Creating Canada's Peacekeeping Past

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Introduction

Canada was once a peacekeeping nation. Although many people from Newfoundland to British Columbia might still wish to use the present tense to describe the Canadian relationship to peacekeeping, it seems inappropriate, given the country's recent history, to do so. Peacekeeping has gone from being a prized foreign policy commitment as well as a national calling in some people's estimation to being discarded in favour of massive expenditures on new fighter jets and used British diesel submarines, the latter of which spend more time in repairs than on the seas. Stephen Harper's Conservative government also worked in more subtle ways to distance Canada from its peacekeeping past, present, and future. It manoeuvred to remove the more than dozen references to Canada's peacekeeping efforts from the most recent version of the citizenship guide, *Discover Canada.* It also withdrew federal funding from the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (recently known as the Pearson Centre), which all but guaranteed the closure of its facilities in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, and in Ottawa in 2011 and in the fall of 2013, respectively.

This was the most concerted effort by any Canadian government to "break" the country of its peacekeeping habit, yet it was not entirely successful. An Environics poll in 2012 asked respondents to name what they considered to be the most positive contribution that Canada was making to world affairs. It found that peacekeeping was by far the most popular response, with 20 percent of those asked volunteering this answer. This was down from 36 percent in 2004 and 40 percent in 1993, but far above other answers, such as contributing to the spread of democracy and helping through foreign aid.[1] The persistent belief in the possibility of peacekeeping's effecting positive change does indicate, however, how influential it has been in Canada's history since 1956. Although some might argue peacekeeping was simply a part of Canada's past, many others remain convinced it should be a part of the country's present and its future.

Originally, the focus of this book was on the popularity of peacekeeping and the ambiguity of Canadians' approval of their country's efforts to promote peace through military action. Over the last decade, an increasing number of primarily English Canadians have spoken out about the disappearance of Canada's

peacekeeping identity and its replacement by one far more martial. The responses of ordinary Canadians to the threat to their country's status as a "peacekeeping nation" made an investigation of the country's peacekeeping's past, its present status, and its future all the more important.

This book revisits and revises Canada's peacekeeping past to shed light on why and how so many Canadians believed peacekeeping to be a part of the country's national identity, as well as the problems this engendered. It is not a mission-by-mission account of the work done by the Canadian Forces on behalf of the United Nations. Such an accounting would reveal a mixed record that speaks to the tremendous challenges inherent in the double project of keeping warring sides apart and then helping to rebuild after conflicts have run their course. There were notable albeit modest successes in the Sinai and Cyprus during the operations there, in addition to the well-known tragedies in Somalia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia.[2] To get at the heart of the Canadian attachment to peacekeeping, however, it is vital to look beyond the successes or failures of the missions themselves. The adoption of peacekeeping as a national symbol in Canada depended on writers and artists who melded their visions of Canada's past, present, and future with the values and possibilities represented by international peacekeeping. What follows is an attempt to reconcile the discrepancies between the practice and the promise of peacekeeping.

The chapters of this book elucidate some of the numerous ways that messages about peacekeeping and Canada were produced, disseminated, and received by Canadians. As cultural theorists following Stuart Hall have noted, communication is a process, not simply a matter of messages being passively accepted by an audience. Varied audiences must be willing to reconfigure a message into social practices – new ways of thinking about oneself as an individual or as part of a group – if it is to be fully accepted into a culture, as peacekeeping was in the second half of the twentieth century in Canada.[3] What emerges is an account of how the meaning of peacekeeping was constructed across the country for approximately fifty years. The strands that comprise this account are the persistence of the political rhetoric of peacekeeping, the exposure to a standard narrative of peacekeeping in high school textbooks, the way in which National Film Board (NFB) documentaries about peacekeeping visually connected peacekeeping and Canada's national identity, the agenda-setting function of newspaper coverage of peacekeeping, the satirical critiques found in editorial cartoons about peacekeeping, and the symbolism of public commemorations of peacekeeping. In addition, the results of public opinion polls provide evidence of the Canadian public's support for peacekeeping throughout the years covered by this book, as well as concerns regarding the conduct of certain operations,

particularly in 1956 and in the 1990s.[4] Although it would have been possible to examine in greater detail just one of the ways in which Canadians could have learned about peacekeeping, it is more useful to have a wide-ranging discussion of how and why it became embedded in Canada's national symbology. It is only through multiple mediated forms of expression, which are contingent on particular understandings of the nation, that something becomes embedded within the system of symbols that people draw on to express their national identity.

The last four decades have seen a scholarly reappraisal of the existence of national identities and the symbols that help sustain them.[5] According to Anthony D. Smith, nations constitute "a named human population which shares myths and memories, a mass public culture, a designated homeland, economic unity and equal rights and duties for all members."[6] Drawing on a similar ethno-cultural understanding of the nation and national identity, Gerard Bouchard's in-depth examination of French Canada offers useful insights regarding the central narratives, or "myths," that a population tells itself to define its identity. Bouchard's approach stresses the hybridity of myths and their ability to flow between "reality and fiction, reason and emotion, truth and falsehood, consciousness and unconsciousness."[7] He emphasizes that we should investigate their origins, note the ebb and rise of their utility as markers of the nation, and examine their possible persistence in the future.

Peacekeeping's adoption into Canada's national symbology, following Bouchard's reasoning, came not from a singular Canadian character that manifested itself in a desire to prevent the escalation of conflicts but from the employment of a litany of words, images, and objects about peacekeeping throughout Canadian society and culture after 1956. As this book makes clear, those who lived in Canada from 1956 to 1997 were exposed to a great volume of political speeches, news reports, and editorial cartoons about peacekeeping. Even if they were not attuned to Canada's foreign policies through these channels, they would have also likely learned about peacekeeping in their high school history textbooks, perhaps watched some of the fourteen NFB films that had peacekeeping as either their primary focus or a major component, visited a monument to peacekeeping located somewhere in the country, viewed one of three Heritage Minutes about peacekeeping, or purchased something with either the one-dollar coin, the loonie, or the ten-dollar bill, both of which have been emblazoned with a peacekeeper. There have also been songs by Canadian cultural icon Stompin' Tom Connors, public buildings and parklands named for peacekeeping and its key figures, a mention in the Molson Canadian "Joe Canada" beer advertisement, dramatic plays, and national days of recognition for peacekeeping. The combined effect of all of these was a saturation of Canadian life with

peacekeeping during these years, and in 2008 peacekeeping was ranked among the top ten symbols of Canada's identity in an opinion poll taken by Ipsos Reid for the Dominion Institute. Peacekeeping did not rank as high as the maple leaf, hockey, and the beaver, but far surpassed the Mountie, the First and Second World Wars, and Vimy Ridge, which came in at numbers 16, 23, and 30, respectively.[8]

As evidence of this saturation, one need look no further than the Heritage Minute "Dextraze in the Congo," one of three such segments made about peace-keeping. The Heritage Minutes were largely the brainchild of Charles Bronfman, whose CRB Foundation, now known as Historica Canada, funded the production of the Minutes as part of its efforts to present Canadian history to a visual and media-saturated country in the mid-1990s. Like all the Heritage Minutes, "Dextraze in the Congo" has been shown on Canadian network television and in movie theatres for nearly two decades. They are shown at no cost to the networks or film distributors and help fulfill their quota of Canadian programming for the day. Bronfman openly stated that the goal of the Minutes was to increase knowledge of Canadian history among the general public, especially young people. He also made it clear that the history his organization valued was that which sought to give Canadians a common heritage, countering the Québécois separatist discourse in the 1990s.[9] Given these circumstances, the production of three Heritage Minutes about peacekeeping shows that it was perceived as a source of common identity for Canadians.

"Dextraze in the Congo" opens with a Black male figure shouting into a radio. He talks angrily about the priests and nuns he will execute as "agents" of an unnamed colonial power if his also unnamed demands are not met. Suddenly, gunfire is heard outside and the other soldiers in the room rush out to deal with the disturbance. As a startled soldier reaches for his weapon, the camera pans first to the barrel of a gun and then to a figure who has entered the room and orders, "Drop your weapon." This figure carries no guns but is accompanied by two well-armed peacekeepers, identifiable in their blue helmets with the UN flag. He stands at attention with his arms behind his back. It is a pose of authority and confidence despite his lack of firearms and his physical size. The unarmed figure states that the Congolese soldiers' allies have been "disarmed" and that he is surrounded. The figure uses the power of his voice and the threat of guns held by other UN soldiers to force the Congolese soldier to lay down his weapon. While this is going on, the narrator, well-known Canadian actor Patrick Watson, tells the audience, "It was Canada that proposed the United Nations peace-keeping force in 1956," thereby contextualizing the confidence with which the unarmed figure carries himself. We are then informed that the figure who has

remained stalwart in the face of this violence was General Jacques Dextraze (later the head of the Canadian Forces). His authority, backed by the use of guns by the other soldiers to "disarm" the Congolese, saved the priest and nuns and restored calm to the situation. It is a dramatic scene that easily fills the allotted sixty seconds.

This Heritage Minute typifies the messages about peacekeeping produced for Canadian audiences. It proclaims that Canadians have been the world's leading peacekeepers since "we" first proposed the idea. Most other documents examined in this book also mention that Lester Pearson was the father of UN peacekeeping in 1956 and Canada's first and only Nobel Peace Prize winner, as well as Canada's unmatched record of participation in peacekeeping operations from 1956 to a point in the 1990s. This international recognition of Canadian deeds lent significant credibility to Canada's later peacekeeping efforts.[10]

There is a factual basis for this narrative and for some of what appears in "Dextraze in the Congo." Pearson did introduce the motion to create a peacekeeping force in the UN in 1956, and although it was not his idea,[11] he was instrumental, along with US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, in ensuring that it was adopted. Canadians also participated in every UN peacekeeping operation from 1956 to the 1990s, although they sent large numbers of troops for only a select few, including the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Egypt from 1956 to 1967, and the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) from 1964 to 1993. Canadians also led UN operations at numerous times, and the first commander of UNEF was Major-General E.L.M. Burns. Many other operations, such as the Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), involved smaller numbers of Canadians in administrative or technical support roles.

Cultural products like "Dextraze in the Congo," rather than focusing on these details, made the Canadian adoption of peacekeeping a moral act. There were no permanent values associated with peacekeeping; rather, the values attached to UN service reflected the contemporary cultural and political climate in which they were being espoused. Cold War political manoeuvrings, the desire to check Soviet power, a willingness to preserve the Commonwealth, a wish to assist in decolonization, or a desire to "stop brush fires from spreading" were all associated with Canada's peacekeeping efforts at one point or another in the past.[12] The values of peacekeeping in the 1990s in English Canada included moderation, communication, mediation, cooperation, caring, multiculturalism, tolerance, goodwill, respect for the individual, and collective rights.[13] The Heritage Minute foregrounded Canada's desire to help the innocent and the ability of its soldiers to act as mediators. Dextraze did not have to carry guns to defuse the situation.

Ambiguously, the Minute implied that while firearms were necessary just in case events required them, it was words that won the day for the side of good and protected the innocent caught in the violence of war. This manner of thinking was consistent with messages produced in a variety of other media, where the motivation to engage in peacekeeping was expressed as a mixture of national interests and an altruistic desire to make a better world. Through peacekeeping, therefore, Canadians were said to be helping both themselves and less fortunate nations gripped by war.

The lack of detail in "Dextraze in the Congo" is indicative of what most Canadians learned about their nation's peacekeeping prowess after 1956. In particular, the reasons why another country required a peacekeeping force rarely mattered in discussions of Canada's peacekeeping past. Canada was the main actor, and a small group of named men were shown to be more important than the unnamed Others who were causing the disturbances. In "Dextraze in the Congo," the colonial power to which the Congolese soldier refers is Belgium, which encouraged the secession of the mineral-rich province of Katanga so that a profitable economic relationship might continue, even after formal independence was granted on June 30, 1960. In the retelling, neither this nor the legitimacy of the struggle of the Congolese people against well-armed and well-funded gendarmes from Belgium matters. Instead, the Minute aimed to sweep the audience along in an exciting vignette about peacekeeping in which no one is killed and Canada plays a starring role.

The domestic construction of peacekeeping as a symbol of Canada's national identity, as evidenced by "Dextraze in the Congo," was also racialized. Citizenship and national identity are often about defining oneself in opposition to another as much as they are about finding common linkages among people.[14] And while discussions of peacekeeping usually emphasized Canada's willingness to help all other nations find peace, they did so in part by marking out Canada as a special and superior nation. This book will show that by separating the Canadian peacekeepers from the people they were sent to assist, different racial constructions of the host nation could be employed.[15] Egypt, Cyprus, and the Balkans were framed as places that needed modernization. Depictions of the Congo and Somalia were more racially prejudiced and employed tropes from the colonial era.[16] The whiteness of the Canadians and their supposedly orderly homeland set the peacekeepers apart from the people they were to help. These were not new ideas, as groups at least as far back as Canada First, which operated around the middle years of the nineteenth century, argued that Canada's northern climate gave its men a pure, strong, and white persona that could be useful in "civilizing" the other "races."[17] The perpetuation of such

characterizations of disorderly others and munificent Canadians encouraged unequal relationships between Canada's peacekeepers and those whom they were sent to help, even as it helped secure a place for peacekeeping in Canada's symbolic pantheon, once again highlighting the dissonance between the practice and promise of peacekeeping.

What caused this dissonance was the existence of three parallel discourses about peacekeeping that referred to the past, the present, or the future for audiences. Those media that discussed the past were likely to present peacekeeping positively, although they did so by denying a considerable portion of the history of peacekeeping. This *nostalgic* imagining of Canadian peacekeeping consciously omitted operational shortcomings while linking peacekeeping to an idealized version of Canada's past. In those sources that emphasized the present, authors either argued that Canada's peacekeeping efforts were helping to bring about a better world or presented criticisms of peacekeeping suggesting that it was not a solution for global and Canadian problems. Such authors shared the language of *functionalism,* which led them to use similar appeals to the "reason" and "common sense" of audiences to justify their arguments. The sources that hypothesized about the future were more likely than not to present peacekeeping in positive terms, and to imagine Canada's playing a large role in bringing about a better world. They told audiences that peacekeeping was part of a *progressive* move towards a more peaceful planet, and their claims held widespread appeal for many Canadians. The producers of messages about peacekeeping investigated in each chapter made choices about which of these discourses to employ, often combining two or all three into a single text.

The effects of these discourses on how and what Canadians learned about peacekeeping have yet to be studied, despite their central role in the adoption of peacekeeping as a Canadian national symbol. Each discourse drew on particular constructions of the nation and peacekeeping for audiences, and referred to a different point in time – the past, the present, or the future. Yet all were constructed and modified according to the cultural and political milieux of the time in which they were employed, and coexisted for almost the entire period covered by this book.

As early as 1957, state and nonstate actors were making use of a discourse of nostalgia about peacekeeping. Strictly speaking, nostalgia refers to a state of homesickness, but historians since the 1980s have used the term to represent the disjunction between an idealized past and an unsatisfactory present.[18] Nostalgia tries to bring a sense of continuity to people's lives and their sense of identity through selected memories and positive associations.[19] Discursive continuity is achieved by making the past appear static, knowable, and better.

This provides a discourse of nostalgia with a presumed ability to know the past and to explain it for audiences. For many people, this is a positive experience although it is often unsatisfactory. This is because nostalgia is an ambivalent concept.[20] Nostalgia calls on people to remember the past as a better time while acknowledging that the present cannot ever fully be that way.

The propensity to recall the past nostalgically was always a response to contemporary events. Uncertainties and fears about current events and the future were, and are, the most common cause of nostalgia in the modern world.[21] The idealized past that Canadians drew on when discussing peacekeeping was situated in the late 1950s. These were the years when Canada's international influence was arguably at its peak, thanks largely to the work of the Department of External Affairs under the direction of Louis St. Laurent and Lester Pearson. This apex of Canadian international diplomacy coincided with an era of economic prosperity for most Canadians. Later dissatisfactions caused by rapid changes in gender and class relations, divisions between French and English Canadians, and changing immigration patterns encouraged some Canadians to see the 1950s as a "Golden Age." Many writers and artists mobilized nostalgic feelings that erased past sources of societal conflict, and discussed an imagined past that was shielded from the actual experiences of ordinary people. In these nostalgic feelings, "people tend to believe that life in the past was 'happier' – that families were closer, that pollution was absent, that peace and order prevailed."[22] The numerous acts of commemoration that are discussed throughout this book were the most public and ceremonial ways in which this discourse of nostalgia was presented to Canadians. Alongside these celebrations of Canada's peacekeeping past were speeches, textbooks, and newspapers, which all contained frequent, simplified, and bittersweet recollections of Canada's peacekeeping past. These nostalgic recollections demonstrate not only an increasing uncertainty about the directions being followed in the present by the Canadian government but a willingness to employ peacekeeping as a symbol of a past time of Canadian achievement, regardless of the uneven record of most UN operations.

The second strand of peacekeeping discourse was framed around the question of whether peacekeeping was a functional policy for Canada to undertake in the present; it commenced immediately in 1956. "Functionalism" was the term commonly used by External Affairs to describe Canada's foreign policies and goals after the Second World War.[23] The Mackenzie King government began to employ this term as it ventured into a more active external affairs policy for Canada during and immediately after the war.[24] Functionalism's advocates sought new roles for Canada internationally, based on the principle that states

should share in the responsibilities of governing the world in proportion to their ability to do so, and help bring about "peace through pieces."[25] Despite this potential, the Canadian government only intermittently advocated functionalism throughout the Cold War, and this is evident in the critical interpretations of peacekeeping's value in the later 1960s and again in 1993.

The term used to describe Canada's need to accept international responsibility was "middle power," which denoted the country's military, economic, and diplomatic influence while also recognizing its limitations.[26] Such political theorizing, however, ignored or downplayed the importance of culture, national identity, linguistic and gender issues, and racial ordering to Canada's peacekeeping participation.[27] As a result, the functionalist discourse, while apparent throughout this study, did not encapsulate many of the domestic and international factors that played a considerable role in determining how Canadians understood peacekeeping and why they cast it as a symbol of their national identity.

The progressive peacekeeping discourse was built on a belief in a future without conflict that had been popular since the end of the Second World War.[28] In Canadian politics, "progressive" has often referred to a rural-based reform movement. By the 1930s, however, left-centred politics in Canada were focused primarily on the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The CCF concerned itself with anti-imperial struggles in the 1930s, and by the end of the Second World War had become a staunch advocate of the UN and an internationalist Canadian foreign policy.[29] This progressivism sought a strong UN able to intervene anywhere in the world through the use of an international police force. Such ideas were labelled utopian, primarily by those who espoused a "functional" conception of international politics.[30] Changing the goal from a world without war to one in which there were more peacekeeping efforts broadened the appeal of this progressive discourse after 1956. As a result, those who espoused progressive ideals based their ideas on "concrete utopias" and believed that peacekeeping could encourage modestly "better" versions of the world in the future.[31]

While the Left is normally associated with the concept of progress, in the case of peacekeeping and Canadian foreign policy, progress was also crucial for Canada's centre-left and centre-right political parties, the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives (PCs). Within External Affairs, there was considerable belief in the power of the UN after the Second World War.[32] Lester Pearson was among those who held this belief, and his time as leader of the Liberal Party reflected a desire for more peacekeeping. Even the PCs, traditionally preoccupied with Canada's relations with Britain, found reason to support peacekeeping as

a major component of Canada's foreign policy. The legacy of the Second World War and fears of a nuclear holocaust because of the Cold War stalemate in the ensuing decades encouraged all the major Canadian political parties, and many ordinary English and French Canadians, to see peacekeeping as a tangible first step in bringing about a more progressive and peaceful world.

Despite the presence of these three discourses across the entire country, language still bifurcated how peacekeeping was understood in Canada. The years 1956 to 1997 saw changing conceptions of Canada from a British to a bilingual and finally to a multicultural nation, and differences between French and English Canadian understandings of the nation. After the Second World War, French Canada increasingly came to be identified with the physical borders of Quebec.[33] Gerard Bouchard suggests that the persistence of "master" and "derivative" myths centred on Quebec's historical destiny and its "glorious beginnings" apart from English Canada both empowered and handicapped that province while offering grand stories that helped explain its present economic, social, cultural, and political conditions.[34] The distinctiveness of these Quebec myths provides insights into why peacekeeping was not adopted as a marker of a Québécois character, as it was for many English Canadians: since peacekeeping did not fit easily into any of the central narratives in Quebec society, it was rarely seen in nonfunctional terms.

Peacekeeping therefore found favour in Quebec when it was presented as an internationalist policy that countered British imperial efforts, but it failed to gain a symbolic hold in French Canada as Quebec became more concerned with its own foreign affairs after the Quiet Revolution.[35] As separatism and a distinct Québécois identity came to dominate the political discussions within that province, Canada's dealings at the United Nations became less relevant to contemporary debates.[36] But peace did not disappear from Quebec's educational and journalistic milieux. Rather, distinct images and ideas about peace were presented to Quebecers that demonstrate the existence of a cultural difference from those found in English Canada. These differences highlight the need to examine Canada as a divided and changing entity.[37]

Many English Canadians, however, looked to peacekeeping as a unifying symbol of Canada's past, present, and future, and a counterweight to what were seen as the divisive discourses coming from French Canada. In English Canada, the postwar era saw a concerted effort on the part of the federal government and many ordinary Canadians to establish traditions and symbols that were Canada's own.[38] In large measure, this occurred because the federal government and those who supported its policies sought to create distance between Canada and Britain. After that time, Canadians were less likely to be encouraged

to "remain nestled in the Union Jack behind the British lion";[39] by the 1950s, a different generation sought a Canadian identity that might fit within the British Commonwealth but that was distinctly Canadian.[40] The changing focus from Dominion Day to Canada Day, the flag debate, and the de-emphasis of Empire Day are all indicative of this shift.[41] Peacekeeping's malleable rhetoric permitted its symbolic adoption amid these generational and ethnic uncertainties by allowing Canadians to conceptualize it as a continuation of the idea of the "peaceable kingdom" for which Britain was responsible, or something distinctly Canadian and based on an understanding of their nation as being concerned with good global citizenship.[42] This abstraction made peacekeeping a more influential idea than might otherwise have been possible.

As peacekeeping became a symbol of Canada largely through domestic frames that were nonetheless influenced by international events, so, too, did English Canadians try to define themselves in terms that nonetheless were influenced by anti-American sentiment. George Grant's *Lament for a Nation,* first published in 1965, argued that Canada would be swallowed up by the United States in the near future if it did not take more control over its foreign policies.[43] Proponents of peacekeeping have also seen it as a policy that separated Canada from a more aggressive, if not imperial, American foreign policy.[44] Historians such as Jack Granatstein have countered this by emphasizing that there would not be any UN peacekeeping without the active support of the United States.[45] Those who wanted to separate themselves from US foreign policies have nonetheless done so by using peacekeeping's variable discourses. Canada could be remembered for acting as an independent broker at the United Nations, praised for being one of the only "middle powers" that could undertake UN peacekeeping, and credited for encouraging a time still to come when no superpowers would be able to take aggressive international action without gaining the approval of the United Nations, despite the fact that political realities suggest otherwise.

The scope of these topics for each chapter necessitated not only a wide source base but also a longer time frame than most studies have adopted. Given the immediate impact peacekeeping made on Canadian foreign policy as well as in discussions of its national identity, the year 1956 is a logical starting point for this book. The creation of the United Nations Emergency Force, the first official peacekeeping operation, will be a focal point because of the substantial amount of attention paid to the actions of Lester Pearson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent at the time and in succeeding years. The ubiquity of cultural texts about peacekeeping was particularly evident in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, and these offer another key time period. The book concludes in 1997, which saw the release of the report

into the Canadian Airborne Regiment's conduct in Somalia. The second half of the 1990s also saw the federal government increasingly choosing to involve the Canadian Forces overseas through NATO operations, rather than those of the United Nations. Responding in part to the US desire to avoid the UN Security Council, as well as the tragedies in Rwanda, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia, this marked a departure from the Cold War situation, where NATO was handicapped by the existence of the Eastern Bloc. This era, characterized by a preference for NATO operations rather than UN missions, will be shown to be a harbinger of the precipitous decline in the status of peacekeeping in Canada since 2000.

Five time periods from 1956 to 1997 have been selected to demonstrate how peacekeeping became intimately tied to discussions of Canada's national identity. These time periods coincide with either the beginning or the end of many of Canada's major UN peacekeeping endeavours: 1956 and 1957 saw the introduction of UNEF and Lester Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize award, respectively; 1960 saw Canada's participation in ONUC under John Diefenbaker's government; in 1964, Canada's forces played a large role in UNFICYP; 1967 saw the expulsion of UNEF from Egypt; and in 1993 the Canadian Airborne Regiment was deployed to act as part of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in Somalia and other soldiers worked to keep the peace in the former Yugoslavia as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). These missions generated large amounts of media coverage in daily newspapers and their editorial cartoons, were included in NFB documentaries about peacekeeping, were commonly referred to in high school history textbooks, and were the missions that politicians would call on most in their rhetoric.

These periods also encouraged authors to develop specific arguments about peacekeeping. In 1956 and 1957, writers and artists might discuss the promises of Canada's future as an international actor because of a substantial belief in the United Nations, while uncertainty about Canada's attachment to Britain provoked strong arguments for and against peacekeeping in discussions about the present. Optimism accompanied the apparent revival, due to peacekeeping, of a United Nations that had been plagued by the use of vetoes in the Security Council as a result of the bitter Cold War–era relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their allies.[46]

When the Liberals were defeated in the federal election of 1957, many people feared that it spelled the end of Canada's prominent international presence. The long-standing Liberal majority in Ottawa was comforting for the many Canadians who were largely satisfied with the government's policies.[47] John Diefenbaker and his ministers attempted to maintain the priorities of the St.

Laurent government, including supporting UNEF, but many newspapers were already lamenting the passing of Canada's Golden Age of diplomacy.

The Suez Crisis was also, in many ways, a turning point in the Canadian public's relationship to the country's foreign policies. The Cold War culture that characterized the post–Second World War years encouraged people to accept their government's foreign policy decisions with a minimum of questions.[48] Canada was a strongly anticommunist state throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and fears of communist infiltrators led to purges in many government agencies, including the National Film Board.[49] The Suez Crisis was a major break from such a tendency; it represented a shift in the degree of dissent permitted in Canada and was indicative of a general thawing in the culture of the Cold War. Peacekeeping therefore had to be presented in such a way as to weather the critiques that were now possible. Its supporters did so by promising a better world through peacekeeping, as well as arguing for its functional value in the present.

The next two decades saw a growing distance between those who continued to believe in the promise of peacekeeping and those who were unimpressed by its results in practice. By the mid-1960s, the existence of a vibrant and subversive Quebec separatist movement and the Canadian government's lack of progress on the issue of increasing global peace discouraged writers and artists from discussing the future. The financial cost of peacekeeping, which threatened to bankrupt the United Nations, combined with the Egyptian government's expulsion of UNEF in 1967, cast further doubts on its future both in Canada and internationally. These circumstances made it more tempting to reminisce about Canada's peacekeeping past. In response to these trends, Pierre Trudeau's Liberal governments of 1968 to 1979 and 1980 to 1984 rhetorically emphasized national interests over the promotion of the United Nations, but in practice his governments continued Canada's active peacekeeping participation in Cyprus and in the Middle East.[50] In 1980, Cold War tensions resurfaced following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan towards the end of the previous year and the bellicose rhetoric of newly elected US president Ronald Reagan. Greater fears in Canada about the possibility of nuclear war led to renewed calls for more UN peacekeeping by those who hoped that the world body might contain the antagonism of the superpowers in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Running alongside this was a push for neutrality and Canadian disengagement from NATO by members of the New Democratic Party and Canada's Left, ideas that Trudeau had hinted at supporting in 1968 but ultimately rejected (as his government did again in the 1980s).[51] In this era, it will be shown, peacekeeping offered possibilities for Canadian independence in its foreign policies, but such a view was never realized.

By contrast, the end of the Cold War saw a flurry of positive and hopeful assessments of Canada's peacekeeping future, reflecting in part a wider international trend.[52] In the mid to late 1980s, under UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, numerous new missions were undertaken to places like Cambodia and Afghanistan. Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government, in power from 1984 to 1993, volunteered Canadian forces for all of the new missions. These renewed efforts culminated in the awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to UN peacekeeping as an institution, which many Canadians considered recognition of their country's efforts above all others. As a result, the utility of peacekeeping as a symbol and its use in discussions of Canada's past, present, and future permitted a policy that was born out of Cold War politics to gain considerable cultural purchase for many Canadians and to outlive the international circumstances that facilitated its birth. By 1993, however, the tragedies of Somalia and the mixed results of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia were causing considerable debate in Canada. One year later, the failure of the international community to prevent or limit the Rwandan genocide further highlighted the limitations of UN peacekeeping. The spectre of Quebec separatism and cynicism about the Canadian government's ability to resolve economic and social problems also heavily influenced discussions about peacekeeping in the 1990s. The negative political climate once again encouraged authors to look to Canada's peacekeeping past rather than project a better future.

Jean Chrétien's Liberals inherited this uncertain foreign policy climate, but emphasized the concept of "human security" that grew out of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). The Liberals also preferred to discuss peace building, which permitted a wider range of actions than classical peacekeeping, often under the auspices of NATO rather than the United Nations, or the "Responsibility to Protect," a proposal that would obligate UN members to intervene in the affairs of a member state whose populations were suffering, particularly in the event of genocide or mass atrocities.[53] The Responsibility to Protect, emerging out of the discourse of Western culpability and indifference in the wake of the Rwandan genocide, struck a chord with the government in part because it required all members of the United Nations to act in unison, and arguably approximated Lester Pearson's desire for a permanent UN army.[54] It would also require the members of the Security Council, not just middle powers like Canada, to take responsibility for promoting the end of conflicts, thereby reducing the need for Canadian troops to be sent abroad.

To its credit, the Canadian government remained a large financial supporter of peacekeeping, a role that in some situations was more desirable than sending

troops to unfamiliar locales where the colour of their skin and their lack of language proficiency might escalate tensions rather than encourage mediation.[55] This was a functional decision that put the needs of other nations above the optics of sending Canadians abroad. Unequivocally, however, Chrétien sought to limit the number of Canadians sent into harm's way on UN service. In this way, his years in office diverged from earlier eras, most notably the years when Pierre Trudeau was prime minister. Unlike in the 1970s, Chrétien's governments continued to talk about peacekeeping as a Canadian activity but failed to maintain an active Canadian presence in all UN operations. The damning report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry, combined with the failures in Rwanda, the mixed results in Bosnia, an unstable domestic political climate, and new attitudes towards international interventions, made peacekeeping a less appealing policy and encouraged peacekeeping's proponents to rely primarily on the discourse of nostalgia.

Canada's governments, educational authors, NFB filmmakers, and newspaper writers and cartoonists transposed these ideas about the United Nations, the Cold War, and peacekeeping, and articulated them through nostalgic, functionalist, or progressive discourses for domestic audiences. When missions went awry, the impact on Canada was discussed far more than the effects on the host nations. The domestic production and reception of messages about peacekeeping were therefore influenced by internationalism but remained centred on the Canadian experience of peacekeeping. This domestic emphasis problematizes the Canadian attachment to peacekeeping while also providing answers to the question of why so many Canadians strongly associate with peacekeeping.

Although many people might take the Canadian attachment to peacekeeping for granted, it is by no means an uncontested phenomenon. Peacekeeping has been labelled an aberration in an otherwise consistent record of Canadian participation in global conflicts dating back to the Plains of Abraham. It is regularly lumped in with the postwar welfare state as being indicative of a time when Canada lost its way as a country.[56]

For example, many of peacekeeping's critics have found common ground with those who criticize multiculturalism for "feminizing" Canadian culture.[57] The predominantly male composition of Canada's military suggests that this is not an apt criticism. Peacekeeping was and still is undertaken by members of the Canadian Forces who, while trained to participate in peacekeeping, are ultimately still soldiers whose job is to kill if necessary.[58] Graham Dawson has argued that "those forms of manliness that have proved efficacious for nationalist endeavour have been approvingly recognized and furthered with all the power at the disposal of the state, while other subversive or non-functional forms

(notably the effeminate man or the homosexual) have met with disapprobation and repression in explicitly national terms."[59] The adoption of peacekeeping as a national symbol by successive Canadian governments and the widespread acclaim that media authors have showered on Canada's peacekeepers suggest that it was not seen as a subversive form of masculinity.

More puzzling is the coexistence of intense support for peacekeeping with continued reverence for Canadian participation in past conflicts, most notably the First and Second World Wars. The Canadian Corps' participation in the taking of Vimy Ridge in 1917 has often been labelled the moment when the country went from being a "colony into a nation," to borrow Arthur Lower's phrase.[60] Participation in the Second World War, challenging Adolf Hitler's Germany and fascism more broadly, is perhaps even more highly revered than Vimy, with those who lived through that conflict commonly referred to as "the Greatest Generation."[61]

Part of what this book demonstrates is that this reverence for Canada's martial past could lead men and women in English Canada to challenge the utility and desirability of peacekeeping, particularly when a UN operation was seen to not be operating "assertively." That peacekeeping was undertaken by military personnel made it a popular act among a portion of the Canadian population that was inclined to see its soldiers as representing the best the country had to offer, but, as will be shown, "traditional" soldiering was preferred to logistics units.[62] Yet the desire for Canadian involvement in peacekeeping and the valorization of Canadian participation in past wars were not mutually exclusive, because so many people hoped that wars of the sort fought in the first half of the twentieth century might never recur. Because of Canada's involvement at the United Nations and the emphasis on resolving conflicts without resorting to force, peacekeeping managed to transcend much of the discontent stemming from Canada's military involvement in the Cold War and Vietnam, particularly among those on the Left.[63] By 1965, in fact, when asked about the likelihood of another world war, 67 percent of Canadians surveyed believed it to be unlikely at any point in the future.[64] It seems that with the threat of mutually assured destruction during the Cold War, peacekeeping, for some, heralded a new way forward. By 1988, and only in part because of the successes of UN operations, peacekeeping was considered to be Canadians' preferred military role.[65]

Those who have written about Canadian foreign policy, whether critics or advocates of peacekeeping, have by and large focused on the successes and failures of individual missions rather than the broader issues tackled by this book. For those whose interests do not lie in the military side of peacekeeping but who are drawn to it because it has been cast as a marker of Canadianness,

this lack of critical examination is frustrating. In part, the tendency to ignore the domestic import of peacekeeping can be explained by the fact that peacekeeping is seen as a military and diplomatic topic to be studied by military and diplomatic scholars. In the 1960s, a number of works by political scientists such as James Eayrs and Donald Gordon and historians such as Jack Granatstein evaluated Canada's peacekeeping efforts in light of its failure to find permanent peaceful solutions to the world's problems.[66] Most of these works were published by or emerged from conferences held by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Such works tended to focus on the more traditional aspects of Canadian foreign policy, namely, who made policy and how it was implemented. Government reports and diplomatic records formed the bulk of the sources used in these works, which, although excellent accounts of official policy, provided little discussion of the nongovernmental fascination with peacekeeping. As governmental interest in peacekeeping declined during the Trudeau years, so did the focus of political scientists and military historians on peacekeeping.[67]

Scholarly work on peacekeeping re-emerged in the waning years of the Cold War, when the Canadian government's interest was rekindled. These publications continued to focus primarily on peacekeeping as a state policy with both positive and negative potential.[68] When they addressed such topics as public opinion regarding peacekeeping, they provided overly simplistic and unsatisfactory answers. Canadians were said to have developed an affinity for peacekeeping because they wanted to feel good about themselves, or to have listened uncritically to successive governments that were all too willing to praise Canada's peacekeeping tradition to score political points in the present.

In the last decade, the study of peacekeeping has moved beyond the disciplinary boundaries of diplomatic history and international relations, with positive results. Scholars such as Kevin Spooner have mined the archives and employed a variety of sources in their examinations of Canada's peacekeeping past.[69] Political scientist Sandra Whitworth is among those who have emphasized the gendered and racial constructions of peacekeeping operations, opening crucial new areas for study.[70] Anthropologist Sherene Razack's work on postcolonialism and the peacekeeping mission to Somalia addresses the importance of racial constructions to Canada's peacekeeping past.[71] These authors all focus on single missions, giving their works temporal and situational specificity. However, because peacekeeping has been such a long-standing part of Canada's foreign policy, a more comprehensive historical examination such as the one provided here can add considerably to the study of peacekeeping.

While some individuals who study peacekeeping have moved in new directions, others have frustratingly continued to hold that examining government

documents is the sole way to get at the "true" history of peacekeeping.[72] There are several problems with such an approach. First, it assumes a unified Canadian identity and does not recognize gendered, regional, and linguistic differences in how messages about peacekeeping were received. Second, it cannot account for the rapid growth in support for peacekeeping that marked the Canadian political scene after 1956. Third, it ignores changes over time in how peacekeeping was understood in Canada. Fourth, it makes no attempt to deal with the periods between 1956 and 1997 when the government of Canada tried to dissuade Canadians from their infatuation with peacekeeping. Finally, and perhaps most critically, this approach avoids looking *systematically* at any of the ways in which Canadians learned about peacekeeping.

There has also been a tendency in the historiography and public discourse surrounding peacekeeping to emphasize the accounts of those who "were there" to help Canadians understand how "things really happened."[73] Peacekeeping is not unique in this regard, and at least as far back as the First World War, veterans' voices and understandings have been privileged in Canada's external affairs.[74] Such first-hand accounts provide thorough examinations of the conditions that were experienced in peacekeeping operations by the peacekeepers themselves, which can educate and inform those who advocate for more Canadian participation overseas. Although such accounts are useful, their authors are often guilty of ignoring the biases and weaknesses of individual accounts and government documents, as well as typically advancing a political position that aims to celebrate the Canadian Forces and continue the rehabilitation of their image that began after the report on the peacekeeping mission to Somalia was released in 1997.[75] Ian McKay and Jamie Swift rightly consider these tendencies as part of the recent militarization of Canada's past.[76]

Instead of privileging the peacekeepers themselves, this book analyzes the attitudes of the widest possible group of Canadians in order to better understand peacekeeping. Unless we undertake a thorough examination of the various modes through which peacekeeping was presented to different Canadians, we cannot come closer to understanding why so many people became enamoured of the idea, why peacekeeping continues to matter to so many Canadians, and how the country might revive its potential to be a peacekeeper in a new and helpful manner. It is also crucial to explore the variations in the peacekeeping narrative that occurred in different formats, as well as the presence of counter-narratives that sought to clarify what was obscured by this hegemonic understanding of Canada and peacekeeping.

Working primarily from political speeches and public opinion records, the first chapter examines the use of peacekeeping in Canadian political rhetoric

from 1956 to 1997. Peacekeeping was a well-publicized part of Canadian foreign policy during those years. The chapter focuses primarily on the rhetoric of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties, as they were the parties in power federally, which increased their ability to employ peacekeeping as a policy and a symbol. In addition to the speeches of politicians such as Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson, John Diefenbaker, Howard Green, Paul Martin Sr., and Pierre Trudeau, *Statements and Speeches,* an official periodical published by the Department of External Affairs, was also examined, as were government publications dealing with foreign and defence policies released by External Affairs or the Department of National Defence. This source base is admittedly biased towards the views of whichever party was in power federally, particularly after 1967. To supplement this, the Parti Québécois' official party platforms as well as the literature it distributed before the referenda of 1980 and 1995 were examined to demonstrate how pervasive Canada's peacekeeping identity had become after 1968. When combined with opinion polls taken from 1956 onward, these examples of political rhetoric can tell us a great deal about how peacekeeping was ingrained in Canadian culture. Such conceptions were not static, and the chapter examines how changes in Canada's domestic political climate often had more of an impact on how peacekeeping was presented by politicians than the results of the peacekeeping missions themselves.

Chapter 2 analyzes the contents of high school history textbooks from 1959 to 1997. An exhaustive study was undertaken regarding the peacekeeping discourses employed in one hundred textbooks approved for use in high schools in French and English Canada during these years. Although history textbooks focused primarily on the past, contemporary politics also influenced the discussions within their pages. The curriculum documents produced by the provinces dictated in some measure how peacekeeping would be taught in the classroom by requiring that certain topics and educational outcomes be present in textbooks. As well, because these works were aimed at a younger audience, they often sought to promote behaviours akin to peacekeeping that emphasized the future utility of peacekeeping. A glimpse into these processes is possible through letters to the federal government from students and teachers from 1956 to 1997. By focusing on textbook contents and curricular requirements, and supplementing this with the letters of students and teachers, it is possible to see how and why peacekeeping was included as a topic in these texts, although further insights remain elusive.

Chapter 3 explores fourteen documentaries made by the National Film Board that either focused exclusively on Canadian peacekeeping efforts or had peacekeeping as a central theme. In a visual medium, the multiple peacekeeping

discourses permitted filmmakers to employ narrative techniques that linked the on-screen images about peacekeeping to Canada's national identity. The films have been divided into two time periods: 1957 to 1965 and 1980 to 1994. Those from the earlier time period employed specific language and imagery to link peacekeeping to a contemporary Canadian identity. Later films sought to both explain Canada's participation in UN operations and offer more critical evaluations of peacekeeping. In these films, the peacekeepers were presented as exemplary professionals rather than as representatives of Canada as a whole, suggesting that filmmakers were uncertain about the directions of Canada's foreign policy.

Chapter 4 scrutinizes major articles, editorials, and letters to the editor in eleven daily newspapers to delve into how authors employed and influenced the three peacekeeping narratives. These sections contained the opinions of each paper as well as the selected opinions of Canadians who chose to write to a newspaper about peacekeeping. In the late 1950s, the combined circulation of all daily newspapers was higher than the number of households in Canada, and while these numbers would decline, newspaper sales remained strong through to the 1990s.[77] Perhaps the two most important centres for newspaper publishing in Canada were, and remain, Toronto and Montreal, and from these cities the *Toronto Star,* the *Globe and Mail, Le Devoir, La Presse,* and the *Montreal Gazette* were all examined. Other important regional papers used were the Halifax *Chronicle-Herald,* the *Winnipeg Free Press,* the *Calgary Herald,* the *Vancouver Sun,* the *Regina Leader-Post,* and the *Ottawa Citizen.* The date ranges examined for each newspaper are related to the beginnings or conclusions of Canada's major peacekeeping involvements. A considerable sample of newspaper and reader opinions has been accumulated, and from this, larger conclusions can be drawn about how language, politics, and region affected what was said about peacekeeping, and how newspapers created and adapted the meaning of peacekeeping and linked it to Canada's national identity.[78]

The editorial cartoons that appeared in the newspapers used in Chapter 4 form the set of sources for Chapter 5. The cartoons are investigated in a chronological manner, within the same date ranges.[79] The presentation of conceptions of peacekeeping visually rather than through written narratives enabled these cartoons to offer divergent ideas about peacekeeping. Early editorial cartoons helped create and disseminate visual depictions of peacekeeping to their audiences in an era when access to television was restricted for some Canadians.[80] The satirical nature of the editorial cartoon genre also meant that they were a source of considerable criticism of the functionality of peacekeeping from 1956 through 1997. The cartoons that appeared throughout the forty-one-year period

examined here attempted to connect with viewers by employing particular images that were inspired by how newspapers and politicians described Canada and peacekeeping. Through their single panels, cartoons helped many Canadians understand that peacekeeping was more complex than it was often presented as being, and created a space where Canadian attachment to peacekeeping could be challenged.

The final chapter considers how peacekeeping has been commemorated across Canada since 1990. It addresses Canada's official peacekeeping monument, the appearance of peacekeeping on Canada's currency, and the creation of an entire peacekeeping-themed subdivision. These commemorations have shifted the attention of Canadians from the present to the past, and encouraged people to think of peacekeeping as something that Canadians used to do. The effects of this shifting temporal focus are becoming clearer now, and they provide an end point for this study.

Ultimately, the varied language and values of peacekeeping allowed many Canadians to associate it with their national identity. This makes these uses of peacekeeping central to how and why so many Canadians came to think of themselves as the world's "Blue Berets." The sources examined, governmental or otherwise, were often more than willing to criticize the actual performance of Canadians in peacekeeping operations. It was, however, the willingness of these sources to separate peacekeeping from the operations themselves that permitted peacekeeping's continued symbolic relevance.

Peacekeeping, therefore, was not something that politicians "sold" to Canadians, nor was it an example of Canadians' naively believing that they were better than other peoples. Instead, peacekeeping became a concept that could symbolize a longing for a particular vision of Canada's past, a belief in the policies of a government in the present, or a desire for a better future. The remainder of this book is dedicated to showing these processes among particular politicians, book authors, filmmakers, newspaper columnists, political cartoonists, and their audiences.