

However, the start of the Middle East Peace Process in 1991² brought about new opportunities and challenges for extra-regional involvement in the Middle East. One of Canada's most significant roles has been as Gavel-holder of the Refugee Working Group (RWG), a committee designed to deal primarily with the plight and humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees. In this role, Canada has continued its commitment to social, political and economic issues such as family reunification, public health, child welfare, and development.³ Canada has also been involved in other multilateral endeavors, such as the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group, for which Canada chairs the discussion on Maritime Confidence-Building Measures, and Canada has held workshops for Middle Eastern naval forces.⁴

In addition to these diplomatic endeavors, Canada has increasingly focussed on civil society and non-governmental organisations as allies in the attempt to establish peace in the region. This reorientation of foreign policy objectives is particularly important at a time when rejectionist and radical fundamentalist movements have mobilized on both sides as negotiations at the state level fail to bear fruit. Political polarization in both Arab and Israeli societies has further problematized the Peace Process by creating a backlash against inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation at the societal level. The continuation of protracted conditions of conflict and terrorist activities during the Peace Process era present serious obstacles for third party intervention. These circumstances have necessitated new thinking about Canadian foreign policy vis-a-vis the Middle East. The following section outlines the ideological shift in Canadian foreign policy from the diplomatic to the grassroots level as a theoretical framework through which to consider the viability of the CFDD in Israel/Palestine and Jordan.

(2) Canadian Peacebuilding in the Post-Cold War Era:

In the post-Cold War era, Canadian foreign policy has undergone two major paradigm shifts. The first is characterized by a transition from peacekeeping to "peacebuilding" (Stephenson, 1998: 65), while the second is defined by a shift from national security to a human security agenda. Both initiatives draw from a long history of human rights and development practices as they have evolved over many years through such organisations as the United Nations and other international development agencies (DFAIT, 1999; Owens & Arneil, 1999; Heinbecker, 1999).

The first shift in Canadian foreign policy is an attempt to move away from the traditional Cold War doctrine of deterrence, i.e., containing, managing or moderating hostilities through the threat to use military force. An example of the traditional approach in the Middle East was the first case

² In 1991, the Madrid Peace Conference set the stage for a series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and the Palestinians. Canada has been a consistent and active non-regional participant on the multilateral track.

³ Since the establishment of the RWG, Canada led a series of international missions to Jordan (1994 & 1996), to refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza (1998), and to Lebanon (1994 & 1997) to obtain first hand information about conditions in the refugee camps as well as to publicize the issue to the international community.

⁴ In addition, Canada is a member of the Multilateral Steering Group, which oversees all five working groups.