



photo: CP (Tom Hanson)

Canadian peacekeepers board a plane bound for Canada from Split, Croatia, in 1995 following the end of their UN mandate in the region.

Peace(keeping) in our time

Ambassador Rock comes by his interest in the UN honestly. His father James Thomas Rock, a career soldier, served 12 months in the first UN peacekeeping force in Suez in the late 1950s, a mission conceived by the senior Mr. Pearson,

Did you know? Canada has seven diplomatic missions accredited to the UN and its agencies.

who won the Nobel Peace Prize for it. "I remember getting letters from Port Said and Haifa and affected areas both in Israel and Egypt," Mr. Rock recalls. "These events happened during the early part of my life

and left a deep impression of the UN (and) a very positive impression of Canada's role in peacekeeping."

In principle, Canada continues to staunchly support UN peacekeeping. Yet while there are more than 70,000 blue berets deployed worldwide today, Canada's contribution numbers only 327 soldiers, police and military observers, ranking 32nd in personnel contributions. This does not mean the country has abandoned peacekeeping: as of April, there were 949 Canadians assigned to the UN-mandated NATO mission in Afghanistan, and 1,200 deployed worldwide. But UN-led missions have been less of a priority.

In part, this is because Western nations have tended since the mid-1990s to focus their efforts in geographic zones where they have direct national interests, such as Bosnia and Kosovo. Canada naturally took an interest in NATO peacekeeping, says Jocelyn Coulon, because the Europeans and U.S. are our allies, and we have a seat (and a say) at the NATO table. At the same time, other nations began contributing more to UN missions. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, for example, sometimes provide up to 2,000 soldiers for a single peacekeeping force. With its reduced military, Canada cannot.

There are contexts in which Canada remains important to UN peacekeeping, particularly when a swift, short-term deployment is needed, says Errol Mendes, professor of international business law at the University of Ottawa. One role is as "moral leader—but with that moral leadership has to come a commitment of resources," he says. The other involves specialized tasks. Canada boasts some of the best military communications experts in the world and knows how to combine hard military skills with humanitarian and peacebuilding abilities. The federal government's pledge to boost resources to the Canadian military may yet place Canada more firmly in the UN peacekeeping orbit.

Of poverty and process

Mr. Annan has specific expectations of prosperous countries. Five years after the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals aimed at halving world poverty by 2015, he urges rich nations to get on with committing 0.7 percent of their gross national income to overseas assistance.

Some have complied with his call. In the recent *International Policy Statement* (see page 16), Canada gave no firm timetable. It has, however, increased and retooled foreign aid so that by 2010, bilateral assistance will focus on 25 countries, according to strict criteria of eligibility. The Statement points out the links between acute poverty and state failure, and between state failure and global security, concluding that aid and security go hand in hand.

Meanwhile, Mr. Annan also urges institutional reforms to the UN to make it more transparent, representative and accountable, a goal Canada shares. Of the two reform models the Secretary-General has tabled for the Security Council, Canada supports a proposal that calls for adding eight four-year, renewable-term seats and one two-year non-permanent, non-renewable seat. But Mr. Malone cautions against fixating on the Council, lest this overshadow discussion of more important proposals to shore up human rights, development and security. "What we see at the UN today is an orgy of posturing on Security Council reform, most countries having adopted fairly self-interested position on the subject."

Canada has meanwhile spearheaded another institutional innovation, the "L20", a group of leaders from 20 key North and South nations that Mr. Martin proposes will "work alongside the UN and other major international institutions." The potential member countries of the group represent two thirds of

Did you know? Canada is the seventh-largest contributor to the UN regular budget, and is one of the few member states to always pay on time, in full and without conditions.
