

# CANADA<sup>A N D</sup> MISSIONS FOR PEACE

lessons from  
NICARAGUA,  
CAMBODIA,  
& SOMALIA

edited by  
GREGORY WIRICK  
ROBERT MILLER

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PEACE

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Gregory Wirick  
and Robert Miller

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*To the memory of  
Gregory Wirick (1952–1998),  
a valued friend, colleague, and  
leader in the new field  
of peacebuilding.*

*— RM*

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# C ONCLUSION

## LINKING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Gregory Wirick and Robert Miller

**T**he three preceding case studies all deal with intrastate conflict: they concern countries in the throes of civil war and the effects that different kinds of outside interventions have had on the course of those wars. These case studies exemplify the types of conflicts most prevalent in the post-Cold War era, although the Gulf War reminds us that conflicts between states are not a thing of the past. Nonetheless, as the world heads into the 21st century, the leading conflicts are likely to be governance

related and to have their roots in the dissolution of the colonial empires of the last century.

What lessons are to be learned from the case studies? What implications do they have for the theory and practice of missions for peace, particularly as practiced by Canada? These are the questions to which we now turn.

As we noted in the Introduction, these case studies all warn us about the constraints and sheer bloody difficulties that confront the international community when it decides to intervene in the affairs of countries rent by conflict. Each of the papers focuses on a different aspect of the constraints operating on missions for peace. In the paper on Nicaragua, Andrés Pérez dealt with the legacies of history. Gérard Hervouët, in the paper on Cambodia, stressed the role of foreign policy; and in the paper on Somalia, Kenneth Bush analyzed the organizational and managerial “anarchies” that accompany missions for peace.

Each of the case studies focused on a period that is now several years old, but recent events only deepen our sense of the limitations and complexities that attend these international interventions. Nicaragua remains sunk in an economic depression that grinds down the majority of the people and maintains the potential for conflict. It cannot be said that the time since the end of the civil war has been seized by the elites of Nicaragua to “begin to construct a minimum social consensus as the foundation of a durable peace,” to quote the modest hope expressed by Professor Pérez (this volume, p. 47). In the case of Cambodia, recent events have revealed the shallowness of the political accommodation between opposing factions brokered by the United Nations (UN). Faced with the apparent emergence of strongman rule, the international community is now grappling with the question of whether to disengage from Cambodia. Finally, recent events concerning Canada’s participation in the UN operation in Somalia have provided bitter lessons for Canadians. In documenting cases of torture and murder by Canadian peacekeepers, the Royal Commission on Somalia has raised doubts in the minds of Canadians about their country’s involvement in such missions.

Nonetheless, it would be a misreading of the case studies to conclude that they are arguments against missions for peace. On the contrary, all three spring from a conviction that such missions can be strengthened by developing a better understanding of the basic forces at work in such operations. We will underline this point by taking a closer look at the arguments presented by our three authors.

## NICARAGUA: HISTORICAL SPACE AND NATIONAL CONSENSUS

History is a succession of self-reinforcing events conforming to recurring tendencies. For much of Nicaragua's modern history, the events add up to a repeated lesson in the limitations of national power. Successive Nicaraguan governments have adopted policies based on the importance of catering first to the United States and then to the Soviet Union. With such uncertain sovereignty, political polarization became the rule, with the aim being to satisfy allies abroad, not to build consensus at home.

Pérez highlighted the critical importance of sovereignty as a prerequisite to establishing effective governance and thus peace. In his analysis, the "centroamericanization" of the peace process had two important results. It brought about a recognition of the commonality and interconnectedness of the factors giving rise to conflict throughout much of Central America, and even more importantly it "imposed more direct responsibility for the outcome of the [peace] negotiations on the governments of the region" (Pérez, this volume, p. 37). The latter effect went to the heart of the problem of empty sovereignty, an important legacy of Central American history.

The peace process created what Pérez (this volume, p. 23) called "new historical opportunities" (what we have chosen to call historical space) for contending forces within Nicaragua. Like a firebreak in a forest fire, this space created a temporary opportunity to contain destructive forces. However, it did not generate a new consensus, nor could it, for reasons that Pérez (this volume, p. 42) went on to explain:

*It was not a process whereby power contenders reached some fundamental agreements regarding the organization of the social, political, and economic life of the country. Peace in Nicaragua was simply a stop to the war, forced by external conditions that made it impossible for the Sandinistas and the Contras to continue their military confrontation. The success of the mission for peace in Nicaragua was not based on its capacity to bring the power contenders to an agreement about the future of the country; rather, the mission for peace succeeded because of its capacity to use the opportunities created by the end of the Cold War to officialize an alto al fuego (cease-fire).*

This conclusion does not in any way invalidate the mission for peace in Central America; it merely highlights its limitations. It brings home to us that all the terms associated with missions for peace — including peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding — are in a sense misnomers. None is a condition of peace; rather, all are at best

preconditions that will come to naught unless a genuine indigenous process of building a "minimum social consensus" begins to occur. Without that, missions for peace are likely to be only postponements of war.

What, then, are the prospects for building social consensus? And what is the role of the international community in that process? Here the argument presented by Pérez raises major issues for Canadian policy and donor policy generally. He argued that the grounds on which consensus can be built have been greatly reduced by the global imposition of a liberal-democratic model that severely constrains the role of the state. This "reduces the possibility of using state power as an effective instrument for the articulation of a social consensus on the future of Nicaraguan society" (Pérez, this volume, p. 43). In turn, with this diminution of the role of the state, the object of political conflict may be displaced onto civil society, thus intensifying political fragmentation and creating conditions for "a war of all against all."

In the age of revolution, conflicts were typically between political groups divided ideologically over the uses of state power. Conflicts today are much more likely to be intergroup disputes within society, with the role of the state and political programs relegated to the status of afterthoughts. This might seem like six of one misery in place of a half dozen of the other, but the more anomic nature of conflict poses special problems for the creation of any consensus to serve as the foundation of lasting peace. In particular, the state is likely to be so weak that it is unable to reinforce a consensus with effective and authoritative policies. Contending parties then have little or no confidence that agreements will be respected or enforced. In consequence, these conflicts tend toward the most extreme outcomes, such as genocide, expulsion, or partition.

In considering the role of outside actors in building social consensus, we must bring fundamental issues of governance much closer to our centre of attention. The downsizing of the state has been approached by international financial institutions and donors as if it were an issue exclusively of economic efficiency and management. In fact, the state supplies some of the essential glue holding society together. We are encouraged by recent indications that the role of the state is being freshly reappraised. In *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World*, the World Bank (1997) repeated its familiar argument in favour of state withdrawal from many areas of economic regulation and activity. However, the World Bank also argued that the state has an essential role to play in development and that

without an effective state, development will be greatly impaired. Pérez's paper contributed to the reappraisal of the role of the state by highlighting its function in building social consensus.

Finally, we turn to the role of Canada in the Nicaraguan peace process. Professor Pérez described Canada's role as being useful and important at two levels: at the technical level, Canada played a role in verification of agreements; and at the political level, Canada played a role in supporting the people directly engaged in the negotiation and implementation of the agreements. In the latter role, Canada helped to expand the political space in which the initiatives evolved "by actively promoting an interpretation of the sources, nature, and implications of the Central American crisis that was significantly different from that of the United States" (Pérez, this volume, p. 44). In particular, Canada advanced a multidimensional view of the roots of the crisis, in contrast to the unidimensional Cold War vision put forward by the US government. By so doing, Canada supported "the solution of internal political, economic and social problems by the countries and peoples of the region themselves" (Charland 1984, p. 4).

In praising the Canadian contribution, Pérez dissented from the view that the consolidation of peace can be effected by peacebuilding, which he described as "highly desirable but impractical" (Pérez, this volume, p. 45). This conclusion follows from his argument that missions for peace can create a window of opportunity for a country in crisis but that the power contenders in that country must then convert that opportunity into sustainable peace. Barring that, peacebuilding is bound to be ineffectual, no matter how well intentioned. He concluded by suggesting that the most that Canada can or should do in the post-conflict situation is to create a "neutral forum for continuous dialogue among the affected country's political contenders" (Pérez, this volume, p. 46).

This analysis provides a compelling and consistent argument in favour of recognizing the limits of intervention and the need to return power as quickly and completely as possible to the local contenders. If this is not done, missions for peace might only perpetuate the conditions giving rise to conflict, particularly the absence of political sovereignty and consequent failure to develop a national political consensus. Clientalism will have been preserved — only the names of the patrons will have changed.

## CAMBODIA: THE ROLE OF FOREIGN POLICY

Missions for peace take place in the intersection where international relations meet local history. Professor Hervouët's analysis of the Cambodian case serves as a powerful reminder of that fact. The Cambodian peace process, like the Central American one, was affected by changes taking place in the Soviet Union under then President Gorbachev. His government set out to improve relations with China, and as a consequence the intransigence of both the Chinese and the Vietnamese regarding a peace settlement in Cambodia began to soften. These changes in the international environment quickly made their influence felt by the Cambodian factions, who began to show a new willingness to negotiate.

In broad outline, the Nicaraguan and Cambodian missions for peace illustrate how the end of the Cold War positively affected the settlement of Third World conflicts, and they remind us of the corrosive effects of the Cold War in many parts of the world. As in Central America, the regional powers in Cambodia played an important role in the peace process, but this role was secondary to that of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The story of Canada's involvement in the Cambodian mission for peace belies the usual depiction of Canada as the international boy scout, always willing to volunteer and to set no limits to its commitments. Indeed, Hervouët documented both the caution with which Canada approached involvement in the Cambodian mission for peace and the role that ulterior foreign-policy interests played in Canada's eventual willingness to become involved. Canada's experience with the International Commissions for Control and Supervision in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam had "profoundly marked the collective memory of Canadian diplomacy" (Hervouët, this volume, p. 52), creating a strong desire at the Department of External Affairs to steer clear of regional-security entanglements. Even with the emergence of new Canadian foreign-policy interests, notably in human rights, trade, and investment, this aversion was slow to dissipate. For a time, Canada hoped it would be possible to build closer commercial and political ties while keeping its distance on security issues, but as Hervouët (this volume, p. 56) noted,

*It was becoming increasingly difficult to explain, often within the same documents and speeches, that Asia and the Pacific were henceforth more important economically to Canada than Europe, that Asian immigration exceeded that from European sources, but that the federal government remained firmly committed to its traditionally cautious stance on regional-security matters.*

It is worth pausing for a moment to reflect on this point because it is often argued that trade and commercial interests can in effect diminish or even cancel out other foreign-policy interests, and there are obviously examples of this. But in the Cambodian case, those same commercial interests motivated the Canadian foreign-policy establishment, somewhat reluctantly, to deepen its involvement in regional-security and development issues in Southeast Asia. This suggests that the relationship between trade and other elements of foreign policy is more complex than is sometimes acknowledged. As the concept of security broadens, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a unidimensional foreign-policy relationship with any part of the world.

Eventually making the decision to engage security issues in its relations with Southeast Asia, Canada nevertheless continued to play its hand very cautiously, indeed timidly, in Hervouët's estimation. It lobbied successfully to participate in the Paris Conference but then disappointed the UN with the modesty of its contribution to the United Nations Transnational Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) missions. Canadians played a very useful technical role throughout the process but avoided proposing policy solutions, preferring the role of helpful fixer to that of foreign-policy architect. All of this is at odds with the common portrait of Canadians as wide-eyed innocents, eager to rush in where angels fear to tread. In Cambodia, Canada has trod very carefully indeed.

In contrast to the modesty of the Canadian role, the UN mission for peace in Cambodia was breathtakingly ambitious. As Hervouët noted, it was a UN operation of unprecedented complexity that "went well beyond peacekeeping to encompass an ambitious attempt to recreate, in the space of a short mandate, the political, economic, and social conditions of a society torn by deep-rooted antagonisms ever since the US intervention in the Viet Nam war" (Hervouët, this volume, p. 69). In short, UNTAC set for itself precisely the sort of goals that Pérez warned against in his case study of Nicaragua. Why, despite similar foreign-policy constraints, did the Cambodian mission for peace go so much further than the one in Nicaragua?

The explanation is to be found in the critical difference between a country seriously damaged by conflict and another devastated by it. The Nicaraguan civil war dragged on for the better part of a generation and inflicted very serious economic and social damage; nonetheless, at the end of the war, many of the country's institutions were more or less intact and one could imagine an internal process of reconstruction, provided the contending parties would allow that to happen. By contrast,

during that same period, Cambodia was entangled in the Viet Nam war, suffered unimaginably through a holocaust, and finally wound up under foreign military occupation. The end result in Cambodia was a society in which human capital had been decimated and, in consequence, one in which institutions had effectively disappeared. If the problem in Nicaragua was a lack of a will for peace, the problem in Cambodia was one of missing capacity. This small country was not a failed state but a state destroyed.

In the circumstances, the international community had no choice but to give a broad mandate to the Cambodian mission for peace. The social, economic, and political infrastructure that would have allowed the country to resume its life after the cessation of the conflict simply did not exist. Much of it had to be rebuilt and sustained with international assistance. Accordingly, we would amend the prescription offered by Pérez, who wrote that missions for peace should try to meet their twin objectives — that is, ending conflict and creating windows of opportunity for sustainable peace — with the minimum necessary intervention and should engage indigenous actors as completely and quickly as possible. However, we would add that the depth and duration of intervention must vary, depending on the needs and circumstances of the country. Where missions for peace are concerned, there is no “one size that fits all.”

## SOMALIA: ANARCHIES AND MISSIONS FOR PEACE

The case studies of Nicaragua and Cambodia highlighted local history and international politics as powerful influences on whether and how missions for peace take place. In the case study of Somalia, Bush focused on the operation itself and, in particular, its mission. His argument, in a nutshell, was that the Somalia operation failed in the end because its mission was defined too narrowly in military terms, thus neglecting other resources, both local and international, that might have helped to resolve the conflict.

Bush began the case study by describing what he regards as the unique characteristic of missions for peace, namely, that they are multidimensional. Typically, they contain activities from all of the elements (peacekeeping, peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, and peacebuilding) in Boutros-Ghali's (1992) *An Agenda for Peace*, and these activities are carried out by a wide variety of actors, including government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private and multinational

organizations. In this perspective, the success of the mission depends mainly on how these various activities and actors fit together (Bush, this volume, p. 83):

*A central idea in a mission for peace is that the success of a peace initiative is more than the sum of the separate impacts of each of these activities. Success depends on the ways the different components of these types of intervention mesh with each other and (as importantly) with existing social, political, and economic structures in war-torn societies.*

According to Bush, the failure of the mission in Somalia was rooted in the evolution of the country's crisis and the subsequent international response. In the decade or so before the UN intervention, Somalia gradually descended into a clan-dominated, militaristic anarchy. In time, this anarchy took the form of marauding militias in which power was wielded primarily by warlords and their gunmen. The consequences for effective governance were severe, as both central political institutions and traditional, clan-based authority structures withered and disappeared. In addition, fire power possessed by these gangs escalated ominously, giving them the capacity to destroy the basic infrastructure of the country in a relatively short period of time. This devastation, combined with the severe drought in late 1991, created the perfect conditions for a human catastrophe. By March 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that one-third of the Somali population, or about 1.5 million people, were at serious risk of death from starvation over a 6-month period.

As the case study shows, the international community was slow to respond, but when it eventually responded, it did so on a large scale and militarily. The international response was heavily conditioned by public pressure on Western governments that was engendered by media coverage of the famine. That pressure eventually led the Security Council to mount a large-scale humanitarian intervention, rather than support the gradual approach taken by Mohamed Sahnoun, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Somalia. Sahnoun was attempting to reach a political settlement through existing social and political structures to, as Professor Bush (this volume, p. 96) described it, "modify those very same structures."

The decision to intervene heavily had immediately positive results, namely, the opening of supply routes for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the mitigation of terrible suffering. The presence of US-led peacekeepers with a mandate to "make" peace contained the warring factions for a time but did little or nothing to resolve the underlying conflict. In

fact, peacekeeping may well have inhibited parties from moving toward peaceful accommodation “by isolating the two communities, freezing an unsettled status quo, and rigidifying the boundaries between groups” (Bush, this volume, p. 103). This dynamic, in turn, led to frequent violent incidents between peacekeepers and Somalis and the eventual abandonment of the mission.

It is impossible to say whether the approach of Mohamed Sahnoun would have worked, given the power of the local warlords and the atrophy of traditional political structures. Nonetheless, the Somalian case study highlights the point made earlier by Pérez that international intervention should be seen as only a window for peace and not as peace itself. For humanitarian reasons, the international community may well have to intervene extensively in situations like Somalia, but somehow the path of engaging and empowering local political forces and communities must be followed at the same time. Realism forces us to concede that balancing these two opposing requirements will be enormously difficult, because although peacebuilding demands dialogue and engagement with local forces, humanitarian intervention will, in all probability, lead to confrontation and conflict. Clearly, missions for peace are delicate, complex political operations requiring careful coordination of different, sometimes divergent, elements.

In Bush’s judgment, the mission for peace in Somalia failed most conspicuously in the coordination of diverse elements. By concentrating on the supposedly quick fix of a military intervention, the mission neglected and then compounded the underlying social, economic, and political crisis in the country. Resources other than the military, such as development NGOs, were underappreciated and underused. At the same time, “the squabbling and turf fights among and between UN and non-UN actors in Somalia became increasingly public as the operation expanded in size and scope” (Bush, this volume, p. 93). These elements of the case study led Bush to characterize the mission in Somalia as the meeting of two anarchies: the local anarchy of clan conflict and the international anarchy of UN intervention. As the author argued, however, each of the operational failures sprang from a deeper cause, namely, the absence of a coherent and realistic sense of mission. Beyond the short-term imperatives of television news and electoral politics, Somalia was a mission for peace without a clear mission.

## LESSONS LEARNED

In undertakings as complex as missions for peace, we cannot expect simple solutions. Nonetheless, lessons relevant to policy can be found, and we will highlight two of these lessons in this section.

### Caution regarding the UN

One lesson concerns the capability of the UN to control and conduct missions for peace. The case studies in this volume suggest that the jury is still out on this matter. As Jan (1996, p. 8) noted recently in regard to the successive UN missions in Somalia,

*There was never a transition from a military to a civilian emphasis. The military mindset that had guided UNITAF [UN Unified Task Force] continued into UNOSOM II [Second United Nations Operation in Somalia] which should have essentially been a civilian operation . . .*

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Apart from the mission's short-run humanitarian value, it was a failure.

In Cambodia, on the other hand, as Hervouët made clear, the UN achieved some of its objectives. Yet here, too, quite substantial criticisms have been made. A number of important opportunities to build an enduring peace were missed during the UNTAC period. Many Cambodians, whose expectations had soared during the economic boomlet of the UNTAC period, were sorely disappointed in the aftermath and are now bitter and cynical about the UN's brief but seminal role in shaping their country's future. "The sudden influx of international agencies, foreign personnel, and external aid led to fairly high rates of economic growth, but also to a growth process that was extremely skewed" (Utting 1994, p. 9). The boom took place almost exclusively in the capital of Phnom Penh and was chiefly confined to the service sector that catered to foreign residents and organizations. The fact is that "rehabilitation was a marginal facet of the UNTAC operation" (Utting 1994, p. 27); some argued that certain socioeconomic characteristics emerged during the peace process that have had negative consequences for the country's rehabilitation and development.

The reality is that multilateral interventions through the UN are bound to be extremely intricate undertakings, with very delicate political components. This makes them prone to contradiction, confusion, and even chaos and, arguably, more prone to serious setbacks than a unilateral intervention would be. In his paper on Somalia, Bush quoted Canadian Major General Lewis MacKenzie as concluding that UN

operations are always conducted with less than what they need, whereas subcontractual missions — like UNITAF — invariably have more than they need. As Bush rightly pointed out, this makes Canadian soldiers more vulnerable in UN operations than in coalition missions.

Canada should face this problem squarely by no longer assuming that the UN is the be-all and end-all of our multilateral involvements in security and development. UN requests for support should be examined on their merits, before considerations of multilateral solidarity are taken into account. NATO is an obvious alternative in the security sphere and could be teamed with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to provide civilian skills in a complex mission. Other regional organizations — with or without Canada's participation — should be encouraged to take the lead in resolving crises within their regions.

A related policy issue is whether a multitude of contributing nations can form a coherent and effective force if many of the troops or civilians are ill-acquainted with the country they have been sent to. The customs and practices among disparate militaries and civilians from various countries make the creation of an esprit de corps exceedingly difficult, especially when people are under huge pressure to perform rapidly, produce results, and finish the job. To overcome these built-in difficulties, the leadership must be exceptional and the circumstances highly favourable.

A rapid-reaction force at the disposal of the Secretary-General would undoubtedly be a better approach. As noted earlier, Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy has also raised the possibility of civilian rapid-response teams. However, the political obstacles facing such proposals would probably be insurmountable in the next 10 years, owing to the suspicions of a highly nationalistic US Congress. In the meantime, Canada should be wary of participating in large and unwieldy UN missions. Also, the Security Council should become more selective in its engagements, something that is already happening. The willingness to engage in a plethora of missions during the early years of the 1990s has been replaced by a much more prudent approach (Findlay 1995, pp. 69–70):

*The UN and contributor states are obliged to weigh competing resources in deciding where to invest their limited resources. This will involve essentially abandoning some states to their own devices when, despite best endeavours, the international community appears unable appreciably to affect political outcomes. Somalia has come to epitomize this dawning realization.*

## The persistence of conflict

At a peacebuilding seminar in Geneva sponsored by the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), it was noted that “the end of armed conflict rarely signifies the resolution of conflict” (UNRISD 1994, p. 6). One should assume that the factors militating against a successful (that is, peaceful) outcome normally outweigh those favouring peace. This is explained by the chaos that descends upon societies in conflict, the confusion that often accompanies efforts to help, and the enormous obstacles outsiders face in seeking to comprehend and influence the situation. For this reason, the Canadian Policy Roundtable identified internal order and security as one of three broad requirements for action, the others being evolving representative political processes and economic and social reconstruction. Together these three objectives were seen as responding to “the human security needs of war-torn societies” (GOC 1996, p. 6).

In contrast to these complex, long-term requirements, international peacekeeping missions tend to underestimate the time it takes to make the transition from war to peace. UNRISD (1994, p. 7) cautioned that

*Peace missions need to be formed with the real needs of the country in mind. ... Peace missions enter a country with large numbers of military and civilian staff and become deeply involved in the operation of national institutions and the creation of new security arrangements for a relatively brief period of time. The massive departure of these forces, just as their massive entry, exacerbates problems.*

We are concerned that the Canadian government seems locked into a fast-entry-fast-exit approach. The Foreign Affairs Minister and government documents refer to a window of opportunity, which, by implication, suddenly slams shut and then remains closed (GOC 1996, p. 3):

*The Canadian ... external initiatives will be short-term. Such policy initiatives will be implemented during the window of opportunity, typically from 24 to 36 months, that exists during negotiations to end a conflict and the associated cessation of hostilities.*

Yet the same document admitted that “one to two years is not a sufficient period of time for complex political restructuring to take root” (GOC 1996, p. 7). Such considerations are particularly relevant to peacebuilding, which requires longer and deeper commitment from outside than other types of mission for peace.

To emphasize this point, it would be worthwhile to rethink the metaphors that have thus far been used to describe the functions of peacebuilding. The language of peacebuilding has been excessively mechanistic and technocratic. Building, constructing, and engineering — with plenty of tools at hand — are the favoured metaphors. All of these metaphors imply imposing something on the landscape, erecting a structure based on the mores of developed countries, and leaving once this rather superficial work is complete. Unintentionally, the language evokes a sense of hubris — “we can easily go in there and sort things out” — when the realities are more likely to confound and confuse.

A subtler approach would be one in which the operative verbs are *to cultivate* and *to nurture*. Such an approach would serve several purposes. First, it would take account of the facts on the ground or, by extension, the circumstances of the country. The role of nature in the metaphor is akin to the roles of history and geography in the case of society. These are the large forces that peacebuilding must accommodate and with which it must interact. Second, it would convey the sense that patience is a virtue and time an important helper. The processes cannot be rushed. This is not an easy lesson to apply when governments rarely have planning horizons longer than 4 or 5 years and, worse still, when the media demand instantaneous results. But instant solutions, or even 5-year plans, do not conform to the way the world works; nor should peacebuilding be forced to accommodate itself to unrealistic timetables.

A level of trust and confidence has to be created concerning the efficacy of peacebuilding, both among its potential beneficiaries and among the population in contributing nations. This is not easy to engender in war-torn countries emerging from years of conflict, or even in Northern countries like Canada in an era of great cynicism about politics. In the Canadian context, creating trust and support means getting the metaphors right. It is an old lament, but a better job has to be done of communicating broad issues of foreign policy to the general public. When highly complex processes are involved, the only way to convey the message is to use relatively simple metaphors, but ones that ring true. That it takes time to grow a garden is self-evident; likewise, it takes time to promote change in a society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

What emerges throughout the case studies is the dynamic nature of missions for peace. These interventions do have an impact: they do change the situation, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. Given this, it is important to offer the Canadian government the following recommendations for policy.

### Selective engagement

The first recommendation is that the government seek to limit the number of its engagements abroad but be willing to stay the course in those it chooses. This implies a very deliberate commitment of skills and resources over a fairly long period. It means making careful choices based on a calculus of values and interests, as opposed to reacting suddenly to media hysteria and rushing to join the latest multilateral band-aid operation. It means selecting niches in which Canada's expertise and resources can be especially helpful. It also means refusing to become involved in situations that superficially seem compelling, particularly for humanitarian reasons, but in which the outcome is doubtful or worse. These considerations must be weighed carefully because of the real possibility that things will go wrong and that Canadian soldiers will be placed at risk.

After the government has made its choices and selected its niches, it should have a sense of commitment and a willingness to engage with the people and society of a country. As Bush wrote (this volume, p. 102),

*A mission for peace is weakened when the scope of its activities is narrowed. If a mission becomes so deeply embroiled in the security or military dimensions of a conflict as to be unable to pursue activities in the political or socioeconomic arenas, it ceases to be a mission for peace. ... A balance needs to be struck among mission activities.*

This approach also offers a more realistic assessment of the length of time it would take to help societies achieve a sense of renewal after being smashed and dislocated by civil war. Such an approach requires us to make a long-term investment — even a generation-long commitment — rather than making a short, sharp, surgical effort to restore order and then leaving the conflicted society to its own devices. Choosing a peacebuilding approach would mean more than turning down peace-enforcement missions; it would also mean refusing to become

involved in some complex humanitarian emergencies and instead continuing to nurture work we have already begun elsewhere.

We would also recommend that the government become engaged in a mission for peace only if it can demonstrate that the mission would involve a reasonable balance of Canadian values and interests. Canada's involvement in Cambodia was an excellent example of this balance, as Hervouët made clear. Nicaragua and Canada's involvement in the Central American peace process would also meet fairly basic criteria for a mission for peace. But Somalia and Rwanda constituted more doubtful cases, largely because the evidence that Canada's interests were at stake was considerably weaker. Common sense must be used in defining interests and values, which is another way of saying that the definitions should be widely shared. There is little point in Canada's becoming significantly involved in countries where its interests are minimal or its values are inimical. There is little point because support within Canada for such an involvement would not be sustained.

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### **Modest expectations**

Canada should be modest in its declarations and expectations. Canada may be engaged abroad to effect change, but change can be both good and bad. Canada's involvement gives us so little control of the situation that we should concentrate on deactivating conflict and on planting the seeds of reconciliation and recovery among the population in distress. Some may argue that such an approach is too modest and that bolder goals are needed to galvanize public support. But surely peace must be engendered and nurtured by the people themselves. Peace must be homegrown through local involvement; it cannot be imposed by Canada or any other nation. We should not be there to provide a vision; rather, we should be there to help nurture the vision identified by the people and their leaders. If this vision does not accord with Canadian values, then obviously we should not involve ourselves.

### **Working groups**

Finally, we recommend that Canada encourage the creation of working groups of like-minded donors for specific war-torn societies and be willing to take on a leadership role within certain of these working groups. Canada has many strengths to offer. We have earned a good reputation as peacekeepers. Our conciliation and mediation skills are well developed, and our international network may be one of the best in the

world, partly because of the many international “clubs” to which we belong. These resources can help bring adversaries to the table for constructive dialogue and negotiation.

## FINAL WORDS

Former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson often referred to “expanding common ground” as a worthy goal in governance and in life. This sensibility is at the heart of a mission for peace, which is a means of operationalizing the concept of a comprehensive system of conflict prevention and resolution as laid out in *An Agenda for Peace*. For Canada, it also means being prepared to play a significant role in those debates and forums where Canada’s interests and values best converge. An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* (1997, p. A18) remarked that “foreign aid and peacekeeping give us stature on the great issues of peace and development.” This is a stature that Canada has earned, but the commitment is ongoing and needs to be renewed in spirit and in vigour each year.

Missions for peace offer a framework for policy linking the great issues of peace and development. Their goal is to increase the space for human beings to lead lives untroubled by the disintegrating effects of war and poverty and to join with others in nurturing a civil and civilized society.