines but, thus far, it has not been possible for the IAPTC, as a whole, to adopt them. Some members have stated quite clearly that if their militaries are made to adhere to UN or other guidelines, then they will not participate in peacekeeping missions. It is up to IAPTC members and others to decide whether such ill-qualified forces ought to be accepted, for any reason.

Military peacekeepers must be trained beyond those capabilities needed to carry out the operational tasks assigned by the UN or by the international organization or lead country conducting the operation. Further, mission organizers must realize and accept that individual countries will insist that their units be equipped to national standards. The type of equipment taken by military units will, from time to time, not be in agreement with UN or other directives. This practice will continue.

If military troops are deployed possessing only the wherewithal to carry out the tasks assigned, experience has shown that they will be in danger of suffering losses and of not being mission-successful. A feature of peacekeeping that must be understood by the UN, national governments and publics alike is that certain aspects of general purpose combat and peacekeeping are identical, for concentrated periods of time. If one were to draw circles around certain Second World War and Korean War battles and then place those circles over a template of contemporary peacekeeping missions, some of the circles would coincide. This is not to equate all peacekeeping missions or even all parts of some missions to those wars. It is, however, true that there is a certain coincidence of activity in which peacekeeping troops are engaged is decidedly and definitely of a combat nature. Thus, the types and level of weapons and equipment issued pre-deployment must be those necessary to engage in combat operations.

There is also a need to ensure that there is a well-trained group of staff officers and support staff capable of establishing a peacekeeping mission on short notice. This requirement is acknowledged from time to time by the UN and national governments but, to date, efforts to address the situation have not met with the degree of desired success. Peacekeeping is a serious business and must be approached and prepared for in a serious manner. The UK and its military were criticized in the aftermath of the bombing of Afghanistan for allocating all of the senior positions in the peacekeeping force headquarters for UK officers. The response was to the effect that the UK military could act quickly, individuals were well-trained and capable: until other countries reached those levels, they could not expect senior appointments. Creation of a pool of mid to high level peacekeeping mission staff, civilian as well as military, trained in interoperability and the establishment and efficient conduct of operations at a high level is a necessity to ensure balanced approaches and achievements and avoid negative criticism that could detract from mission accomplishment.

The United Nations and its Security Council are the only universal organizations charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. According to the UN Charter, all questions affecting international peace and security are to be dealt with by the Security Council. For many reasons, it is not always possible to abide by that rule. Indeed, UNEF I was created by the General Assembly after it proved impossible for the Security Council to deal with the Suez Crisis. However, it should be the exception that international conflict prevention and resolution measures are not authorized by the Council. Recognizing that there will be situations, the solutions to which will be sought and implemented by countries that are Member States of the UN, but not in that capacity. They will find alternative ways to act if it appears that the Security Council or General assembly will not be able to do so. There will also be times when, for other understandable reasons, countries will wish to act with minimum UN *qua* UN authorization, guidance and/or supervision.

The UN must ensure it does all within its power to avoid being marginalized when dealing with incipient or actual conflicts. Member States, for their part, must make every effort to prevent and settle disputes within the strictures of the UN Charter. Where this cannot be done to the extent desired, the UN must seek to play a role which draws attention to its universal responsibilities and authority. In some instances, this may be limited to the Security Council passing a resolution which sets out and agrees to decisions reached elsewhere by individual countries, groups of countries or other organizations. Those decisions may note quite clearly that certain command, control and coordination arrangements have been agreed between and among the parties concerned. This was clearly

the case in the aftermath of the Kosovo bombing and the war on Afghanistan. Such occasions draw additional attention to the UN and that is good. They also create precedent and may well ensure that in the future, countries that may be tempted to act alone will, rather, work through the UN.

Recent years have seen developing a division of peacekeeping implementation conduct measures. Generally speaking, those conducted in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter are managed, not by the UN *qua* UN, but by others acting also, in concert or under the direction of another organization. Others, under Chapter VI or the non-existent, but regarded as real Chapter VI and one-half are carried out in all respects by the UN. From time to time, accompanying this typology, comments have been made that the UN ought to return to “classical peacekeeping” and leave all other forms to non-UN arrangements. This would be a mistake as it would negate the knowledge acquired by the UN in the additional areas and would also result in a weakening of the position of the UN in conflict prevention and resolution. The general approach ought to be aimed, not at undermining the UN, but at ensuring it is used as much as possible in the circumstances.

Another change that must be made to ensure the maximum benefit is gained is to recognize and accept that peacekeeping is not a neutral activity. Many misconceptions and much confusion have been created in so thinking. It is difficult to understand how an activity in which many are killed and in which peacekeepers kill people can be called neutral. Neutrality is akin to “a plague on both your houses”, a withdrawal from the discussion and argument. Peacekeeping, on the other hand, is impartial and objective. Every day, national governments and military and civilian peacekeepers on the ground decide that certain individuals will live and that others will die. This situation is created as, by choice of circumstances, it is decided to intervene in country “A” instead of country “B”. In a theatre of operations, military officials, NGOs, representatives of international organizations and others decide to allot and facilitate the delivery of the aid on hand to a certain part of the country. Military commanders and civilian officials assess a situation, decide on a course of action and then implement it to the best of their abilities. The assessment often results in a determination that there is fault or that one area is more deserving of aid, for a multitude of reasons, than another area. Thus, actions are undertaken on the basis of impartiality. Wider acceptance of this view of peacekeeping will go a long way to increasing government responses to need and to ensuring that resources of all types are delivered where needed.

Recent peacekeeping and allied operations have seen an increase in the number of functional areas represented in headquarters staffs or otherwise located in-theatre. This trend will continue. It must be carefully monitored to ensure the introduction of new functions contributes to the accomplishment and success of the mission and does not have a negative impact on overall results. Areas in which representation has been obtained, or is being sought at the mission headquarters and lower levels include those of gender issues (both within the mission and the country hosting the mission), legal matters including selection of all types of targets and operational objectives and the means used to deal with them, children and how they are affected by conflict and what can be done to aid them, and that of political advice.

With regard to the latter, it has been the case, for many years, that theatre commanders and other military officers responsible for a high and wide range of activities have had political advisors on their staffs. Of late, political advisors have been allocated to headquarters of a lower level and it is certain that this trend will continue. One challenge that has arisen with each of the areas mentioned above is that of command, control and

coordination. In the case of the legal advisor aiding in the selection of targets, questions have arisen concerning to whom the advisor is responsible: to the armed forces headquarters in his/her home country or to the commander on the ground. With political advisors, a like question has been raised, especially when the advisor has been seconded from the higher headquarters to which the in-theatre commander is responsible. Commanders and staffs at all levels must be aware of these challenges and do their best to meet them successfully.

For many years, both military commanders and senior representatives of civilian organizations, national and international alike have been concerned that they and those who work with them are being assigned tasks that are clearly beyond their means and are being required to carry them out. Organizations such as the UN Security Council must take great care that they do not assign impossible to accomplish tasks, as nationally attractive and desirable as that may be. To send personnel into a situation of danger without the necessary resources is not a mark of good leadership.

In this regard, we must bear in mind that it is national governments that comprise the membership of the United Nations and its associated agencies. The UN is not an international parliament with executive powers, it is not a world government. In many respects, the UN is a gathering place on the East River of New York City to which repair the representatives of its Member States. There they deliberate in accordance with instructions from their national capitals and, when conditions are judged to be correct and appropriate, they agree to act in a certain fashion. The Secretary-General and his staff of international civil servants advise and act in accordance with direction received from the Security Council and other principal organs of the UN. When criticism of peacekeeping is voiced, in most, but, of course, not all circumstances, that negative comment should be directed to national capitals, not to New York. It is national governments, the Member States of the UN who have the power and the authority to ensure that corrective actions are taken.

One of the peacekeeping functions which has increased greatly in recent years is that of the use of civilian police. This is so for a number of reasons. It appears as if some national governments and their citizens pay much more attention to military casualties than those suffered by civilian police or members of NGOs or international agencies. Thus, police casualties are less likely to elicit calls for withdrawals or for force protection measures that effectively hobble much of the military freedom of action. In addition, an allied reason is that civilian police are being called on to carry out tasks that in the past, when the number of police was much less, would have been assigned to the military. Thus, there is an even greater possibility that less negative attention will be paid to adverse consequences.

There are certain challenges with relying more heavily on the use of civilian police. The first is that of ensuring that members assigned to peacekeeping duties are qualified for the positions they will assume. UN Headquarters has instituted a programme of screening of nominated police in their home countries aimed at weeding out those deemed not to be capable. Next is the fact that the number of civilian police required in missions greatly exceeds the available supply. National, regional and local police forces are established on the basis of actual need and are funded only for the numbers required to ensure effective policing. If members are permitted to proceed overseas for duties with peacekeeping missions and no replacements are forthcoming, citizens question why they are paying taxes for police protection at home that is not being supplied. There is also a reluctance to use retired police personnel. Each of these areas needs to be addressed promptly and effectively as it is certain that increased numbers of civilian police will be required well into the future.

As currently practiced, international military peacekeeping is carried out by national contingents acting under national Terms of Reference coordinated by an international commander and staff. Each national contingent commander is specifically instructed by the national government as to the flexibility that will be permitted and when the commander must “call home” for instructions concerning orders given by the senior UN or other commander. Rules of Engagement are adopted by peacekeeping missions for use in varying circumstances. Usually, they are agreed by all contingents in a given mission. It is well known, however, that agreement to a mission ROE does not mean they will be followed in all circumstances. There are established “national caveats” which mean that a force commander and senior staff must be aware of the national variants and take them into account when giving operational direction. Force commanders and the parent political organization, be it the UN, NATO or another international organization do not like to be embarrassed by having national contingent commanders refuse orders.

Another reality due to the fact that peacekeeping is an international activity conducted on a national basis is that the military force commander is not free to place his forces where he deems they will be most effective. For a plethora of reasons: religion, ethnicity, national political policies and military strictures imposed by governments among them, proposed placing of units is subject to a national agreement or veto.

National Terms of Reference, national Rules of Engagement and other restraints mean that the operational effectiveness of a mission is hobbled from the outset. It is highly unlikely that any of these national restraints will be removed in the near future. To be aware of their existence and to devise plans to deal with them and their implications is the only method of accommodating them.

Civilians and their parent organizations must be made clearly aware of the above limitations on military forces. In the event of civilians needing military aid or protection, they need to know which national contingents will act in which manner. Not to be so informed is to court needless loss of life.

None of the peacekeeping realities set out in this paper should be new to the knowledgeable observer. That this is so and that corrective action has not been taken to date only underscores the time imperative in doing so at the earliest possible opportunity. Not to improve peacekeeping where improvement is clearly warranted means less efficient use of resources and greater injury and loss of life to peacekeepers and those they strive to protect alike.

There are at least three certainties about the future of peacekeeping:

- It will continue to be the international conflict resolution instrument of choice.
- The mechanisms and modalities used in the past will be required in the future.
- New mechanisms and modalities will be required to face as yet unknown peacekeeping challenges and opportunities.

These certainties mean that greater flexibility, imagination, innovation and professionalism will be required of all who are associated with any aspect of peacekeeping.

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Lester Pearson realized that his work in the invention of peacekeeping was only and beginning and would be built upon by those who would come after him. As noted earlier in this paper, he said “If on that foundation, we do not build something more permanent and stronger, we will once again have ignored realities, rejected opportunities and betrayed our trust. Will we never learn?” It is abundantly evident that we have learned how to build on Pearson’s legacy. What all must do now is to resolve to take action to continue that building process to improve further the international conflict resolution instrument of choice – peacekeeping.

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<sup>1</sup> Alex Morrison is the Founding President of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (1994 – 2001), the President of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, and the President of Peacekeeping Education Associates. He may be reached at [sandym@mail.com](mailto:sandym@mail.com).