

CANADA'S GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES: PEACEKEEPING

Every day in the news, we see nations at war, people rioting in protest, the building of advanced weapons, and people dying of starvation and disease – all serious threats to peace in our world.

The United Nations was created to help nations resolve conflicts peacefully and to reduce the amount of suffering in the world.

WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS?

Read pgs. 264 + 265 and answer the following questions:

1. a) When was the UN founded? _____

b) What is the promise all UN members are expected to sign and obey?

2. a) How many members did the UN have as of 2006? _____

b) Where is UN Headquarters? _____

3. Refer to **FIG. 9-3** to answer these questions.

a) Explain what the International Court of Justice is.

b) Identify the five permanent members of the Security Council.

c) Explain what the Security Council does.

CANADA AND GLOBAL PEACEKEEPING

Read the following information on Canada's role in global peacekeeping and answer the questions that follow:

By the mid 1950s, the Cold War between communist Russia and capitalist United States was well under way. Both nations were locked in a deadly nuclear arms race. Each of the nations had nuclear bombs and was capable of destroying the other 25 times over, if the Cold War turned hot. There was a great danger that a conflict between non-nuclear nations would draw Russia and United States into a war in which nuclear weapons would be used – a nuclear holocaust.

The Suez Canal Crisis

As night fell on November 4, 1956, the United Nations General Assembly was still meeting in a tense emergency session, seeking some solution to a Middle East crisis that threatened world peace.

In July, a breakdown in relations between Britain and Egypt had led Egyptian President Abdul Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal – declare that the government of Egypt owned it. Nations in Europe were alarmed! Petroleum to fuel their factories, warm their homes and run their cars came from the oil fields in the Arab countries through the Suez Canal. They feared that the vital link between Europe and the oil fields of the Arab nations would be cut off. They couldn't allow this to happen.

Nasser had told a cheering crowd of Egyptians that the European nations such as Britain and France could “choke on their rage.” From that point on, ships wishing to use the canal would pay Egypt a toll and that money would go toward financing the building of the Aswan High Dam on the Nile. More importantly, Nasser now had the power to decide which nations’ ships could pass through the canal and which nations’ ships could not.

France and Britain were worried about Nasser’s future plans to control such a strategically important waterway. They were also worried about what amounted to a direct challenge from Egypt to their trading interests. Secret plans were made for Israel to attack Egypt, backed by France and Britain, who would send troops to protect the canal.

In October fighting erupted. On one side were the Egyptians back by the Soviet Union (Russia), on the other, Britain, France, and Israel backed by the US. Once again it looked as if the major military powers of the world would be drawn into battle. Would the Soviet Union come to Egypt’s aid? Would the United States become involved on the side of Britain and France? The world braced for another deadly meeting of the world’s military powers.

On October 29, even as negotiations for a peaceful settlement were under way, Israel, Britain, and France invaded Egypt in a coordinated campaign. The world community was in crisis again. The UN desperately needed some alternative to another war.

Enter Lester Pearson

Canada’s minister of External Affairs, Lester Pearson, who was later to become Liberal Prime Minister, rose in the UN General Assembly to present a daring and imaginative proposal. He called for the creation of a new kind of army, a United Nations Emergency Force, made up of troops from neutral nations. The UN force would enter the troubled region to secure a cease-fire, supervise the withdrawal of the foreign troops, and establish a neutral armed presence between the warring parties.

Within 48 hours, Lester Pearson and the Security Council of the United Nations had turned the proposal into a plan of action, and the international army of “peace soldiers” was born. The plan worked. The fighting stopped. One year later Lester Pearson was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to the United Nations goal of “saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

The Dangers of Making Peace

Stop the fighting; prevent bloodshed; maintain order – these are difficult and often dangerous goals for Canadian and other members of the UN Emergency Force. They must observe the activities of hostile forces, patrol dangerous borders, and constantly mediate between parties in conflict. Peacekeeping soldiers place themselves in the middle of violent civil wars, or act as buffers between warring armies. They live in typical combat situations of physical hardship, strict discipline and potential risk. All the while, they must maintain their neutrality to work for peaceful settlement, rather than for a victory.

Since 1956, Canada has been at the forefront of peacekeeping operations around the world. Soldiers, police and civilians have all played prominent roles in separating armies and in the resolution of conflicts in Cypress, the Middle East, Haiti, Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, East Timor, and Angola to name a few. Currently Canadian peacekeepers are now serving in five regions of the world: Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East.

But Canada's involvement in so many trouble spots has not come without a price. More than 100 Canadians have been killed while on peacekeeping duties around the world. Operations in both Somalia and Rwanda led to a crisis of confidence in the Canadian military.

Canada's peacekeeping forces have undergone dramatic changes over the years. In their modern role, the job they will most likely face now is protecting civilian populations, organizing elections, and guarding humanitarian convoys. The military has also set up a Rapid Response Force to fly to the scene of natural disasters. Its first deployment came in 1998 when Hurricane Mitch ravaged Central America. Canadian soldiers rushed to provide medical and humanitarian relief.

Arguments exist for the end of UN peacekeeping operations. Some people in Canada claim it is too costly and too ineffective. But in the near future it seems unlikely the UN or Canada will abandon peacekeeping. Peacekeepers with their blue helmets, symbols of their peacekeeping role, are likely to remain as a buffer between the worlds' warring factions.

NATO in Kosovo: Another kind of Peacekeeping

Nothing about the conflict in Serbia was simple. Up until 1990, Kosovo was a self-governing province of Serbia. Its population of 1.8 million people consisted of 30% Christian Serbs and 70% Moslem Albanians. From the capital in Belgrade, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic suspended the Kosovo government and sent "security forces" to take direct control of the province. Known as "ethnic cleansing," Milosevic used soldiers and police to terrorize and drive out the Moslem Kosovars. They fled to neighboring nations such as Albania and Macedonia. This started the largest forced movement of a civilian population in Europe since the Second World War.

Armed conflict erupted in 1998 between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Serbian security forces. At least 250,000 ethnic Albanians fled their homes in 1998. Television exposed the world to the horror stories of human suffering as a result of "ethnic cleansing" – confiscation of property and money, burning of villages, separation of families, mass killings, abduction and rape of women.

Those who spoke to aid workers first told of a large group of ethnic-Albanians who were stopped by Serb troops in the southwestern Kosovo village of Meja. Most of the men were ordered to stay behind, the others told to move on. "Five minutes after we left, we heard shooting" one woman said. "It went on for 10 to 15 minutes non-stop." A second group of refugees traveling the same route hours later told human rights workers of seeing a pile of bodies.

Led by the United States, the members of the NATO alliance, of which Canada is a member, sent bombers to drive the Serbs out of Kosovo. Canada sent a squadron of F-18 fighter-bombers and ground troops to support the NATO efforts to halt the atrocities. After several months, Milosevic agreed to withdraw his security forces from Kosovo and Canada joined the UN peacekeeping efforts to restore order. Canada's role was to separate and disarm both the Serbs and Moslems, distribute humanitarian aid, and investigate claims of war crimes – a deadly struggle where the rescuer can become the victim.

The Saddest Walk: Refugees in Canada

When the NATO bombing began, Canada made plans to take 5,000 refugees at a cost of about \$100 million – about \$20,000 per person – for six months. The refugees were flown from refugee camps in Macedonia to the Canadian Forces base at CFB Trenton in Ontario.

They touch down in Canada from their flight across the Atlantic Ocean in the middle of the night. The doors to the aircraft open and 249 Kosovars begin their walk into a new life. A journey into the unknown, another of the immense life changes that these people have undergone since they were uprooted from their homes in Kosovo. They've been terrorized, expelled, exiled, and spent months in squalid camps. Now they're suddenly in Canada, a place they've never heard of.

Just off the plane, Hasan Obobosic (names have been changed) stops to thank Canadians. He has kept his family together during their expulsion from Kosovo – his son (Mico, Age 8), daughter (Sanela, age 16), wife (Nure), and his 80-year-old mother (Ajko). In the bright lights of the airport, surrounded by darkness, Nure stands silently at Hasan's side, the stress of her ordeal plain on her face. Two days later, she would be hospitalized with exhaustion.

They have been through the unimaginable – a whole way of life in Kosovo destroyed, gone, perhaps forever. They were forced at gunpoint to flee their homes and their lands in Kosovo. After a lifetime in one place, gone in a few minutes, it seemed, that they had before they were forced out. And what remains is beyond thinking about.

In sleeping quarters allotted to the Obobosic family, Sanela has claimed an upper bunk after weeks of sleeping on the ground. Her 80-year-old grandmother, a nephew, and aunt share the room. They are all from a small village of about 1,400 people outside the capital Pristina in Kosovo.

“When we were rounded up all together in the middle of the village, they were pointing their weapons at us and we were all seated,” Hasan Obobosic recalls. “We didn't dare breathe – even the smallest of children of two months didn't dare breathe or move. At that moment, when they told us to get our children, mothers, fathers, and brothers and go, we had no choice but to do what they asked. When we left our house, we know they had burned it down. Not just our house, but they burned the whole village. The whole village was burned.”

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Use information in the reading to respond to the following statements.

1. Middle East nation that nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956. _____
2. Two European nations that opposed the nationalism. _____

3. Energy resource that was the root of the conflict. _____
4. Two super powers that might have become involved. _____

5. Type of weapons the super powers might have used. _____
6. International organization that set out to resolve the conflict. _____
7. Future PM of Canada who proposed the UNEF. _____
8. Prize awarded to the creator of UN Peacekeeping. _____
9. Three original goals of UN Peacekeeping. _____

10. Number of world regions in which Canadians currently serve. _____
11. Number of Canadians killed in Peacekeeping operations. _____
12. Three modern roles of Canadian Peacekeeping. _____

- 13. Symbol of all Peacekeeping operations. _____
- 14. Province that Milosevic sent security forces into. _____
- 15. Term that refers to the terrorization of Moslem Kosovars. _____
- 16. The International alliance that bombed Serbia. _____
- 17. Place where Kosovar refugees were first housed in Canada. _____
- 18. What happened to Hasan Obobosic's village. _____

19. Congratulations! The Obobosic family has moved into your neighborhood. You have been elected by your neighbors to head a welcoming committee. **Fill in the following chart with 10 things your committee can do to help the Obobosics to adjust to life in Canada.** Include both "do for" and "tell about" items. Be sure to write complete sentences. /5 marks

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