

# **CANADIAN PEACEBUILDING IN THE MIDDLE EAST: CASE STUDY OF THE CANADA FUND IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE AND JORDAN**

**Tami Amanda Jacoby**

Post-Cold War Canadian foreign policy is characterized by new methods and philosophies of engagement in international zones of conflict. This reorientation takes place against the background of new forms of armed conflict and new sources of insecurity in the international system in the last few decades. In the past, Canada's stature in diplomatic and peacekeeping initiatives was attributed to its designation as a "middle power" (Cooper, Higgot & Nossal, 1999), and its reputation for impartiality in international disputes. Traditional Canadian peacekeeping was generally limited to third party intervention in wars between states, such as mediating between hostile parties, bringing them to the negotiating table, and helping to monitor a negotiated settlement.

By way of contrast, post-Cold War Canadian initiatives differ both in scope and context. First, they address protracted armed conflicts that take place not only between states, but also conflicts of an ethnic/communal and/or tribal nature that occur within and across state borders. Second, they involve not only the military aspects of conflicts, but also the socio-political issues related both to conflict and peace negotiations in post-conflict situations. The current international context has brought about new challenges and opportunities for Canadian foreign policy development. This article explores the transition in Canadian foreign policy from peacekeeping to peacebuilding based on a case study of the Canada Fund for Dialogue and Development (CFDD) in Israel/Palestine and Jordan. The primary intent of this fund in the Middle East is to promote mutual respect and understanding through dialogue on issues related to the Peace Process between Israelis and Arabs.<sup>1</sup> The intention of this research is to determine the extent to which Canadian-funded projects have fulfilled these goals. This study is based on fieldwork in Israel, Palestine and Jordan, and a series of interviews conducted by the author, between July 10 and August 10, 2000 in the field. The unique contribution of this research to Canadian foreign policy development is in assessing how a particular initiative has played out in a specific zone of conflict and in relation to the local and indigenous concerns of recipients of Canadian funding. This methodology is intended to provide necessary feedback into the policy process for enhancement of future foreign policy goals in a way that weds the interests of both the Canadian government and local allies in the field.

The first section of this article looks back at Canada's traditional involvement in the Arab-Israeli Conflict as a way to distinguish the current transition from Canadian peacekeeping to peacebuilding. In the second section, the current objectives of Canadian involvement in international zones of conflict are examined with the Middle East as the immediate framework of analysis. The third section evaluates the specific case of the CFDD in Israel/Palestine and Jordan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Canada Fund for Dialogue and Development brochure, Canadian Embassy, Tel Aviv.