**CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION AND PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS: HOW MIDDLE POWERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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In a world rather starved of good news stories in recent times – with international headlines dominated by the likes of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Brexit, the mess in the Middle East, and China-fuelled anxiety about stability in East Asia – one of the most comforting things to have happened is that, since your change of government last year, Canadians seem to be again behaving like Canadians.

That Pearsonian liberal internationalist tradition, which had been the source of so much effective engagement in so peace-making, peace-keeping and peace-building endeavours by Canada over so many years – and which certainly inspired and engaged me as Australian Foreign Minister and later head of the International Crisis Group when I was working with you on issues like bringing down the apartheid regime in South Africa, building regional security architecture in the Asia Pacific, various arms control initiatives, the birth of the responsibility to protect principle, and the creation of the International Criminal Court – seemed to completely go missing for a decade, and the world was a lesser place for it.

But that tradition seems to be very much now back in business, with some of the key markers of which I’m aware being Foreign Minister Stephane Dion’s speech to the UN in March launching your campaign for a 2021 seat on the Security Council, responding explicitly to what he described as pleas worldwide for “Canada’s active return to multilateral action’; Defence Minister Harjit Singh Sajjian’s speech to the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore in June, indicating that Canada was about to become again a more deeply engaged security partner in the Asia Pacific; and now of course the big new whole-of-government Peace and Stabilization Operations Program announced last month, with a budget of $450 million over three years to support dialogue, conflict resolution and peace-building, including through deployments of police officers and civilian experts in areas where they can make a different, and also a specific pledge to make up to 600 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel available for possible deployment to UN peace operations.

As you start playing all these active roles again, I think that there is much that Canada and Australia can learn from each other, as we have in the past at least when we have each been at the top of our multilateral form – and I hasten to acknowledge that we in Australia have been very far from in top form ourselves in that respect for a good part of the last two decades. What we have most in common is our status as middle powers, with a proven capacity – even if neither of us have consistently demonstrated it – to play a very active and effective role in international conflict prevention, resolution and peace support operations. What I can perhaps most usefully do now is draw on my own experience – as Foreign Minister from 1988-96, President and CEO of the International Crisis Group from 2000-09, and chair or member of a raft of blue ribbon international commissions and panels over that period – to share with you my own judgment of the distinctive role that middle powers can play in these areas, and draw out some of the specific lessons that I have learned about what works and what does not.

**Middle Power Diplomacy.** Not everyone, at least in Australia, likes the idea of being a “middle power”. When the conservative government of John Howard was in office from 1996 to 2007, that language disappeared entirely from our diplomatic vocabulary. For Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, we were a “pivotal” power, and it was demeaning to suggest otherwise. As he put it on one occasion ‘My predecessor Gareth Evans talked about Australia as a ‘middle power’. Labor seems to have a middle child complex when it comes to our place in the world. We are not ‘middling’ or ‘average’ or ‘insignificant’…we are a considerable power and a significant country’.

I fear that my long-serving successor may have missed the point here – perhaps not for the only time in his ministerial career. In international parlance, “middle power” has no connotation at all of mediocrity or insignificance.  The initial lists of middle powers that started appearing in the 1980s in fact tended to incorporate countries like China, France, the UK and Japan, with the top group containing only the “great powers” of the day, viz. the U.S. and Soviet Union.  These days the term is used not so much to describe countries by reference to their comparative population sizes or GDPs or military budgets: there is no generally agreed list – long or short – of those who by some agreed objective measures are neither great nor small. Rather the term is most commonly used to describe the kind of diplomacy typically practised by a relatively small and distinctive group of states: Australia, Canada and the Scandinavians typically listed among them – although, again, for all of us, commitment to this style of diplomacy has waxed and waned with changing political leadership.

I define “middle power diplomacy” as the kind of international engagement which can, and should, be practised by states who may not be big or strong enough, either in their own region or the wider world, to *impose* their policy preferences on anyone else; but who do recognize that that there are international policy tasks which need to be accomplished, if the world around them is to be safer, saner, more just and more prosperous (with all the potential this has, in turn, to affect their own interests); and who have sufficient capacity and credibility to be able to advance those tasks.

Middle power diplomacy has a characteristic method and a characteristic motivation. The characteristic *method* is coalition building with “like-minded” countries, usually also involving “niche diplomacy”, which means simply concentrating resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field.  And the characteristic *motivation* for middle power diplomacy is what I have long described as “good international citizenship” – another term which disappeared from the Australian diplomatic lexicon during the Howard era, and for whose rebirth I continue to argue.

Whatever the origin of this expression (some of the literature ascribes it to me, but it’s also sometimes attributed to Lester Pearson in the 1960s: that man again!), at the core of the idea is a belief in the utility, and necessity, of acting cooperatively with others in solving international problems, particularly those problems which by their nature cannot be solved by any country acting alone, however big and powerful.  The crucial point to appreciate about good international citizenship is that this is not something separate and distinct from the pursuit of national interests; it is not some kind of foreign policy equivalent of boy-scout good deeds. On the contrary “being, and being seen to be, a good international citizen” should itself be seen as a third category of national interest, right up there alongside the traditional duo of security and economic interests.

The argument is that, just by being seriously committed to cooperative international problem solving, more traditionally defined national interests are advanced two ways. First, through simple reciprocity: my help for you today in solving your drugs or terrorism or peace and stabilization problem might reasonably lead you to be willing to help solve my environmental problem tomorrow. And secondly, through reputational benefit: the perception of being a country willing to take principled stands for other than immediately self-interested reasons, or willing to commit military personnel to dangerous multilateral peace support operations in faraway countries where there is prospect of deriving any direct economic or security benefit from doing so, in fact does no harm at all to one’s own commercial and wider political agendas.  One of the attractions of the concept is that it bridges the traditional gap between realism and idealism, by making it clear that pursuing values and interests are not necessarily completely different ways of going about things:  rather, the pursuit of values can also *be* the pursuit of interests.

So much for the conceptual framework for thinking about these things, which you may or may not find useful. Let me now turn to the lessons I have learned from thirty years of trying, with varying degrees of success, to advance the cause of conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peace-keeping and peace-building: or, if you like as I do to look at everything through a preventive lens, preventing conflict *outbreak*, preventing conflict *continuation* and preventing conflict *recurrence.*

**Preventing Conflict Outbreak**. The first rule for preventing violent conflict is, of course, don’t start it, which is a message the US has had cause to ponder long and hard after its rush to war in Iraq in 2003. There are circumstances in which there will simply be no alternative to taking coercive military action, certainly to respond to real and immediate cross-border threats (as in the case of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1991), and certainly in cases of genuine self-defence, as Afghanistan was in the beginning even if by now, as the conflict has dragged on, that rationale lost most of its force. And the third context in which military force may be perfectly defensible is that of the international ‘responsibility to protect’ those, within the borders of a sovereign state, at risk of genocide and other mass atrocity crimes.

The short point for present purposes is that coercive military actions should only ever be undertaken in the most serious and unequivocal cases, as a last resort, and in circumstances where it will do more good than harm. In the controversial case of Libya in 2011, I have no doubt that those conditions were satisfied in March that year; that they fully justified the Security Council resolution that month authorizing far reaching (but not unlimited) military action for civilian protection purposes; and that they did in fact prevent a massacre in Benghazi. But the subsequent action by the NATO-led coalition in pursuing all-out regime change war against the Gaddafi regime, without seeking any further input from the Security Council, stretched that civilian protection mandate to breaking point. And that in turn led to complete paralysis in the Council’s response to the unfolding situation in Syria, with awful consequences that we are still living with.

The second rule of conflict prevention is to understand the causes: the factors at work – political, economic, cultural, personal – in each particular risk situation. The basic point about conflict is that it is always context specific. Big overarching theories – whether cast in terms of clash of civilizations, ancient tribal enmity, economic greed, economic grievance, or anything else – may be good for keynote speeches, and are certainly good for academic royalties. They may also be quite helpful in identifying particular explanatory factors that should certainly be taken into account in trying to understand the dynamics of particular situations. But they never seem to work very well in sorting between those situations which are combustible and those which are not. For that you need detailed, case by case analysis, not making assumptions on the basis of experience elsewhere, or what has gone before, but looking at what is under your nose, right now.

That has perhaps been the real strength of the International Crisis Group, whose distinctive methodology is founded on field-based reporting and analysis, on the premise that everything starts with an accurate take on what is happening on the ground, the issues that are resonating and the personalities and forces that are driving them. Although knowing perfectly well how media-friendly simple stories are, my mantra leading the group was always don’t simplify the analysis: *complexify* it!

I should add in this respect that I am not a huge fan of quantitative, as distinct from qualitative, methods for identifying potential conflict, or atrocity crime, situations of the kind that are periodically fashionable. Models where you identify and give comparative weightings to relevant causal variables, accumulate quantitative data in relation to each of them, set computer programs running, and wait for appropriate alarm bells to ring. But many more alerts are likely to be thrown up by these alarm-bell and traffic-light systems than anyone is likely to be able or willing to respond to, and in practice no response will be made without much more detailed qualitative analysis.

The third big lesson that I, and hope we all, have learned about conflict prevention is the need to fully understand the conflict prevention toolbox, and be prepared to apply flexibly as circumstances change the whole range of possible measures, that can be deployed to deal with high-risk situations, again not shirking a complex response if that is what is required. The easiest way of getting one’s head around the options available in any given situation is to think, literally, of a toolbox, and one with two trays – for long term structural prevention and short term more direct operational measures respectively. Each tray in turn has four basic compartments for, respectively, political and diplomatic measures, legal and constitutional measures, economic and social measures, and security sector and military measures. And there are sub-compartments within each of these – to take just the economic area, for focused humanitarian aid, positive incentives like an infrastructure support package, and negative incentives or sanctions.

The crucial thing is to recognise not only that each situation has its own characteristics, and that one-size wrenches don’t fit all, but that each situation is likely to require a complex combination of measures, the balance between which is bound to change over time as circumstances evolve.

A fourth rule of effective conflict prevention is to be prepared to work without recognition. In diplomacy, as in life itself, more can often be achieved by allowing others credit for whatever is achieved, or by nobody seeking overt acknowledgment, than by a competitive clamour for attention. Third party diplomacy, be it governmental, intergovernmental or private, to prevent the threatened initial outbreak of conflict or mass violence is most successful when nothing happens, and nobody notices – which is one of the reasons it is so hard to mobilize. As I can testify after 21 years in Australian government and politics, for most people in public office, performing good works without anyone noticing it is like having your teeth pulled without anaesthetic.

One of the best examples anywhere of unheralded but extraordinarily effective preventive activity remains the heroic mediation effort of the OSCE’s High Commissioner for National Minorities over many years, particularly during the volatile early post-Cold War period when Max van der Stoel held the post, to quietly stop as many as a dozen major ethnic and language-based conflicts from breaking out across Central and Eastern Europe, from the Baltics to Romania – using essentially the political, legal and constitutional sub-compartments of the conflict prevention toolbox to find solutions acceptable to both majorities and minorities. There are many lessons from that period which still resonate today.

The fifth rule is to be prepared to commit the necessary resources, governmental and intergovernmental, when and where they are needed, and particularly at the early prevention stage, where any investment now is likely to be infinitely cheaper than paying later for military action, humanitarian relief assistance and post-conflict reconstruction. This is something the international community is still much better at talking about than doing, but I hope very much that the new Canadian Peace and Stabilization Operations Program – with its emphasis, among many other things, on the role of women and youth in contributing to peace – will be a new standard-bearer in this respect.

**Preventing Continuation: Conflict Resolution**. When efforts to prevent the outbreak of conflict fails, the task becomes that of preventing its continuation, or conflict resolution – hopefully achieved by peacemaking negotiations rather than the use of overriding military force. There are a number of lessons I have learned from my Cambodian experience, and from being on the margins of many other peace processes during my nearly a decade at the International Crisis Group – and which by and large I think the world has now learned – as to what makes for a successful peace accord.

First, peacemaking requires, as does earlier conflict prevention effort, the commitment of serious diplomatic resources, both in quality and quantity, at whatever level is most likely to bring success – through the UN, through a regional organization, sometimes through second-track or unofficial mechanisms, and sometimes through a particular government initiative using its own diplomatic resources. That means personnel with a combination of excellent political, negotiation, leadership and management skills combined with a superabundance of optimism, creativity, persistence, patience and stamina.

I think we certainly had that with my colleagues in the Australian diplomatic service, but in the past with UN envoys and special representatives it was almost entirely a matter of chance whether any of these qualities existed – I know one envoy who found his name at the top of the list for a sensitive position for which he had no obvious background simply because his surname began with ‘A’. Things have improved greatly in the UN with the establishment of a well-resourced Mediation Support Unit, and to the extent the necessary skills have fallen away in countries like our own, they can be taught, perhaps with the help of a similar national support unit.

One of the many necessary personal skills required to be a successful peace negotiator or mediator is a capacity for self-effacement: not letting one’s own personal or national ego get in the way of what the situation requires. In the Cambodian peace negotiations, I think one of the reasons Australia was successful in moving forward the UN peace plan at the crucial early Jakarta meetings is that we always made it clear that we were working to and through the meeting convenor Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas as a “resource delegation” rather than a leading player in our own right. In diplomacy as in life you can get a lot done when you let others take the credit – and as often as not will get anyway whatever credit is due!

Second, successful peace negotiating requires a willingness to work with all the players that matter, however ugly their past behaviour may have been. I think with the Cambodia exercise we showed plenty of the former, but the success of the process we initiated also depended on us being prepared to talk face to face with the leadership of the Khmer Rouge: not an experience that I can, to this day, recall without shuddering, but a necessary one. It’s a lesson the US took a long time to learn in Iran, and still has to learn in the case of organizations like Hamas in Palestine.

Third, the terms of any accord, and in particular the method of its enforcement and implementation, must be sufficiently resilient to deal with spoilers – those who, whether they originally buy into the settlement or not, seek to undermine or overturn it. That has been a constant problem in most of the peace settlements in Africa and elsewhere that have not held, or which remain incomplete. In Cambodia the Khmer Rouge were successfully stared down when they walked away from the Paris Agreement, but it was a very close run thing. At least since the Brahimi Report sixteen years ago UN peacekeeping missions have been armed with much better mandates to respond to violent spoilers, although those mandates have not always been accompanied by the resources and operational effectiveness their execution has required.

The UN now has more peacekeepers on the ground, in more places, and in more complex conflicts, than ever before, and are asking them to do more than ever more – not least routinely, not totally exceptionally as in the past, to forcibly protect civilians at risk of violent harm. Yet – largely due to foot-dragging by states in the global North, possessing many of the world’s most capable militaries – their numbers remain in desperately short supply, and we are not giving them anything like the equipment, logistic support, training and in some cases the leadership they need. I hope again, and expect, that Canada’s recently announced willingness to re-engage, militarily as well as with civilian resources, in complex peace and stabilization operations, will be very helpful in this respect.

Fourth, any peace accord must deal in one way or another with all the fundamentals of the dispute: all the issues which will have to be resolved if normality is to return. That said, peacemaking is less often an event than a process, and signing the agreement will rarely be the end of it.

Fifth, any successful peace accord must get the balance right between peace and justice. The South African truth and reconciliation commission model, with its amnesties for the perpetrators of even the most serious crimes if they were both frank and repentant, remains very widely admired (even if the practice there by no means consistently followed the principle). But in other cases sustainable peace will not be possible without significant retributive justice: i.e. the visible trial and punishment of those most guilty. And in other cases again people just want to move on, with no backward looking process at all. What is clear is that the people of every country, whether it’s Cambodia or Rwanda or anywhere else, have to resolve what works for them.

Sixth – and this follows particularly from the last point – a peace accord to be successful must have the necessary degree of international support: with all the guarantees and commitment of resources that are necessary to make it stick.

**Preventing Recurrence: Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**. This area of peace support operations is just about the hardest of all to get right, and I suspect it is the one on which architects of the new Canadian Peace and Stabilization Operations will be focusing most intensely. One of the things we now understand most clearly about conflict is that the countries and regions most likely to lapse into it are those that have been there before. And the biggest lesson of all about the handling of conflict that we have learned in recent decades is the critical necessity of effective post-conflict peacebuilding, to ensure, after notional peace is achieved by whatever means, that the whole weary conflict cycle does not begin again.

We learned that lesson from Rwanda (where the 1994 genocide, taking 800 000 lives, followed the Arusha peace deal just a year before); from Angola (where the 1991 Bicesse Agreement to end the war in was followed by a relapse into bloody conflict for another decade with another million or more lives lost); and we have learned it, among many other cases where things have gone badly wrong, from Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and South Sudan.

One of the best analyses I have read of why, as the author puts it, “despite the best intentions, and the investment of significant resources, external actors fail in their reconstruction efforts and even contribute to perpetuating the very conditions of insecurity and conflict that they are trying to alleviate,” is a recently published book by an Australian colleague, Jasmine-Kim Westendorf Why Peace Processes Fail: Negotiating Insecurity After Civil War(Lynne Reiner Publishers, 2015). She focuses on three of the four big elements which have been at the heart of international attempts to build sustainable peace in war-torn societies – security building, governance building and transitional justice initiatives – leaving aside only the economic dimension.  She meticulously analyses how these efforts have played out in six different peacebuilding contexts – Cambodia, Mozambique and Liberia, which all involved fights about government; and Bouganville, North and South Sudan and Aceh, which were essentially secessionist conflicts, or fights over territory. Her chosen case studies are an intriguing mix of different population sizes, conflict durations and other variables in play like the presence or absence of decolonization, resource competition, and international involvement in the civil conflict in question – and between them cover pretty much the whole range of post-Cold War peacebuilding efforts.

While most of these country cases have not seen a resurgence of full civil war since their peace agreements were concluded, neither have any of them yet reached the point where every dimension of their peace can really be considered sustainable: “violence, insecurity, ongoing divisions between formerly warring groups and a sense of political instability remain characteristic of nearly all these contexts, as they hover between peace and war, particularly at election times.”

So what has gone wrong?  The basic argument, which I think is right, is that the dominant international approach to peacebuilding has been too technocratic and template-driven,  assuming too much universality in the nature of war-to-peace transition, leaving little room for peace processes to be responsive to very variable local contexts, and in particular too often distancing the technical aspects of security building, governance building and transitional justice from the internal political dynamics that are so crucial in defining the shape that peace actually takes.

The limited resources and skilled personnel available to peacebuilders – with policymakers in the UN system and elsewhere always having to deal with many more problems simultaneously than they have the capacity comfortably to address – are a partial explanation of why we see so many one-size-fits-all cookie-cutter approaches which turn out pretty poor bakery. But there is also a mindset problem:  “a conviction of both the superiority and rationality of technical mechanisms, and their applicability across contexts”, and one which “privileges the bureaucratic imperative over other forms of decision-making.”

I had plenty of experience with this kind of cloth-eared box-ticking when I was Foreign Minister from the late ‘80s to mid ‘90s, and even more when I was leading the International Crisis Group after 2000, because by then the post-Cold War peacemaking and peacebuilding process was in full swing.  An early and very clear example I inherited at Crisis Group was in Bosnia, where the internationals were desperate to have an early election in order to tick the democratic governance/local ownership box, but where this would have been – in the context of civil society having had no time to find its feet – a recipe for simply giving plebiscitary legitimacy to the same old divisive leadership thugs, and where Crisis Group successfully argued for a significant postponement.

I am inclined to be a little more forgiving of the Cambodian peacebuilding process in the early 90s because, for all its deficiencies, I know exactly how hard it was for the UN mission, UNTAC, to address the combined challenges of a peace process that was under severe military threat from the Khmer Rouge, a despotic government, and a human rights wasteland: there is much that remains deeply disheartening about the state of democracy and human rights in the country today, but at least the days of genocide and civil war seem completely over. But whatever the quibbles one might have about particular judgements here and there, the cumulative weight of the argument is overwhelming: international policymakers have been too insensitive to local political dynamics, and they badly need to lift their game in future.

What is missing from the book I have been describing, and I know what Canadian policymakers will be most looking for is a detailed discussion of the kinds of more sensitive and responsive on-the-ground strategies that might actually deliver better and more sustainable results in the future. All of this is a lot easier said than done, and I am afraid I just don’t have the recent on the ground experience – not least in the contemporary environment where Islamist extremism has become such a dominant conflict driver. But I would like to draw your attention to the very sophisticated work that is now being done on the kinds of detailed strategies needed to avoid the problems I have been describing by a new organization based in Barcelona: the rather clunkily-named but quite outstanding *Institute for Integrated Transitions* ([www.ifit-transitions.org](http://www.ifit-transitions.org/) ), which is led by a refugee from the International Crisis Group, Mark Freeman.

The general perception which underlies all their detailed prescriptive work is that to build a successful *state*, it is an absolutely necessary condition to build a broadly cohesive society – with some kind of overarching national *narrative* reinforcing a sense of shared national *identity*. The development of effective institutions – across the whole political, economic, administrative, rule of law and security spectrum – has to grow out of, or proceed in tandem with, getting the socio-cultural context right. In particular there just have to be generally accepted ground rules for the pursuit and exercise of political power. Compare and contrast the relative success in managing transition of South Africa, with its inclusionary “rainbow nation” narrative and inspirational leadership from Nelson Mandela, and Iraq, where almost every relevant group was excluded at one crucial stage or another, or throughout, from the peacebuilding process, and inspirational leadership of any kind was non-existent.

While appreciating that this is inadequate for your purposes, from my own now somewhat out- of-date experience I would distil five basic imperatives for those trying to put together international peacebuilding missions (or post-conflict peace support operations if that terminology is preferred) that won’t fall apart, and those then charged with holding them together.

First, and above all else, study, understand and respect the local political dynamics – and the cultural and other limits within which outsiders must operate. Afghanistan, Iraq after 2003, and Libya after 2011 are unhappy major examples of how much can go wrong when that understanding is lacking.

Second, sort out who should do what and when - immediately, over a medium transition period and in the longer term: allocate the roles and coordinate them effectively both at headquarters and on the ground. Of all the things that went wrong in Afghanistan for so long, among the most serious were weaknesses on this front – poor coordination among all the international players (between military and military, civilian and civilian, and military and civilian) and as between them and the Afghan government.

Third, commit the necessary resources, and sustain that commitment for as long as it takes: there has been a long and lamentable history of ad hoc donors’ conferences, accompanied by rapidly waning attention, and generosity, once the immediate crisis is over. But in recent years donor commitment to peacekeeping and peacebuilding has been better sustained, and again the recent Canadian commitment will be an important international morale-booster in this respect. At the UN level, the Peacebuilding Commission hasn't fully lived up to hopes and expectations, but it has been helpful at the margin keeping more donor and policymaker focus than might otherwise be the case directed at very difficult continuing situations like Burundi.

Fourth, recognise that multiple objectives have to be pursued simultaneously: physical security may always be the first priority, but it cannot be the only one, and rule of law and justice issues, and economic governance and anti-corruption measures, deserve much higher priority than they have usually been given. Afghanistan is perhaps again the best and clearest recent example, where the international efforts to help create an effective police and court system were for a very long time hopelessly and lamentably inadequate.

Fifth, recognise that all intrusive peace operations need an exit strategy, if not an exit timetable, and one that is not just devoted to holding elections as soon as possible, as important as it obviously is to vest real authority and responsibility in the people of the country being rebuilt. Every peacebuilding situation has its own dynamic, but some of the worst peacebuilding mistakes of the past have had more to do with leaving too soon, or doing too little, than staying too long or doing too much.

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For all the lessons we have, or should have, learned about conflict prevention, resolution and peace support operations, it can’t be denied that all of these enterprises are gruelling, difficult, and don't always generate immediate or visible returns. From the perspective of the ages that Steven Pinker has given us in *The Better Angels of Our Nature,* there has been an unequivocal decline over the centuries in the nature and scale of violence that humans have inflicted on each other. And it is the case– as Andrew Mack and his team at SFU and others have continued to document – that if you take every situation in the world other than those where Islamist groups are one of the warring parties there is still a strong overall trend decline evident since the early 1990s in the number of wars, episodes of mass killing, and the number of people dying violent battle deaths. But the unhappy reality is that if one does take into account conflicts in which Islamist groups are a party – as in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East and Africa – there has been an alarming upsurge in battle deaths, now running at higher levels than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

But none of this means that any of our peace endeavours, and the important new commitment that Canada is making to them, are a waste of time. Efforts of this kind may not be a sufficient condition for achieving sustainable peace, but they are a necessary condition. And countries like ours have a particular responsibility to engage in them, simply because we have the resources, the capability and the experience to make a difference. If we don't do it, who will?

To those who say – and we both have had governments in the recent past who have needed to be persuaded on this front – why *should* we take on what Hedley Bull described as “purposes beyond ourselves”, these often frustrating, often thankless, always expensive and sometimes dangerous tasks of conflict prevention, resolution and peace support, when the conflict in question is on the far side of the world or does not impact in any immediate way on our own obvious national security or economic interests – there are two good answers. One is that there is a straightforward moral imperative to do whatever we can, recognizing our common humanity, to diminish the suffering of our fellow human beings. The other, to return to where I began, is that it is not only the morally right thing to do, but it very much in our hard-headed national interests, reputationally and in terms of likely reciprocal support on matters on which have more immediate interests, for Australia and Canada to be and be seen to be good international citizens. And to work on eliminating from human experience the horror and misery of war and mass atrocity crimes is to be a very good international citizen indeed.

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