

Evidence 9.54

In the Medak Pocket area of southern Croatia (Evidence 9.51), Canadian peacekeeping forces' traditional role was directly challenged:

“In mid-September 1993 United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) soldiers from 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, advanced into the disputed Medak Pocket with orders to implement the latest ceasefire between Croatian Army troops and Serb irregular forces. They were reinforced with two mechanized companies of French troops. The Canadians, well schooled in the delicate art of ‘peacekeeping,’ discovered that their negotiation skills were not immediately required there. Instead they found themselves back in their primary war-fighting role when Croatian Army units opened fire with machine-guns, mortars, and artillery in an effort to stop the Canadian advance. To complete their assigned mission, the Patricia’s were required to threaten the use of military professionalism and discipline came after the smoke cleared, when the Croatians backed down and the Canadians immediately reverted back to their role as impartial peacekeepers in their dealings with individuals that minutes before had attempted to kill them. ...  
For the soldiers involved in the Medak Pocket operation, the next few days were the most difficult. They were tasked, along with civilian police officers, and UN medical officers, to sweep the area for signs of ethnic cleansing. ... While the job of gathering evidence may have been the most difficult for the Canadians, daunting many of the young soldiers to this day, it was of critical importance. The Medak Pocket provided the world with the first hard evidence that Serbia was not the sole perpetrator of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, deconstructing the myth that the Yugoslav wars could all be neatly labelled as Serbian wars of aggression and expansion. The meticulous procedure used to sweep and record evidence in the area was also standardized in UNPROFOR, perhaps providing some degree of deterrence to those who may fear being called before a war crimes tribunal.”

Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, December 11, 2002.

Source: Lee A. Windsor, “The Medak Pocket.”

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What is the cartoonist saying about the situation the peacekeepers were in?

Source: Cameron Cardow, Toronto Star, July 8, 1992.

Eventually, the failure of UN sanctions and of UN peacekeepers on the ground, and the expulsion of Serbia from the UN, led NATO forces, under the UN’s auspices, to take action. The conflict ended with the signing of the Dayton Accord in December 1995, enforced by NATO ground forces. In 2006, Bosnia became a partner nation in NATO. While the NATO mission (Implementation Force—IFOR) in Bosnia ended in 2004, NATO (Stabilizing Force—SFOR) continues to maintain a military headquarters in Bosnia to assist Bosnians in developing their armed forces.

### Flashpoint 3: Afghanistan

On October 7, 2001 the United States and its allies launched military strikes against Afghanistan’s Taliban regime. The strikes were in retaliation for the terrorist attacks of 9/11, after the Taliban failed to comply with a UN Security Council request to surrender al-Qaida leader Osama Bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of 9/11. Following the Taliban’s defeat, a UN-supported conference in Bonn, Germany established an interim Afghan government under the US-backed leader Hamid Karzai. In December, the Security Council authorized the creation of the International Security

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Afghanistan, showing location of Kandahar Province. Canadian Forces were based mainly in Kandahar Province. The southern territories of Kandahar and Helmand Province were among the most dangerous territories in Afghanistan, vulnerable to frequent insurgent actions.

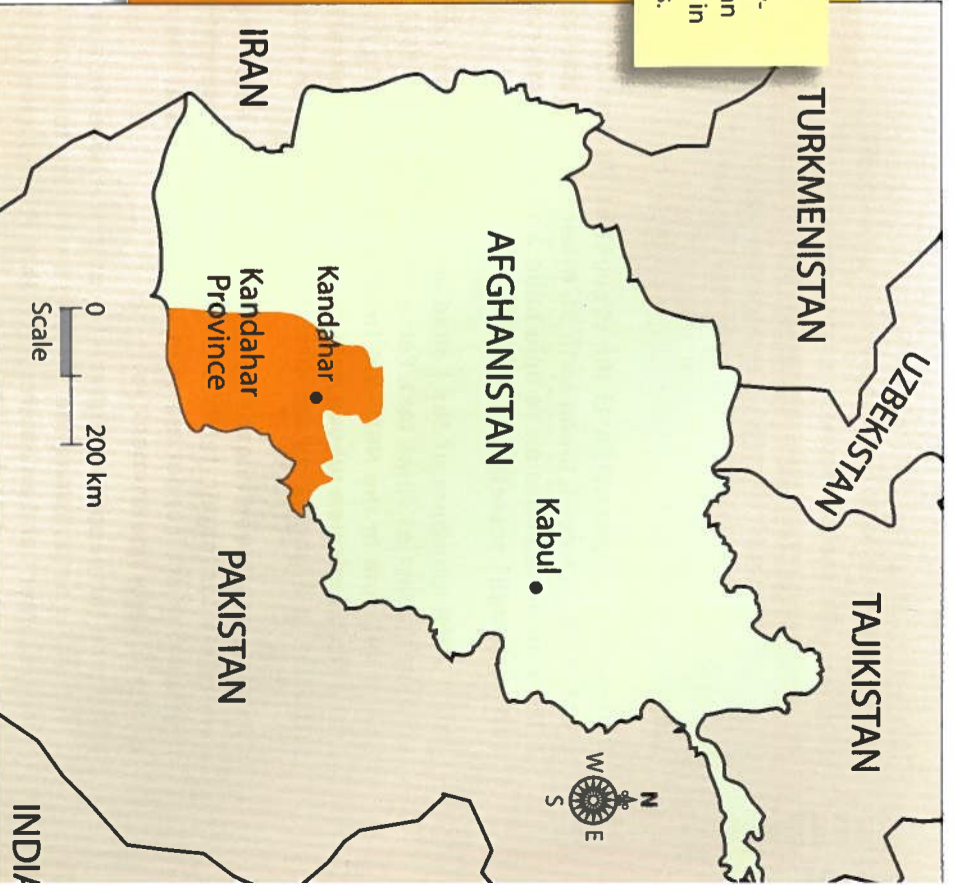


Assistance Force (ISAF) to safeguard the transitional authority. In March 2002, the Security Council established the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) to manage all UN humanitarian, relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities.

In the early days following the 9/11 attacks, the Canadian government sent naval vessels to the Arabian Sea to hunt for al-Qaeda operatives deserting the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Some ground troops and special forces were also dispatched to Afghanistan. This was not a peace-keeping mission, but rather a clean-up of residual Taliban forces. Canada’s top-secret Joint Task Force 2 (JTF-2) commandos scoured the hillsides for the adversary. After six months and four casualties resulting from “friendly fire,” the infantry battalion returned to Canada. The navy (and, it is believed, JTF-2) stayed on.

In February 2003, Liberal Defence Minister John McCallum announced that Canada’s second move into Afghanistan would be a “peace support operation.”

1. In examining Evidence 9.56, which reflects the views of the Liberal government, and Evidence 9.57, which reflects those of the Conservative government, can you identify any differences in the Canadian role? Explain.
2. What is Canada’s role as identified by the government in 2007?



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Interviewed in 2003, Major General Andrew Leslie, Canada’s senior commander in Afghanistan and Deputy Commander of the International Security Assistance Force, commented on Canada’s role.

Based on this evidence, explain what a “peace support operation” entails. How is this approach similar to or different from other “peace operations” that you have read about?

**Q:** Canada has the largest contingent in ISAF. Could you describe the Canadian Forces’ role?

**A:** Canada provides over 40 percent of ISAF, the largest single contribution. We’re also the most technologically advanced in terms of equipment, and arguably have the best trained soldiers. Our soldiers patrol up in the mountains around Kabul to make sure no unpleasant people are there to fire rockets into the city. They chase away Taliban or al-Qaeda elements and criminals who prey on the people flowing into Kabul. Equally important, the soldiers patrol inside Kabul, day and night. They take the local police out with them, training them, showing them how we conduct our business in a nation where respect for the rule of law is well established. These “presence patrols” reassure the locals that someone is out there providing security for them. The soldiers also do a variety of health projects.

**Q:** Describe how Canadian Forces’ civil-military cooperation programs influence the relationship between the Canadian Forces and Afghans.

**A:** We are spending a significant amount of money on civil-military cooperation projects. It’s critical, because by spending money on infrastructure, we show the locals that we are making their lives better. What they care about is security, water, food, and shelter. If we can help them with those elements, they will see that we are a positive force, not just another invader. Then, when hostile elements try to kill some of the locals or some of us, perhaps the people we’ve helped will think twice before letting them. So, it’s a force protection issue, as well as a desire to do good.

Source: Government of Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada World View*, Issue 20, Autumn 2003.