

Paul Heinbecker said that in a departure from traditional Security Council election campaigns, Canada ran not only on its UN credentials, but also a specific policy platform. The first priority was to promote human security and to expand the Council's historical state-centred approach to peace and security. Second, Canada sought to reassert the engagement and leadership of the Council in the wake of its post-Somalia and Rwanda retrenchment. Finally, Canada undertook to promote transparency and accountability of the Council to make it more democratic.

The greatest challenge to Canada's platform was on human security because of the state-centred security mandate assigned to the Council by the UN Charter and because of its strict interpretation by key member states. Nevertheless, Canada started from the assumption that today's security agenda is dominated by new threats that affect people directly. The security of states is essential, but not sufficient, to ensure the peace, safety and well-being of people. Human security treats the safety of people as a moral good and a human necessity. It also treats the safety of people as integral to achieving stability. Therefore, Canada sought to broaden the Council's definition of "threats to international peace and security" – its usual trigger for action, to encompass new human security challenges. Canada argued that humanitarian principles and human rights should be given greater weight in the Council's calculus of when to act. The "CNN effect" engages actively our consciousness, we no longer have the choice whether to act or not. Grievously harming people is no longer tolerable.

A strategy that combined a case-by-case approach with a normative one was chosen. Under the first element of this strategy, Canada sought "operational entry points" for advancing human security practices in the Council's day-to-day decisions on key security issues, particularly peacekeeping mandates and sanctions regimes. Canada realised the second element of its strategy – promoting a more normative approach to human security, through a thematic initiative on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The theme of protection of civilians in armed conflict was well-suited to the Council's mandate and instruments. No one could argue that armed conflict was beyond the Council's purview. Nor could anyone dispute the fact that the victims of today's conflicts were overwhelmingly civilian, and that the majority of conflicts were within rather than between states. As a part of Canada's first presidency of the Council in February 1999, Canada succeeded in securing the agreement of Council members to discuss this topic in a meeting open to the wider UN membership. The meeting included the first-ever briefing of the Council by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. A Presidential Statement was negotiated. It expressed the Council's concern with the plight of civilians caught in the cross-fire and condemned deliberate attacks against them. Canada's strategy also included tasking the Secretary-General to examine what the UN could do and to report back to the Council. Six months later, in September 1999, the Secretary-General's ground-breaking report on the protection of civilians was endorsed by Resolution 1265, drafted by Canada. To further lock-in Council engagement, that resolution also created the Canadian-led Council working group, in which a follow-up resolution was negotiated. In April 2000, during Canada's second and last