

FORWARD

The United Nations Association in Canada is very proud to present here the policy and community discussion facilitated to mark *50th Anniversary of UN Peacekeeping* in 2006 and 2007. This anniversary noted the important landmarks of the world's first designated UN peacekeeping mission to resolve the Suez Crisis, as well as Lester. B. Pearson's award of the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in proposing this first peacekeeping mission. To reduce tensions in the Suez region, the Canadian proposed that the United Nations send a multinational contingent to the region. "My own Government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force, a truly international peace and police force," said Mr. Pearson.

The concept of peacekeeping was an idea nudged along and supported by the Opposition critic for External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs) at the time, John Diefenbaker. We can be proud that the UN has always drawn broad-based and non-partisan support in this country. The United Nations has succeeded most obviously in sustaining the sometimes fragile dialogue that has averted the horror of a third world war, in encouraging multinational dialogues and the development of international law, and in providing a forum for interaction between governmental and non-governmental entities. Ninety percent of the work on the UN remains development, especially directed in support of the poorest.

Like much of the work of aspiring to world peace, peacekeeping (and peacebuilding) carries many serious risks. Canadians know, perhaps more than many countries, what it is to put our men and women on the line for this goal. Faced with some ambivalence among Canadians about our current role in Afghanistan, it is a serious moment to reaffirm an understanding that peacekeeping, and meeting our commitments to our membership in the United Nations, have been tasks of honour for Canada and Canadians. While we have dropped significantly in the troop numbers for UN peacekeeping, Canada remains committed to providing both troops and, increasingly, specialized support, to countries lacking the peace and prosperity which we enjoy.

With serious risks to the peace and security of the world confronting the global commons, we have never needed the UN more than we need it today. Therefore, this 50th Anniversary has not only served to celebrate and more deeply value Canada's lasting contribution to a more peaceful world, but to encourage Canadians to continue to support peace, development, diplomacy and global citizenship.

I would like to thank all of those who contributed to the success of this initiative. Through this publication, the innovative and enlightened thinking and experience of leading Canadians and world experts is presented in the hope of moving these issues forward. There were many thousands of others—in schools, through public lectures, through community engagement including UNA Canada’s own branches across the country. Most importantly I would like to acknowledge the work of Emily Schroeder. Ms. Schroeder was the engine and heart of this year long initiative. Her hard work, clear thinking and care ensures these discussions and initiatives contribute in their way to the national and global progress toward peace.

Finally, UNA-Canada acknowledges and is grateful to the many courageous Canadian soldiers, police and civilians who are risking their lives to lend their support to enhancing or ensuring democratic freedoms and basic human rights around the world.

Therefore, I am very pleased to present this report on behalf of UNA-Canada. This report brings together the thousands of views and data collected and analyzed throughout the Peacekeeping Project’s events, roundtables, and public dialogues which took place in Canada from August 2006 to March 2007, into a comprehensive set of findings and recommendations. It is my hope that the report will be a valuable addition to the evolving dialogue in this complex field.

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United Nations Association in Canada
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