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## The “Old Peacekeeper” Confronts the “New World Order”: Canadian Power and Purpose from Suez to Afghanistan

**Abstract:** In 1956, when they devised a way out of the Suez crisis, Canadian diplomats were remarkably successful in advancing their nation’s interests by promoting its security, enhancing its global influence, and preserving the international order. Today, the Afghan experience highlights the apparent obstacles to the pursuit of comparable interests in a post-Cold War, post-9/11 world. It is against this background that the present article seeks to reveal the underlying factors that enabled Canada to be effective as a traditional *peacekeeper* at Suez but apparently impede its success as a *peacemaker* in Afghanistan. These factors consist of, on the one hand, external forces beyond Canada’s control, such as an ever more complex world order and the increasingly convoluted nature of contemporary crises. On the other hand, however, there is also the largely home-made problem of a widening ‘commitment-capability gap’: Ottawa is ready to enter poorly defined commitments which it does not have the resources to sustain. As Canadians now debate their post-Afghanistan role on the global stage they should take variations on all four dimensions of context, crisis, capabilities, and commitment into account and formulate a policy that applies the key lesson of its successful Suez diplomacy by linking credible operational commitment to convincing strategic leadership.