



**HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CANADA**

# **CANADIAN FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN**

## **Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence**

**Rick Casson, MP  
Chair**

**JUNE 2007**

**39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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## **Report of the Standing Committee on NATIONAL DEFENCE**

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENCE**

has the honour to present its

## **FIRST REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.





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## DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to the 58 Canadian men and women who, at the time of this report's adoption, have died in Afghanistan, serving our country.

Corporal Glen Arnold, CD	Sergeant Donald Lucas
Master Corporal Raymond Arndt	Bombardier Myles Stanley John Mansell
Corporal Robbie Christopher Beerenfenger	Corporal Matthew McCully
Dr. Glyn Berry	Corporal Kevin Megeney
Corporal Anthony Joseph Boneca	Warrant Officer Frank Robert Mellish, CD
Corporal David Braun	Corporal Robert Thomas James Mitchell
Private David Byers	Corporal Keith Morley, CD
Trooper Darryl Caswell	Corporal Jamie Brendan Murphy
Private Robert Costall	Warrant Officer Richard Francis Nolan, CD
Private William Jonathan James Cushley	Corporal Randy Payne
Private Kevin Dallaire	Trooper Patrick James Pentland
Corporal Paul Davis	Corporal Brent Poland
Corporal Matthew David James Dinning	Master Corporal Darrell Jason Priede
Corporal Ainsworth Dyer	Corporal Christopher Jonathan Reid, CD
Corporal Andrew James Eykelenboom	Sergeant Robert Alan Short
Chief Warrant Officer Robert Girouard, CD	Private Nathan Smith
Sergeant Craig Paul Gillam, CD	Sergeant Shane Stachnik
Captain Nichola Kathleen Sarah Goddard, MSM	Corporal Christopher Paul Stannix
Corporal Francisco Gomez, CD	Master Corporal Allan Stewart
Private Richard Green	Corporal Albert Storm, CD
Private David Robert Greenslade	Sergeant Darcy Scott Tedford, CD
Private Mark Anthony Graham	Lieutenant William Turner
Sergeant Vaughan Ingram	Master Corporal Jeffrey Scott Walsh
Corporal Shane Keating	Corporal Jason Patrick Warren
Corporal Bryce Jeffrey Keller	Corporal Aaron E. Williams
Private Kevin Vincent Kennedy	Private Blake Neil Williamson
Private Josh Klukie	Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson
Master Corporal Anthony Klumpenhower	Master Corporal Timothy Wilson
Sergeant Marc D. Léger	Private Braun Scott Woodfield



## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

---

The Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is a tremendously complex operation. The Committee has worked hard to understand it. In addition to hearing from many witnesses, we made two fact-finding visits to major Canadian Forces bases supporting deployed troops and we travelled to Afghanistan to see the men and women of the Canadian Forces in action. In every instance found Canadian Forces personnel and their families to be serving with a degree of honour, courage and professionalism rarely equalled anywhere the world. We admire them greatly and thank them for doing what they do.

This report addresses issues related to the conduct of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan. In doing so, the Committee wishes to make clear that any criticism of the mission is not intended, in any way, to be critical of military men and women who serve so gallantly on our behalf. In offering our views and recommendations, we wish to be seen solely as fulfilling our role to assist Parliament in holding government accountable for its policies and their execution.

To deploy military forces is one of the most difficult and important decisions government can make. Once the country is committed to such a course of action, Parliament treads a sensitive, but necessary path in critically — and hopefully constructively — reviewing the mission, to ensure the mission is meeting the political and strategic goals set by government. This is the difficult, but terribly important task we set ourselves.

The military mission in Afghanistan has provided Canada with its first intense combat since the Korean War. Not only did the Canadian Forces have to learn quickly, but government and Canadians were subject to a new learning curve that still has to be overcome, in order to fully understand what needs to be done in Afghanistan. The Committee feels that while the Canadian Forces continues to adapt in Afghanistan, it has certainly learned enough, fast enough, to be among the most capable and successful national contingents. The government too continues to learn how to guide, manage and integrate elements of national power in an overseas operation, with some departments learning faster than others. In many ways, Parliamentarians and the Canadian public lag in comprehending the nature and detail of the operation and although they are inclined to want things to go well, they remain conflicted as to whether enough of the right things are being done. In this, there remains a significant role for government, who in addition to simply explaining what is going on, needs to do more to educate and motivate Canadians.

Some discussion was devoted to the idea of receiving regular in-camera or classified operational updates on international operations and the challenges involved in such activity were readily acknowledged. However, despite those challenges, I think there would be considerable value in providing Government-sponsored, non-partisan closed briefings on international operations to a select group of Parliamentarians, so that they

could maintain an accurate understanding of mission status and realistic expectations for the future. Those being briefed would be expected to contribute responsibly to subsequent Parliamentary debates and abide by the obligations imposed by virtue of being selected to receive the briefings.

Given the intriguingly complex nature of the Afghanistan problem, it concerned us that debate often became over-simplified, both with regard to the situation and its remedy. Misperceptions were not uncommon. We therefore came to feel that, apart from the specific tasks found in our official mandate, the Committee also had the obligation to offer a non-partisan, informed, accurate and constructive review of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan. We hope Canadians will find our work useful.

Throughout our study, the Committee benefited greatly from the experience and articulate participation of The Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh. At the conclusion of our trip to Afghanistan in January 2007, Mr. Dosanjh was re-assigned to be the Official Opposition Foreign Affairs Critic and had to leave our Committee. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank him for his contribution and wish him well in his new duties.

When Canadian Forces personnel deploy away from home, whether on a ship patrolling the Arabian Sea, or in surveillance aircraft patrolling Afghanistan airspace, or in a dusty pair of boots patrolling the villages of Zhari district, their military families continue to serve at home. Wives and husbands carry the burden of managing family life while their spouse completes a tour of duty in or near Afghanistan. Sons and daughters worry about Mom or Dad. Mothers and fathers worry about the circumstances of a serving son or daughter. Other close loved ones share the stress and concern.

The Committee knows that in places such as Victoria, Edmonton, Petawawa, Trenton, Valcartier, Gagetown and Halifax, military families try to carry on as normal a life as possible, while a mother or father, son or daughter is away on a dangerous operational mission. We wish to acknowledge the great courage and stamina displayed by military spouses, their sons and daughters; and their mothers and fathers who 'soldier on' at home. Their role in keeping the home front happy and stable is of prime operational importance because it allows our fighting men and women to concentrate on their mission. In that way they provide significant service to Canada and we would like all Canadians to recognize that fact.

The Committee also wishes to formally recognize the courage and devotion to duty of the following Canadian Forces personnel who have received awards for acts of valour in action against the enemy in Afghanistan.



### **Star of Military Valour<sup>1</sup>**

- Major William Hilton Fletcher S.M.V., C.D.
- Private Jess Randall Larochelle S.M.V.
- Corporal Sean Teal S.M.V.
- Sergeant Patrick Tower S.M.V., C.D.

### **Medal of Military Valour**

- Corporal Chad Gerald Chevrefils M.M.V.
- Sergeant Michael Thomas Victor Denine M.M.V., C.D.
- Master Corporal Collin Ryan Fitzgerald M.M.V.
- Corporal Jason Funnell M.M.V.
- Private Jason Carl Allan Lamont M.M.V.
- Master-Corporal Sean Hubert Niefer M.M.V.
- Private Michael Patrick O'Rourke M.M.V.
- Corporal Clinton John Orr M.M.V.
- Captain Derek Prohar M.M.V.
- Captain Michael John Reekie M.M.V.
- Corporal Joseph Jason Lee Ruffolo M.M.V.

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1 Military Valour Decorations are national honours awarded to recognize acts of valour, self-sacrifice or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy. They were approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1993 and consist of the Victoria Cross, the Star of Military Valour and the Medal of Military Valour. The Victoria Cross is awarded for the most conspicuous bravery, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty, in the presence of the enemy. The Star of Military Valour is awarded for distinguished and valiant service in the presence of the enemy. The Medal of Military Valour is awarded for an act of valour or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The mandate adopted on May 16, 2006, by the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence stated:

That the Committee examine the various aspects of the mission of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, such as its duration, the state of the personnel and materiel, the relationship between the mission's combat operations and its efforts to help reconstruct the country, and the criteria for assessing its effectiveness, with a view to determining whether it is possible to complete the mission successfully while still meeting Canada's other international obligations, and that the Committee submit recommendations in a report to the House based upon its examination.<sup>1</sup>

This report focuses on Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Canada is a signatory to the 2006 Afghan Compact,<sup>2</sup> an agreement between the international community and the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, in which the International Community agrees to help develop Afghan capacity to rebuild the country. There are three main areas — or 'pillars' — of activity:

- a. Security;
- b. Governance, the rule of law; and human rights;
- c. Economic and social development.

The Canadian military contingent — Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) — represents one 'D' — defence — that, along with diplomatic and development efforts, comprises the government's '3D' approach to complex conflict and post-conflict situations. The 3D approach is, in turn, part of the government's overall 'whole of government' approach to modern crises.

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1 Standing Committee on National Defence. *Minutes*. Meeting No. 2, Tuesday, May 16, 2006.

2 The Afghan Compact can be found on the UNAMA website at <http://www.unama-afg.org/news/londonConf/docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf>.

The Committee finds that JTF-Afg is the most combat effective, best trained, best led, best equipped and best supported mission of its kind that Canada has ever deployed. It is among the best national contingents in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The Canadian Forces are in Afghanistan:

- a. To protect the national security interests of Canada by helping to ensure that Afghanistan will not, once again, become a haven for international terrorists;
- b. At the invitation of the democratically elected government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, to help provide a secure environment in which the rule of law, human rights and economic prosperity can grow; and
- c. To support our allies and other international friends in the UN, NATO and the G-8 by providing leadership in one of the most difficult operational areas.

Perhaps the most important lesson the Committee learned is that our Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is a highly complex and noble operation. It is extremely difficult and will not be ended by any simple remedies or quick fixes. International support will be needed for at least a decade, if not a generation.

One of our more significant findings was that Canadians generally did not know enough about the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan and that many therefore had an incomplete understanding of what our military men and women are doing there. Our report therefore takes time to explain the complex environment and circumstances in which the Canadian Forces must operate. Our report goes on to discuss the mandate of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. Succeeding chapters examine specific issues identified in our study mandate and other important issues we discovered and studied along the way.

The Committee identified three important factors that had fundamental influence on the Canadian Forces mission. First, Canada is not acting unilaterally in Afghanistan. Consequently well-intentioned calls for Canada to do 'this' or change 'that' tend to oversimplify issues. Second, perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of the mission is that it is one of capacity building. From the beginning, the international effort has been offered in support of Afghans. Canadians do not do the work for Afghans, they help Afghans build the capacity to do the work themselves, giving development and reconstruction an 'Afghan face.' A corollary is that improvements come only as fast as the emerging capacity will allow — an 'Afghan pace,' so there is no advantage in simplistically throwing Canadian money, people or equipment at problems faster than they can be absorbed and used effectively. Third, and perhaps most important, Canada has taken

sides in this issue. Along with its allies, Canada has decided to stand with the democratically elected government of Afghanistan. Therefore, the mission is not, and never has been, anything akin to a peacekeeping mission.

There are three general threats. First, the main direct threat to the national security of Afghanistan, and to Canadian troops, is the Taliban who have continued to mount an insurgency against the Afghanistan government and use guerrilla warfare tactics against JTF-Afg, including suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices and ambushes with machine guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers. The second threat is a poisonous mix of corruption, the illegal drug trade and continuing tribal warlord influence beyond the capital city of Kabul. The Committee feels the third threat is closer to home. It is found in our own national impatience with the pace of progress in Afghanistan. The reality is that the military alone cannot solve the Afghanistan problem.

As proud as we are of our military contribution, the Committee is not blind or deaf to the considerable challenges facing the overall international effort or Canadian mission in Afghanistan. We found that, although there are recent signs of some improvement, the Canadian government and media have been less than wholly effective in providing ordinary Canadians and Parliamentarians with adequate information about Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. Government could have done more and the media could have been much more balanced in its approach and covered more of the non-combat activity constantly being conducted by Canadian troops. In this regard, we were encouraged by the government's release of a report explaining the progress being made by the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

Critics of the mission have said it is unbalanced and that more diplomatic and development effort is required — and less combat operations. Nearly everyone we met, including military commanders, agreed that more development was needed, but they pointed out that security trumps development and until an adequate degree of security existed, development aid could not flow to the degree desired. Moreover, critiques of imbalance have usually been based on simplistic assumptions by which balance was equated to numbers of people or quantity of dollars. In fact, balance is most accurately measured on the basis of *effect*. The military mission has always had a degree of balance unknown to most Canadians, based on the work of the Canadian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar and the Strategic Advisory Team-Afghanistan, working within Afghan government ministries in Kabul.

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3 Government of Canada. *Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: Measuring Progress*. Report to Parliament, February 2007. At [http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/docs/260207\\_Report\\_E.pdf](http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/docs/260207_Report_E.pdf).

A considerable number of Canadian Forces soldiers are involved in training the Afghan National Army and that they accompany Afghan soldiers into combat. Canada could do more in this area because a competent and effective Afghan National Army that is capable of protecting its own country is a prerequisite for foreign troops to leave Afghanistan.

Our troops have seen extensive combat and have been successful in every major tactical battle against the Taliban, but the cost has been heavy. Fifty-eight Canadians have died in Afghanistan so far. Many more have been injured — 205 by April 30, 2007. Those with physical injuries are cared for by a world-class medical system based on multinational and allied support from the battlefield to Canada. The Canadian Forces ability to diagnose and treat psychological injuries has matured over the past decade and considerable attention is devoted to the care of those who have suffered operational stress injuries as a result of service in Afghanistan. For the first time too, families of deployed personnel are receiving attention from mental health professionals, although more needs to be done here.

Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan have been provided with some of the best equipment in the world and, perhaps of more importance, the national defence procurement process has been dramatically successful in delivering new, important operational equipment quickly. Where it traditionally took up to 10 or more years for major equipment to reach the troops in the field, new artillery guns, new mine-resistant armoured personnel carriers, uninhabited aerial vehicles and additional armour plating for trucks all arrived in Afghanistan within one year of the request by commanders. This represents a startling and welcome display of government will and cooperation among military and bureaucratic officials.

Less timely has been the delivery of reconstruction and development aid. In 2006, after major combat operations, it took too long for reconstruction and development efforts to follow-up and mitigate the effects of ISAF operations on local Afghans, many of whom had fled and could not return until wells had been dug, houses repaired and food delivered. While Canadian military forces were able to provide temporary security, the absence of follow-on reconstruction activity made it difficult to convince Afghans to return. DND funds available to the Commander of JTF-Afg were immediately available and useful in getting some local projects underway, but the more substantial CIDA funds were longer in coming. There are promising signs that government bureaucracy has been tempered to the point that CIDA development funds are now flowing more efficiently In 2007.

Three issues have conspired to take a touch of the gloss off the military record. First, there are a number of Canadian investigations underway, based on un-proven allegations, examining the treatment of Afghan detainees while in Canadian hands and their transfer to Afghan authorities. Second, a degree of associated concern has been expressed over the quality of a technical arrangement between the Canadian Forces and the Afghanistan Ministry of National Defence, governing the details of detainee transfers from the Canadian Forces to Afghan security authorities. A subsequent arrangement,

however, supplemented the first arrangement and removed much of the associated concern. Third, there have been a small number of incidents in which innocent Afghan civilians have been killed during fighting between ISAF and Taliban forces. Most of these unfortunate occurrences have come from the collateral damage of air strikes. Canada has no combat aircraft in Afghanistan, and although Canadian troops have not been directly involved in the air strikes, Afghan displeasure does not usually discriminate among foreign troops. Moreover, Canadian troops have shot Afghan civilians in the course of their operations. No matter the circumstances, these regrettable incidents provide a continuing concern in the campaign to 'win the hearts and minds' of ordinary Afghans.

Not one of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee expected the military problem in Afghanistan to be solved by February 2009. Everyone thinks it will take a long time. Some spoke of decades; some spoke of generations; but all spoke of a long-term commitment. This raises the question of whether the mission mandate ought to be extended or not.

In order to answer that question, the Committee offers some recommendations on how government might improve the information flow between itself, ordinary Canadians and Parliament. In the end, the Committee recommends a Parliamentary debate be held in 2008, on whether the mission should be extended past February 2009. In the meantime, the Committee thinks it is important to remember that Canada is not acting alone. Canada and its allies — United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Estonia and Romania — provide nearly 12,000 troops (2500 Canadian) in the south of Afghanistan. If we leave, someone else will have to carry the load.

We end on a note of humility, acknowledging that many of our close and traditional allies are indeed sharing the burden of combat and providing significant development and reconstruction resources in southern Afghanistan. Many of them have lost national blood and treasure as Canada has. While we might urge others to consider doing more, there is no more effective way to bring others along than to continue playing a meaningful leadership role ourselves. In this regard, the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan has been successful. The men and women of the Canadian Forces have contributed another wonderful chapter to Canadian history.





# INTRODUCTION

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The insurgents chose to test Canada, and Canada responded magnificently.

General James Jones  
Supreme Commander Allied Powers Europe<sup>1</sup>

## STUDY MANDATE

The mandate adopted on May 16, 2006, by the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence stated:

That the Committee examine the various aspects of the mission of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, such as its duration, the state of the personnel and materiel, the relationship between the mission's combat operations and its efforts to help reconstruct the country, and the criteria for assessing its effectiveness, with a view to determining whether it is possible to complete the mission successfully while still meeting Canada's other international obligations, and that the Committee submit recommendations in a report to the House based upon its examination.<sup>2</sup>

## GENERAL

Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) is the most combat capable, best trained, best equipped and best led formation of its size and kind that Canada has ever fielded. It has been strategically relevant, operationally effective and tactically decisive.

Other reports on Canada's mission in Afghanistan have tended to be pessimistic and some have called for an end to Canada's role in the country. Your Committee knows Canada is better than that. Canadians have never shirked from their responsibility to help those in need, nor has Canada ever failed to take operational leadership when it was necessary to do so. Difficult challenges will not deter our national will. Our military history is the story of Canadians going abroad to fight in the national interest of Canada and on behalf of others who could not defend themselves. From Vimy to Visoko, from Kapyong to Kabul and from Paardeberg to Panjwayi, Canadian military missions, despite the difficulties, have accomplished the job they were sent to do.

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1 Gauthier, Major General Michel. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence No. 22. November 8, 2006.

2 Standing Committee on National Defence. *Minutes*. Meeting Number 2, Tuesday, May 16, 2006.

Canadian diplomatic, development and military personnel in Kandahar were unanimous in telling us that they were clear on what they had to do, that good progress was being made and that now was not the time to waiver. They, more than most, know success is achievable. We agree. That is why this report takes a positive, but realistic and sober view of Canada's military accomplishments and prospects in Afghanistan.

We are realistic and know that the job is not yet over, and that what remains to be done requires the dedicated work of brave Canadians. Canadian soldiers will still have to fight Taliban insurgents. Diplomats will still have to mentor an immature Afghan democracy. Development officers and aid workers will still have to provide resources and support to destitute Afghans throughout the countryside. Therefore, our report presents a realistic, constructive critique of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. Our findings result in clear and achievable recommendations that, if implemented quickly and energetically, will help Canada fulfill its role in the United Nations-led international development effort and its leadership role in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military operations designed to create a secure environment throughout Kandahar province.

To spend Canadian blood and treasure abroad is one of the most important and weighty decisions to be taken by government. Parliament has a central role to play in such decision making. The Committee therefore felt the full import of its duty to examine the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan.

The Committee's first lesson was that Canada's mission in Afghanistan is a noble endeavour, but an exceedingly difficult and complex one.

The international mission in Afghanistan can be successful with more work. The NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) efforts to help Afghan security forces establish a secure environment have been successful in a majority of the country and are currently making progress in the southern and eastern provinces. The Committee fully understands the challenges facing ISAF in 2007, but we think the appropriate approach is to get on with doing what is necessary to overcome those challenges and not simply dwell on how hard it is going to be. We applaud all ISAF pre-emptive operations that have effectively nullified any expected 'spring offensive' by Taliban forces, this year.

Consider that NATO is the most powerful and successful alliance in the history of the world and the world's best peacekeeping force for the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It brought peace to Europe after two World Wars. It imposed peace on the post-Cold War Balkans. It has never failed in any undertaking. Now, in Afghanistan, NATO is engaged in its first out-of-area operation, in another effort to bring peace and stability to a troubled country. NATO will succeed here too.

However, our confident attitude does not prevent us from appreciating the dangerous and significant challenges standing in the way of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

While we recognize that the existence and future of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is entirely a political decision, we found it necessary to keep in touch with sources of 'ground truth' to ensure our deliberations and findings did not become so political, so academic or so unconnected to practicality as to be unhelpful. Along the way, the Committee's work was grounded by candid views offered by serving men and women of the Canadian Forces and their families. We wish to make particular note of our visits to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Edmonton and CFB Petawawa where we were able to meet with many returning soldiers, some of them injured, and their spouses. Together they provided the Committee with a special insight into the effects of the mission that no amount of second-hand testimony or academic research could have given us. Most importantly, as a culmination to our study, we were pleased to visit Joint Task Force Afghanistan at Kandahar Airfield. It allowed us to judge all that we had heard against the reality on the ground.

Other witnesses appearing before us, particularly those having recent experience in Afghanistan, were also of great value. Testimony from a wide range of academics, diplomats, along with defence, international development and women's advocates provided important benefit to our work. Military officers returning from Afghanistan, who served in senior military headquarters or who worked in the fledgling Afghan government brought novel insight into the larger issues at play. We were also grateful for the informative contributions of Ministers Mackay, O'Connor and Verner.

Given the sometimes life and death issues inherent in the mission, your Committee has worked hard to maintain a non-partisan approach to this study. We tried to look at the issues objectively and come up with realistic recommendations that, if implemented quickly and energetically, will improve the quality and effect of Canada's defence effort in Afghanistan and therefore enhance the overall mission.

Our focus is on the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan and therefore this report deals mainly with issues related to the establishment of a secure environment in Kandahar province. We discuss related issues only in so far as they relate to the Canadian military mission. Broader issues of diplomacy and development are left to be examined by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which is conducting a wide-ranging, high-level study of Canada's mission in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

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3 A motion to conduct the study was adopted by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on Thursday 1 Feb 07. The amended motion adopted reads, "That this Committee hold hearings, starting at the earliest, for the purpose of evaluating Canada's mission in Afghanistan and reviewing the present focus, and accordingly invite the appropriate Ministers, departmental officials, representatives of civil society, the Diaspora and other relevant witnesses."

## FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS

Throughout our study we were constantly reminded of three fundamental factors that continue to shape Canada's Afghanistan mission.

First, Canada is not acting unilaterally in Afghanistan. Canada is contributing to an international effort in each of the diplomatic, development and defence (3D) environments. Consequently well-intentioned calls for Canada to do 'this' or change 'that' tend to oversimplify issues. Canada works through the United Nations (UN) and NATO, cooperating in a variety of multilateral strategies, programmes and projects. The international effort in Afghanistan is immense. Over 60 countries contribute to the overall development and reconstruction effort.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)<sup>5</sup> has over 1,000 staff (of which about 80% are Afghans) in 13 regional offices throughout the country. There are 15 UN agency offices in Afghanistan. More are being established. ISAF<sup>6</sup> is made up of military contingents from 37 countries and nearly 40,000 troops.

Second, perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of the mission is that it is one of capacity building. From the beginning, the international effort has been offered in support of Afghans. The 2001 Bonn Agreement and the 2006 Afghanistan Compact clearly explain the lead role to be taken by Afghan authorities. When Canadian units initially served in ISAF, in Kabul, in 2003, they openly advertised their role as "leading from behind" or "second row" support. In Kandahar this support role continues. Canadian development and reconstruction support is also delivered through International Organizations (IOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and UN aid agencies to help Afghans, according to Afghan priorities. Canadians do not do the work for Afghans, they help Afghans build the capacity to do the work themselves, giving development and reconstruction an 'Afghan face.' A corollary is that improvements come only as fast as the emerging capacity will allow — an 'Afghan pace,' so there is no advantage in simplistically throwing Canadian money, people or equipment at problems faster than they can be absorbed and used effectively. There is also no advantage in Canada trying to arbitrarily take action on its own, without international support.

Third, and perhaps most important, Canada has taken sides in this issue. Along with its allies, Canada has decided to stand with the democratically elected government of Afghanistan. Therefore, the mission is not, and never has been, anything akin to a peacekeeping mission. Peace, stability and reconstruction are important aims, but so is the effort to help Afghan security forces eliminate the Taliban insurgency, in order to establish not just any security environment, but one in which democracy and human rights flourish. If

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4 Mackay, The Honourable Peter. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence, June 6, 2006. p. 1.

5 See the UNAMA website at <http://www.unama-afg.org>.

6 See the ISAF website at <http://www.nato.int/ISAF/index.htm>.

generic security were the only aim, then it could be attained under either a Taliban regime or a democratic Afghan government. The issue is really which of those two forms of government provides Afghans with hope, dignity and prosperity in the future. The Committee believes any future under a feudal Taliban regime would simply bring a return to repression, a largely medieval standard of living and an absence of human dignity. Canada has chosen to join the international community in helping Afghanistan to build a democratic and prosperous future and the Canadian Forces will continue to support Afghan security forces in their fight against Taliban insurgents.

## GOVERNMENT POLICY BACKGROUND

Government international policy describes the Canadian ‘whole-of-government’ approach in Afghanistan as being an effort that integrates civilian, government and military resources, to offer a broad-based contribution to the international effort to rebuild Afghanistan. While the term might be novel, the idea is not. Nations have always applied all elements of national power when engaged in any serious effort abroad, particularly one in which important national interests are at stake.

Government policy also mentions 3 “Ds”, a term meant to describe the cooperative application of defence, diplomatic and developmental efforts to complex conflict and post-conflict situations. The overall Canadian mission in Afghanistan<sup>7</sup> does indeed feature all three “Ds”, but, in order to understand the focus of this report, it is necessary to understand how each “D” is applied.

The first “D” is diplomacy. Reporting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Arif Lalani is located in the Canadian Embassy in Kabul. He is the head of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan<sup>8</sup> and pursues Canadian diplomatic activity with the government of Afghanistan and other countries in the region as required. Given the military focus of this study, diplomatic elements are discussed in this report only in so far as they directly impact the CF mission in Afghanistan.

Development — the second “D” — is largely actioned through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which contributes to the international development and reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. Along with other major international donors, CIDA supports Afghan government approved national programs and projects

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7 See the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website for the Afghanistan mission at <http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/menu-en.asp>. Also see the Department of National Defence Afghanistan website at [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/afghanistan/index\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/afghanistan/index_e.asp). The Canadian International Development Agency Afghanistan website is at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-129153625-S6T>.

8 During the Committee’s visit to Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) in January 2006, the Commander of JTF-Afg, Brigadier General Tim Grant was unequivocal in stating that Ambassador Sproule was the ‘head Canadian in country.’

whose delivery is overseen by reputable multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The important point here is that CIDA works through other international organizations, it does not directly undertake development or reconstruction work itself. It supports international programmes and projects throughout the country, as well as in Kandahar Province. In keeping with our study mandate, this report deals only with development activity having direct relevance to the Canadian Forces mission in Kandahar Province.

During its study, the Committee learned that there are subtle, but important differences among the related terms “aid,” “development,” “reconstruction” and “civil-military cooperation (CIMIC)”. These will be further explored in Chapter 4.

The third “D” — defence — is also not as straightforward as it appears. Canada’s defence contribution is directed at security sector reform, one of the three main pillars of the international effort in Afghanistan. While all Canadian Forces elements in Afghanistan remain under national Canadian command, Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) itself is also assigned under operational command of NATO. NATO, not Canada, is responsible for the overall conduct of military operations in Afghanistan. Canada does not act independently in this regard. While Canada always has a ‘veto’ over how its military forces are used, and Canada is responsible for the conduct of its soldiers in operations, Canadian operational influence is applied, as it always has been, through the NATO chain of command, where any such influence achieved is invariably in proportion to the practical contribution being made.<sup>9</sup>

## THE REPORT

Given the complexity of Canada’s mission in Afghanistan, the Committee felt that it was important to explain general aspects of the mission as a whole and offer a description of the Canadian Forces operations, to correct public misperceptions of what our soldiers are doing. Canadian troops are doing much more than simply fighting the Taliban. In fact, they are doing much more than either the government or the media have

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9 In addition to formal national diplomatic representation at various levels in NATO, it is interesting to note that Canadians have occupied a number of important positions within the NATO military hierarchy during our presence in Afghanistan. General R.R. Henault, a former CDS, has been Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, the alliance’s senior military advisory council, since 2004. Major General Ivan Fenton served as the Assistant Director of Operations on the Military Staff at NATO Headquarters from 2004-2007 as well. During 2006, Major General Angus Watt was the Deputy Commander Air in ISAF Headquarters. Recently, Brigadier General Jim Ferron was appointed Chief of the ISAF intelligence staff and Brigadier General Marquis Hainse will soon take up duties as the Deputy Commander of ISAF Regional Command South. Colonel Mike Kampman is the Chief of Staff in Regional Command South Headquarters. The government has also announced that Canada will provide the Commander of Regional Command South again, later in 2007 (Major General Marc Lessard is currently in training for the role) and will seek to provide the Commander of ISAF in 2008.

reported. The first chapter presents the context of the mission. The second chapter is devoted to an examination of the Canadian Forces mission. Chapter 3 focuses on the issues specifically identified in our study mandate:

- a. The duration of the mission;
- b. The state of personnel;
- c. The state of equipment;
- d. The relationship between combat operations, development and reconstruction;
- e. Military involvement in the delivery of humanitarian aid, development or reconstruction;
- f. Balance;
- g. Criteria for assessing mission effectiveness; and
- h. Mission success and other international obligations.

Not surprisingly, the Committee identified other important issues in the course of its work and they are addressed in Chapter 4. They include:

- a. Informing Canadians and Parliament;
- b. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border;
- c. The status of women in Afghanistan;
- d. Poppy crop eradication;
- e. Detainee handling and transfer;
- f. Contributing to the training of the Afghan National Security Forces; and
- g. Sharing the burden.





## CHAPTER 1 — THE CONTEXT

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### GENERAL

Perhaps the most important lesson the Committee learned is that our Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is a highly complex and noble operation. It is extremely difficult and will not be ended by any quick fixes. It is also apparent that apart from those with a direct interest, ordinary Canadians have not heard enough about this mission. Consequently, we feel there is an incomplete understanding of what is really going on in Afghanistan and therefore some misperception of what our Canadian Forces are doing.

Along with this lack of information, the Committee has been surprised by the pessimism of many commentators who tend to think the Afghanistan problem is perhaps just too difficult. These adverse perceptions are, in part, aggravated by the absence of a coherent government communication plan that provides Parliamentarians with up-to-date information on the details of the many accomplishments of JTF-Afg. More transparency and clarity would go a long way to helping Canadians gain a better and more complete understanding of the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan.

Canadian troops fought alongside United States (US) forces and other coalition forces in Afghanistan in early 2002, against the remnants of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, as part of Canada's contribution to the global war on terrorism. Four Canadian soldiers died in that campaign. Canadian Forces units returned to Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led ISAF in 2003, taking up security duties in Kabul and its surrounding area. Before they left in 2005, three more soldiers had been killed in action. The Canadian Forces took over leadership of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar in August 2005 and in early 2006 provided the command element and an infantry battle group for the Multinational Brigade in Regional Command South, as part of the US Operation Enduring Freedom. Spring and summer fighting was intense and before Canadian troops reverted to ISAF command at the end of July 2006, another 13 Canadian soldiers and one Canadian diplomat had been killed. For the rest of 2006, ISAF operations offered no respite for our troops. By the end of the year, a further 25 Canadian soldiers were killed in action, bringing the overall total of Canadian dead in Afghanistan since 2002, to 45. Another 13 soldiers have died in Afghanistan in 2007. Most Canadians know this much.

However, the Committee also heard that, since 2003, both the government and the media have offered neither the breadth nor depth of information about the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan, to the extent required by Canadians to fully understand

why our troops are there and what they are doing.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, the Committee notes the government's release of a report explaining the progress being made by the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

## CANADA AND AFGHANISTAN

Officially known as the Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions, the Bonn Agreement was the initial series of agreements intended to re-create the State of Afghanistan, after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. There had been no popularly-agreed government in Afghanistan since 1979, so it was felt necessary to have a transition period before a permanent government was established. In December 2001, a number of prominent Afghans<sup>3</sup> met under UN auspices in Bonn, Germany, to decide on a plan for governing the country; as a result, the Afghan Interim Authority was inaugurated on December 22, 2001 with a six-month mandate to be followed by a two-year Transitional Authority, after which elections are to be held.

Bonn Agreement conditions were met with the conclusion of the Presidential election in 2004 and national and parliamentary elections in 2005.

Following on from the Bonn Agreement, the Afghanistan Compact was developed during a conference held in London from January 31 to February 1, 2006. It provides the framework for international community engagement in Afghanistan for the period 2006-2011. Representatives from the international community, including Canada, attended the conference, which was co-chaired by Afghanistan, the UN and the United Kingdom (UK). Canada pledged its full support.

The Compact sets out detailed outcomes and benchmarks, with timelines for their delivery. It also contains mutual obligations that aim to ensure greater coherence of efforts between the Afghan government and the international community.

The Compact is not a simple aid package. It seeks to build lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions, with particular emphasis on developing human capital. It identifies three critical and interdependent areas of activity:

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- 1 Among those who brought this point up was James Appathurai, the NATO Spokesman. He told the Committee ' [...] because the press corps certainly does not want to cover, will not cover, except in the most extreme circumstances, the positive developments [...] | [...] ask them to cover the building of a school or a road. They were very clear. They will not do it. They will do it if the school burns down.
  - 2 Government of Canada. *Canada's Mission in Afghanistan*.
  - 3 Some influential Afghans chose not to attend. Among them was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former Afghan Prime Minister, who objected to US influence and presence in Afghanistan. He remains 'at large' and an important leader among insurgent groups.

- a. Security;
- b. Governance, the rule of law and human rights; and
- c. Economic and social development.

Afghanistan and the international community have clear interests in seeing the Afghanistan Compact succeed, but it will not be easy. We have come to the current situation because Afghanistan was a failing and failed state for over 30 years. A review of this tragic degeneration will help us understand the magnitude of the challenge that faces Afghanistan, and Canada, now.

#### **ONCE A FAILING STATE ...<sup>4</sup>**

Afghanistan is a rugged, sparsely populated mountainous country of approximately 652,000 square kilometres (about the size of Manitoba). It shares borders with China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and a sector of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir that is controlled by Pakistan. About half of the country is more than 2,000 meters above sea level. A 2006 estimate puts the population of Afghanistan at about 31.1 million people.<sup>5</sup> The major languages are Pashto and Dari/Farsi.

The southern province of Kandahar, in which the Canadian Forces mission is based, is one of 34 provinces in Afghanistan. It has a population of about 1 million and an area over 54,000 square kilometres (about the size of Nova Scotia). According to a 2006 estimate, over 450,000 people live in Kandahar City, the provincial capital.

Afghanistan joined the UN in 1946. The country has rarely been controlled by an effective central government because the historical influence of tribal leaders and local warlords has thwarted centralized rule from Kabul.

In 1973, King Zahir Shah was overthrown in a coup by his cousin and former Prime Minister, Muhammad Daud. In April 1978, leftist military officers overthrew and killed Daud, and Noor Muhammad Taraki became President. In September 1979 after a long and bitter insurgency, Taraki was deposed and later killed. He was replaced by his deputy, Hafizullah Amin, who also failed to suppress the rebellion. Faced with instability on its southern border, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) sent military forces into Afghanistan on December 25, 1979 and took control of Kabul. Babrak Karmal, leader of a less hard-line faction, was installed as President, but the rebellion persisted. Insurgent mujahedeen

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4 Based on United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan website at <http://www.unama-afg.org/about/info.htm>.

5 CountryReports.org at <http://www.countryreports.org/country.aspx?countryid=1>

fighters who, given the Cold War context of the time, were covertly funded and equipped by the US, battled Soviet troops throughout the country for the next decade.

In November 1987, Karmal was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah. Earlier that year, under the auspices of the UN, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the USSR and the US signed Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan. These agreements provided for an end to foreign intervention in Afghanistan, and the USSR began withdrawing its forces. The UN set up a mission to monitor the withdrawal of foreign forces — the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) — and made plans to support the anticipated repatriation of refugees. The Soviet withdrawal was completed in February 1989. The rebels who had not signed the agreements, however, continued fighting against Najibullah's government.

As civil war between various factions continued following the Soviet withdrawal, the number of civilians fleeing the country increased steadily, and Afghanistan suffered the world's leading refugee crisis. By 1990, there were 6.3 million civilians in exile — 3.3 million in Pakistan and 3 million in Iran.

Fighting intensified in 1992. Rebel forces closed in on Kabul and the Najibullah government collapsed. On April 24, 1992, the Peshawar Accord brought the agreement of leaders of the mujahedeen (guerrilla) forces — except one, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar — to form a government under Sigbatullah Mojaddedi. According to the agreement, Mojaddedi would head a Transitional Council for two months. He would then be replaced by a Leadership Council to last four months that would be headed by Burhannudin Rabbani.

Rabbani was declared President of the Islamic State in Afghanistan in July 1992. Under the Accord, he was to have relinquished power in October, but he didn't. By that time, Ahmad Shah Massoud, Rabbani's Minister of Defense, was engaged in armed confrontation with Hekmatyar in Kabul.

In 1993, two peace accords — in Islamabad on March 7 and Jalalabad on 18 May — were negotiated between President Rabbani and eight other Afghan leaders. The parties agreed to form a government for 18 months, to set in motion an electoral process. In December 1993, the UN established the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) to canvass a broad spectrum of Afghan leaders for their views on how the UN could best help with national reconciliation and reconstruction.

Despite these positive developments, Kabul was soon besieged again, first by various mujahedeen factions, and then by the Taliban, a movement with its foundations in Kandahar. The movement initially gained momentum as an opposition to the mujahedeen, whom the Taliban came to regard as having corrupted Afghan society.

In late 1994 and early 1995, the Taliban continued to grow in strength, and they took control of much of southern and western Afghanistan, including Kandahar and Herat.

In September 1996, the Taliban took Kabul. The government retreated to Taloqan and Mazar-i-Sharif and formed a new coalition called the Northern Alliance.

Fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance groups continued between 1997 and 2000 with little change in military positions. In July and August 1998, the Taliban overran many northern provinces, as well as the cities of Mazar-i-Sharif and Taloqan, where the government had relocated. A major massacre of thousands of civilians took place in Mazar after the Taliban took the city.

Following the August 7, 1998 terrorist bomb attacks on US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Tanzania, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution, expressing concern at the continuing presence of terrorists in the territory of Afghanistan. It condemned attacks on UN personnel in Taliban-held areas, including the killing of two Afghan staff members of the World Food Program (WFP) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Jalalabad, and of the Military Adviser to UNSMA in Kabul. It also condemned the capture of the Consulate-General of Iran in Mazar-i-Sharif.

On December 8, 1998, another UN Security Council resolution demanded that the Taliban stop providing sanctuary and training for international terrorists and that all Afghan factions cooperate in bringing indicted terrorists to justice. A week later, after the Taliban failed to respond to this demand, the UN Security Council applied broad sanctions under the UN Charter.

In early 1999, yet another UN Security Council resolution noted that Osama bin Laden had been indicted by the US for the August 1998 embassy bombings and demanded that the Taliban turn him over to the appropriate authorities to be brought to justice. This too was ignored and further sanctions were applied.

There had been other issues. In a statement on October 22, 1999, the UN Security Council also expressed profound distress over reports of involvement in the fighting, on the Taliban side, of thousands of non-Afghan nationals, some of whom were below the age of 14. It noted the seriously deteriorating humanitarian situation and the worsening human rights situation—including forced displacements of civilian populations, summary executions, abuse and arbitrary detention of civilians, violence against women and girls, and indiscriminate bombing. The capture of Iran's Consulate-General in Mazar-i-Sharif, along with the murder of Iranian diplomats and a journalist, were described as flagrant violations of international law. Deeply disturbed by a significant increase in the cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs, especially in Taliban-controlled areas, the UN Security Council demanded that such illegal activities be halted.

The conflict within Afghanistan continued through 2000 and 2001. Political and security problems, in the absence of an effective government, caused frequent interruptions in the flow of humanitarian assistance, and various crises required temporary departures of UN and non-governmental aid workers.

Already suffering from the devastating effects of civil war, in the late 1990s the people of Afghanistan also faced a series of natural disasters — starting with earthquakes in February and May 1998 that killed more than 7,000 and affected the livelihoods and shelter of a further 165,000. In June, some 6,000 people were killed in severe flooding. Also at that time, a severe and protracted drought began.

In the face of such a daunting situation, the UN delivered more than 94,000 tons of food aid to 1.13 million people in 2000 alone, while vaccinating some 5.3 million children against polio and providing support for non-discriminatory education to more than 300,000 children — including home schooling projects for girls. Nevertheless, one quarter of all children born in Afghanistan were dying of preventable diseases before the age of five. Afghan women were nearly five times more likely to die in childbirth than in other developing countries. Typhoid and cholera epidemics were rampant, and pneumonia and malaria had re-emerged as public health threats. The condition of women had deteriorated markedly, and only one in 20 girls received any kind of education.

To compound the problem, refugees were returning to what the UN Mine Clearance Program has called the most heavily mined country in the world, with a staggering 9.7 million land mines. As part of its efforts, the program cleared some 68 square kilometres of previously affected areas, but obviously much remained to be done.

On September 4, 2001, the UN issued a report entitled *The Deepening Crisis*, which highlighted the desperate and worsening humanitarian situation faced by Afghans. The crisis, however, would only get worse.

### **... THEN A FAILED STATE<sup>6</sup>**

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, the Taliban government of Afghanistan refused US demands to hand over Osama bin Laden and therefore became a target of US military might.

The US military response commenced on October 7, 2001. US objectives were to make clear to Taliban leaders that the harbouring of terrorists is unacceptable, to acquire intelligence on al Qaeda and Taliban resources, to develop relations with groups opposed

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6 Some of this information is based on information taken from GlobalSecurity.org at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom.htm>. Accessed November 2006.

to the Taliban, to prevent the use of Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists, and to destroy the Taliban military allowing opposition forces to succeed in their struggle.<sup>7</sup> Finally, military force would help facilitate the delivering of humanitarian supplies to the Afghan people.

In December 2001, major leaders from the Afghan opposition groups and diaspora met in Bonn, Germany, and agreed on a plan (the Bonn Agreement) for the formulation of a new democratic government. Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun from the southern city of Kandahar, was appointed Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority. In January 2002, the first milestone of the Bonn Agreement was achieved with the announcement of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga (Pashtun for “grand council” — a traditional forum in which tribal elders come together and settle affairs). An emergency Loya Jirga of some 1,500 delegates met in June 2002 to form the Transitional Administration of Interim President Hamid Karzai.

In 2004, the country convened a Constitutional Loya Jirga (Council of Elders) and ratified a new constitution the following year. Hamid Karzai also became the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2004.

Legislative elections were held in September 2005. The National Assembly — the first freely elected legislature in Afghanistan since 1973 — sat in December 2005.

However, Afghanistan’s tenuous security situation continued to threaten the gains of the recent transition, with incidents caused by terrorist and criminal activities, as well as factional clashes. The increase in poppy cultivation and narcotics trafficking continued to be of particular concern, as they further eroded the security environment. Consequently, assistance and development programmes suffered, as deployment of the UN personnel, NGOs and other humanitarian agencies was restricted due to concerns for their safety.

## **THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The government of Afghanistan is attempting to rebuild the country after over 30 years of conflict within its borders. It is also trying to establish a democratic government.

The current, democratically-elected Afghan government is weakened by endemic corruption, undermined by independent tribal warlords and opposed by the Taliban who are conducting an insurgency based in the southern and eastern provinces nearest the border with Pakistan. The insurgency has created a degree of insecurity that impedes reconstruction and development. While some successes have been enjoyed by

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7 US Department of Defence news briefing held at the Pentagon on October 7, 2001. At <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2001/10/mil-011007-usia04.htm>. Accessed November 2006.

international development efforts in the west and north, more remains to be done in the south and east.

The UN is coordinating humanitarian and development efforts within Afghanistan, including substantial development assistance from Canada. As well, Canada, along with other major NATO allies has contributed military forces to the UN-mandated, NATO-led ISAF that conducts military operations to neutralize Taliban forces, support the projection of Afghan government influence and protect development and reconstruction activity. While much remains to be done, considerable progress has been made.

During the summer and autumn of 2006, there were calls for an increase in NATO troop strength in the south. Canada, among others, expressed concern that not all NATO allies were sharing the combat burden equally. On the other hand, there has been criticism that what is needed is not more troops, but more development assistance. The way to 'win the hearts and minds' of Afghans, many say, is not with bullets or bombs, but with food and medicine. The Canadian mission is, in their view, unbalanced and needs more determined and robust diplomacy and development components.

On this issue, the Committee was constantly reminded that, for now at least, security trumps other concerns. In the end, among all the witnesses the Committee met, it found near unanimous agreement that additional development cannot happen without a commensurate increase in security and that security in the south was not yet adequate to permit widespread development assistance. However, the outlook is not entirely bleak. More Canadian reconstruction funds are now flowing into Kandahar.

Much like that which occurred in 2006, some sources expected another 'spring offensive' by the Taliban insurgents this year, but ISAF forces, Canadian troops among them, conducted pre-emptive operations to disrupt Taliban forces. In fact, in early 2007, NATO significantly increased its forces in the southern region and launched Operation Achilles against Taliban insurgents, mainly in neighbouring Helmand Province. James Appathurai, the NATO Spokesman explained that "since the Riga Summit (November 2006) [...] [NATO] has added about 7,000 troops to its force levels.," In the south, the number of troops has gone up during the past 18 months, from 1,000 to about 12,500, of which 2500 are Canadian.<sup>8</sup>

Canadian troops have been clearing Taliban out of the Panjwayi and Zhari districts, claiming success in finding and killing key Taliban leaders. Improved security has encouraged civilians to start returning and this, coupled with the Canadian government's

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8 Appathurai, James. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence, February 27, 2007. p. 16.



February 2007 announcement of the allocation of an additional \$200 million dollars<sup>9</sup> in reconstruction funds, over the next two years, makes for brighter days ahead in Kandahar Province.

Allied efforts must be recognized as well. The US is deploying another brigade into the eastern provinces of Afghanistan and has committed an additional \$11.8 billion in military and civilian aid over two years, mostly to pay for the expansion and training of the Afghan army and police. Britain too has augmented its forces in the south by an additional 2,000 troops and additional special operating forces are being deployed. The additional British forces have provided Regional Command South with a reserve battalion that can be deployed to address emergencies anywhere in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

The Australian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan Province have been working closely with Dutch forces. Despite the good reconstruction work being done, the Australian Minister of Defence noted recently in an Australian Ministry of Defence Newsletter<sup>11</sup> that his Government is sending a 300-strong Special Operations Task Group, to work within ISAF in the southern province of Uruzgan, to enhance provincial security, disrupt Taliban extremists' command and control and supply routes, support the development of the Afghan national security forces and help reinforce the legitimacy of the Afghan Government.

About 400 of a planned 1000 Polish troops have been operating in Afghanistan since early 2007. Poland has placed no caveats on their forces.<sup>12</sup> Germany is deploying an additional six reconnaissance aircraft and the Italians are sending surveillance drones and a transport plane.

"In the short term we will not remove the threat of the Taliban, but we will contain it," said British General David Richards, who completed his tour as ISAF's commander in February 2007. The betting is that the Taliban will not attempt another conventional battle but will intensify ambushes and suicide-bombings<sup>13</sup> and, in fact, no Taliban 'spring offensive' has materialized this year.

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9 The Prime Minister announced the funding on February 26, 2007. The Prime Minister's website says: "Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced up to \$200 million in additional funding for reconstruction and development activities in Afghanistan [...] The funding, to be disbursed this year and next on top of Canada's annual allocation of \$100 million to development activities in Afghanistan, will flow to five priority areas: governance and development (\$120 million); counter-narcotics (\$30 million); policing (\$20 million); de-mining (\$20 million); and road construction (\$10 million)." At <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=1&id=1552>.

10 ISAF New Release. *British troops ready to respond to immediate threats*. May 17, 2007. At [http://www.nato.int/isaf/Update/Press\\_Releases/newsrelease/2007/pr070517-377.htm](http://www.nato.int/isaf/Update/Press_Releases/newsrelease/2007/pr070517-377.htm).

11 *Defence Direct*, April 2007. At <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/defencedirect/apr2007/april.htm>

12 Bogdan, Zaryn. *Polish Radio External Service*. May 10, 2007. At <http://www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/gb/dokument.aspx?iid=52203>.

13 "A Double Spring Offensive." *The Economist*. Print edition. February 22, 2007.

Beyond the military sphere, signs of progress are apparent in many parts of the country, not the least of which is the growth in education and health care and the return of more than four million refugees. According to Christopher Alexander, the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Kabul, the health care system now allows 85% of Afghans to have access to primary health care (from virtually 0% under the previous Taliban regime); 7.3 million children have been vaccinated; 5.4 million children (34% of them girls) are attending schools; the national GDP was \$4 billion in 2002, but has grown to \$8.9 billion in 2006. Currency reform has taken hold and the national budget is balanced.<sup>14</sup>

So Canada and NATO entered the spring of 2007 with guarded optimism, better prepared than last year, but still facing the same melange of threats.

## THREATS

### The Taliban

Taliban and al Qaeda insurgencies, fuelled by drug traffickers, corrupt officials and common criminals, are equally active in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> The Taliban, along with elements led by Afghan Islamist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's<sup>16</sup> and foreign jihadi fighters<sup>17</sup> are the primary, direct military threat to the security of Afghanistan and the authority of the duly elected Afghan government in southern Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> They are also the main military threat facing Canadian troops in Kandahar province.

Afghans are determined, brave fighters who have historically repelled invaders and occupiers by asymmetric insurgency warfare. They are not known for fighting pitched conventional battles in large numbers, but they will infest an area and wear down an enemy with vicious hit and run attacks. The Committee often heard people wondering how we could hope for any military success in Afghanistan, given Afghan success at defeating occupying armies of Alexander the Great, the British and the Soviet Union. Such questions greatly over-simplify the circumstances and are perhaps unrelated to

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14 Alexander, Christopher. *Evidence*. Standing Committee of National Defence, February 27, 2007. p. 16.

15 Rubin, Barnett R. and Abubakar Siddique. "Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate." *Special Report*. United States Institute of Peace, October 2006.

16 Gulbuddin Hekmatyar served twice as Afghanistan's Prime Minister in the 1990s, but was forced to flee to Iran before the end of the decade. He opposed the US invasion of Afghanistan and ended up leading an insurgency against the Afghan government. He was invited to participate in the Bonn Agreement in 2001, but refused, complaining about American interference. He remains at large, still sponsoring insurgent attacks against the Afghanistan government and foreign troops in the country.

17 Ibid. p. 3.

18 Jones, Seth. "Pakistan's Dangerous Game." *Survival* Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring 2007. pp. 15-32.

current ISAF operations. Unlike its historical predecessors, ISAF is not an invading or occupation force. It is in Afghanistan at the request of the duly elected Afghan government and its mission is sanctioned by the UN.

The word *Taliban* is the Pashto plural form of the Arabic *تاليب* *Tālib*, "student". The Taliban are a strict Sunni puritanical Islamist and Pashtun-nationalist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001. They emerged from the ethnically Pashtun areas of Afghanistan. Many of the Taliban grew up in refugee camps in Pakistan and much of the current membership is drawn from the students of religious seminaries, or madrassas, in Pakistan.

The Taliban originated around 1993-1994. Pakistani military and intelligence authorities based in the city of Quetta, located near the border with Afghanistan, formed a militia movement consisting of religious students in Pakistani religious schools, to gain control of the Afghan mujahedeen government. The leader of the movement was Mullah Mohammed Omar. In early 1994, Omar gathered recruits from Islamic schools, and his movement gained momentum. In October 1994, about 200 Taliban seized the Afghan trading border town of Spin Boldak, thus opening a supply route for Pakistani aid to Afghan Taliban sympathizers, who were based in Kandahar.

The Afghan government refused to accept the presence of Pakistan-sponsored Taliban. Conflict escalated and a protracted battle ensued between Taliban and the government south of Kabul, eventually spreading to northern cities such as Herat and Kunduz. Pakistan began to aid, mobilize and expand the Taliban. A steady flow of graduates from Pakistani madrassas, gave the Taliban a reliable supply of new recruits.

The Taliban captured the Afghan capital of Kabul in 1996 and, by 1998, controlled over 90% of the country. Afghans then found themselves under the rule of an austere and puritanical regime that banned television, most forms of recreation, non-religious music and statues, such as the giant Buddhas in Bamiyan, which the Taliban destroyed in March 2001.

In 1996, Osama bin Laden moved to Afghanistan from Sudan. During Osama bin Laden's stay in Afghanistan, he had helped finance the Taliban. After al-Qaeda attacked US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the US began actively supporting the opposition Northern Alliance and demanding that the Taliban turn over Osama bin-Laden to the US government.<sup>19</sup> The Taliban protected bin Laden from extradition and continued to harbour him after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US.

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19 Ahmad Shah Massoud, the charismatic leader of the Northern Alliance was the target of a suicide attack on September 9, 2001, two days before the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, a timing considered significant by some commentators who believe Osama bin Laden ordered the assassination to ensure he would have the Taliban's protection and cooperation in Afghanistan.

On October 7, 2001, the US, aided by the UK, Canada, and a coalition of other countries, initiated military actions in Afghanistan. The ground campaign was mainly fought by the Northern Alliance, the remaining elements of the anti-Taliban forces, which the Taliban had never been able to destroy. In early December, the Taliban gave up their last city stronghold of Kandahar and retired to the mountainous wilderness along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. They were not, however, idle.

The Taliban re-emerged to threaten the October 2004 presidential election, but despite sporadic attacks in the weeks leading up to the vote, the election went off relatively smoothly. In late 2005, the Taliban introduced new tactics against American, Canadian and allied forces in southern Afghanistan, including the suicide bomb and other measures adapted from the war in Iraq. Some intelligence sources indicated the presence of foreign fighters too.

The insurgency continues. Less than 100 kilometres from Kandahar, just over the Pakistan-Afghan border, are the tribal lands of Baluchistan Province. The major city in this area is the Pakistani city of Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan. Some say the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters can operate in this area with impunity.<sup>20</sup> Others believe that the presence of the Taliban is not only being tolerated by the Pakistani government, but that it is being actively supported especially by the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organization.<sup>21</sup>

To make matters worse, some experts think Afghanistan is just one step away from becoming a narco-state.<sup>22</sup> The mixture of corrupt warlords, illegal drug traders and a massive poppy crop that provided most of the world's opium supply in 2006, operating in league with the Taliban, produces a formidable challenge.

The insurgency and the illicit drug trade cannot be controlled so long as the border with Pakistan remains uncontrolled. The Taliban still enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan, whether with the Pakistani government's approval (as President Karzai claims) or despite efforts to stop them (as President Musharraf insists). In the south-east, the Americans have reinforced their presence on the border with Pakistan. But in the Canadian and British

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20 Jones, Seth. "Flagging Ally: Pakistan's Lapses Are Hurting the War on Terror." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. January 14, 2007. Seth Jones is a RAND Corporation expert in Terrorism and Nation-building.

21 Lamb, Christina. "Britain says Pakistan is hiding Taliban chief." *Times Online*. October 8, 2006. At <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article665054.ece>. "Lieutenant-General David Richards will fly to Islamabad tomorrow to try to persuade Pervez Musharraf to rein in his military intelligence service, which Richards believes is training Taliban fighters to attack British troops."

22 Dodd, Mark. "Afghanistan warns of narco-state danger." *The Australian*. February 20, 2007. On February 19, 2007, Afghanistan's Ambassador to Australia, Mohammed Anwar Anwarzai, said, "Unfortunately, we are now on the verge of becoming a narco-state. I can confess to that."

sectors, the frontier is virtually unguarded. Despite NATO's planned reinforcements, there is unlikely to be more than a thin presence of special operations forces to watch over this part of the border.<sup>23</sup>

ISAF combat operations in southern Afghanistan during the past year highlighted the apparent ability of Pakistani-based Taliban fighters to cross undetected into Afghanistan and attack Afghan and ISAF (including Canadian) military forces. Often, these same Taliban forces, once defeated, were able to escape back across the border into Pakistan where they seem to have enjoyed a degree of safe haven. Afghan and NATO political leaders have been diplomatically active in putting pressure on Pakistani President Musharraf to rein in Taliban insurgents living in Pakistan. Musharraf, for his part, claims he is doing what he can. Minister of Foreign Affairs The Honourable Peter Mackay told the Committee:

While many efforts are being made, there is one reality that can't be denied, and that is that 40 million Pashtuns are estimated to live along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. It is from this tribal group that the Taliban insurgents who are attacking our troops derive most of their support [...] Moreover, it is estimated that some 30,000 Pashtuns move, effectively unhindered, back and forth across the Afghanistan border every day.<sup>24</sup>

Afghanistan-Pakistan border issues are covered more fully in Chapter 4.

The Taliban are not just attacking the ISAF forces. They have attacked mosques where moderate imams preach against them. They have attacked hospitals and other social services funded by the international community. They have murdered teachers who provide instruction to girls. One unidentified Taliban leader told al-Jazeera television, "By the will of God, we expect to gain the confidence and support of the Afghan people, especially their support for martyrdom operations, which will continue in the future. We already have a large group of Afghan freedom fighters who are waiting to volunteer in these martyrdom operations."<sup>25</sup>

On February 23, 2007, Radio Free Europe reported that groups of Taliban fighters had launched a series of attacks across western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan, beginning an expected spring offensive. NATO reported that Taliban forces were present in at least five southern and western provinces of Afghanistan — Helmand, Kandahar, Farah, Uruzgan, and Ghor. Earlier in the month, on February 2, 2007, Taliban elements seized the town of Musa Qala in Helmand Province and controlled the town about 25 kilometres from a key reconstruction project at the Kajaki hydroelectric dam. Meanwhile, correspondents at

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23 The Afghan Border Police are stationed at established crossing points, but they are not capable of conducting extensive border control operations.

24 Mackay, The Honourable Peter. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence, No. 24. November 22, 2006.

25 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. *In Depth Afghanistan: The Taliban, Afghanistan's Fundamentalist Leaders*, updated March 21, 2006.

Kajaki reported that several hundred British Royal Marines had been fighting on a daily basis to keep the Taliban far enough from the dam so that reconstruction work could continue.

In the western Farah Province, several hundred Taliban fighters seized the remote district of Bakwa on February 19. However, within 24 hours, the Taliban vacated Bakwa and a day later 200 Afghan troops deployed to the town unopposed. Also on February 19, in the eastern Kunar Province, US troops engaged Taliban fighters near the border with Pakistan. That same day, militants in the southern part of Uruzgan Province ambushed Afghan and NATO forces as they tried to dismantle a roadside bomb. Then, on February 20, a Taliban suicide bomber disguised as a doctor injured seven US soldiers when he blew himself up at a hospital in southeastern Khost Province.

In 2007, as expected by ISAF, the Taliban has reverted to more 'hit and run' tactics and suicide bombings directed at Afghan civilians, in an effort to turn them against ISAF forces and foreigners generally. They have attacked and 'retaken' isolated towns, melting away before having to face superior ISAF firepower. Previously, in 2006, whenever Taliban forces massed to take on ISAF forces directly, they were decisively defeated, as they were by Canadian troops in Op Mountain Thrust, Op Medusa and Op Falcon Summit. The former Commander of ISAF, British General David Richards told the Committee during a meeting in Afghanistan, in January 2007, that he felt the Taliban were over-rated as a conventional fighting force, but that did not mean they were not dangerous. For its part, ISAF has learned from its 2006 experiences and has been conducting its own aggressive operations in southern Afghanistan, to disrupt anticipated Taliban operations.

Operation Achilles was NATO's largest operation to date and it was launched in Helmand Province in March 2007, to establish a wide area of security around the Kajaki power dam, to enable needed repairs to take place and to ensure the dam would be able to function into the future, providing electric power to the region. A Canadian combat team under Major Alex Ruff was deployed to the Kandahar-Helmand provincial border area and conducted operations to block insurgents trying to escape from other allied NATO forces.

Other NATO operations were conducted throughout southern Afghanistan during the past three months and their collective effect has been to neutralize any significant insurgent spring offensive. By mid-April, US General Dan McNeill, the Commander of ISAF, said that an anticipated spring offensive by insurgents [...] [had] not materialized on a large scale, although he warned that violence in the country could still reach last year's levels.<sup>26</sup>

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26 Chivers, C.J. "Major Taliban offensive hasn't materialized, NATO General says." *International Herald Tribune*, Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

## Corruption, Warlords and Opium

While the Taliban may be the most direct military threat to the national security of Afghanistan, the poisonous mixture of widespread, ingrained corruption; independent warlords and a burgeoning illegal drug trade constitutes the most dangerous domestic threat. Professor Janice Stein of the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies has said President Karzai's government has an endemic problem of corruption and that to eradicate it will be a long process, so we must be reasonable in our expectations about how long it will take.<sup>27</sup>

Another example of a challenge to political reform in Afghanistan has been the role of warlords who have risen to power with both the Afghan government and the international community's apparent blessings. While various allegations of their involvement in crimes against humanity and war crimes persist, some remain notoriously corrupt. A great many warlords simultaneously work for government and rule almost independently of national strategies and priorities. This is one serious factor in the disillusionment of the population.<sup>28</sup>

The issue may linger a while. A revised version of a controversial bill granting amnesty to groups that allegedly committed war crimes was signed into law on March 10, 2007, by Afghan President Hamid Karzai after being approved by the Afghan parliament, which includes many former militia leaders. The resolution bars the state from independently prosecuting individuals for war crimes absent accusation from an alleged victim. It also extends immunity to all groups involved in pre-2002 conflicts, as opposed to only leaders of various factions alleged to have committed war crimes during the 1980s resistance against Soviet forces and war crimes committed during the country's civil war. The Taliban and other human rights violators active before the establishment of the December 2001 Interim Administration in Afghanistan are protected under the bill.<sup>29</sup> Critics say the law may violate Afghanistan's constitution as well as certain international human rights treaties.

There is also a strong perception amongst Afghans that external forces are using warlords, security force commanders and government officials for their own strategic purposes. Such manipulation seriously undermines both the rights and livelihoods of Afghans.<sup>30</sup>

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27 Stein, Professor Janice. Appearing on *The Agenda*. TV Ontario, February 20, 2007.

28 ACBAR. Brief to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Afghanistan.

29 Price, Caitlin. "Afghanistan president signs war crimes amnesty bill into law." *Jurist Legal News and Research*. University of Pittsburgh, Sunday, March 11, 2007. At <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/paperchase/2007/03/afghanistan-president-signs-war-crimes.php>.

30 ACBAR.

Last, but certainly not least, the drug economy is booming, despite extensive attempts to wipe out opium production. International efforts to eradicate the poppy crop failed so far. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), opium poppy production in the country reached a record 6,100 metric tons in 2006, beating the 2005 total by 49 percent. Poppy crop eradication programmes have tended to affect the poorest farmers who, in the absence of a viable alternative crop, are left with essentially two choices — continuing poverty or working for the Taliban.

Illicit drugs breed corruption. Counter-narcotics efforts provide leverage for corrupt officials to extract enormous bribes from traffickers. Such corruption has attracted former militia commanders who joined the Ministry of the Interior after being demobilized. Police chief posts in poppy-growing districts are reputedly sold to the highest bidder: as much as \$100,000 is paid for a six-month appointment to a position with a monthly salary of \$60. And while the Taliban have protected some small farmers against eradication efforts, not single high-ranking government official has been prosecuted for drug-related corruption.<sup>31</sup>

A detailed discussion of all these issues is beyond the mandate of our study and Canadian military forces do not have a direct role in any of these areas. They do not participate in poppy crop eradication, nor do they engage in any counter-narcotics operations. They may however, have some positive influence on Afghans as they work with and mentor them in various activities, from employing local Afghans to mentoring Afghan National Army (ANA) leaders. Beyond that, a full investigation of these troubling issues must be left to a future study.

### **Our Own Impatience**

The Committee was not sure how to address this issue and it too may be outside our mandate, but it did strike us that much of the debate of Canada's overall Afghanistan mission, and specifically of the military mission, seemed to be characterized by a certain impatience to 'get it over with.' This may be a manifestation of our tendency to look at the problem through Western eyes and, frankly, view it as somewhat of a distraction from what we should be doing with our lives here in Canada. Afghans do not have the luxury of looking at their predicament in such a detached way.

Viewed through a historian's lens it might be noticed that since the Second World War, Western tolerance for protracted conflict has become quite limited. Public opinion at home, detached as it is from the reality of the battlefield, can turn on a dime and force governments to bring the troops home, just because citizens feel they have had enough.<sup>32</sup>

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31 Rubin, Barnett. "Saving Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2007. At <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070101faessay86105/barnett-r-rubin/saving-afghanistan.html>.

32 US forces were consistently militarily successful throughout the Vietnam War, but that record was no match for the anti-war movement. In the eyes of Americans, the war had simply gone on for too long, at too high a price for little apparent gain.



In some ways, this sounds a little selfish, especially when such considerations do not include any attempt to understand what might happen to those we are trying to help if we pack up and go home.

Virtually all witnesses told the Committee that it will take decades to get Afghanistan back on its feet as a thriving member of the international community. “Balkan-like time”<sup>33</sup> is how Ambassador Christopher Alexander described the expected time-line.<sup>34</sup>

In the end, the Committee came to think that uninformed impatience at home might have some adverse impact on our national will and therefore have a negative influence on our determination to do what is required to achieve strategic objectives set by Government. We did not dwell on this point, but it did add to our consideration of the roles played by government and the media in exercising their responsibilities to keep Canadians informed of the mission.

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33 The United Nations Protection Force first entered Croatia in 1992. The NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) entered Bosnia in 1995. It became the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 1996. Military forces, now under European Union command, remain in the Bosnia-Herzegovina today.

34 Alexander, Christopher. UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (Political Affairs) in Afghanistan, appearing before the Committee on February 27, 2007.



## CHAPTER 2 — THE MISSION

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Question: What is the most important thing Afghans need right now?

Answer: We need security, electricity and clean water.

Ahmadsha, from Kandahar City  
Provincial Reconstruction Team website at

<http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/library/kprt-en.asp> May 2007.

### GENERAL

While much of this report tends to concentrate on the mission as we found it late in 2006 and early 2007, the Committee wants to highlight the point that the Canadian Forces returned to Kandahar in the summer of 2005, to take over the PRT. Then in early 2006, Brigadier-General David Fraser and the 1 PPCLI Battle Group deployed to lead ISAF operations against the Taliban, who had been re-establishing their forces in Kandahar Province ever since they were ejected by the US in 2001.

Upon his arrival in February 2006, Brigadier-General Fraser took command of the Multinational Brigade in Regional Command South, including a complement of US forces under command.<sup>1</sup> During the height of summer fighting the Multinational Brigade conducted a transition to ISAF command while simultaneously rotating fresh troops from Canada. Canadian troops assisted UK forces getting into Helmand (Major Bill Fletcher went to Sangin, originally for five days, but was finally brought out after five weeks), and other Canadian elements assisted the Dutch deployment into Uruzugan Province, flying about 1,000 Dutch soldiers in Canadian C130 Hercules aircraft. Canadian troops received extensive accolades from the US, UK and the Netherlands. Not much of this was known at home.

In September 2006, Op Medusa was ISAF's first major military operation and its aim was to clear Taliban insurgents from a fortified position in Pashmul, about 30 km west of Kandahar City. It was a success, led by Canadians. Press reports indicated that, in the first few days of fighting, more than 200 insurgents were killed and about 80 captured. Another insurgent group of about 180 fled.<sup>2</sup> The Taliban had threatened to take Kandahar

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1 The US has traditionally not allowed its military forces to be directed by foreign commanders in operations. It was an indication of the confidence they have in the quality of Canadian military leadership that US forces were placed under Canadian operational command in Afghanistan.

2 McArthur, Donald. "Canadian troops press ahead in Op Medusa." *Canwest News Service, Windsor Star*. September 6, 2006. At <http://www.canada.com/globaltv/national/story.html?id=57f6ad09-1281-4cf9-b1ca-2c90d4ce8154>.

and defeat NATO in the process, but it was the insurgents who were defeated. Canadian troops beat them. This was the Taliban's first defeat in this area since 2001, according to the Afghanistan Ministry of Defence and the Chief of the Afghan armed forces.

Op Baaz Tsuka (Falcon Summit) followed, in December 2006. It built on the success of Op Medusa and aimed to establish an enduring and stable environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development initiatives for the people of the Zhari and Panjwayi districts. Operations were carried out in conjunction with Afghan National Security forces. ISAF and Afghan military forces worked together with tribal elders and district leaders in an effort to provide assistance and targeted development directly to the people of Zhari and Panjwayi.<sup>3</sup> This operation too was successful in driving insurgents away, so that development and reconstruction activity could begin.

The Taliban did not achieve any of their objectives in 2006.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the year, General David Richards, the ISAF Commander, was able to note that in three of the five ISAF Regions, there was more than a 40% reduction in attacks on ISAF troops in December 2006, compared with December 2005. As well, the overall insurgent incident total dropped from a peak of 913 in August to a low of 342 in December 2006.

All this is recent history, however. It will be helpful to go back a bit and review how we got to where we are today.

## THE MANDATE

The Bonn Agreement<sup>5</sup> called for an Interim Authority to be established in Afghanistan on December 22, 2001. In addition to asking for the assistance of the international community in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces, and in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure, the Agreement included an explicit invitation from the Interim Authority for the deployment of a UN-mandated military force to assist in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas.

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3 NATO Press Release. "Operation Baaz Tsuka will send a strong message to Taliban from Afghan people." December 15, 2006.

4 General David Richards, Commander ISAF, in a briefing to the Standing Committee on National Defence, in Kandahar, January 26, 2007. He listed the Taliban aims for 2006 as being (1) to take Kandahar; (2) to remove the British troops from Helmand Province; and (3) to continue offensive operations throughout the winter (2006-07). None of these aims were attained.

5 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions*. At [http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/\\_nonUN%20Docs/\\_Internation-Conferences&Forums/Bonn-Talks/bonn.htm](http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/_nonUN%20Docs/_Internation-Conferences&Forums/Bonn-Talks/bonn.htm).

On December 20, 2001, UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (2001) authorized the establishment of ISAF to help the Interim Authority maintain security in Kabul. ISAF could, as appropriate, expand to other urban centres and areas.<sup>6</sup> Then, on 22 December 2001, the first of the ISAF troops were deployed, under British control.

By early February 2003, Canada had been asked to participate in ISAF. Then Minister of National Defence, The Honourable John McCallum, told the House of Commons:

[...] Canada has been approached by the international community for assistance in maintaining peace and security in Afghanistan for the UN mandated mission in Kabul. Canada is willing to serve with a battle group and a brigade headquarters for a period of one year, starting late this summer. We are currently in discussion with a number of potential partners.<sup>7</sup>

In April 2003, Minister McCallum explained in the House of Commons, “ [...]we are very proud that we will be sending 1,500 to 2,000 troops to Afghanistan for six months and another 1,500 to 2,000 for the following six months.”<sup>8</sup> Canadian troops were on the ground later that summer and the Canadian contingent provided the bulk of ISAF forces in Kabul. About the same time, in August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF and the UN Security Council authorized ISAF to deploy its forces beyond Kabul, to help stabilize the security situation and allow the extension of the government’s authority throughout the country.

In support of ISAF expansion, the Canadian government decided to re-deploy the Canadian Forces personnel from Kabul to Kandahar, to take over a US Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in 2005. The Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of National Defence at the time, explained to the House of Commons:

[...]we have decided, with our NATO allies, to increase Canada's military commitment to Afghanistan over the next several months. In fact, by early next year, our military presence and role in Afghanistan will be greater and more varied than it has been to date, notwithstanding significant contributions over the past three years[...]

Canada chose to deploy a provincial reconstruction team to Kandahar, because we have been there before. We know the region well. It is also one of the provinces most in need of security and rebuilding[...]

In February, the Canadian Forces will also be deploying into Kandahar a brigade headquarters of about 350 persons that will command the multinational force there for nine months. At the same time, we will be deploying a task force of about 1,000 troops into Kandahar for one year[...]

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6 Ibid., Annex I.

7 McCallum, The Honourable John. *Hansard*. February 12, 2003.

8 Ibid., *Hansard*. April 28, 2003.

Earlier, when he visited Afghanistan on 12 October 2005, Minister Graham had noted in a press conference:

I think there's no question but that the mission in Kandahar is a much more dangerous mission [...] We've always said that [...] we were under no illusions that this would be an easy PRT[...] So our troops were ready and prepared to face the fact that they may have to face attacks [...] it will be more in the nature of a combat mission where they will be out looking for people who are doing exactly this type of thing to try and destabilize the country and they'll be on the lookout for them. That's going to be their job is to go out and meet them in the field and destroy them and destroy their capacity to attack our troops and to attack innocent Afghan people.<sup>9</sup>

A change in the government brought no substantial change in the mission. In summarizing his remarks to the House of Commons during a debate on the Afghanistan deployment, The Honourable Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence said, "Our Canadian Forces are in Afghanistan because it is in our national interest, because we have the responsibility to take a leadership role in world affairs and because Afghans need us and want us to help them." On May 30, 2006, appearing before the Committee, he was more explicit:

...Canada is in Afghanistan to ensure the security of Canadians... .

[W]e need to address threats to our security before they reach our shores. Canada therefore has a responsibility to ensure that the extremists who would harm us and our allies can no longer find refuge in Afghanistan ....

We're also in Afghanistan in support of our friends and allies in the G-8, NATO, and the United Nations, who all consider Afghanistan a priority. As a responsible member of the international community....

And third, Canada is in Afghanistan for the sake of the Afghan people.

He also noted that the conditions outlined in the Afghanistan Compact<sup>10</sup> would provide the measures of success for the mission:

As part of our commitment to Afghanistan, Canada signed the Afghanistan Compact, which clearly outlines how the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, and the international community will work together over the next five years to ensure that the multilateral efforts in Afghanistan are successful. The compact also clearly identifies benchmarks against which to evaluate progress made in Afghanistan.

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9 The Honourable Bill Graham. *Teleconference Transcript*. October 12, 2005. DND Website at [http://www.dnd.ca/site/newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=1778](http://www.dnd.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1778).

10 A copy of the Afghan Compact can be seen at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/20060130%20Afghanistan%20Compact%20Final%20Final.0.doc>.

We should remember however, that within Canada's overall mission in Afghanistan, National Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development all have their own different — but hopefully complementary — priorities. Specific tasks must be coordinated in order to be effective.

In summary, Canada's overall effort in Afghanistan has been endorsed by successive UN Security Council Resolutions, for the past five years. The most recent Security Council Resolution, 1746 of March 23, 2007, extended mandate of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and ISAF until March 23, 2008.

## **THE MISSION**

The Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan has been somewhat misunderstood by Canadians, subject to unbalanced reporting by the media and inadequately explained by the government.

The mission never has been and never will be a peacekeeping mission. This is not a mission in which Canada is an impartial observer. We have chosen to stand with the democratically elected Government of Afghanistan and against the insurgency that opposes it.

It is also important to understand that Canada is not the 'lead' nation. The UN coordinates activity of the international community in Afghanistan. The security agenda is largely managed by ISAF. While Canada provides the leadership of the Kandahar PRT, the PRT is not a "Canadian" entity *per se*. The Kandahar PRT is an ISAF element. The PRT exists to facilitate the delivery of development and reconstruction from any international donor, not just Canadian agencies. While Canada can certainly provide development and reconstruction support *through* the PRT, it does not control all PRT reconstruction activity.

Canadian Brigadier-General Tim Grant exercises national command over the Canadian Forces in theatre, on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Brigadier-General Grant also exercises operational command over the Canadian Forces elements in Afghanistan that have been assigned to NATO operational control, which means that while Canada retains ultimate command over the Canadian Forces in theatre, the operational plans and orders come through the NATO chain of command, all the way from the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, to ISAF in Afghanistan. Brigadier-General Grant therefore takes his operational orders from the Commander, Regional Command South — currently a British Major-General.

## **COMMITMENTS**

The total extent of the Canadian Forces commitments in support of Afghanistan operations have never been fully appreciated by Canadians at large. The roster is impressive in both substance and variety.

## Operation<sup>11</sup> APOLLO

Op Apollo was Canada's original military contribution to the campaign against terrorism.

On September 20, 2001, Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Art Eggleton authorized more than 100 military members serving on military exchange programs in the US and other allied nations to participate in operations conducted by their host units in Afghanistan.

In early October, in response to the terrorist attacks in the US, the North Atlantic Council (NATO's senior political advisory body) invoked Article 5 of the Treaty of Washington, which states that any attack on a NATO nation launched from outside that nation shall be interpreted as an attack on all the NATO nations. Days later, on October 7, 2001, Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien announced that Canada would contribute air, land and sea forces to the international force being formed to conduct a campaign against terrorism.

General Ray Henault, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) at the time, prepared several military units for deployment. The next day, Minister Eggleton announced Canada's 2000-person military commitment to Op Apollo, including an infantry battle group for ground operations in Afghanistan and Navy warships that immediately began deploying to the Arabian Sea.

Canada was the first coalition nation, after the US, to send warships into the Southwest Asia operational theatre, where they engaged in force-protection operations, fleet-support operations, al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership interdiction operations, and maritime interdiction operations. At its peak in January 2002, the Canadian Naval Task Group comprised six warships and about 1,500 Navy personnel. The Navy commitment to Op Apollo ended in December 2003.

In January 2002, Canada deployed combat troops to Kandahar as part of a US Army task force. The Canadian contribution was built on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) Battle Group, which included a reconnaissance squadron from Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) (LdSH(RC)), and combat service support elements from 1 Service Battalion. This was a combat mission that, in addition to providing security at Kandahar Airfield, saw Canadian troops engaged in the capture and destruction of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces.

The 3 PPCLI Battle Group returned home in July 2002, but in March 2003 the Canadian Forces ground commitment to Op Apollo continued with the provision of an

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11 The operations described here are Canadian operations, each of which is a discreet activity focussed on a specific mission. They should not be confused with NATO combat operations such as Op Medusa or the US Op Enduring Freedom.



infantry platoon deployed elsewhere in the Arabian Gulf region to provide local security to deployed Canadian Forces units.

In November 2001 a Strategic Airlift Detachment deployed from 8 Wing Trenton with one CC-150 Polaris (Airbus A310) long-range transport aircraft and about 40 Canadian Forces members, including three flight crews and one air-cargo handling team. Its tasks included medical evacuation, sustainment and re-supply, rapid delivery of operationally required items, and movement of personnel into the theatre of operations. In May 2002, the detachment ceased operations and returned home, but the CC-150 Polaris continues to provide support today by carrying out regular sustainment flights from Canada to the Arabian Gulf region.

In December 2001, a Long Range Patrol (LRP) detachment of two CP-140 Aurora surveillance and maritime patrol aircraft, with about 200 Air Force personnel, including flight crews and support personnel, deployed to the Arabian Gulf region to provide reconnaissance and surveillance support to the coalition maritime forces. The LRP Detachment conducted its last mission in June 2003, having completed 500 missions and logged more than 4,300 flying hours.

### **Operation ALTAIR**

Op Altair, which began in October 2003, consists of single Canadian warships deployed individually to operate with US carrier strike groups in the Arabian Gulf region, as part of US Op Enduring Freedom. It continues today.

### **Operation ACCIUS**

Few Canadians have ever heard of Op Accius, the one-man operation in which a senior Canadian Forces officer was deployed to serve as a military advisor to the civilian-led United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Op Accius began in late 2002 and ended in June 2005. .

### **Operation ARCHER**

The Canadian contribution to the US Op Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan is known as Op Archer. It consists of about 30 Canadian Forces personnel who fill various roles within the US-led Combined Security Transition Command — Afghanistan

(CSTC-A) that is working to reform and build both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). The Canadian Forces provide a Brigadier-General as Deputy Commander and about 12 other Canadian officers to CSTC-A in Kabul.

The Canadian Forces also contributes 15 personnel to act as instructors involved in the training of the Afghan National Army at the Canadian Afghan National Training Centre Detachment (C ANTC Det) in Kabul.

## **Operation ARGUS**

During his tenure as Commander ISAF in 2004, General Hillier realized that the emerging Government of Afghanistan required help and support to develop a capable and effective bureaucracy. The Afghan Compact and the Afghan National Development Strategy provided 'what' had to be done. Afghan bureaucrats required help with 'how' to plan and implement the appropriate strategies. General Hillier offered Afghan President Hamid Karzai a team of military officers to train and support Afghan government bureaucrats. President Karzai gladly accepted the offer.

Since September 2005, the Canadian Forces has, on a bilateral basis, provided a Strategic Advisory Team-Afghanistan (SAT-A). The SAT-A is a multi-disciplinary team of experienced and seasoned military and civilian strategic planners working in close cooperation with the senior ministerial leadership of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in accordance with Canada's '3D' approach. It operates under the following guidance from the Chief of the Defence Staff:

"The SAT will work directly with the GOA [Government of Afghanistan] to identify the critical paths required to established efficient and durable Afghan institutions. The SAT will assist the GOA in the identification of the enabling capabilities, resource requirements, critical activities/milestones and a performance measurement framework. The scope of the team's activities will be determined through consultation with the GOA and the Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan."<sup>12</sup>

The SAT-A mission statement is:

To conduct credible and accountable capacity building operations in direct support of the senior leadership of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that ensures strategic coherence and results in good governance, peace and security in support of the Afghan Compact.<sup>13</sup>

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12 From a presentation by Lieutenant Colonel Fred Aubin to a Conference of Defence Associations Institute roundtable on March 30, 2007. Lieutenant Colonel Aubin had just returned to Canada after serving nearly one year as the Deputy Commander of the Strategic Advisory Team-Afghanistan.

13 Ibid.

The SAT-A consists of 14 Canadian Forces members, augmented by a CIDA officer to advise on development issues. The team includes a small command and support element, two teams of strategic planners, a defence analyst and a strategic communications advisor. The composition, size and capabilities of the team are adjusted as necessary.

Although the SAT-A is a military unit on an independent operation and therefore is legally directly responsible to the CDS, it works in consultation with the Canadian Ambassador, his Head of Aid and with a senior representative of the Afghan government. The SAT-A is not, in any way, an intelligence organization, nor does it have any covert military role as some media have insinuated. The SAT-A is a non-parochial organization that serves at the pleasure of the Afghan government. As with all other Canadian Forces elements in Afghanistan, SAT-A aims to build Afghan capacity, providing direct planning support to government ministries and working groups in the development and governance realms. It does not work on issues in relating to the 'Security' pillar of the Afghan Compact. However, in addition to supporting Afghan government ministries,<sup>14</sup> the team has worked extensively with the Afghanistan's National Development Strategy Working Group, Public Administration Reform, Civil Service Gender Equity Policy, and with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

Canadian Forces strategic planners are embedded in their partner Afghan government ministries and agencies and work under Afghan leadership. The basic method of operation is that the team assists working level officials integrate the substantive ideas of the Afghan leadership and international experts into cohesive strategic frameworks.<sup>15</sup>

Examples of SAT-A work are their facilitation of government officials' movements to visit flood-damaged areas for damage assessments; support provided to meetings that were held with eight provincial councillors to discuss disparity and support with respect to national, provincial, and local initiatives; and support to the Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, in preparing for a visit to Canada last fall. Finally, the SAT-A has also been helping with the preparation of provincial development plans, to coordinate efforts between provinces, ISAF, and the UN.

Some may question the use of military officers in this way. There are three reasons why Canadian Forces officers form the SAT-A. First, senior Canadian Forces officers are trained in strategic planning and programme organization. They are accustomed to

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14 The SAT-A works with the following government ministries: The Chief of Staff of the Office of the President; The Senior Economic Advisor to the President; The Executive Director of the Afghan National Development Strategy; The Minister of Justice; The Minister of National Communications; The Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (National Solidarity Program); The Minister of Education; The Minister of Transportation and Civil Aviation; The Minister of the Interior; The Minister of Finance; and The Chairman of Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission. SAT-A does not work on issues relating to the "security pillar".

15 DND website. *Op ARGUS*. At [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/afghanistan/argus\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/afghanistan/argus_e.asp).

setting up and running large, complex operations and this experience is valuable in helping to build an equivalent Afghan bureaucratic capability. Second, members of the SAT-A come from both the Regular and Reserve Force, and have a variety of specific qualifications, knowledge and experience in fields such as communications, logistics, law, medicine and engineering. Third, no one else seems to be stepping forward, from other government departments, to volunteer to do the job. Military officers will readily agree that the Canadian Forces should not expect to be doing the SAT-A job for a long time and that other government departments have public servants who are much more qualified to provide strategic bureaucratic advice and support. But the CDS recognized the requirement and acted quickly to provide a remedy. Canadian Forces personnel gladly reacted and continue to serve in the role. If any other government department displayed equivalent initiative or desire to provide qualified personnel, the Canadian Forces would welcome the effort. So far no one else seems to be interested.

### **Operation ATHENA**

Op Athena is the current Canadian Forces contribution to ISAF. It includes about 2,500 personnel.

After leaving Afghanistan in July 2002, the Canadian Forces returned in August 2003 under Op Athena, with the deployment of a large contingent to Kabul, to serve with ISAF. For nearly two years, Canada provided the command element of a Multinational Brigade and an infantry battle group to help establish security in Kabul and the surrounding region. In 2003, then Major-General Andrew Leslie served as the Deputy Commander of ISAF and, from February to August 2004, then Lieutenant-General Rick Hillier commanded ISAF, which at that point comprised some 6,500 troops from 35 countries.

Over five successive six-month rotations Canadian Forces troops conducted foot patrols in the city and surveillance missions throughout the ISAF area of responsibility. They conducted armed raids on illegal weapons caches and suffered injury and death as a result of mines and suicide bombers. Throughout their tour of duty in Kabul, Canadian Forces contingents facilitated the democratic process for the Afghan National Assembly, Provincial Council elections and the Presidential election.

In late 2005, this phase of Op Athena ended with the redeployment of Canadian Forces elements to Kandahar, to temporarily be part of the US Op Enduring Freedom and prepare for a return to an expanding ISAF. Canadian Forces personnel took over the leadership of a Provincial Reconstruction Team from US forces and Brigadier-General David Fraser took command of the Multinational Brigade in Regional Command South in February 2006. With him came the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI) Battle Group to conduct operations against the Taliban in Kandahar Province, in an effort to establish a secure environment in which reconstruction and development activity could thrive. 1 PPCLI would spend most of their tour in combat against the Taliban, suffering a number of dead and wounded. A Canadian diplomat was killed by a suicide bomber in Kandahar City.

In the meantime, ISAF was expanding its area of responsibility and operations, replacing US Op Enduring Freedom forces as it went. On 31 July 2006, the Canadian troops in Kandahar returned to under operational command of ISAF as it took over of the southern region of Afghanistan from US forces.

ISAF authority is exercised through five subordinate Regional Commands (RCs):

- a. Regional Command Capital in Kabul;
- b. Regional Command North in Mazar-e Sharif;
- c. Regional Command West in Herat;
- d. Regional Command South in Kandahar; and
- e. Regional Command East in Bagram.

Each of these Regional Commands, with the exception of Regional Command Capital, have their own PRTs, the role of which is to assist local authorities in the reconstruction and maintenance of security in the area.

- a. Five PRTs in Regional Command North;
- b. Four PRTs in Regional Command West;
- c. Four PRTs in Regional Command South (of which one, in Kandahar, is led by Canada); and
- d. 12 PRTs in Regional Command East.

Today, the Canadian Forces contingent in Afghanistan is called Joint Task Force Afghanistan (JTF-Afg) and is commanded by Brigadier-General Tim Grant. Soldier for soldier, JTF-Afg provides more capability than any other national contingent in Afghanistan, organized as shown below:

- a. 1200 person infantry battle group; including
  1. A combat engineer squadron,
  2. An artillery battery,
  3. An armoured reconnaissance troop,

4. A Leopard tank squadron,
  5. A Tactical Uninhabited Aerial Vehicle (TUAV) Unit, and
  6. Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLTs) partnering with Afghan National Army (ANA) Infantry *kandak* (battalion) and ANA Corps HQ;
- b. 70 Health Service Support (HSS) personnel at the Multinational Medical Unit (MMU) at Kandahar Airfield;
  - c. 30 military members with the Multi-National Brigade (MNB) Headquarters;
  - d. 300 military members with the National Command Element (NCE) at Kandahar Airfield;
  - e. 300 military members with the National Support Element (NSE) in Kandahar;
  - f. In Kabul, about 50 military personnel at ISAF Headquarters, 15 personnel with a smaller NSE Detachment and 11 at the Canadian Embassy;
  - g. 250 military members with the Theatre Support Element (TSE) in Southwest Asia; and
  - h. The Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

### **Canadian Air Force Contribution**

The Canadian Air Force has been continuously supporting Canadian Forces operations in Afghanistan and this region, since 2002. Together with tactical inter-theatre airlift, between the staging area at Camp Mirage and Kandahar, the Air Force provides a lifeline to JTF-Afg. This air bridge requires absolute dedication to ensure it operates effectively, because the very success of the mission in Afghanistan depends on it.

In 2006, over 550 flights of strategic airlift, representing the movement of thousands of people and tonnes of materiel, have supported Canadian troops. The fleet of five CC-150 Polaris Airbus aircraft has been used largely for personnel transport and for smaller pallet-sized cargo. The majority, almost 75% of the strategic airlift, however, has been accomplished through contracted airlift, including C-17 chalks provided by the United States Air Force.

The materiel and personnel are first flown into Camp Mirage, the primary Canadian base of operations in the theatre. Camp Mirage is also used to administer personnel departing and returning from Afghanistan during periods of home leave travel assistance or rest and recreation. Camp Mirage is commanded by a Canadian Air Force lieutenant-colonel and is operated almost exclusively by air force personnel. Thousands of air force personnel have quietly served in Camp Mirage since it was first established in 2002.

Given the current air threat and risk assessments in theatre, the CC-130 Hercules remains the sole platform for moving personnel into Afghanistan from Camp Mirage. The Hercules, about one-third to one-quarter the size of the strategic lift aircraft, is the workhorse of our air mobility fleet. During 2006, they have made over 500 flights into Afghanistan.

The Air Force also operates within Afghanistan. Air and ground crew are conducting flying operations with the CC-130 Hercules throughout Afghanistan in direct support of Canadian Forces operations in that country. Whether transporting personnel from Kandahar to Kabul or parachuting up to 14,500 kilos of supplies per flight to deployed soldiers throughout the country, they make a tremendous difference. They have become a key enabler to commanders by providing supplies to soldiers in remote areas of Afghanistan that are not supported by a road network, or in areas in which the Taliban are disrupting the road network.

In addition to supporting Canadian soldiers, the Canadian Air Force has been instrumental in delivering personnel and supplies for other nations, including the Netherlands, the US and UK. Canadian flight crews are acknowledged by other nations for their accuracy and effectiveness, particularly when it comes to air-dropping supplies into dangerous and hostile environments.

The Canadian Air Force also has responsibility for generation and provision of uninhabited aerial vehicle (UAV) capability for JTF-Afg. Air Force and Army personnel work together in an integrated tactical UAV unit, providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support to commanders in the field.

Men and women of the Air Force are also actively engaged in key positions within ISAF headquarters in Kabul. Major General Angus Watt<sup>16</sup> recently served as the ISAF Deputy Commander (Air) and occasionally ran ISAF operations during the Commander's absence from theatre. Other Canadian Air Force personnel serve in the SAT-A in Kabul. In addition, airfield engineers and other skilled Air Force personnel are integrated into a variety of units.

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16      Soon to be Lieutenant General Angus Watt, assuming the position of Chief of the Air Staff (Commander of the Air Force) in National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa.

## **Canadian Navy Contribution**

The Canadian Navy has also provided officers, both Regulars and Reservists, to work in the SAT-A. Naval personnel were seconded to the US-led Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan to assist in the transition between American forces and NATO forces that occurred in 2006. A variety of Naval personnel — military policemen, doctors, cargo movement specialists, drivers, supply techs, etc. — serve with JTF-Afg. Specially skilled naval clearance divers have been put ashore to contribute to the critical and highly dangerous function of defeating improvised explosive devices in theatre.

Naval technical and operational experts have been assisting the Chief of the Land Staff to determine the feasibility of deploying the Phalanx close-in weapons system, or CIWS — a devastatingly accurate Gatling gun normally on Canadian destroyers and frigates as an essential last defence against anti-ship missiles. The weapons could be of use in defending selected installations from inbound mortar or rocket fire.

It should also be remembered that in October 2001, it was a Canadian naval task group and maritime aircraft that defended the US Navy and US Marine Corps force that seized Kandahar from the Taliban.

## **NATIONAL COMMAND VS OPERATIONAL COMMAND**

### **National Command**

At the present time, Brigadier-General Grant, as Commander JTF-Afg, exercises national command over all Canadian Forces elements in Afghanistan. A national chain of command is maintained to deal with matters of national policy, administration, and discipline. The CDS always retains full command of any Canadian Joint Task Force (JTF) deployed overseas through the Commander, Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (Comd CEFCom), who in turn issues operational direction to the appointed Commander of the JTF.

### **Operational Command**

In the case of NATO operations in Afghanistan, Canada has agreed to provide forces under Operational Command (OPCOM) of NATO commanders. JTF-Afg is responsible for all military operations in Kandahar Province and Brigadier-General Grant takes his operational orders from British Major General Jacko Page, the Commander of Regional Command South. A graphical representation of national and operational chains of command follows in Figure 1.



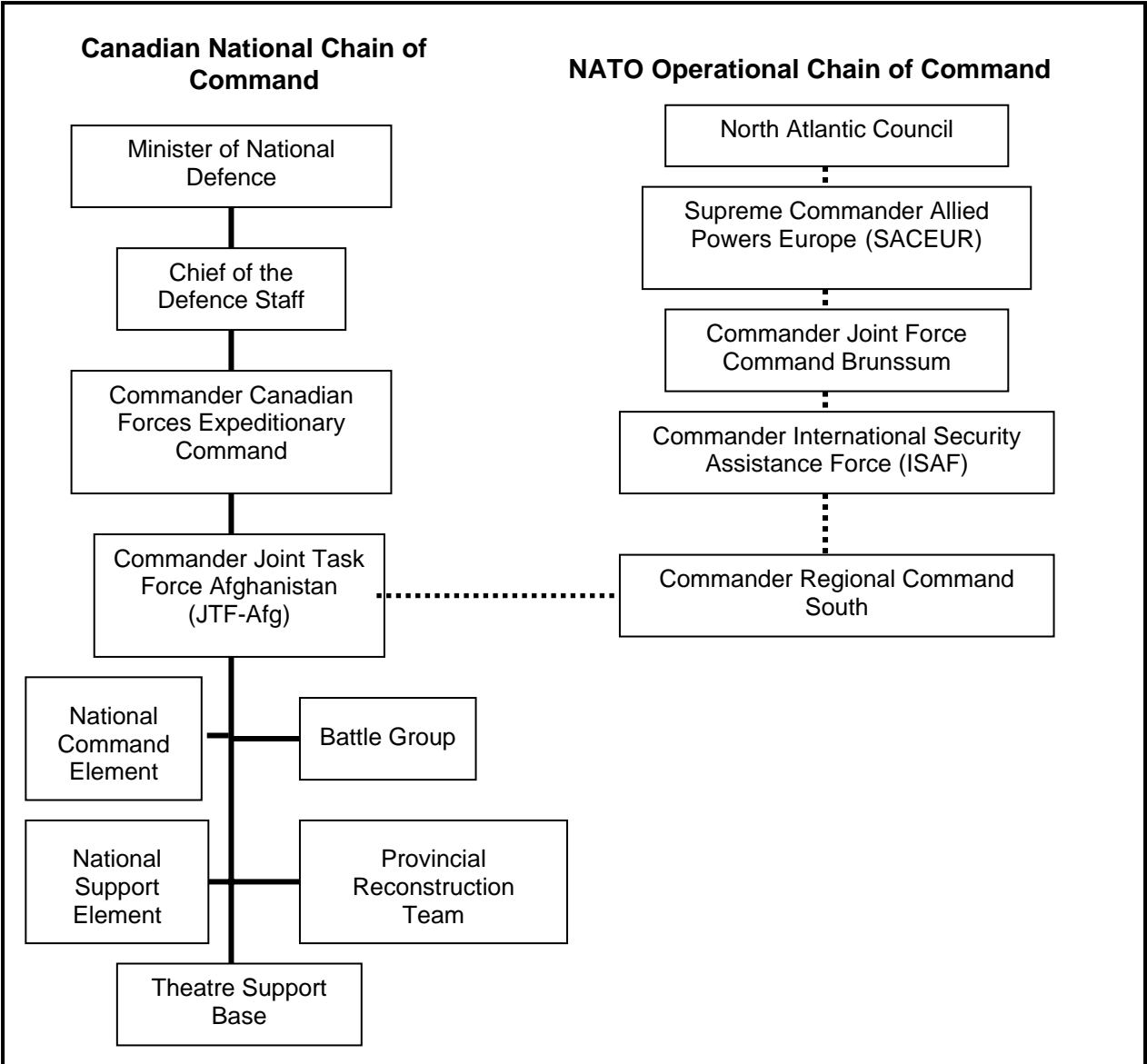


Figure 1 — National and Operational Chains of Command

**KINETIC AND NON-KINETIC OPERATIONS**

As can be seen from the array of elements within JTF-Afg, the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is much more balanced and versatile than is generally thought. One aspect of this balance is its ability to conduct kinetic and non-kinetic operations. As the term implies, kinetic operations feature the traditional use of military force to attack and destroy an enemy. Non-kinetic operations involve non-combat military activity.

While kinetic operations may either impress or remove the enemy’s will to fight, non-kinetic operations are usually the ones that ‘win the hearts and minds’ of the people. JTF-Afg is able to do both — well.

The 1200-person infantry battle group is a formidable unit capable of strong kinetic operations. It has never been beaten. Its success in Op Medusa, alongside other NATO troops and elements of the Afghan National Army in the fall of 2006, has been hailed as perhaps the most significant NATO victory yet, in Afghanistan. The 1 RCR Battle Group, working with allied ISAF forces, defeated a Taliban force trying to reach Kandahar city.

However, the battle group is also able to conduct effective non-kinetic operations, sometimes at considerable cost to the soldiers. Battle group elements provided security posts to protect the construction of a new road — Route Summit — in the Panjwayi district, last winter. With Canadian, German and US funding, a Japanese construction company was contracted to build the road with Afghan labour. Canadian military engineers provided some advice for part of the work. Canadian soldiers have been killed and others injured in Taliban attacks on the road, but construction continued until completion.

Another example was Op Falcon Summit (*Baaz Tzuka*). Days prior to the operation, Canadian soldiers held several meetings with tribal elders to discuss reconstruction efforts that would begin, and to persuade locals to help support ISAF and to help ISAF keep the Taliban out of the area after the Taliban have been removed. Then, on December 15, 2006, NATO aircraft attacked a Taliban command post in the area. Later that same day, other NATO aircraft began dropping three sets of leaflets over the region. The first set warned the population of the impending conflict. The second drop included a plea for locals to turn their backs on the Taliban and support NATO. The final set of leaflets had an image of a Taliban fighter with a large X superimposed on it, to warn Taliban fighters to leave the area or suffer the consequences. By the time the operation ended in January 2007, very little military force had been used and Taliban, who were not killed or captured, had left the area.

The Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT) is JTF-Afg's principal non-kinetic operational unit, comprised of military and civilian personnel with a variety of skills, all designed to support local reconstruction and Afghan capacity building in Kandahar province. To balance its non-kinetic capability, the PRT can conduct low-level kinetic operations if required, usually to protect other elements of the PRT.

Also as noted above, JTF-Afg has an ensemble of other non-kinetic elements that keep busy. Medical personnel conduct outreach clinics in rural villages, Canadian Forces personnel mentor Afghan National Army personnel in Kandahar and at the Kabul Military Training Centre. The SAT-A supports government planners in Kabul too.

## **AFGHAN DEVELOPMENT ZONES**

In the southern provinces of Afghanistan ISAF is pursuing what has been called the "Ink Spot" strategy. Officially it is referred to as the Afghan Development Zone (ADZ) concept, to establish regions that are sufficiently safe to allow a focus on reconstruction. The intent is to have these ADZs grow and spread like flowing ink, until Afghan government influence and authority covers the country.

Essentially, an ADZ is created this way. Security forces first clear an area of insurgents and then maintain a presence to ensure security of development projects by the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Auxiliary Police and ISAF, augmented by support from a PRT. The PRT and other development agencies then roll out a concentrated programme of spending on projects that have a key economic and social multiplier value, such as bridges, roads, wells, or clinics. ISAF offers a quick reaction capability to protect these ADZs against renewed insurgent activity.

JTF-Afg is tasked to make Kandahar City into an ADZ. Canadian tactics in this regard have seen the deployment of robust elements of infantry and tanks into forward operating bases beyond Kandahar City, astride likely approaches that might be used by Taliban forces. Security within the city is the responsibility of the Afghan National Police, supported by the Afghan National Army. The KPRT is active within Kandahar City too. The approach is working.

### **THE KANDAHAR PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM (KPRT)**

Canada assumed responsibility for the KPRT in August 2005. It is one of 25 PRTs throughout Afghanistan that help to:

- a. Extend the Afghan government's authority and ability to govern;
- b. To facilitate the rebuilding of local infrastructure; and
- c. To provide services to its citizens.

The KPRT aims to facilitate an interdepartmental approach that enables Afghans to help Afghans. It cooperates with non-governmental organizations, international organizations and identifies reconstruction needs where the international community may be unable to operate.

The KPRT includes about 350 personnel, mainly Canadian Forces members, but it also has diplomatic advisors from DFAIT, development officers from CIDA, civilian police led by the RCMP, and officers from Corrections Services Canada. About 145 of the total strength are deployable on operations. The remainder are responsible for planning and administering KPRT work from Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City. It is organized as follows:

- a. The PRT Commander's Tactical Headquarters Group, to provide protection and mobility to the PRT Commander and his staff;
- b. An infantry rifle company to protect and escort PRT personnel, provide a quick reaction force for Kandahar City, and conduct defence and security tasks;

- c. Military project managers (military engineers) that enhance the PRT's ability to manage quick impact reconstruction and development projects;
- d. A Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Platoon;
- e. A Military Police Platoon;
- f. Health and medical support;
- g. A service and support element; and
- h. Other specialized elements, including personnel from the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

### **Range of Expertise**

It is important to know that the KPRT works to build Afghan capacity rather than do the work themselves. Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Hetherington told the Committee during its visit to Kandahar in January 2007, that they aim to put an "Afghan face" on everything they do. At the local level, PRT experts meet with village 'Shuras' — a gathering of village elders — to determine what Afghans want and need. The PRT then facilitates the work to be done by Afghans.

The KPRT is led by Canadian military personnel, but it is not only an entirely Canadian organization. The US Department of State has deployed personnel of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to be part of the Kandahar PRT and there is also representation from the Afghan Ministry of the Interior.

One example of the work done by those serving in the KPRT is found in the case of Warrant Officer Dean Henley, nicknamed by locals as the 'Prince of Panjwayi.' He could be the most popular man in southern Afghanistan because of a silver suitcase he carries. The suitcase is packed with money for locals, who are paid \$5 a day to clean schoolyards, or dig out ditches and canals. When the Committee met Warrant Officer Henley in Afghanistan in January 2007, he had employed over 500 by then. He told us that the idea was to give Afghans just enough money that they won't become dependant on the Canadians for work.

Warrant Officer Henley is a Canadian Army reservist, who normally works as a school teacher in Canada. The KPRT is full of Henleys.

## Security

KPRT work requires a secure environment. The Taliban oppose reconstruction work at the local level and have threatened and murdered Afghans collaborating with government and ISAF initiatives, notably Safia Ama Jan, the head of a provincial women's affairs department, who was gunned down near her home in Kandahar in September 2006.

The KPRT also includes an infantry rifle company that provides local security for KPRT personnel as they go about their reconstruction business. The Canadian Brigade Group conducts higher level operations to eliminate and neutralize Taliban forces in the area.

## Funding Flow

During its visit to Kandahar, the Committee heard that one of the problems facing the PRT was that, reconstruction money was not coming through fast enough from CIDA. Informal information told us that CIDA funding in Afghanistan was subject to the same contracting and accounting regime imposed in Canada and that such red tape succeeded only in delaying the flow of necessary funding through the PRT, for projects waiting to be done.

We recall that a senior CF officer made this same point to another Parliamentary committee earlier in 2006. In October 2006, the Commander JTF-Afg had a reconstruction fund of \$1.9 million dollars, provided by DND, to be spent on local reconstruction projects. It has since been increased to nearly \$4 million. There was also another 'pot' of money to be provided by CIDA for other, longer-term projects and it was this second source of money that was slow in coming. The public record shows the following exchange:

**BGen. Howard:** Minister Josée Verner has been here. She spoke about the \$100 million a year that goes into Afghanistan and 10 per cent of it is aimed at the Kandahar province. That is as per her transcripts when she was here last time. Based on that 10 per cent then, a number of projects are ready to go created by the PRT with the three development officers. They are simply waiting for this funding to arrive. Once they have the funding they can prosecute these projects.

**The Chairman:** The troops have been there for how long, and we are waiting for funding from CIDA still?

**BGen. Howard:** Yes, sir.<sup>17</sup>

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17 Howard, Brigadier-General A.J. *Evidence*. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, October 16, 2006.

The difficulty in moving money through the government bureaucracy is another element that contributes to perceptions of imbalance. If the 3D strategy is to be effective, all three Ds must be able to apply their individual expertise in a complementary and aggressive way to address the mission at hand. It seems though, that CIDA may have been a drag on diplomacy and defence in late 2006. The Committee hopes that lessons have been learned and that with the new reconstruction and development money announced in February 2007, by Prime Minister Harper, CIDA has changed its funding process to allow project money to flow at the speed needed to meet the operational requirements of the mission.

A number of related recommendations flow from this issue.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**The government should review regulations governing the disbursement of reconstruction and development funding through the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, to ensure project funding can flow at the rate necessary to meet the requirements of the mission and establish a process of financial and project accountability.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**The timely disbursement of reconstruction and development funding to the field is not only important in Afghanistan, but in all of Canada's international operations. Therefore, the government should review regulations governing the dispersal of reconstruction and development funding in all international operations, to ensure project funding can flow at the rate necessary to meet mission requirements and establish a process of financial and project accountability.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**While the disbursement of reconstruction and development funds are routinely accounted for in Departmental Performance Reports and responsible Ministers may be requested to appear before Parliamentary committees to report on such expenditures, the Committee feels that audits of international development funds should ensure that project funding is transparent, effective and efficient and establish a process of financial and project accountability.**

## CHAPTER 3 — MANDATED STUDY ISSUES

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### MISSION DURATION

This is like playoff hockey Sir. Lose and you're out. You don't want to leave the game feeling you could have done more.

A young Canadian Army officer in Kandahar, over coffee  
January 2007

Government has committed the Canadian Forces to operations in Afghanistan until February 2009. Minister O'Connor made that clear when he appeared before the Committee on May 30, 2006, saying, "People are speculating about 10, 15, or 20 years. That's just speculation. Right now, our military commitment — I can't speak for diplomacy or aid — is to February 2009."

From all that has gone before it is apparent that the rebuilding of Afghanistan and the establishment of democratic institutions will not be complete by then. Many speak of taking decades or generations to finish the job. In the immediate future however, the International Community, agreed, in the Afghan Compact, to assist the Afghan government in a number of specific ways until at least 2011. Canada is a signatory to the Afghan Compact and has committed \$1 billion in official development assistance to Afghanistan until 2011.

Apart from those wider concerns, the Committee sees two specific issues of prime importance to the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan. First is the hope that a sufficiently secure environment will exist in February 2009, in which reconstruction and development proceeds unhindered by the Taliban. Second is the desire to see adequately trained Afghan security forces able to protect their country on their own, by February 2009. If both those conditions exist at that time, Canada can happily declare an important part of the job done and bring its military forces home, leaving a robust contribution of professional development personnel in place. However, if either of those conditions is not present, and we insist on bringing the troops home, Canada's current military responsibilities will have to be handed off to someone else. We will have left the job undone.

There are compromises available, but even they will require another country to deploy combat troops to Kandahar Province, in placed of Canadian troops. Canada may decide to keep its leadership of the PRT and simply bring home the battle group. Government may also consider moving the military reconstruction elements to another location in Afghanistan. Both of these options require additional combat troops from another country.

The Committee thinks however, that the central issue in any call to end the mission 2009 or earlier, is the fact that some simply do not like to see the Canadian Forces fighting. As we alluded to earlier, such a view is at odds with our national history, is not in keeping with our demonstrated strength of national character and it certainly is not in keeping with the current reality in Afghanistan.

Much in this conversation troubles us. It all sounds too much like packing our bags and getting out of town because the task is too hard. Is it really in our nature to plan to not complete our work simply because we don't want to?

While visiting Kabul in May 2007, on behalf of CARE Canada, which has worked in the country for decades, former Deputy Prime Minister John Manley said, in a telephone interview, he felt it is too soon to conclude that Canada should withdraw its troops when its commitment expires in two years. "I don't think we should leap to conclusions," he said, and added that the debate about keeping troops in Afghanistan has to look at what progress has been made in establishing a civil society and what Canada's allies plan to do. "It's far too simplistic to say we've done our part and we should go," Mr. Manley said.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee strongly feels that any decision to end the military mission, at any time, should be based entirely on whether or not the strategic objectives assigned by Government have been achieved, or can be achieved. An important consideration in reaching that decision will include whether Canada wants to, or is able to, continue to pay the cost in terms of national blood and treasure. Simply put, in February 2009, is it still worth it?

In addressing the Committee on February 27, 2007, James Appathurai, the NATO Spokesman and Ambassador Christopher Alexander made it clear — talk of withdrawing from Afghanistan provides solace to our enemies, causes our allies to lose confidence in us and reduces Afghan hopes for continued help. Almost everyone we heard from agrees that Afghanistan is a long-term project and that Canada should be "in for the long haul."

The Committee believes there is still time to give the military mission a chance to do its work. In acknowledging that government has a mission deadline in place, the first topic of discussion ought to be an examination of what we need to do to succeed in that timeframe — not why and how we should get out before the job is done. Having given ourselves a deadline, it is a moral and professional responsibility to develop and execute a plan that meets the goals we have set for ourselves. Given our military experiences during the past year, what is it we can now do to ensure we meet our objectives by February 2009?

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1 Campbell, Murray. "Ten Killed in Kandahar Bombings." *The Globe and Mail (Print Edition)*. May 18, 2007. At <http://www.rbcinvest.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/PEstory/LAC/20070518/AFGHAN18/International/international/international/3/3/24/>.



Frankly, the Committee believes Parliament and government should not have put the country in this position in the first place. Approving an operation for a specified period of time is like saying we will come home after only one period of hockey, no matter what the score. Deciding a timeline and then deciding what to do is the reverse of what should happen. Proper strategic planning would start with a thought-out definition of the aim, followed by the development of a strategy and campaign plan to achieve it. Parliament should debate the strategy, not the timeline.

The Committee believes that the first step to set things right must be a renewed effort to help Canadians understand the military mission in Afghanistan. We also believe that government has an opportunity to regain constructive, non-partisan support for the mission by ensuring that a fully informed Parliamentary debate on mission objectives and strategy is conducted in 2008. The debate should be preceded by a concerted government effort to inform the public of the mission status and present a realistic measure of the mission's success and the outlook for the future. Such information should also include a clear explanation of the benefits to Canada, to be gained from the effort.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**The government should hold a debate on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan without delay, to provide Canadians with an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the aim and status of the mission, Canada's role in it and to inform government decision-making relating to the mission deadline in February 2009.**

#### **STATE OF PERSONNEL**

Given the pressure of combat, the Committee was impressed by the aggressive professionalism of the Canadian Forces men and women in Afghanistan and by how well they all seemed to be holding up.

The Army bears the brunt of the manpower load for the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan. Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie, the Commander of Canada's Army appeared before the Committee on November 20, 2006 and outlined the personnel challenges he faces, the more important of which are covered in following paragraphs.

The Army has sufficient personnel to fulfill the requirements of the mission until 2009, but it will not be easy. One of the areas of considerable pressure is that facing senior non-commissioned officers (Senior NCOs — personnel in the rank of Sergeant). These men and women are the backbone of the Army. They lead soldiers in operations, train them in combat schools, and carry out other important duties, but there are simply not enough of them.

Apart from needing more people, the Army must also deal with the fact that its unit establishments do not match the structures that are being deployed to Afghanistan. For example, an infantry company in Canada is usually composed of 100 to 110 soldiers. The operational companies in Afghanistan are about 145 to 150 strong. That means when an infantry company is assembled for deployment, the Army has to draw on at least two other companies in the same battalion.

Lieutenant-General Leslie has directed that Army establishments here in Canada be restructured to mirror those in operations. The regular field force structure is migrating towards one that is based on three brigades and 9, perhaps 10, infantry-based battle groups. These brigades and battle groups are then to be organized, trained, and equipped just as they will deploy in operations. After its current tour of duty in Afghanistan ends, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (2 RCR) will be designated a standing battle group for a five-year trial.

Apart from these general concerns, another personnel issue that gets attention from everybody is the care and handling of casualties.

### **Health Services**

The Canadian Forces has established a separate Health Services command. A separate military health care system exists because The Constitution Act of 1867 assigned sole responsibility for all military matters, including military health care, to the federal authority. The National Defence Act gives the Minister of National Defence the management and direction of the Canadian Forces. He, in turn, gives management and direction of the medical and dental services to the Canadian Forces.

In addition, the 1984 Canada Health Act specifically excludes Canadian Forces members from the definition of “insured persons”. They are also excluded from insurance coverage under the public service medical and dental care plans. Accordingly, the Canadian Forces leadership has a strong legal and moral obligation to provide comprehensive health care to Canadian Forces members, whether in Canada or abroad. In return for the commitment and unlimited liability to serve their country, Canadian Forces members must be provided with health care comparable to that which is provided to all Canadians, yet tailored to meet their unique needs.

Despite what many people assume, the Canadian Forces Health Services does not provide regular health care to military families. The provision of health care to military families, like the provision of health care to all citizens, is a responsibility of the Provincial governments. Many military families, such as those in CFB Petawawa for example, being somewhat more remote from a big city than some other bases, have a difficult time finding a family physician. In such cases, the Military Family Resource Centres on Base

offer counselling and referral help for military families who need such support, particularly when a spouse is deployed away on an operational mission like that in Afghanistan (more information about Military Family Resource Centres is found below).

In operations, health care takes on a whole new meaning and importance. There are generally two types of casualties in theatre — physical and psychological.

## **Physical Injury**

The physical casualties, particularly battlefield casualties are dealt with quite effectively by the tactical level medical elements that extend from immediate first aid in combat, back through the unit medical station, to the Role 3<sup>2</sup> Multinational Hospital at Kandahar Airfield. During its visit to the Role 3 facility, the Committee was greatly impressed by the multinational team who treated everyone — allied soldiers, Afghans and yes, even Taliban casualties — with the same professional urgency and care.

Casualties stabilized in the Role 3 facility, but who require further treatment beyond what is locally available, are usually evacuated to the US regional medical facility in Landstuhl,<sup>3</sup> Germany, a world-class hospital that provides the finest care available to our wounded service men and women. If a Canadian casualty is required to spend any amount of time in Landstuhl, the Canadian Forces makes arrangements for their next-of-kin to fly over and be with them.<sup>4</sup> General Hillier, the CDS, has presented the hospital with an official award of thanks, on behalf of Canada, for all they have done for Canadian troops. .

Depending on the nature of their injuries, casualties may be flown directly home to Canada from either the Multinational Hospital in Kandahar, or from Landstuhl. Upon return, they are put in the hands of the Canadian Forces Health Services for further care.

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2 In military terminology and organization, a Role 1 medical capability is that low-level battlefield first aid provided by medical personnel in the field. Role 2 is usually a more established, but still austere facility that can provide basic surgery. A Role 3 medical facility provides triage, more advanced surgery and other medical support.

3 The Landstuhl Regional Medical Center is a 143-bed medical facility located near Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. It operates under the Commander of the US Army in Europe and the European Regional Medical Command. More than 100 soldiers have been treated there since the fall of 2005. It is supported by Fisher House, which resembles a North American Ronald McDonald House where families stay and receive support while their loved one is in hospital. *The Maple Leaf*, April 25, 2007, Vol. 10, No.11. p. 15

4 They are accommodated at Fisher House. On 21 March 2007, Brigadier-General Grant, the Commander of JTF-Afg presented Fisher House with a plaque from the 1 RCR Battle Group and a \$20,000 donation from all of JTF-Afg. *The Maple Leaf*, April 25, 2007, Vol. 10, No.11. p.15.

During our visits to CFBs Edmonton and Petawawa, Committee members spent considerable time talking with wounded soldiers who had come home and who were under continuing care. Every one of them — every one of them — had nothing but praise for the care and attention they had received from the time of their injury, no matter what route they followed in coming home.

When we met with more seriously injured soldiers in CFB Edmonton and CFB Petawawa, they clearly told us that their primary concern was being able to remain in uniform. They knew that the extent of their injuries might not allow them to continue the kind of soldiering they had been doing, but each of them was determined to stay in the Canadian Forces and do something of value.

After a period of treatment, a medical judgement is made whether an injured soldier can continue to serve in the Canadian Forces. This judgement is based on the Canadian Forces policy of 'universality of service' which means, essentially, that everyone in the Canadian Forces is liable to be deployed into an operational theatre and they must therefore be able to meet the physical requirements demanded by such a posting. Regrettably, some wounds or disabilities are so serious they will never heal or be mitigated to the point of allowing the serviceman or woman to have any hope of regaining such a high standard of fitness.

Personnel who are medically released from the Canadian Forces are subject to the close scrutiny and administration of an integrated transition process that is cooperatively managed by DND and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). These young Veterans and their dependent families are eligible for all the compensation and benefits provided by the New Veterans Charter.<sup>5</sup>

### **Psychological Injury**

Psychological injuries are more difficult to diagnose, treat and follow-up. Officially categorized as Operational Stress Injuries (OSI), these injuries can occur as a result of a myriad of incidents of stress and manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Here again, DND and VAC have developed an effective, cooperative programme for service personnel with OSI — both serving and retired.

It comes as no surprise that the stress of continued combat is one cause of OSI, but there are others. Those who live in anticipation, or dread of bad news, like families at home in Canada, might be affected by OSI too.

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5 See the Veterans Affairs Canada, New Veterans Charter website at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=Forces/nvc&CFID=6926210&CFTOKEN=95200984>.

In preparing for the battlefield, Canadian Forces leaders at all levels are now routinely briefed on the signs of OSI and they keep close eye on their subordinates for any sign of abnormal behaviour. There is a traditional *machismo* in military ranks that, in past, has tended to mask, ignore and denigrate the apparent 'weakness' of 'shell-shock' or other signs of 'cowardice.' Although such extreme attitudes are no longer the case, the Committee did hear that the inclination to hide signs of OSI was still prevalent, particularly in the more combat-oriented units. As troubling as that may sound, it should also be noted that it is in those units that the low-level leadership is most attuned and able to detect signs of trouble, because the consequences of letting OSI fester on the battlefield are so dire. Brigadier-General Hilary Jaeger, the Canadian Forces Surgeon General at the time,<sup>6</sup> believes that the current generation of combat arms leaders is very aware of the crucial role they play in looking out for the mental health of their personnel, and they do consider the possible emotional reactions to each incident, encourage peer support, and they do not hesitate to ask for advice.<sup>7</sup>

Of primary importance is the pre-deployment training that the troops receive, for at least two reasons: one, the more confident a member is of his or her skills, the better they will be able to react when challenged; and two, the more a member feels part of a cohesive group, the better it is for their mental health. Challenging collective training is also extremely important in building a cohesive team.

Some of Brigadier-General Jaeger's additional thoughts on the Canadian Forces mental health regime, which she outlined for the Committee on 27 November 2006, are outlined in the following paragraphs.

All soldiers are given a thorough but general psycho-social screening before deploying. Spouses are normally invited and encouraged to attend with the member. Regrettably, some spouses are not able to attend for a variety of reasons — some simply do not wish to attend, others may live out of town and still others may have other obligations at the time. The intent is to discuss any personal concerns or complicating circumstances the soldier may have (i.e. their own health status, an ailing parent, pending legal action etc.) to assess the impact that the deployment would have on these kinds of stressors. All Canadian Forces personnel also undergo a general medical screening done prior to being cleared for the mission.

While in theatre, all troops can access the mental health team, which currently includes a psychiatrist, mental health nurse and a social worker, or, they can discuss concerns with a Chaplain or general duty medical officer.

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6 Brigadier-General Jaeger has since been appointed Commander, Canadian Forces Health Services.

7 Jaeger, Brigadier-General Hilary. *Evidence*, Standing Committee on National Defence, November 27, 2006.

Concurrently, the Canadian Forces Health Services continue to work at educating all personnel on mental health issues. There are three important lessons. First, Acute Stress Reaction (sometimes known as Combat Stress Reaction, once known as 'shell shock') is the classic case of the good soldier who just can't go on any more, develops tremors, tearfulness, etc., or perhaps even runs away. This is an acute, usually short-term condition best treated close to the soldier's unit through simple measures such as adequate rest and food, coupled with the clear expectation that the member is normal and will return to duty. Most do return to duty if managed correctly. Second, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a very different thing. As an anxiety disorder, it can arise on the basis of a single severe stressor and produce a variety of symptoms that can be lumped under three general headings — avoidant, re-experiencing, and hyper-vigilance. In the Canadian Forces, it seems to come to light in a delayed manner and therefore most of the military's focussed mental health tools address this condition in the enhanced post-deployment screening process that takes place four to six months after military personnel return home. Third, the stresses of deployment can certainly make almost any mental health condition worse, from depression to simple phobias to personality disorders.

At the end of an operational tour of duty in Afghanistan, all personnel spend some "decompression time" in Cyprus, four days to relax and reduce the stress associated with coming back home. While much of the value of this activity is in the rest and recreation it affords the soldiers, there is an educational component that allows members to recognize, understand, and in some cases control their emotional reactions to certain situations. Some personnel, who have gone through the decompression process told Committee members that, before they left Afghanistan, some of them viewed the stop-over in Cyprus as being a "four-day obstacle between me and my wife and kids." However, upon having completed the decompression programme, they all agreed the break was beneficial and needed, particularly for those who had been involved in prolonged bouts of combat.

Given the proven popularity and perceived value of the decompression period and its positive impact on managing the mental health of returning soldiers, the Committee wonders why such a decompression is not provided to those who are coming home for their mid-tour leave period. Is this just a simple oversight?

Consider the 1RCR Battle Group in ROTO 2, over the autumn and winter of 2006-07. Almost from the days of arrival in August, the battle group remained in intense combat for at least three months and then saw sporadic fighting for the rest of the tour. Surely soldiers who were slated for their leave in, say, November, would have been subject to a significant degree of combat stress. Surprisingly, there seems to be no attention paid to the requirement for any decompression in such a case. So, given all the good work that has been done in recent years by the Canadian Forces in the field of OSI prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, here we have an instance where it seems to have been ignored. A soldier who has experienced severe combat stress early in his tour

and is scheduled to take his leave back home is simply put on a plane and sent back to his young wife and children. Why is he any less likely to be a victim of OSI than the soldier going home at the end of the tour?

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

### **DND should review the need for some sort of flexible decompression programme for soldiers going home on mid-tour leave.**

Four to six months after returning home, the troops undergo an enhanced post-deployment screening, which consists of a standardized, fairly extensive questionnaire followed by a semi-structured, one-on-one interview with a mental health professional. This is thought to be an effective tool for early detection of mental health and coping concerns. Brigadier-General Jaeger thinks four to six months is about the right point at which to do this testing because, at this point, many people who may have had symptoms upon their return home will have had them resolved spontaneously, while others may have either had delayed onset of symptoms or may be more willing to admit to symptoms that have been there all along. Moreover, a member who has any concerns about their mental health at any time can seek help from a variety of sources without waiting for this particular screening to be scheduled.

Not all major Army bases have equal access to mental and other health support. When we visited CFB Petawawa, we learned that among the three major Army bases that support Afghanistan deployments, CFB Petawawa was served by only nine mental health professionals, as compared with 27 at CFB Edmonton and 35 at CFB Valcartier. However, Brigadier-General Jaeger explained that about 30 health care professionals are available in Ottawa to support the nine in Petawawa whenever needed.

There are other mental health team members. In addition to military mental health support, there is an independent, but complementary network that is doing great work.

### **Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS)**

The Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS)<sup>8</sup> network came into being in the spring of 2001, in response to a combination of recommendations made by the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, the Department of National Defence Croatia Board of Inquiry and the Department of National Defence Ombudsman. The objectives of OSISS are:

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8 The DND OSISS website is found at <http://www.osiss.ca/>.

- a. To develop social support programs for the members, veterans and their families who have been affected by operational stress; and
- b. To provide education and training that will eventually change the culture within the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces particularly — but also within Veterans Affairs Canada — toward psychological injuries.

The OSISS program provides confidential peer support and social support to CF personnel, Veterans, and their families, affected by an operational stress injury like anxiety, depression, or PTSD resulting from military service. Social support is offered by individuals who have themselves experienced an operational stress injury, and by family members who fully understand, through their own experiences, operational stress injury issues.

The OSISS peer support program is available throughout Canada to serving Canadian Forces personnel, Veterans and their families. Peer Support Coordinators are located in most major cities. Trained Peer Support Coordinators, who themselves have been injured by operational stress, offer support by listening to those who are suffering, drawing on similar experiences, and providing guidance on resources available in DND, VAC and their own community. Privacy is respected and conversations are kept confidential.

Family Support Coordinators offer support to families affected by an operational stress injury by listening, providing information, engaging in discussion groups, and making connections to community resources.

One of the advantages of the OSISS network is the fact that it is entirely independent of the military chain of command and so many serving personnel and their families feel more comfortable seeking OSISS assistance. Despite encouragement to the contrary, many believe that their military career will be adversely and irreparably affected if operational stress injuries are pursued through normal military channels.

To support the OSISS network, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has established OSI Clinics to help Veterans, Canadian Forces members, and eligible RCMP recovering from an OSI. Support is also available for their families. The OSI clinics have teams of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and clinical social workers, who provide high quality standardized assessment, treatment, prevention and support services.<sup>9</sup>

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9 More information on the VAC OSI Clinics can be found at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=mhealth/osic>.



## RECOMMENDATION 6

**The government should recognize the critical and growing work done by the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Network and support it with appropriate funding and other resources, so that it can keep up with the growing need of caring for returning Afghanistan Veterans and their families.**

### Amenities

JTF-Afg is perhaps the best supported force Canada has ever sent abroad. The degree of support provided by Canadians across the country is simply phenomenal. It rivals, and sometimes surpasses that of the Second World War. Certainly nothing since then compares with what we see now.

This support has been manifest in the amount of material Canadians have sent overseas to the troops. Everything from Christmas cards from school children, to toques, to cakes has made its way to Kandahar. In fact, Committee members heard from several soldiers who sheepishly said that there was simply too much coming their way. However, they quickly pointed out that nothing was wasted and what did not end up with in military hands went to worthwhile charities in Afghanistan.

The Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency (CFPSA) provides morale and welfare programs, services, and activities to JTF-Afg. They have over 60 civilian volunteer employees (75% of whom are women) who organize sports, holiday flights and internet cafés for the troops, among other things. The Agency manages the amenities that support the decompression period in Cyprus too.

CFPSA also manages the Tim Hortons outlet at the Kandahar airfield, located right beside “Maple Leaf Gardens” a full-scale ball-hockey rink, complete with overhead floodlights. Situated along the “boardwalk”, a raised walkway around the main sports field, where other nations’ commercial outlets are beginning to appear,<sup>10</sup> the Tim Hortons trailer has become a symbol of Canada and a popular stop for troops of all nationalities living on the base. The outlet is not a traditional Tim Hortons franchise operation. It is owned by the Canadian government and cost \$1.2 million to put in place, but profits have been coming in at a rate much higher than expected.<sup>11</sup>

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10 In addition to local merchants, there is a Burger King, a Pizza Pizza and a bank with an ATM.

11 Tim Hortons prices in Kandahar are the same as here in Canada — except that they are in US currency. ‘Inside information’ provided to the Committee pointed out that the best gift to give a soldier deploying to Afghanistan is a Tim Hortons coupon (or many of them) bought in Canada, in Canadian dollars, for use in Kandahar.

CFPSA contracts live radio and television programmes to be transmitted to troops deployed overseas. Deployed troops can also make regular contact with family at home via e-mail. They can also book time at a video centre, to connect with their families in the supporting base video centre.

Books, videos, nightly movies and the popular Christmas show tour featuring well-known Canadian celebrities — Rick Mercer for example — are all provided through CFPSA.

As might be expected though, most of this terrific support is found at Kandahar airfield, but some of it also makes its way out to military personnel serving at isolated forward operating bases and exposed strong-points. Exercise and weight-lifting equipment is a common feature at these isolated locations.

The entire morale and welfare support programme for the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan is better than it has ever been. There is however, room for more. A double-double is good with a Beavertail.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**The government should actively encourage other appropriate Canadian entrepreneurs to increasingly participate in support of Canada's overseas missions.**

### **The Home Front**

When Canadian Forces personnel deploy to Afghanistan, there are a number of organizations activated at home, to support the families left behind. They are:

- a. The Deployment Support Centre
- b. Unit rear parties
- c. Military Family Resource Centre; and
- d. Local civic groups and officials.

Deployments are built around a major unit such as an infantry battalion, but many troops from other units on a base, or within a brigade, are taken up in the mission. When such a large group deploys, the parent Canadian Forces Base establishes a Deployment Support Centre to act as a 'one stop' point of contact for all deployment support matters going to the troops overseas, or coming back to the families from the mission area. Each unit that has provided a significant number of troops for the mission has a representative

located in the Deployment Support Centre to take care of unit personnel interests. In practice, everyone in the Deployment Support Centre cooperates with everyone else and helps all equally.

Complementing the Deployment Support Centre are the Unit Rear Parties, an element of a deployed unit that remains behind to take care of unit business, while the majority of the unit are away on operations. Rear Parties act as the contact point for families and play a part in keeping the families informed of the mission circumstances. They also provide support and advice to families left behind.

Perhaps the most formidable of support establishments available to families is the Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC), one of which is found on each major military base. They are part of a network of centres sponsored and managed by the Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency and each one is independent of, but enjoys the support of, the military chain of command. The MFRC provides a range of programmes and support for families from arranging for babysitters, to daycare, to counselling sessions. The MFRC acts as a drop-in centre or it can be a refuge in times of stress. They run Reunification Workshops to help families adjust to the return of parent from overseas. Deployment workshops are conducted for the children of service personnel, to help them understand and cope with the departure, or return of a parent. The average MFRC agenda is a model of service.

MFRCs are guided by a Board of Directors, usually composed of wives or husbands of military members and representatives of the military chain of command. The MFRC functions under the day-to-day management of an Executive Director and a small staff. The majority of the work is done by a corps of volunteers from the military community — mainly from those same stalwart military families of whom we are so proud.

Finally, but certainly not least, is the considerable support provided by local municipal organizations and officials how have helped to take care of military families at home.

Recently though, a troublesome issue has come up. As noted above, stress can affect military families at home, just as much as it might impact on soldiers serving overseas. As troops from CFB Petawawa returned home after six months of virtually constant combat in Afghanistan, there has been a noticeable increase in stress related cases among Petawawa military families, but wait times at a local clinic in Pembroke deny treatment for months. The clinic's budget allowed it to handle about 10 referrals a month from the military base at Petawawa. However, over January and February 2007, the centre has become inundated with up to 90 referrals in one month. It needs more resources to handle the load.

While Canadian Forces personnel are exempt from the Canada Health Act and are therefore provided with health care by the Canadian Forces and federal funds, military families are not. Their health care, like all other civilians, is the responsibility of provincial governments. While they wait for help, some military families, who already bear a considerable burden, struggle even more.

Provincial authorities hesitated to take responsibility, so much so that the Ontario Ombudsman investigated the matter.<sup>12</sup> On April 13, 2007, in a news release,<sup>13</sup> the Ombudsman made it clear that something had to be done and that same day the Ontario government announced a \$2 million emergency fund to provide children's' mental health support in communities facing crises, such as Petawawa, and committed to provide the Phoenix Clinic in Pembroke with the budget it requires to meet military families' counselling needs.

According to the press release, the Ombudsman's investigation confirmed that while health services for military members are a federal responsibility – and while the federal government has a moral obligation to support its troops – the province is solely responsible for mental health services for Ontario children, regardless of their parents' occupation. There was no provision for dealing with a crisis situation like that in Petawawa.

The Provincial Ombudsman made three recommendations:

- a. That it immediately fund children's mental health services through the Phoenix Centre;
- b. That it ensure long-term support for the children of military personnel in consultation with the federal government; and
- c. That it provide the Ombudsman with monthly progress reports.

The Ontario Government has accepted the Ombudsman's recommendations.

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12 Picard, André. "Mental-health services shortchanging children of our soldiers." *Globe and Mail*, March 8, 2007.

13 Ontario Ombudsman news release. *Ombudsman's Intervention Resolves Mental Health Services Crisis for Children of Ontario Soldiers Serving in Afghanistan*. April 13, 2007. At [http://www.ombudsman.on.ca/UploadFiles/File/PDF/Press%20release%20Eng\(1\).pdf](http://www.ombudsman.on.ca/UploadFiles/File/PDF/Press%20release%20Eng(1).pdf).

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**Recognizing its moral responsibility, the federal government should strongly encourage the provincial and territorial governments to provide the resources needed to address the mental health support required by military families.**

## **STATE OF MATERIEL**

For perhaps the first time in Canadian military history, since the magnificent Canadian Corps in the First World War, we can say that Canada's military contingent in Afghanistan is the best equipped and most capable unit of its size in ISAF. A notable achievement has been the speed with which some equipment has been procured. Many will have heard of the notoriously slow government procurement process, in which it has routinely taken up to 15 years to acquire an important piece of major equipment, but the process has been trimmed considerably for the Afghanistan mission. Since the Canadian Forces first joined ISAF in 2003, government, military and public service leadership has joined in a cooperative effort to get Canadian troops the clothing, weapons and equipment to do the job we have sent them to do.

The individual clothing and equipment worn by our men and women in Kandahar is simply the best the Canadian Forces has ever had. From the combat vests to helmets, the gear is first class. Of particular note are the ballistic glasses everyone is obligated to wear on operations. The committee saw pictures of Canadian soldiers with minor shrapnel wounds to their face and noted the fact that the area around the eyes was clear of wounds, due to the ballistic glasses. Another picture showed the lens of a set of ballistic glasses, in which a piece of shrapnel about the size of a small peanut was lodged, having been stopped before it reached the eye of a soldier.

Perhaps the most effective vehicle has been the LAV III armoured personnel carrier. It enjoys the confidence of the troops and many of them told us that the LAV III had saved their lives, both in ambushes by Taliban armed with machine guns and RPG rocket launchers, and in IED explosions.

To meet a growing improvised explosive device (IED) threat, the Canadian Forces acquired the South-African made RG-31 Nyala wheeled vehicle, which has a specially designed hull built to withstand the shock of a mine explosion underneath. The Nyala took a little over one year from first request until it was patrolling in Kandahar.

In November 2005, the M777 lightweight howitzer was an urgent operational requirement purchase. It was deployed in February 2006 — a mere four months later. DND is now negotiating for six additional M777s, with options on 15 more. Precision munitions that use a Global Positioning System (GPS) “to steer precisely to the target” are being bought for the new howitzers.

In 2006, the Canadian Forces deployed a squadron of Leopard tanks. Many people thought the days of the tank were numbered after the Cold War and that, particularly in Canada, there was simply no need for them. Indeed military plans had them being phased out in favour of lighter, more agile vehicles. However, continuing DND strategic analysis and operational lessons learned began to prove that a contemporary role did exist for tanks. Practical experience in Afghanistan also generated a requirement for their firepower and protection.

The Army quickly refurbished 17 tanks and deployed them to Kandahar. Canada is the only ISAF contingent to have tanks in Afghanistan and Canada has never before deployed a tank force that far away. Canadian tank and maintenance crews have done wonders in making the tanks operational in such an uninviting environment.

The Committee thinks some points should be made clear. First, the tank is an offensive weapon and its accurate direct fire capability provides a significant amount of combat power to the Canadian battle group, allowing them to fight more effectively. Second, the tank provides a hefty degree of protection for our soldiers. It can withstand rocket propelled grenade attacks and most improvised explosive devices seen so far.

For all the advantages of using a tank in these circumstances, concern developed about the effects of heat on the tank crews during the blistering hot summer months. With the ambient heat generated within a tank, temperatures on the inside might climb to over 50° C. The Army examined possible solutions, from water-cooled vests for crew members to an interior air conditioning system similar to that built into the LAV III. Regrettably none proved to be workable so the decision was made to acquire new tanks.

It has been announced that the Government will purchase up to 100 Leopard 2 tanks, as well as securing the loan of 20 Leopard 2A6 tanks for use in Afghanistan this summer. The Leopard 2 tanks are newer, more heavily armoured and more technologically advanced than the Leopard 1 that is currently used by the Army. Leopard 2 tanks have significantly increased personnel protection against explosive devices and landmines, an ability to travel considerably faster in difficult terrain, more powerful engines, and stronger firing capabilities.

The 20 combat-ready Leopard 2A6 main battle tanks will be loaned by Germany for short-term requirements and will be deployed to Afghanistan this summer with the next rotation of Canadian troops. The 100 Leopard 2 tanks will be purchased from the Netherlands for the long-term requirements of the Canadian Forces. They are expected to be delivered by the end of summer 2007, after which they will be upgraded to Canadian Forces standards.

But General Leslie and Lieutenant-General Mike Gauthier, the Commander of Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command, still have one further requirement they hope can be granted as quickly as others have been. They need medium-heavy lift helicopters.

Canadian Forces elements in Afghanistan depend, in large part, on vehicle convoys to transport troops into action, re-supply forward operating bases and conduct routine administrative movement in the Kandahar city area. Any road movement is liable to attack by an improvised explosive device, a suicide bomber or ambush by insurgents. Having a medium lift helicopter to move troops around the operational area will mitigate the risk of road movement and increase the speed of tactical deployments.

Lieutenant-General Leslie also pointed out that those same helicopters are operationally required here in Canada, for a variety of domestic operations. They are particularly valuable in moving people and supplies in the area of floods, fires and ice-storms.

DND is currently pursuing a project worth a total of \$4.7 billion to acquire a fleet of 16 medium-heavy lift helicopters for the Canadian Forces. However, the project schedule does not provide helicopters to the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan before February 2009. The Committee therefore feels that the project should be accelerated to the degree required to give our deployed troops the necessary helicopters as soon as practicable.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**The government should accelerate its effort to expedite the delivery medium-heavy lift helicopters to support combat operations of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and ensure that the helicopters acquired are effective in both domestic and international operations.<sup>14</sup>**

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14 The contractor selected for the medium-to heavy-lift helicopter project will be awarded a contract to deliver 16 medium-to heavy-lift helicopters that meet all the minimum mandatory capabilities, including cabin space to accommodate an infantry platoon (30 soldiers) with full combat equipment; able to lift multiple loads, including a lightweight field howitzer and associated equipment (a minimum of 5,443 kilograms); a minimum flight range of operation of 100 kilometres; and a delivery date of first aircraft must be no later than 36 months after contract award and final aircraft delivery no later than 60 months after contract award.

Canadian Forces helicopters also assist civil authorities in responding to emergencies such as floods, forest fires and earthquakes.

The estimated total project cost for the acquisition phase is \$2 billion, including the cost to purchase the aircraft. An additional \$2.7 billion has been estimated for 20 years of in-service support, for which a separate contract will be competed by the prime helicopter manufacturer through a request for proposals. The requirement for this equipment is urgent.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMBAT OPERATIONS, DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION**

### **Humanitarian Aid, Development, Reconstruction and CIMIC**

Before discussing issues of mission balance, it will be helpful to clarify a number of relevant terms. There are undoubtedly better technical explanations of the terminology discussed below, but the versions offered here were helpful in helping the Committee understand the concepts involved.

During our visit to the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, the Committee came to learn that there are subtle differences between humanitarian assistance, development programmes and projects, reconstruction projects and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC).

Humanitarian aid is the provision of emergency assistance and resources to help those in desperate, life-threatening circumstances. It alleviates human suffering and seeks to maintain human dignity. An example is the widespread relief effort deployed to help millions of people after the December 2005 tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean. Another would be the humanitarian assistance sent to counter extensive human suffering and starvation in Somalia in 1992. Humanitarian aid is invariably delivered by nations and organizations other than those at risk. It is often provided by UN relief agencies or other international humanitarian organizations such as CARE and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Development assistance seeks to address the underlying socio-economic conditions that may have led to a humanitarian crisis. It is distinguished from humanitarian aid as being aimed at alleviating poverty in the long term, rather than suffering in the short term. It may come from developed or developing country governments as well as from international organizations such as the World Bank.

Reconstruction is the repair or rebuilding of infrastructure that has been destroyed or damaged as a result of conflict, a natural disaster or long-term wear and tear. It may also involve the construction of a new facility. An example of traditional reconstruction activity by the Canadian-led PRT would be the rebuilding and opening of a local school. The provision of support and security to the construction of a new road — Route SUMMIT in the Panjwayi district — is another example of reconstruction activity.

Related to the provision of aid, development or reconstruction is the military Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) function, but where humanitarian aid, development and reconstruction are primarily focussed on the population, CIMIC is very much a military ‘force multiplier,’ exercised to assist military commanders in achieving their mission.



There is a CIMIC element in the Kandahar PRT. The main objective of CIMIC is to achieve the necessary cooperation between civil authorities and the Canadian Forces with a view to improving the probability of success of military operations.<sup>15</sup>

In Canadian Forces operational doctrine, the main CIMIC objectives are to:

- a. Fulfill obligations imposed by Canadian law (e.g. NDA and Criminal Code) and international law (e.g. Law of Armed Conflict, International Human Rights Law), the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977, Treaties and such memoranda of understanding (MOU) and agreements, or technical arrangements reached between national authorities or parties;
- b. Support the Task Force mission by providing support to civil administration, assisting or reinforcing the judicial, executive and legislative branches of government, as well as political and socio-economic infrastructure to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public institutions and civil services;
- c. Facilitate the Task Force mission by minimizing interference by the local population in the military phase of an operation while obtaining civil support for the civil phase and associated tasks;
- d. Assist all military commanders by providing those resources necessary to meet essential civil requirements, avoiding damage to civil property and usable resources, and minimizing loss of life and human suffering;
- e. Identify and coordinate the use of local resources, facilities and support such as civilian labour, transportation, communications, maintenance, medical facilities and supplies to restore local government; and
- f. Support, as required, IOs, NGOs, the UN and national civilian agencies.

In practical terms, military commanders deploy CIMIC teams at the tactical level to 'win the hearts and minds' of the local people. If done well, it represents a classic 'win-win' situation. The population receives help and the military is able to concentrate on operations against the enemy.

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15 Canadian Forces. *Civil Military Cooperation in Peace, Emergencies, Crises and War*. B-GG-005-004/AF-023. 1999-01-15. p. 1-4.

## **Military Involvement in the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid, Development or Reconstruction**

There is a fundamental, conceptual difference of opinion relating to the role of military forces in the delivery of humanitarian aid, development or reconstruction. Professional international aid agencies believe that military forces should, in no way, be involved in the physical delivery of any form of aid.

When he appeared before the Committee on June 8, 2006, Mr. Kevin McCort, the Senior Vice-President of Operations for CARE Canada told us,

... that we must not confuse the mandates of entities primarily responsible for combat operations with those of organizations dedicated to reconstruction. I know security is needed for development, just as I know development can reduce insecurity. But I am convinced organizations specialized in one should not assume they can take on the roles and responsibilities of the other.

Mr. Gerry Barr, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation offered further detail:

The issue that's front and centre for many NGOs active in Afghanistan is the blurring of lines between aid strategies and military strategies. You've heard a little bit about that here from my colleague Mr. McCort. This blurring arises when the military delivers aid, and when aid delivery by NGOs or the government is tied, implicitly or explicitly, to a military strategy...

Canada's official position is that there is no confusion of roles in the Canadian strategy in Afghanistan because humanitarian assistance — that is, specific life-saving assistance — is not being provided through the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar. In fact, that is simply a budget-line distinction, not a distinction of roles. The military is carrying out community development-type activities, such as repairs to local schools. There is a civil-military cooperation fund managed by the military for these types of activities ...

We need clarification of the military's position with respect to the use of development assistance in their campaign, and I would respectfully say, Canada needs to make this right[...] The delivery of aid should be focused on the needs and rights of Afghans and not tied to any military or political strategy, and in all but exceptional circumstances, military forces should avoid engaging in reconstruction or relief activities in Afghanistan. Aid workers are the right people for that job...

... the military should stick to security and protection of civilians, not to delivering assistance.

The Committee has heard these concerns before but believes there is some misconception about what the military is actually doing in the way of helping Afghans. While we understand the different conceptual roles of humanitarian assistance agencies and military forces, we do not think such definitive distinctions can be applied in Afghanistan because they simply do not reflect the reality on the ground.

We discuss the militarization of development assistance in Chapter 4. Here, we simply make the point that, we agree that where professional aid agencies are able to do so, they, not military forces, should deliver such assistance. Military commanders also agree. The problem arises when professional agencies cannot, or will not, engage a suffering population. This is the problem in Kandahar province. Not many NGOs or other aid agencies, beyond the World Food Programme (WFP) are present to help Afghans. Mr. Philip Baker, the Director General of CIDA's Afghanistan Branch, in response to a question about the number of NGOs on the ground in Kandahar Province, told the Committee on 12 December 2006:

... the number of NGOs active in the province is somewhat limited, compared to other provinces, due to security reasons. For example, there were NGOs that were beginning to implement the MISFA [Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan] ... They attempted that during one year but then brought those to a halt due to security reasons. There are other small NGOs across the province that are starting to gear up, but for large food distribution, it's the World Food Programme that is manning and leading the show.

As has been shown elsewhere in this report, the Canadian Forces is not directly delivering aid or development to Afghans. Canadian military forces are facilitating the delivery of aid and development through CIDA and USAID representatives, who work with NGOs and IOs present in Kandahar province. They in turn, consult local Afghan leadership about what needs to be done.

The Committee also understands that the military CIMIC function is much more of a pointed concern for professional aid agencies. CIMIC does purposely engage in helpful acts with a local population, particularly immediately after a battle or period of combat. Understandably, given their ethics, Canadian military commanders want to help non-combatants as best and as quickly as they can. It is also understandable that there is tactical advantage to helping local civilians and their leaders, to 'win their hearts and minds.' CIMIC has always been a legitimate function of military forces and is not intended to be a 'neutral' activity. That said, military commanders in Kandahar all agree that while CIMIC consultation with local civilian authorities should continue as long as needed, the provision of military assistance, such as digging wells and rebuilding village compound walls, will cease as quickly as professional development agencies can take over the job.

From what the Committee saw in Afghanistan, both military and professional development personnel on the ground understand what each other is doing and what each other is capable of doing. There seems to be no conceptual dispute among those who must simply get on with helping Afghans. Within the Canadian mission, it is the role

of the PRT to work with professional development agencies to address concerns and misunderstanding. When difficulties arise at a higher level, ISAF and UNAMA are the appropriate authorities to resolve them.

## **BALANCE**

The Committee has examined the issue of 'balance' in the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. The central concern was that too much time and effort was being spent on engaging the Taliban in combat, rather than getting on with widespread development efforts that are so obviously needed.

Of all the issues associated with the Afghanistan mission, this is one of the most oversimplified and therefore misunderstood. Many argued that the sheer numbers devoted to combat (a battle group of about 1200 personnel) compared to the total strength of the Kandahar PRT (about 350) indicated an undesirable emphasis on combat and not enough on development. It looked even worse when considering the common perception that there were only one or two DFAIT diplomats and only one or two CIDA development officers in the PRT.

Those who thought the mission lacked balance usually based their criticism on two criteria — money and numbers. Both criteria miss the point.

On 6 June 2006, Minister Mackay told the Committee that the incremental cost of the military portion of the Afghanistan mission, between 2001 and 2006 had been \$1.8 billion. This is the cost generated by having the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. It does not include normal pay and equipment maintenance costs that would have been incurred during normal duty at home. Minister Mackay also told us that \$466 million had also been committed to development activity during that same time frame. Some then compared the military cost to development commitments and complained that military expenditures outpaced development money by a ratio of more than 4:1 and that this somehow proved the mission was unbalanced.

This is a specious argument for three reasons. First, there is no accepted definition of what military/development cost ratio would be considered "balanced" and second, the two activities are so inherently different that any comparison is largely irrelevant. Third, in all the Committee heard, no one really seriously thought that the time was right to withdraw the Canadian Forces from Afghanistan. So even when Canada's military forces are not conducting operations (hypothetical at this point, because they are conducting operations every day), they would still "cost" Canada something even when staying in garrison.

What surely must be important criteria in each case is the *effect* of military or development activity, and the Committee heard quite clearly from a number of people that the general state of insecurity was inhibiting development. It then stands to reason that more military effect was needed during the period in question, in the hope that more

developmental effect could follow. As we are seeing now, perhaps improved security will allow and call for more developmental effect — a welcome possibility.

The other common criticism of balance tended to focus on the numbers of personnel fulfilling the various roles. The overall Canadian Forces mission strength is about 2500, of which about 1200 are found in the combat-oriented battle group, the unit that does the fighting. The National Command Element, National Support Element and the Theatre Support Element, who control and administer JTF-Afg, account for a little more than 950 personnel, which leaves about 330 personnel in the PRT. However, critics argue that more than 100 of the PRT are combat troops required for local security. In addition the PRT headquarters and administrative support element take up more personnel so that in the end, only about 180 personnel are available to engage in reconstruction work. This is hardly enough they say.

Such criticism is based on a misperception of just what exactly the PRT does. As mentioned, the PRT does not actually go out and repair or build things for Afghans. The PRT works with Afghans to enable them to decide on the work to be done and then to do the work themselves. The PRT works to build Afghan capacity, using Afghans — putting an 'Afghan face' on the projects. In this way, the PRT personnel are facilitators, not labourers. As facilitators, they can generate and oversee much more work than their numbers might indicate. Within the PRT, CIDA administers the provision of money to projects and programmes being carried out by Afghans, military engineers supervise Afghans digging wells, RCMP help to train Afghan policemen, financed by money provided through CIDA. In this way it can be seen that balance is not solely an issue of numbers. A more credible and accurate assessment of mission balance is to measure the pace and effect of reconstruction activity being facilitated by the PRT. Although slow to get started, both the pace and effect of PRT work has picked up over the winter and so the 180 facilitators are having much more impact than one would expect if they counted numbers alone.

During the Committee's visit to Afghanistan the Commanding Officer of the PRT, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Hetherington, clarified the numbers. While it was true that there was only one CIDA development officer in the PRT, she was not alone. There was one other development officer in the higher headquarters of Regional Command South, three further development officers working in Kandahar City and another three in the Canadian Embassy in Kabul. As well, the one diplomatic officer in the PRT and the one diplomatic officer acting as the Political Advisor to the Commander JTF-Afg were not isolated either. They were in regular contact with Canadian diplomatic and development personnel in the Canadian Embassy, under the direction of Ambassador Arif Lalani.

The PRT also includes five Canadian civilian policemen, led by RCMP Chief Superintendent David Fudge. This contingent, working with other allied police, helps to train the local Afghan National Police (ANP) and will grow to 10 policemen by March

2007. There is also a 25-person Military Police Platoon that supports the training of the ANP. Two officers from Corrections Services Canada have also been deployed to Kandahar, to work with allies in establishing a proper Afghan detention system.

The PRT reconstruction programme is pursued in a manner that engages Afghans themselves. It asks local village Shuras to decide on what reconstruction projects are needed and the priority in which they should be tackled. In this way, not only are Afghans helping themselves, they are being encouraged to take ownership of local projects and develop their own capacity for further work. The PRT facilitates reconstruction work by Afghans, it doesn't do it for them.

The Honourable Joséé Verner, Minister for International Development explained why such local ownership is important, when she appeared before the Committee on 12 December 2006:

Throughout Afghanistan, these projects — some 8,100 to date — are being done by community councils and less than 1% have been subject to rebel attacks. It is for just this reason that we are working with local partners, with elected councils, with representatives of the population. We are assured that they are in full possession of the projects because these people enjoy considerable support.

It is important to remember that the Kandahar PRT is not a *Canadian* PRT, but a *Canadian-led* PRT. In addition to the Canadian elements mentioned there are representatives of the USAID, the WFP and the United National International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The PRT is more of a 'cooperative' than a 'unit,' in which various teams with a variety of talent contribute their services and management skills to a growing menu of development activities.

In the end, when the PRT administrative elements are put aside, the Committee learned that there are about 180 PRT personnel who deploy into the field to facilitate development and reconstruction work.

Still, to many, 180 reconstruction personnel does not seem balance the 1200 combat personnel, but closer examination reveals no great cause for worry. Where the 1200 combat personnel have defeated hundreds of Taliban, the 180 reconstruction personnel, because they facilitate the work of Afghans, have had positive influence on thousands of Afghans, an effect out of all proportion to their number. This extended impact is explained by the fact that PRT personnel act as 'enablers' not 'doers.' The Committee was impressed by this short list of PRT general accomplishments during the period of their rotation from August 2006 to January 2007:

- a. Medical — village medical outreach teams that helped repair local clinics, administered first aid and health care to rural Afghans and provided professional support to Afghan hospitals;

- b. The provision of equipment to Afghan security forces, assistance in building infrastructure such as police stations and extensive mentoring of Afghan soldiers and policemen;
- c. 16 schools were repaired; two new schools were opened, hundreds of tents were provided to act as 'portable' classrooms to accommodate all students; and
- d. The PRT has paid students and teachers to begin an immense cleanup of the debris-strewn Kandahar Technical College, the first of small-scale projects that could become a million-dollar investment. In February 2007, the university, after months of delays due to earlier contractor woes, will fire up a new \$17,000 Canadian-supplied generator, and plumbers will put the finishing touches on new water and plumbing systems.<sup>16</sup>

The Committee was also reminded by Minister Verner that:

In Kandahar, such programs have achieved good results in close to 400 villages so far, with more to come. In Kandahar, Provincial Reconstruction Team projects are being completed at a rate of roughly 10 to 20 new projects per month, touching 7 Kandahar districts so far. We are funding the roll out of these projects to 2 more of the 17 Kandahar districts, and more will follow.

In the province of Kandahar alone, Provincial Reconstruction Team projects with CIDA and other donor assistance have resulted in tangible improvement in the life of villagers and the rural population. For example, more than 1,000 wells have been dug and 800 manual pumps have been distributed; 4 large water reservoirs are now in service; 100 km of irrigation canals have been rehabilitated; the provincial transportation and electricity networks have been improved. This means 150 km of new roads, 4 bridges, 50 km of power lines, 10 transformers, and 42 power generators.

So it becomes apparent that this "balance" issue is not as simple as was originally thought. There is more.

When Professor Douglas Bland, the Chair of Defence Management Studies at Queen's University, appeared before the Committee on 9 May 2006, he addressed the question of mission balance and said that criticisms often rest on an error in reasoning, in which people see *balance* and *equal* as synonyms. "True balance," he said, "is achieved

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16 From an article by Doug Schmidt, CanWest News Service. *Higher Learning in Disarray in Kandahar*. Wednesday, January 31, 2007. "There's need everywhere," said Lt Alfred Lai, a Civil-Military Cooperation officer with the Kandahar PRT. "We still have to fix the fabric of the college and the university. By the time we're finished, maybe they'll have the salaries for the teachers ...."

one 'D' at a time, when just the right number of resources are provided to meet the particular demands of each of the three Ds." He went on:

Balance is sustained when we adjust resources as the needs and circumstances change. There is no logical or appropriate way to balance the Ds without measuring particular needs independent of each other. In other words, there is no logic or requirement to make all three Ds equal in every respect.

With regard to the first D — diplomacy, for example, some 25 or 30 Canadian diplomats are stationed in Kabul today, where there were none in 2001. Scores of Canadian officials, on the other hand, in Ottawa, at the UN, at NATO, in Washington, in European capitals, and elsewhere, are coordinating Canada's diplomatic efforts and policies for humanitarian and security missions in Afghanistan. Then consider the second D — development. Afghanistan is Canada's largest recipient of official development assistance and is one of the leading developmental donors in Afghanistan. The total allocation of development assistance to Afghanistan, over the period 2001 to 2011, is about one billion dollars. The third D — defence — is seldom reported as fully as it could be. Canada's military operations get a great deal of attention in the media, and although it has improved lately, the previous emphasis on combat and flag-draped coffins left many Canadians with the impression that combat is Canada's only mission and that members of the Canadian Forces spend all of their time fighting. Not enough Canadians know that the Canadian Forces support valuable and extensive reconstruction work too.

During the early stages of study, the Committee heard from many witnesses who complained that Canadian media at large and those embedded with Canadian troops in particular were being unbalanced in their reporting, concentrating almost entirely on exciting combat stories and tragic deaths of Canadian soldiers in action. Solemn 'ramp ceremonies' made frequent appearances on television screens and front pages.

Seemingly forgotten in all this battle coverage was the fact that other Canadians were advising the Afghan government, training Afghan National Police, mentoring Afghan National Army units, building roads and canals and sending medical outreach teams to visit mothers and babies in rural villages. Many thought the only 'imbalance' to be found was in media reporting.

The Committee found no disagreement from anyone that more development was needed. The argument was not whether development assistance should be increased, but rather when, how and by who. The international strategy, wholeheartedly supported by Canada, is based on building the capacity of Afghans to help themselves. In Kandahar Province, Afghans decide, design and implement their own development plans with Canadian help. This means that things happen at a pace acceptable to Afghans.

In the Committee's view, the ideal circumstance would be to have a clear 'imbalance' in the favour of reconstruction and development work. It is universally accepted that the preferred circumstance is less combat and more development and reconstruction.



Minister O'Connor told the Committee that "there is no military solution to Afghanistan."<sup>17</sup> When Brigadier-General Tim Grant, the Commander of JTF-Afg was briefing the Committee during their visit in January 2007, he made it clear that the military aim is to "work itself out of a job." Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Hetherington, the Commanding Officer of the Kandahar PRT reinforced these views by explaining that as quickly as the security environment improves and the Taliban threat recedes, military combat forces will be replaced by more reconstruction and development activity.

The current reality is that much of the fighting has been initiated by offensive action of the Taliban. Those who call for more 'balance' (less fighting) tend to ignore the fact that the Taliban have a 'vote' in whether fighting occurs or not. Where Canadian combat initiative occurred it was in reaction to an impending Taliban threat, usually the occupation of local villages by insurgent forces. In this way, the degree of combat is entirely dependent on the presence of Taliban forces and activity. No Taliban; no fighting. Discussions of balance have never considered the possibility of even greater combat effort in the short term, to generate a major effort to eliminate the long-term Taliban threat.

So it is clear to the Committee that the only impediment to more Canadian reconstruction and development work is the continuing existence of an insecure environment in Kandahar Province. The Committee heard from a range of witnesses who told us that military forces should not be reduced at this time, while the threat remained. Military briefings, not surprisingly, also made this point clearly.

In Afghanistan, Sara Chayes<sup>18</sup>, a prominent American author and Kandahar entrepreneur was quite clear in how she felt about the issue of 'balance.' When asked about her views of the so-called Canadian 'debate' over whether to keep military forces in Afghanistan or bring them home, she said that, framed that way, the question is much too simplistic. "Kinetic operations are essential," she said. Ms. Chayes also explained that the Afghan insurgency is not home-grown. In her view it is an 'invasion' from Pakistan, using Taliban foot-soldiers. More aid is definitely needed, but it cannot be just given to Afghans without effective oversight to ensure it is not lost to endemic corruption. In the meantime, the lack of security demands that substantial military force remain in place.

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17 O'Connor, The Honourable Gordon. Minister of National Defence. Appearing before the Committee on May 30, 2006.

18 Sarah Chayes is a former National Public Radio (NPR) war correspondent who left her job in 2002 to help rebuild Kandahar. Chayes' selfless efforts, the subject of countless news stories, put her in a position to provide the world with a first-hand account of the harsh realities of life in post-war Afghanistan in her book *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban*. Today, she runs a small agri-business called Arghand, which uses traditional Kandahar fruit crops to produce high-end skin-care products, such as soap and bath oil, as well as jams for the local market. Chayes earned a B.A. in history from Harvard University, receiving the Radcliffe College History Prize for best senior thesis written by a woman. She served in the Peace Corps in Morocco, then returned to Harvard to earn an M.A. in history and Middle Eastern studies. Chayes began her radio career in 1991 at Monitor Radios in Boston, then joined NPR in 1996 as a Paris reporter. During her time with NPR, she reported from Algeria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Serbia, and Bosnia. Her work during the Kosovo crisis earned her the 1999 Foreign Press Club and Sigma Delta Chi awards.

Another clear message came from the Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization, in a letter<sup>19</sup> to the Committee in January 2007. The organization expressed concern that the current debate about Canada's mission in Afghanistan oversimplifies and politicizes the very complex conflict and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. They thought that the choices for Canadian policy should not be limited to either maintaining the current military mission or withdrawing altogether. In their view, they strongly felt that Canada's military presence is essential.

In late May 2007, there were growing indications that the security situation in Kandahar Province was improving. There is considerably more reconstruction and development activity than at this time last year. The soldiers are seeing significant improvement on the streets and in the markets. A number of NGOs are now doing good work in the area.

In light of overwhelming evidence, the Committee is satisfied that the Canadian mission in Afghanistan is adequately balanced for the circumstances. In fact, the mission is showing impressive flexibility in adjusting the balance as circumstances change. Nonetheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that more development and reconstruction aid must begin to flow as the security situation improves.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**The government should rebalance the diplomatic, development and defence components of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, to increase the focus on diplomacy and development.**

#### **CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING MISSION EFFECTIVENESS**

The Committee has maintained a consistent interest in the government's mechanism for measuring the effectiveness and success of the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan, but was, for some time, disappointed in the lack of a clear explanation. How do we know if we are doing any good?

Interestingly, the 2005 Defence Policy Statement presents eight factors to be considered by Government before reaching a decision to deploy a military mission overseas. A clear exit-strategy or desired endstate is one of them, but the list does not include clear metrics against which the effectiveness or success of the mission can be measured. Without such measures of mission success, how can we be sure we are closing on the desired endstate?

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19 From Adeena Niazi, Executive Director, Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization. January 4, 2007.

We understand that certain mission parameters may be classified for operational security reasons, but, in our view, it cannot be that no mission parameters are made public. We also understand that the nature of mission parameters will vary at different levels and that their attainment may ebb and flow depending on the situation, particularly at the tactical level. However at some higher level, Government must be able to explain to Parliament, how it goes about judging whether the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan is meeting its assigned objectives.

The Committee was therefore happy to see measurable criteria, in the form of clear questions, presented in the government's recent report on the progress being made in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> The questions are:

- a. Is there a democratically-elected government of Afghanistan that represents the will of the Afghan people, and does it want the support of the international community in establishing security and providing development assistance?
- b. Do the United Nations, NATO and the Government of Afghanistan welcome Canada's participation in the mission and are our allies willing to share the burden in our sector of Afghanistan?
- c. As progress is made in building the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), is the Government of Afghanistan prepared to commit more ANA and ANP units to Canada's sector of Afghanistan? Are Canadian and allied forces making progress training the ANA and the ANP?
- d. Is progress being made in combatting corruption in Afghanistan?
- e. Is our assistance making a difference? Further, would leaving Afghanistan jeopardize the progress being made in education, the construction of basic infrastructure and the advancement of the rights of women in our sector?
- f. Is the Afghan government committed to respecting human rights, including the rights of women?

Two other considerations include the level of international community burden-sharing across the three pillars of the Afghanistan Compact and how Canada's contribution stands in relation to that of other nations that have also pledged to assist in Afghanistan.

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20 Government of Canada. *Canada's Mission in Afghanistan*, February 2007.

## MISSION SUCCESS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

The Committee expressed an interest in knowing whether the current mission in Afghanistan could be accomplished, while still meeting Canada's other international obligations. There are many facets to this issue, but generally, we think it is fair to report that throughout the duration of the mission, Canada has indeed succeeded in meeting its other existing international obligations.

The Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan does not impede the conduct of any other existing Canadian international military obligation. A list of current operations being conducted by the Canadian Forces, concurrent with Afghanistan operations, is found on the DND website at: [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/current\\_ops\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/current_ops_e.asp).

Although all current military commitments are being met, the Committee heard from a number of military witnesses who made the point that the Canadian Forces could not, while it is conducting the current mission in Afghanistan, deploy an equivalent force to some other overseas mission. We recall Lieutenant General Leslie's remarks earlier in this Chapter, describing the personnel strains that challenge him. Commodore Margaret Kavanagh, the Commander of the Canadian Forces Health Services told the Committee, on 27 November 2006, that there are difficulties in her area too. When asked if the Health Services could support another mission, she replied, "Could we do another Afghanistan-type mission with the same capability? No. Could we do something else? Yes. It just depends on where it is, what we're being asked to do, and who else is coming to the party with us."

The process of taking on an international military obligation is not ad hoc, despite the occasional event where it might seem so. Theoretically, government can deploy every soldier, ship and airplane it owns, so, equally theoretically, government can take on as many commitments as it has resources for. In reality, the Canadian Forces is not able to deploy 'everything' all at once, because a good proportion of their kit and capability must remain in place to serve the institution — training schools, recruiting offices, staff colleges, maintenance workshops, supply depots. Once this 'corporate' requirement is set aside, there is a certain amount of deployable capabilities available to go where the government sends them.

However, these deployable capabilities are not all ready to go all the time. The Navy, Army and Air Force each have their own unique 'managed readiness system' that ensures the availability of certain capabilities. In the case of the Army's managed readiness system, Major-General Stuart Beare, the Commander of the Land Force Doctrine and Training System, told the Committee that the Army is required to maintain, "... the capability to provide, one high-readiness brigade headquarters, and, two land task forces for expeditionary operations on an enduring basis."

Government decides when and where to deploy the Canadian Forces. In arriving at such a decision, they will have to consider a variety of factors, an important one of which is the priority of the mission compared to other obligations being undertaken at the time. Military advice from the Chief of Defence Staff will offer views on the risks involved and the menu of capabilities needed to achieve assigned objectives. In the end, government can send its military assets anywhere it wants to, but any decision will invariably involve important trade-offs, which is why prioritization is so important.



## CHAPTER 4 — OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

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### INFORMING CANADIANS AND PARLIAMENT

The Committee's interest in this topic came about as a result of collective, general frustration over the lack of official information being made available to Parliament about Canada's mission in Afghanistan. As one Committee member put it:

... we do not have a great deal of information to go on. Before sending men and women off to war, the government has a duty to first inform parliamentarians of the specifics of their mission. It is unacceptable to us that as parliamentarians, we have been kept in the dark and that many of our questions have gone unanswered....<sup>1</sup>

This opinion came into sharp focus because some Members of Parliament felt that the time available before the debate dealing with the extension of the Afghanistan mission until February 2009, held in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 17 May 2006, did not provide sufficient opportunity for members to become acquainted with details of the mission.

In initiating the debate, Prime Minister Harper was clear in laying out the elements of the military mission for which his government was seeking Parliamentary approval:

... we are seeking to extend the mission of both the Canadian Forces in Kandahar as well as the efforts of Canadian military diplomats, development workers and police in the PRT, the provincial reconstruction team, for 24 more months. This mission extension ...will cover the period from February 2007 to 2009 ...

Extending the mission of the Canadian Forces has operational consequences. We will take on once again a second leadership rotation from November 2007 to May 2008, and this is new. As I said earlier today, we will be prepared to assume overall leadership of the ISAF for one year starting February 2008.<sup>2</sup>

With such a weighty issue on the table, the Committee regrets that some Members rising in reply chose to go a different route. The first responder declared, "My question has to do with process."<sup>3</sup> A subsequent speaker offered, "... so suddenly has this debate been brought on, so little information has been provided in advance on such an important issue and so much time is remaining until decisions really have to be made, I find this

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1 Bouchard, Robert. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence. Tuesday, May 16, 2006. p.1.

2 Harper, The Right Honourable Stephen. *Hansard*. Wednesday, May 17, 2006. p. 1503

3 Szabo, Paul. *Hansard*. Wednesday, May 17, 2006. p. 1504.

who process insulting ...”<sup>4</sup> The Leader of the Official Opposition eloquently captured the general mood of members, who genuinely wanted to understand the mission and give it informed support, when he opined:

We firmly believe in the current mission and the global goals. We also firmly believe that the government’s process will not allow many parliamentarians to make an informed decision about this critical issue. It is unfair to place parliamentarians in this position.<sup>5</sup>

And so the tone was set for the rest of the evening and throughout the conduct of this study. Despite having a consistently good story to tell Parliament and the Canadian people, it has seemed to the Committee that the Government has not been forthcoming with regular, informative accounts of the Afghanistan mission. Diminished information can lead to misunderstanding and make it hard to generate the support due such a noble endeavour.

Professor Roland Paris, while appearing on TV Ontario’s *The Agenda*, on 20 February 2007, lamented the fact that much of the Parliamentary discussion of the Afghanistan mission seemed stuck on who could be seen to support the troops the most, rather than dwelling on important matters of substance, such as what are we trying to do and how are we trying to do it. We agree with Professor Paris and hope our recommendations below help to address this concern.

### **Public Understanding of the Mission**

Throughout its study, but particularly after its visit to Afghanistan, the Committee was struck by the widespread lack of understanding of Canada’s mission. Despite the considerable amount of information found on government websites and speeches by involved Ministers, ordinary Canadians and many Parliamentarians still have only a cursory idea of the mission’s details and its effect. Media reporting has been unbalanced, focussing mainly on combat operations and the repatriation of soldiers killed. The efforts of Canadian Forces personnel with strategic planning skills, who support Afghan government bureaucrats in Kabul, are unknown to Canadians. The RCMP officers who form part of the Canadian-led PRT and who help to train the Afghan National Police have received little coverage. The Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) role that forms a fundamental component of the reconstruction effort has never been fully explained to Canadians.

Kandahar is the home of the Taliban movement and continuing access to safe haven in Pakistan gives the Taliban an ability to avoid decisive engagements with Canadian troops. However, there was one time the Taliban did choose to stand and fight. They were decisively defeated by Canadian troops during Op Medusa, a battle that occurred in September 2006. General Sir David Richards, the Commander of ISAF has repeatedly praised the martial accomplishment of Canadian troops in this battle, noting that

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4 McCallum, The Honourable John. *Hansard*. Wednesday, May 17, 2006. p. 1504.

5 Graham, The Honourable Bill. *Hansard*. Wednesday, May 17, 2006. p. 1505.



this victory was perhaps the most significant to date. It thwarted further Taliban activity in the area and allowed rejuvenated reconstruction work in the Panjwayi district.

Yet Op Medusa exemplified many of the difficulties apparent in providing Canadians with adequate information about the mission as a whole. At the time of the battle and even today, there is no information about Op Medusa to be found on any government internet website. The only mention of it on the DND website can be found in media releases announcing the unfortunate death of soldiers engaged in the fight. The media also covered Op Medusa, but not nearly in the depth it deserved. They too concentrated on military deaths and injury.

Media reports also spoke of widespread civilian casualties and the Committee heard some witnesses who shared the concern that an apparent over-reliance on air support and artillery gun fire caused unnecessary civilian casualties during Op Medusa. During its visit to JTF-Afg in Kandahar, the Committee heard from Lieutenant Colonel Omer Lavoie, the Commanding Officer of the 1 RCR Battle Group, who led the brunt of the fighting. Colonel Lavoie was clear in stating that there were no non-combatants in the 1 RCR Battle Group area and that he saw no 'widespread civilian casualties' as a result of the fighting. "I was the man on the ground and there were none," he said.<sup>6</sup> This clarity was never transmitted to Canadians at the time.

Government needs to do more to help Canadians understand the nature, importance and effect of the mission in Afghanistan. Granted, the Prime Minister, on a number of occasions, has been clear in explaining why we are in Afghanistan, as have Ministers Mackay, O'Connor and Verner, but perhaps something more than their explanations are required.

## **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**The government should conduct regular, televised, public briefings, at meaningful intervals, to accurately inform Canadians about the status, activity and effect of the mission in Afghanistan.**

In the absence of such briefings, the Committee sought to receive information direct from DND.

## **Parliamentary Understanding of the Mission**

In appearing before the Committee on May 30, 2006, the Honourable Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence responded to a question about the possibility of him coming to brief about the Afghanistan mission at least four times a year. He replied:

I'll take this as something to deal with. I don't know if three months is the appropriate time or not. I don't know whether in three months progress or the lack of progress can be

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6 In a briefing to the Committee, January 25, 2007, during its visit to JTF-Afg.

registered. I certainly expect to be back to this committee on a regular basis, but today I couldn't commit to giving you an update every three months until I find out if it makes any practical sense.

The Committee eventually succeeded in having a senior Canadian Forces officer present bi-weekly reports on the Afghanistan mission. However, these ceased over the late December 2006-January 2007 period when Parliament was not sitting. In February, the Committee passed a motion to have the briefings resume on a monthly basis.

The Committee feels that it should take a more active and aggressive role in seeking current and relevant information about the Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan. To that end, it will seek a more structured approach to briefings and visits. In fact, the Committee believes it should receive regular briefings on all Canadian Forces operations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Minister of National Defence should appear at least four times a year before the Standing Committee on Defence to provide a televised situation report, outlining the status, activity and effect of all Canadian Forces operational missions being conducted at the time.**

The Committee also found it could have done a better job of gaining an early understanding of the international command and control structure governing the international and Canadian missions in Afghanistan, particularly in the defence realm.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**In months during which the Committee is not travelling and in which the Minister does not appear, a Canadian Forces senior officer should continue to appear before the Committee to present a briefing on the mission status, activity and effect of all ongoing Canadian Forces operational missions since the last report and provide a view of what can be expected in the next month.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**For the life of the current Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan, or in the future case of a similar mission, the Standing Committee on National Defence should make an annual visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, to receive detailed briefings on the NATO mission in Afghanistan and meet with the North Atlantic Council to discuss multilateral strategic coordination and other issues of mutual interest.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**In addition to the visit to NATO Headquarters, the Committee should attempt to annually visit Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), which oversees all NATO operations, and/or Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum, which oversees ISAF operations, to receive detailed strategic and operational level briefings of the NATO operation in Afghanistan. If a visit is not possible, alternate means of communication such as video-conferencing or invitations to SHAPE/JFC Brunssum officials should be considered.**

## **RECOMMENDATION 16**

**The Standing Committee on National Defence should visit the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan at least once annually, at an appropriate time, in order to review the status of the mission at that time and any progress being made.**

## **DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT OF COMMITTEE TRAVEL**

When the Committee travelled to Afghanistan in January 2007, DND provided helpful advance briefings on various issues including mission status, travel plans and operational security. The visit to JTF-Afg was entirely worthwhile and we are grateful to DND for the support they provided throughout the trip. There were however, two important issues that should be highlighted.

First, although the Committee did eventually get to travel “outside the wire” to visit an ANA camp and an ANP training centre (and would have visited a Canadian Forward Operating Base had bad weather not stopped helicopters from landing), there were other important mission elements we did not see. The PRT is a major component of Canada’s military mission and it was unfortunate we did not get to see Camp Nathan Smith and PRT work in Kandahar City while we were there. In fairness, it should be noted that all senior PRT personnel did come to Kandahar Airfield to meet with the Committee, but as helpful as such briefings were, they are less effective than actually seeing operational locations in person.

While the Committee understands the significant responsibility borne by the MND, CDS and Commander JTF-Afg for the safety of visiting VIPs, we enthusiastically urge them to consider the necessity of getting visiting Parliamentarians around to see all mission elements and arrange opportunities to meet with military personnel *in situ*.

The second issue is more irksome. DND restricted the number of Committee personnel who could visit Kandahar Airfield to 10. The rationale for this number, given in the advance briefings, was that there was simply no room to take any more on the military aircraft flying from the Theatre Support Base into Kandahar Airfield. The effect of this restriction was to prohibit attendance by other Committee members who may have wanted

to visit JTF-Afg and to require the Committee Clerk to remain in Camp Mirage. So, only eight Committee members, accompanied by one interpreter and one analyst spent time with JTF-Afg.

It is highly irregular and unsatisfactory to travel without the Committee Clerk and the Committee is still at somewhat of a loss as to why DND could not accommodate just one more person on the trip, particularly since no less than five DND representatives (one Colonel from the Canadian Forces; one policy officer from the DND Parliamentary Affairs staff; and two members of the office of the MND) met the Committee upon arrival at the Theatre Support Base. One of them had been in Kandahar days earlier and had come out to meet the Committee at Camp Mirage. All five officials then returned to Kandahar Airfield with the Committee — taking up five seats on a crowded military aircraft. This left the Committee with the distinct impression that the restriction of 10 personnel that was placed on the Committee was, at best, an artificial imposition that need not have been applied at all. We think the one DND official could have remained in Kandahar Airfield to meet us on arrival and thereby allow the Committee Clerk to make the trip as he should have.

However, there is a broader issue here and it is one of ensuring Parliamentary Committees are supported to the extent required to allow travel by the full Committee (if they so desire) and the necessary staff required to support Committee work.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

**When visiting Canadian Forces international operations, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Defence should be accorded early and full support by DND, to ensure that the full Committee and necessary staff are able to complete the trip and their work.**

#### **THE AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN BORDER**

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border has long been a source of dispute. Afghanistan and Pakistan relations have been problematic ever since Pakistan was created as part of the partition of India in 1947. Some elements of friction were apparent even before then, between Afghanistan and India under British Imperial rule. All governments of Afghanistan have never recognized the Durand Line, delineating the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghan Pashtuns have historically made claims on the Pashtun and Baluch regions of Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> In remote regions, the border has been more of a notion than a fact. Central governments in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have never succeeded in establishing firm control over their mutual border region.

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7 Rubin. "Resolving the Afghanistan-Pakistan Stalemate." p. 2.

When US forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001, to assist the Afghan Northern Alliance to expel the Taliban leadership and eliminate al-Qaeda terrorists, the US was concerned that Taliban and al-Qaeda personnel would disappear into Pakistan's western regions and never be brought to justice.

When ISAF forces expanded into southern and eastern Afghanistan, the Taliban heartland, in 2006, Taliban insurgent forces were reinforced from western Pakistan and challenged the ISAF presence. Taliban forces gathering in Afghanistan were defeated in Operation Medusa, during the fall of 2006. As has been historically the case, the Taliban insurgency ebbed during the winter months, as travel through the mountainous border regions becomes difficult, but a renewed Taliban surge is expected in spring 2007 and once again, the issue of Taliban support from, and access to, Pakistan may be an operational concern to ISAF. Nonetheless, ISAF initiated pre-emptive operations. Some Taliban forces in Kandahar Province were dispersed by ISAF troops in Op Falcon Summit in January 2007 and in March 2007, another ISAF military operation, Op Achilles, cleared Taliban insurgents from the area of the Kajaki dam in Helmand Province.

There are broader, historical questions regarding the stability of the tribal areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Pakistan's policies toward these areas and the effects of tribal militancy upon international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. It is a complicated issue and there is sometimes a tendency to oversimplify the issue.

It is useful to begin with a review of the situation in western Pakistan, where a system of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) attempts to govern the people. The FATA are bordered by: Afghanistan to the west with the border marked by the Durand Line (a boundary never formally accepted by Afghanistan), the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab to the east, and Baluchistan to the south.<sup>8</sup>

The total population of the FATA was estimated in 2000 to be about 3,341,070 people, or roughly 2% of Pakistan's population. Only 3.1% of the population resides in established townships. It is thus the most rural administrative unit in Pakistan.

The Tribal Areas comprise seven Agencies — Khyber, Kurram, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, and North and South Waziristan and five Frontier Regions (FR) namely FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Banuu, and FR D.I. Khan.

About 30% of the FATA is inaccessible both politically and administratively. The region is only nominally controlled by the central government of Pakistan. The mainly Pashtun tribes that inhabit the areas are fiercely independent, but until friction ensued following the fall of the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan, the tribes had mostly had friendly relations with Pakistan's central government.

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8 This section is generally taken from an article by Fair, C. Christine, Nicholas Howenstein and J. Alexander Their. *Troubles on the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border*. United States Institute of Peace, December 2006. At [http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace\\_briefings/2006/1207\\_pakistan\\_afghanistan\\_border.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2006/1207_pakistan_afghanistan_border.html).

Despite more than fifty years of independence, human development and physical infrastructure of this area, sufficient to connect FATA to the rest of Pakistan remains weak. A colonial-era legal system that is inconstant with Pakistan's own constitution remains in place. Rights are inconsistently applied and arguably, as a result, many FATA residents could have a negligible sense of responsibility and allegiance to the Pakistani state.

The tribal areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border present a number of challenges for both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and for the international community. Taliban and al Qaeda militants have taken refuge in the remote villages of these areas, from which they launch attacks against Afghan and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. These Taliban fighters have also allied with local insurgents based in Waziristan and Baluchistan, raising several disquieting questions about Pakistan's own internal security and ability to exert control over this area.

As a result of some international pressure, regular Pakistani army troops entered the tribal areas for the first time in Pakistani history and in 2004. Pakistan Army attacks on local militant groups resulted in civilian casualties, fuelling an insurgency by some Waziri tribal groups. Pakistani troops and US forces have carried out "coordinated operations" in the border region that has further antagonized some local tribes. The Pakistani Army has about 80,000 troops in the region now.

The Pakistan military's lack of success in South and North Waziristan — and concomitant peace deals — have empowered and legitimized the socio-political role of the mullahs, the militants, and their Taliban allies. International forces now confront a fundamentally different Taliban than they did in October 2001. The Taliban has replenished its revenues, recruited new cadres, and adopted Iraq-like tactics, such as improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers.

Pakistan has tried in recent years to mitigate cross-border infiltration into Afghanistan. They have talked about fences; they have talked about mines (which Canada opposes) and aerial surveillance. Pakistan has deployed more than 80,000 troops into the border regions and have suffered over 800 casualties fighting insurgents since 2002.

Canada has not been blind to this overall situation and positive steps are being taken. In October 2006, the Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Gordon O'Connor outlined the issue for the Committee. According to Minister O'Connor, there are about 12.5 million Pashtun people on the Afghan side of the border. There are also about 22 million in Pakistan. Together they equal the population of Canada.

The border is porous. Anyone moving across the border — two or three men — may not necessarily be Taliban. There is no paperwork needed for the Pashtun to move back and forth across the border, because they have a right to cross freely, much as native Canadians have to move back and forth into the US.

When Minister O'Connor met with the president of the Pakistani senate and Minister of Defence in October 2006, , he told both of them that Canada appreciates what they're doing and that we understand they also have other insurgencies in their country with which they must deal. But Pakistan was asked to do more, because in Canada's view, a porous border is like an open door allowing movement into our area of operations.

One of the modest steps of confidence suggested by Minister O'Connor was the possible deployment of a liaison officer, with the 12th Army Corps of the Pakistan Army, in southern border region and the positioning of a Pakistan liaison officer in the Canadian military headquarters in Kandahar.

When he appeared before the Committee on 22 November 2006, Minister of Foreign Affairs the Honourable Peter Mackay outlined some of the Canadian measures to address this complicated situation.<sup>9</sup>

The level of Canadian political and military engagement in Pakistan is arguably greater now than at any point in the past. In March 2006 Prime Minister Harper and Defence Minister O'Connor visited Pakistan and Minister O'Connor returned in September 2006. On both occasions they raised the importance of security and development missions in Afghanistan with the Government of Pakistan and the premium Canada placed on Pakistan's cooperation. They specifically raised Canadian concerns regarding the activities of insurgents within the Pakistani territory. Minister Mackay subsequently discussed these same issues with Pakistani Prime Minister Aziz in October 2006, in Halifax and then with President Musharraf himself, at the United Nations General Assembly in New York that same month.

Canada, in concert with allies, continues to push Pakistan to step up its efforts to prevent the cross-border movement of insurgents. Specifically, Canada encouraged Pakistan to seek out and arrest senior Taliban figures inside their country; improve border security; sign, ratify, and implement key United Nations conventions and resolutions against terrorism; legislate and enforce more robust anti-money laundering laws and counter-narcotics training; and work to prevent the exploitation by insurgents of refugee camps inside Pakistan.

On another front, Canada is working with Pakistan's security and law enforcement personnel to increase their capacity to deal with border management and related issues. Liaison arrangements between Canadian Forces personnel stationed in Pakistan and Pakistan's armed forces are being enhanced.

The capacity of Pakistan's security forces in the border regions is limited, particularly given the enormous security challenges they face in the rugged terrain. Pakistan military personnel are spread thin and often lack the proper equipment, particularly communications technology. This lack of capacity contributes to the degree of lawlessness

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9 Mackay, The Honourable Peter, *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence, No. 24. November 22, 2006.

throughout the border regions and undermines government efforts to address the cross-border movement of insurgents. Through the Foreign Affairs global peace and security fund and counterterrorism capacity-building fund, Canada is working to increase the capacity of Pakistani security forces. Projects currently being developed include a Pakistani police capacity-building course that aims to have RCMP trainers work with Pakistan to enhance the professional development of their security and law enforcement personnel along the border and elsewhere, and the provision of appropriate communications equipment, including satellite phone technical assistance, to the relevant Pakistani authorities to help secure the Pakistan-Afghan border and respond to the presence of security threats — that is, to detect and interdict smugglers and cross-border movement of insurgents.

## THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

The Canadian Forces has no direct role in this issue. It is much more central to the work of CIDA. Our interest was piqued, however, because throughout the conduct of our study, the Committee heard, time and time again, witnesses explain that among the objectives of Canada's overall mission in Afghanistan is the enhancement of the lives of women and girls, to release them from the oppression of Taliban influence and the grinding poverty in which they have had to exist for the past generation. So we asked specifically to hear from some academic and advocacy experts on the subject.

Not all agreed that the situation everywhere had improved for Afghan women since 2001, but not all said it had deteriorated either. Ms. Rina Amiri, the Lead Consultant for Afghanistan and Regional Matters with the Open Society Institute said her views fell somewhere in the middle.<sup>10</sup> She thought that Afghan civil society had improved and that over 200 women's organizations had started to gain a voice. On the other hand, Ms. Amiri pointed out that much of the progress had been made in bigger urban centres like Kabul and that women living in rural villages still suffer from domestic violence, rape, forced marriages and a maternal mortality rate of over 40%.<sup>11</sup> For women, increased security is much more than simply defeating the Taliban. The rule of law is not yet effectively established in Afghanistan and this relates to our earlier concern about the endemic corruption found among government officials and the ANP. Nonetheless, Ms. Amiri sees significant value in the military campaign:

I find it ironic that on the one hand people speak of the situation of women and the need to address this, but at the same time they say, no, we shouldn't engage militarily in the country; we should not send soldiers.... You cannot isolate the situation of women. They're not an island; they are part of Afghan society. As in every conflict situation in the world, those who bear the brunt of conflict, those who bear the brunt of instability are

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10 Amiri, Rina. *Evidence*. Standing Committee on National Defence, January 30, 2007. p. 5.

11 *Ibid.* p. 6.



children and women. We have seen what the women of Afghanistan have endured in the past. Unless there is a resolute commitment to put soldiers on the ground and address the security situation in Afghanistan, the situation of Afghan women will not improve.<sup>12</sup>

## POPPY CROP ERADICATION

Although the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan do not participate in poppy crop eradication, they are nonetheless affected by it. Poppy eradication is financed to a large degree by the US and UK. The actual crop destruction is carried out by the Afghan National Police.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),<sup>13</sup> noted in its Report "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006," that opium poppy acreage increased by 59% from 2005 to 2006. Afghanistan opium production, of which 6,100 tonnes are produced annually, now accounts for 92% of the world's opium supply. The increase in the southern provinces was even more spectacular, with production up by 121% overall, and by 162% in Helmand province, where the British military contingent is based. In Kandahar Province, where the Canadians are located, production decreased by 3%.

Huge amounts of money are involved. UNODC has estimated that the global retail value of Afghanistan based opium, and its heroin derivative, amounted to over \$(US) 50 billion dollars. In early 2006, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa said "Revenue from the harvest will be over three billion dollars this year ...." According to Costa, the opium farmers get about 25% of the take, with the druglords keeping the remaining 75% — or about \$2.3 billion dollars.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai spoke of the drug problem when he visited Ottawa on 22 February 2005. In an address to a joint sitting of the House of Commons and the Senate, he said it would take five to 10 years to resolve and that, "If we do not destroy poppies in Afghanistan, then poppies will destroy us. I hope you have the patience to succeed."

Many international reports describe the Afghan government's campaign to eliminate opium as failing. The British lead the international counter-narcotic effort and, among other things, are helping to train ANP counter-narcotics officers. In a complementary programme, Germany leads the training of the overall ANP, which includes border police who also play a role in stopping the drug trade. However, not everyone thinks poppy eradication is the way to go.

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12 Ibid., p. 6.

13 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html>.

The Senlis Council<sup>14</sup> is an international policy think tank whose work encompasses foreign policy, security, development and counter-narcotics policies. Their extensive programme currently underway in Afghanistan focuses on global policy development in conjunction with field research to investigate the relationships between counter-narcotics, military, and development policies and their consequences on Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts.

Based on research carried out in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kandahar and Helmand, Senlis council reports have been highly critical of the overall military strategy in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> Senlis reports claim that counter-narcotics policies pursued in Afghanistan by the international community have been largely ineffective and contribute to a worsening of relations with local communities. As the eradication of poppy crops continues, it has led to support for the Taliban and al-Qaeda insurgents among dissatisfied farmers instead of helping to "win their hearts and minds."

Even though Canadian troops do not conduct poppy eradication operations, there is some concern that local Afghan discontent will fall on Canadians, even if our troops are not directly involved in eradication. As well, some officials worry that antagonising farmers with forced eradication will only strengthen the insurgency. The Afghan government has so far resisted American pressure for aerial spraying, preferring to rely on tractors. It claims to be targeting "the greedy rather than the needy" (for instance destroying poppy fields allegedly owned by a former police chief). No compensation will be offered. But uprooting is often a haphazard affair, usually affecting those who cannot bribe the eradication teams to pass over their plots. Given that there can be little or no eradication in Taliban areas, those who live under government control feel unfairly penalised.<sup>16</sup>

The proposed Senlis Council solution to the opium crisis is a novel one — buy the total opium crop from the farmers directly, and process it into medical opiates, especially for distribution to developing countries. A full discussion of this and other proposals to bring the drug trade under control in Afghanistan is beyond the bounds of this study, but it may be informative to learn how Canadian field troops have been handling the situation. The following vignette comes from a 2006 article by Murray Brewster of the Canadian Press.<sup>17</sup>

When the commander of Canadian troops in southern Afghanistan's poppy-rich Helmand province gives his word to village elders that his soldiers are not there to rip up their fields, he means it.

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14 The Senlis Council at <http://www.senliscouncil.net/>.

15 See the reports on the Senlis Council website.

16 "Double Spring Offensive." *The Economist*, Print edition. February 22, 2007.

17 Brewster, Murray. "Canada treads dangerous line over poppy eradication in southern Afghanistan." *Canada.com* at <http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=9311e6b5-f974-4e2f-ae54-dd2084e67021&k=4588>.

In fact, Major Bill Fletcher takes great care to ensure his armoured vehicles don't wreck the green pastures, or generally cause damage to the plants that produce a scourge of drug addiction in the West.

"It's basically my word as a commander to them," he said in a recent interview at Forward Operating Base Robinson, in the heart of Helmand River valley.

"There's a code of ethics and honour around here. My word as a commander, and my platoon commanders give their word that Canadians will not be involved in these things, seems to be taken at face value..."

Besieged on three sides by poppy fields and in an outpost that was the target of a mass Taliban attack last month, Fletcher is practising what a senior British officer irreverently described as "realpolitik."

As commander of C Company, 1st Battalion, of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Fletcher is faced with this potentially volatile conundrum every time he looks over the grey prefab walls of his remote outpost, where the poppies are so close they often kiss the edge of his razor-wire defences. Last week, in full of view of heavily armed Canadian troops, local villagers and temporary workers went about the business of harvesting this year's crop. All of it will be processed in drug labs sprinkled throughout the Afghan-Pakistan border area, with some of the refined heroin eventually finding its way to the streets of major Canadian cities.

The program to rip up and burn poppies is organized and led by the Afghan National Police and army, a point coalition commanders hammer home at every opportunity. Much of the super-secret anti-narcotics operation is focused on destroying the processing labs.

Given the grinding systemic poverty of this region, where the average civil service wage is equivalent to about \$60 Cdn a month, the troops find it hard not to feel some sympathy for the farmers.

"The reality for these guys is, they grow poppies because they get enough money to live," said Fletcher. "They're not drug barons, you know. They're not huge traffickers or anything else. They're just farmers trying to make a go in what is a pretty tough landscape." The complaints of villagers around here aren't much different than farmers on the Prairies back home, except this crop becomes an illegal narcotic.<sup>18</sup>

## **DETAINEE HANDLING AND TRANSFER**

Since 2001, the Canadian Forces have captured and subsequently transferred numerous individuals suspected of committing crimes or planning to commit terrorist acts against international forces or Afghans themselves. These apprehended individuals are

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18 Major Bill Fletcher was recently awarded the Star of Military Valour, second only to the Canadian Victoria Cross, by Governor General Michaëlle Jean, for acts of courage under fire in the face of the enemy in Afghanistan.

referred to as 'detainees' and they are routinely handed over to Afghan national security forces by Canadian troops. The Committee heard early testimony that highlighted significant concern over the practice of transferring detainees to Afghan authorities because it was thought that they will be mistreated or tortured by ill-trained Afghan police.

Public allegations subsequently surfaced that claimed three detained Afghans may have even been mistreated while in Canadian custody. The allegations came from University of Ottawa law professor Amir Attaran,<sup>19</sup> based on government documents he obtained under the Access to Information Act. The Canadian Forces launched a Board of Inquiry<sup>20</sup> to investigate the treatment and processing of detainees by the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, and the circumstances regarding the transfer of the three detainees from a Canadian field unit to Military Police at Kandahar Airfield in the period 6-8 April 2006.

The Board of Inquiry is distinctly different from a separate ongoing Canadian Forces National Investigation Service (CFNIS) investigation, in which trained investigators determine whether or not a criminal offence has occurred, and whether or not there is sufficient evidence to lay charges.

In addition to these proceedings, the Military Police Complaints Commission announced<sup>21</sup> it was launching a second public interest investigation into a complaint regarding the transfer of detainees by Military Police in Afghanistan. This decision relates to a joint, Amnesty International Canada and British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, complaint letter received on 21 February 2007. In the complaint, it is alleged that the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal and unidentified members of the CF Military Police, on at least 18 occasions transferred detainees to Afghan authorities notwithstanding alleged evidence that there was a likelihood they would be tortured.

Detainee handling and transfer involves certain diplomatic issues too. Afghanistan is a sovereign country and is responsible for the handling of all detainees captured on its own territory. Canada, and other nations, are in Afghanistan at the invitation of the Afghan government and so, detainees captured by the Canadian Forces were originally turned over to Afghan authorities, subject to conditions found in an arrangement between the Canadian Forces and the Afghan ministry of defence, signed on 18 December 2005.

The document in question is entitled, "Arrangement for the Transfer of Detainees between the Canadian Forces and the Ministry of Defence of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The first section of the arrangement establishes the technical nature of the document when it says, "This arrangement establishes procedures in the event of a transfer ...." It is an agreement between two government agencies, not an agreement between two countries *per se*.

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19 See the transcript of an interview with Dr. Attaran at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2007/feb2007/inte-f16.shtml>.

20 DND new release at [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=2199](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=2199).

21 Military Police Complaints Commission website at [http://www.mppcc-cppm.gc.ca/300/Afghanistan/index\\_e.aspx](http://www.mppcc-cppm.gc.ca/300/Afghanistan/index_e.aspx).

According to Ms. Colleen Swords,<sup>22</sup> the DFAIT Assistant Deputy Minister International Security Branch and Policy Director, the arrangement is not a formal treaty and is not legally binding. It simply reaffirms existing legally binding commitments, in particular those in the Third Geneva Convention, as well as obligations undertaken by both Canada and Afghanistan under international law with respect to detainees. In these circumstances, it was felt, there was no need to enter into a separate legally binding agreement with the Government of Afghanistan. Ms. Swords also pointed out that the mechanisms for the transfer of detainees concluded between Afghan authorities and other NATO allies such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are also not legally binding.

The transfer arrangement establishes the procedures to be followed in the event of a detainee transfer. It is intended primarily to provide commanders on the ground with clarity on what to do in the event of a transfer, the arrangement lays out two key principles:

- a. Recognition of the need for detainees to be treated humanely under any circumstance and in accordance with the standards set out for prisoners of war<sup>23</sup> in the Third Geneva Convention;
- b. Afghan authorities, in exercising sovereignty over their own territory, should have the ultimate responsibility for detainees transferred and held within Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup>

The agreement acknowledges the right of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit detainees at any time during their custody and an obligation for both parties to notify the ICRC upon transferring a detainee, in accordance with their obligations pursuant to international law. It also establishes a commitment that persons transferred from the Canadian Forces to Afghan authorities will not be subject to the application of the death penalty. Finally, it features recognition, by both parties, of the legitimate role of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) with regard to the treatment of detainees. Canada notifies the ICRC in a timely manner each time a detainee transfer occurs and Canada also notifies ISAF of any detainees transferred. The information shared with NATO is similar to that provided to the ICRC.

Based on the premise that Afghan authorities should have the ultimate responsibility for detainees transferred and held within Afghanistan, Canada has been actively contributing to efforts to assist and strengthen Afghan capabilities in this field. Consistent with its leadership role in security system reform in southern Afghanistan, Canada has deployed a corrections expert to the UNAMA for the past three years and has recently

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22 Testimony before the Committee on Monday, December 11, 2006.

23 Note that detainees are not considered to be “prisoners of war” and that the term is used only to describe the level and nature of treatment detainees will be afforded.

24 Afghanistan, like Canada, is a sovereign country and a member of the United Nations. The Canadian Forces and other international military forces are there at the invitation of the Afghan government.

deployed more Corrections Services Canada officers to the Kandahar PRT, to help with capacity building in the Afghan corrections and detention centre in Kandahar province.

Professor Michael Byers, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law, also appeared before us on 11 December 2006, and expressed strong concern that the transfer agreement was not as robust as it could be. He, like Mr. Alex Neve of Amnesty International Canada was deeply concerned that when the Canadian Forces transfer a prisoner into Afghan custody, torture or ill treatment by Afghan police will occur. They felt that the transfer agreement was not sufficient to prohibit such abuse and that it therefore left Canada and Canadian Forces personnel liable to be in violation of their international human rights obligations.

Professor Byers, cited the detainee transfer agreement between the Netherlands and Afghanistan as a good model, suggested a number of amendments be made to strengthen the transfer agreement. First, he wants Canada to insist on a right to conduct follow-up checks on detainees transferred to Afghan authorities. Second, in addition to ensuring that the death penalty is not applied to any transferred detainees, Canada should also insist that no transferred detainees are sent to any third country. Finally, Professor Byers thinks the agreement ought to be elevated to the status of a legally binding undertaking, so that Afghanistan can be held to account if they violate any aspect of international law.

Being sensitive to the debate surrounding the handling of detainees, Canadian military leaders in Afghanistan worked to ensure this issue was being handled appropriately. A Canadian Press article<sup>25</sup> described how Brigadier-General Tim Grant, the Commander of JTF-Afg, reached an agreement with the Kandahar office of the AIHRC, to have the AIHRC act as watchdog for detainees captured by Canadians to ensure that valid complaints of abuse are investigated.

Abdul Quadar Noorzai, the Kandahar manager of the AIHRC said, "Canadians respect human rights very well.... It is one of the greatest acts taken by them and I really appreciate it from the core of my heart." Noorzai said he was now free to investigate and document cases of suspected abuse, whether the allegations involve Canadian troops or Afghan authorities. The agreement gives victims a way to have their complaints investigated by either Canadian authorities or the local judiciary for prosecution.<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, there was continuing concern over the transfer of detainees to Afghan security authorities. The Minister of National Defence subsequently visited Kandahar to discuss the details of detainee transfer and the role of AIHRC in monitoring

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25 Brewster, Murray. "Afghan group to monitor detainee care. Canada first NATO country to reach deal on probing inmate complaints". *Canadian Press*, March 1, 2007.

26 Ibid.

the subsequent treatment of detainees held in Afghan prisons. Minister O'Connor returned to Canada and confirmed that the AIHRC will monitor the treatment of detainees transferred by Canada to Afghan authorities.

On May 3, 2007, the government went one step further and signed a supplemental arrangement between the government of Canada and the Afghan Ministry of Defence, in which both parties agreed to additional and more stringent criteria for the treatment, supervision and access to detainees in Afghan prisons. This supplemental arrangement addresses the major concerns voiced in previous testimony and, in fact, is now being held up as the best arrangement of its kind in Afghanistan. In combination, the two Canadian-Afghan arrangements on detainee transfer are being touted as an example for all other national contingents.

However, one preferred step remains and that would be to have NATO ISAF develop a common detainee transfer arrangement between ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan, so that all detainees are handled and transferred in a consistent manner and common expectations of follow-up are known and understood by all parties.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

**The government should attempt to convince NATO to establish a general arrangement with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the consistent treatment of detainees, but in the meantime, the Government of Canada should ensure that, in all combined operations conducted by Canadian and Afghan military and/or police forces, all detainees captured by Canadian Forces are treated in accordance with the December 18, 2005 and May 3, 2007 arrangements between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and the Convention against Torture.**

#### **CONTRIBUTING TO THE TRAINING OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES**

An important aspect of the international effort to assist in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, are the programmes to establish and build the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). The aim is to make each capable of playing its full role in the maintenance of peace and security in Afghanistan. When they are able to do this, international military forces can leave.

The US is the lead nation for the development of the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Once elements of the ANA complete their training programme, ISAF's involvement with the ANA is focused on its operational employment rather than its manning, initial training and sustainment. ISAF helps to bring the ANA up to operating capability through the provision of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT). These teams support training and deploy on operations in an advisory role.

At a Geneva conference on Afghanistan security in April 2002, donor countries agreed to support the rebuilding of the security forces in Afghanistan. They established a 'five pillars' approach, each to be led by a different nation. The US took the lead to build the ANA and Germany took the lead for the ANP.<sup>27</sup> The Afghanistan government and the international community agreed to set up the ANP with 62,000 personnel, a number thought to be the minimum that could function effectively and be sustained by the government of Afghanistan over the long term. That number was to include 44,300 uniformed police, 12,000 border police, 3,400 highway police and 2,300 counternarcotics police. In January 2006, a standby reaction police force was added.

Together, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) comprise the major elements of the Afghan national security forces. The ANA is overseen by the Afghan Ministry of Defence and the ANP are overseen by the Ministry of the Interior.

The US-led Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) is responsible for training the Afghan National Army and also interacts with the German-led project to train the Afghan National Police. In partnership with the Government of Afghanistan and the International Community, CSTC-C plans, programs and implements reform of the Afghan Police and defense sectors in order to develop a stable Afghanistan, strengthen the rule of law, and deter and defeat terrorism within its borders.<sup>28</sup> It is commanded by a US Major-General with a Canadian Brigadier-General as Deputy Commander.

### **Training the Afghan National Army**

Upon becoming president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai set a goal of an army of 70,000 by 2010. Three years ago, there was virtually no ANA to speak of, but today, the ANA has nearly 37,000 soldiers<sup>29</sup> and ANA units now regularly take part in or lead combined ANA-ISAF combat operations.

Initial recruiting problems lay in the lack of cooperation from regional warlords and inconsistent international support. The problem of desertion dogged the force in its early days. In mid-March, 2004 estimates suggested that 3,000 soldiers had deserted.

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27 Inspectors General, US Department of State and US Department of Defense. *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*. November 2006. The other pillars are Justice (Italy); Counternarcotics (UK) and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR — Japan).

28 CSTC-A website at <http://oneteam.centcom.mil/default.aspx>.

29 United Nations Human Rights Council, Fourth Session. Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and on the achievements of technical assistance in the field of human rights. March 5, 2007.



As part of Op Enduring Freedom different nations have undertaken various responsibilities in training the ANA, managed by Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A), a US-led two-star level multi-national command headquartered in downtown Kabul. Canadian Brigadier-General Denis Tabbernor serves as the Deputy Commander.

From July 2006, ANA training and education has been managed and implemented by the newly-formed Afghan National Army Training Command (ANATC), which reports directly to the Afghan Chief of the General Staff. All training centers and military schools are under ANATC HQ, to preserve the approach that ISAF forces are mentoring Afghan military appointments, who remain responsible for the training of their own soldiers.

Individual basic training is conducted primarily by ANA instructors and staff at ANATC's Kabul Military Training Center. Foreign mentors at the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC) work under a US Army General Officer and in addition to the majority American contingent, there are 60 British troops, along with small detachments of French, Romanian and even Mongolian soldiers. Fifteen Canadian Forces personnel serve at the KMTC, acting as mentors to the Afghan instructors who teach Afghan soldiers. Note that the Canadians are 'mentors,' not instructors *per se*. This is consistent with the overall approach of building Afghan capacity, not doing the work for them.

KMTC has about 2,500 Afghan soldiers under training at any one time and it graduates a 615-man *kandak* (battalion) every month. It takes 16 weeks to turn an Afghan recruit into a trained soldier (as compared with 13 weeks in Canada).

CSTC-A provides the ANA with other various degrees of oversight, mentorship, and assistance. The US assists in the basic and advanced training of enlisted recruits and trains non-commissioned officers (NCO) for the basic training courses. A French Army advisory team oversees the training of officers for staff and low level field command in the Officer Training Brigade. The UK also conducts initial infantry officer training and commissioning at the Officer Candidate School. The British Army also conducts initial and advanced NCO training in a separate training brigade.

The Canadian Forces supervises the Combined Training Exercise portion of initial military training, where trainee soldiers, NCOs, and officers are brought together in field training exercises to certify them ready for field operations. Ideally, these exercises would be held at the *kandak* level, but the ANA is simply not able to perform at that level yet. However, as the ANA grows and matures they will reach that level and in order for such training to be effective, more training staff will be needed. This is one area where Canada and the Canadian Forces can reinforce success.

## **RECOMMENDATION 19**

**The government should increase the Canadian Forces contributions to Afghan National Army training so that, as the Afghan National Army grows and matures, higher level collective training of new kandaks can be conducted prior to real operations.**

Once trained ANA forces leave the KMTC in Kabul and join the Regional Corps deployed around the country, ANA *kandaks* are supported by attached ISAF military personnel called Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLT — affectionately known as ‘omelettes’) that mentor the *kandak* leadership and advise commanders in the areas of intelligence, communications, fire support, logistics and infantry tactics. OMLTs also play a particularly important coordinating and de-conflicting role between ANA and ISAF operations. There are at least 20 OMLTs currently deployed, and the Alliance is working to increase this number significantly.

Canada provides a 64-man OMLT in Kandahar Province, which recently took over responsibility for supporting an entire ANA Brigade. Here too, as the ANA grows and more *kandaks* are deployed in the Kandahar area, Canada could provide valuable help by increasing the size of the Canadian OMLT as the number of *kandaks* grows.

During its visit to Kandahar, the Committee heard a variety of comments about the Afghan army covering the gamut from recklessness to courage. Most experienced views agreed that Afghan soldiers fought well in combat, even if they tended to lack a bit of battle discipline. There are difficulties however. Apart from the ever present concern that a trained soldier might run off to join the Taliban, desertion and difficult recruitment are reoccurring problems. Soldiers are recruited from all nine ethnic groups across the country and, once enlisted, will spend their three year tour of duty on operational deployment. Some simply grow tired of being away from home for perhaps the first time in their lives. Once paid, some just take their money back to their family, with no thought to their ‘professional’ military responsibilities. None of this information was supported by empirical facts. It was all anecdotal, but it did provide the Committee with a better feel for the circumstances.

In the end, the Committee came away with a realistic understanding of the difficulties prevalent in growing and developing an effective ANA. Good, moral armies are not built overnight and the ANA faces many years of hard work before it is able to stand by itself, in its own land. It is not yet ready to operate on its own.

The Committee feels this is one area where Canada could do more. A fully trained ANA that can protect its own country is essentially our ‘exit strategy’ for this mission. When the ANA can stand on its own, foreign military forces can go home. In light of this perspective, providing additional training support to the ANA should be the Canadian Forces’ number two priority after security operations, because the entire Afghanistan Compact security sector reform is based on the development of the ANA, to the point that they can effectively establish and sustain a secure environment throughout the country. Right now, the US, British and French are carrying the majority of the load. We could do more.

Not only are Canadian soldiers world-class trainers in military operations, the profession of arms in Canada is built on solid moral and physical criteria, guided by ethical leadership, all of which could usefully be applied to the development of the ANA.

## Training the Afghan National Police

The development of the ANP has lagged behind that of the ANA and only in the past two years has the international community come to realize the importance of a stronger domestic police force, capable of contributing effectively to the establishment of peace and security and of law and order. The Afghan Compact authorized an ANP strength of 62,000 personnel and the international community, under US and German leadership have been offering effective help to reach this goal.

The ANP is part of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and is organized by regions, then provinces and then districts, each led by a Chief of Police.<sup>30</sup>

The basic training of a new ANP recruit is 8 weeks long, after which he/she is assigned to a duty station typically close to home. Many of the new ANP members lack formal education and are illiterate. Most of the new ANP officer-level personnel are trained at the Kabul Police Academy, where they receive a three-year university level professional education, after which they can expect duty assignments throughout the country.

The prevailing public perception is that the ANP is corrupt and ineffective due to the lack of mentoring and development, and also because of low pay (approximately US\$ 70 per month), as well as inadequate supervision. Some of those issues will be addressed by on-going rank and pay reform, a programme to professionalize the force by retaining only trained officers and ensuring that all can receive their pay as earned. Despite the international community's focus on ANP development, it is generally accepted that the ANP is about three years behind the level currently enjoyed by the ANA. The current goal is to reach a strength of 60,000 by 2011.

However, even now, the government of Afghanistan cannot afford to pay its police, so the international community has established a mechanism to pay ANP salaries through the Law and Order Trust Fund, administered by the UN Development Program (UNDP).<sup>31</sup> Costs are considerable. For example, the US contributed \$20 million in 2004, \$40 million in 2005 and \$9.5 million in 2006. As of May 2006, the US Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs funding for the ANP program totaled nearly \$1.1 billion for the period 2004-2007. In addition there was a transfer of \$200 million from the ANA program to procure weapons and equipment for the ANP in 2005.

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30 This and following information comes from a briefing received by Canadian Forces officers during the Committees trip to Afghanistan in January 2007.

31 Inspectors General, US Department of State and US Department of Defense. *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*. November 2006. p. 5.

The government of Afghanistan is projected to maintain an ANP funding level through 2012 and beyond at about \$170 million, but forecasted sustainment costs for the ANP (training, infrastructure and equipment) show it will be closer to \$600 million. The gap will presumably have to be filled by the international community.<sup>32</sup>

But deterioration in the security situation in 2006, forced the MOI to act to rebalance the ANP and to establish the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP). The MOI also considered increasing the ANP to 82,000. To study the issue, a working group was constituted in February 2007, consisting of representatives of Germany, the US, Norway, the Special Representative of the European Union (EUSR), UNAMA, and the Afghan Government (MOI, MOF). It met four times, chaired by the German Embassy.

The proposal to increase the size of the ANP was based on an analysis that due to the security situation, which began to worsen in early 2006, more Afghan security forces were required in order to guarantee stability in the country. A series of steps were taken in to rebalance the ANP and establishment the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), which was essentially a local self-defence force, in the face of growing insurgent infiltration in the south.

The primary mitigating factor on the proposal to increase the size of the ANP is the effect of this increase on the financial situation of both the Government of Afghanistan and the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan. The Afghanistan government does not have sufficient funds to pay the salaries of even a 62,000 police force and the Law and Order Trust Fund also constantly struggles to find enough funds.

The Task Force agreed that whatever decision is made the ultimate solution to increasing the effectiveness of the police lies not only in numbers, but in improving the quality of the police force. The MOI has reiterated the urgent and continuous need for an improvement of the quality of the police force, but professionalization of the police also depends on thorough reform of the Ministry of Interior itself.

The Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) is intended to be a community-based auxiliary police force to promote security at the district and village level, working under the local Chief of Police. In the Kandahar area, candidates for the ANAP are recommended and selected jointly by the village elders and mullahs, and are sent back to their communities upon completion of training. Monthly pay is equivalent to that of regular ANP personnel and they are provided with uniforms and weapons when they complete the CSTC-A sponsored and a Canadian Forces delivered two-week basic training programme in Kandahar. Their initial contract is for one year, after which they have an option to renew it, or join the regular ANP. The current plan is to train and deploy 2,000 ANAP policemen in Kandahar Province, with an increase to 2,080 if funding permits.

In comparison to some, Canada's contribution to training the ANP is small, but it does have some influence. Canadian civilian police and Canadian Forces Military Police

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32      *Ibid.*, p. 6.

provide instruction to the ANP on a variety of subjects including responding to an attack by an improvised explosive device (IED), first responder training, patrol training, weapons training, searching of suspects and vehicle checkpoint procedures. Some training support is also provided to Afghan National Auxiliary Police recruits at the US-run Regional Training Centre.

The Canadian Military Police Platoon is part of the KPRT. One detachment (2 military policeman) are tasked to support ANP training in the Kandahar area.

The RCMP work with international partners to assist with the mentoring and training of the ANP. One RCMP officer is deployed to the Police Reform Unit of the US-led Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) in Kabul and one is placed in the Afghan Ministry of the Interior.

Within the KPRT, 10 Canadian civilian police, under the leadership of RCMP officers, assist in building the capacity of the ANP by mentoring the local police force. Canadian police are responsible for establishing relationships with law-enforcement partners and serving as the point of contact between the KPRT and local police. They work in close cooperation with other international policing partners. Canadian police officers conduct regular joint patrols with KPRT military officers to liaise directly with the ANP at numerous police stations and checkpoints both within Kandahar City and in some of the rural districts.

Since 2005, Canadian police officers have distributed more than 2,500 working uniforms that were locally procured and distributed to the ANP. Other essential policing equipment, including boots, flashlights, belts, traffic cones, spike belts and portable speed bumps have also been provided to the ANP.

Canadian development funds were obtained to improve the living/working conditions of six local ANP stations. Four were renovated. Three new police stations, located in key areas of the city, are being constructed with two more planned.

In Kandahar, the fire department is part of the ANP. It lacked basic fire-fighting gear and so the KPRT Civilian Military Cooperation (CIMIC) team received equipment from the Langford, B.C. Volunteer Fire Department for the Kandahar Fire Department. The Langford Fire Department also donated approximately \$400,000 of equipment to be divided between Kandahar and Kabul.

## **SHARING THE BURDEN**

Throughout 2006, Canadians came to think that we were carrying too great a share of the fighting in southern Afghanistan. This perception was abetted by the concern of ISAF leaders that many of the participating nations had imposed caveats on the

employment of their troops that denied ISAF commanders any flexibility in deploying ISAF troops to the areas of greatest threat. The caveat issue became a hot discussion within NATO circles over the summer and fall.

National troop contingents assigned to NATO have always come with caveats attached — some explicit, but many implicit. Most are reasonable in the circumstances. A common complaint was that some forces focused on reconstruction and development work in the north, were considered to be not pulling their weight because they were not allowed to deploy into the southern provinces and fight alongside the British, Canadians, Dutch and Americans. Ignored in the argument were two important facts. First, national parliaments and governments had agreed to deploy their troops to do a specific job and were fortunate enough to find themselves in an area where fighting was minimal. Such contingents were organized and trained to do the job they were sent to do — mainly run a PRT operation, which leads to the second point.

Most of the PRT oriented elements are not easily turned into a combat unit in a short time. They are neither trained nor equipped to fight serious battles. If they came south, they may have turned out to be more of a burden than a help.

The Canadian government has caveats on the Canadian Forces contingent in Afghanistan now. For example, the Canadian-led PRT cannot be packed up and deployed elsewhere without approval of our national chain of command.

While Canadian troops certainly suffered terrible injury and death, we must not allow ourselves to be disheartened by the loss. There have been over 10,000 Canadian Forces personnel deployed to Afghanistan since 2001. Counting our 46 tragic deaths and over 180 injuries, our troops have suffered about a 2% casualty rate. The Committee knows such calculations can seem cold-hearted, but it is important to keep an objective perception of the price being paid.

Canadians are not the only ones paying a price. Some have paid more. While others may not have paid the same steep price as that paid by our troops, many of our allies have been involved in the fighting. The following chart shows the number of ISAF military deaths so far, in Afghanistan.

### NATO fatalities in Afghanistan by Country (as of adoption)

Australia	1
<b>Canada</b>	<b>57</b>
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	4
Finland	1
France	9
Germany	21
Italy	9
NATO	1
Netherlands	6
Norway	1
Portugal	1
Romania	4
South Korea	1
Spain	21
Sweden	2
United Kingdom	60
United States	399
<b>Total</b>	<b>599</b>
Source:	<a href="http://icasualties.org">icasualties.org</a>





## CONCLUSION

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This report focused on Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. It shows that while the Canadian Forces are providing operational leadership for the military campaign in the south of Afghanistan and that Canadian troops are performing exceptionally well, the overall mission still faces enormous challenges. Although noble, the mission is decidedly complex. There are no short term fixes or simple remedies. Evidence presented to the Committee is unanimous in calling for a long-term commitment from the international community for perhaps a decade — or a generation.

It is clear to many that the military mission alone will not solve the Afghanistan problem. So, while it is acknowledged that the Canadian Forces are in Afghanistan to protect our national interests, they are contributing to the broader international effort to help Afghans rebuild their country, so that it never again becomes a haven for terrorists. Our military mission also supports our close allies and other international friends in the UN, NATO and the G-8.

The Committee found that JTF-Afg is the most combat effective, best trained, best led, best equipped and best supported mission of its kind that Canada has ever deployed. It is among the best national contingents in ISAF, but it cannot do the job alone. JTF-Afg represents the defence 'D' of the government's '3D' approach to complex conflict and post-conflict situations. The other two 'Ds' are diplomacy and development. The 3D approach is, in turn, part of the government's overall 'whole of government' approach to modern crises.

We found three factors to be important when considering the mission. First, Canada is not acting unilaterally in Afghanistan and cannot simply 'do this' or change that' on its own. Second, the mission is one of capacity building, helping Afghans build the capacity to do the work themselves. We also noted therefore, that there is no advantage in simplistically throwing Canadian money, people or equipment at problems faster than they can be absorbed and used effectively. Third, and perhaps most important, Canada has taken sides in this issue. The mission is not, and never has been, anything akin to a peacekeeping mission.

The mission is also characterized by three general threats. First, the main direct threat to the national security of Afghanistan, and to Canadian troops, is the Taliban who have continued to mount an insurgency against the Afghanistan government and use guerrilla warfare tactics against JTF-Afg, including suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices and ambushes with machine guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers. The second threat is a corrosive mixture of corruption, the illegal drug trade and continuing tribal warlord influence. A third threat was identified closer to home — our own national impatience with the pace of progress in Afghanistan.

The report identified a number of difficult challenges that remain to be overcome. Government and media have been less than wholly effective in providing ordinary Canadians and Parliamentarians with adequate information about Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. Government could have done more and the media could have been much more balanced in its approach.

The military mission was found to be not as unbalanced as some have claimed. Balance is more accurately measured on the basis of *effect*. The military mission has always had a degree of balance unknown to most Canadians, based on the work of the Canadian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar and of the Strategic Advisory Team-Afghanistan, deployed within Afghan government ministries in Kabul.

Canada could do more in training the Afghan National Army because a competent and effective Afghan National Army that is capable of protecting its own country is, in a way, an 'exit strategy' or a prerequisite for foreign troops to leave Afghanistan.

Canadian troops with battlefield injuries are cared for by a world-class medical system based on multinational and allied support from the battlefield to Canada. The Canadian Forces ability to diagnose and treat psychological injuries has matured over the past decade and considerable attention is devoted to the care of those who have suffered operational stress injuries. However, more needs to be done to address the psychological impact on military families.

Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan have been provided with some of the best equipment in the world and, perhaps of more importance, the national defence procurement process has been dramatically successful in delivering new, important operational equipment quickly. One of the remaining requirements is for a medium-heavy lift helicopter, needed to increase the flexibility and speed of tactical deployment of combat troops and to reduce the need for road convoys that are liable to ambush and attack by improvised explosive devices. We encourage the government to expedite the delivery of these helicopters.

The Committee identified the need for more timely flow of development and reconstruction resources from CIDA, in the aftermath of combat operations that have displaced innocent civilians. We also highlighted the need for more attention to be paid to the handling and transfer of Afghan detainees. Finally, we remain concerned about the impact of accidental deaths of innocent Afghans in the course of ISAF military operations.

In the end, having heard so many things from so many people, we are left with the fact that Canada's complex and noble military mission in Afghanistan is far from over. We know too that the rebuilding of Afghanistan will not be complete by the end of our military mandate in February 2009. The question is, therefore, when that deadline arrives, do we stay and finish the job or come home?

## **LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

The government should review regulations governing the disbursement of reconstruction and development funding through the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, to ensure project funding can flow at the rate necessary to meet the requirements of the mission and establish a process of financial and project accountability.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

The timely disbursement of reconstruction and development funding to the field is not only important in Afghanistan, but in all of Canada's international operations. Therefore, the government should review regulations governing the dispersal of reconstruction and development funding in all international operations, to ensure project funding can flow at the rate necessary to meet mission requirements and establish a process of financial and project accountability.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

While the disbursement of reconstruction and development funds are routinely accounted for in Departmental Performance Reports and responsible Ministers may be requested to appear before Parliamentary committees to report on such expenditures, the Committee feels that audits of international development funds should ensure that project funding is transparent, effective and efficient and establish a process of financial and project accountability.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

The government should hold a debate on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan without delay, to provide Canadians with an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the aim and status of the mission, Canada's role in it and to inform government decision-making relating to the mission deadline in February 2009.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**DND should review the need for some sort of flexible decompression programme for soldiers going home on mid-tour leave.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**The government should recognize the critical and growing work done by the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Network and support it with appropriate funding and other resources, so that it can keep up with the growing need of caring for returning Afghanistan Veterans and their families.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**The government should actively encourage other appropriate Canadian entrepreneurs to increasingly participate in support of Canada's overseas missions.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**Recognizing its moral responsibility, the federal government should strongly encourage the provincial and territorial governments to provide the resources needed to address the mental health support required by military families.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**The government should accelerate its effort to expedite the delivery medium-heavy lift helicopters to support combat operations of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and ensure that the helicopters acquired are effective in both domestic and international operations.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**The government should rebalance the diplomatic, development and defence components of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, to increase the focus on diplomacy and development.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**The government should conduct regular televised, public briefings, at meaningful intervals, to accurately inform Canadians about the status, activity and effect of the mission in Afghanistan.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**The Minister of National Defence should appear at least four times a year before the Standing Committee on Defence, to provide a televised situation report, outlining the status, activity and effect of all Canadian Forces operational missions being conducted at the time.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**In months during which the Committee is not travelling and in which the Minister does not appear, a Canadian Forces senior officer should continue to appear before the Committee to present a briefing on the mission status, activity and effect of all ongoing Canadian Forces operational missions since the last report and provide a view of what can be expected in the next month.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**For the life of the current Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan, or in the future case of a similar mission, the Standing Committee on National Defence should make an annual visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, to receive detailed briefings on the NATO mission in Afghanistan and meet with the North Atlantic Council to discuss multilateral strategic coordination issues and other items of mutual interest.**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**In addition to the visit to NATO Headquarters, the Committee should attempt to annually visit Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), which oversees all NATO operations, and/or Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum, which oversees ISAF operations, to receive detailed strategic and operational**

level briefings of the NATO operation in Afghanistan. If a visit is not possible, alternate means of communication such as video-conferencing or invitations to SHAPE/JFC Brunssum officials should be considered.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

The Standing Committee on National Defence should visit the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan at least once annually, at an appropriate time, in order to review the status of the mission at that time and any progress being made.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

When visiting Canadian Forces international operations, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Defence should be accorded early and full support by DND, to ensure that the full Committee and necessary staff are able to complete the trip and their work.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

The government should attempt to convince NATO to establish a general arrangement with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the consistent treatment of detainees, but in the meantime, the Government of Canada should ensure that, in all combined operations conducted by Canadian and Afghan military and/or police forces, all detainees captured by Canadian Forces are treated in accordance with the December 18, 2005 and May 3, 2007 arrangements between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and the Convention against Torture.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 19**

The government should increase the Canadian Forces contributions to Afghan National Army training so that, as the Afghan National Army grows and matures, higher level collective training of new kandaks can be conducted prior to real operations.

## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Hon. Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence RAdm Dan Murphy, Director of Staff - Strategic Joint Staff Vincent Rigby, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy)	2006/05/30	3
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b> Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs James Fox, Director General, South and South East Asia Bureau Wendy Gilmour, Deputy Director, Belarus, Caucasus, Central Asia, Moldova, Ukraine (REE)	2006/06/06	4
<b>Canadian Council for International Co operation</b> Gerry Barr, President and Chief Executive Officer Erin Simpson, Policy Officer (peace and conflict), Peace, Security and Development	2006/06/08	5
<b>CARE Canada</b> Kevin McCort, Senior Vice-President, Operations	2006/06/08	5
<b>Polaris Institute</b> Steven Staples, Director, Security Programs	2006/06/08	5
<b>Réseau francophone de recherche sur les opérations de paix</b> Marc André Boivin, Coordinator	2006/06/13	6
<b>Université du Québec à Montréal</b> Dr. Justin Massie, Research Associate , Chaire de recherche du Canada en politiques étrangère et de défense canadiennes	2006/06/13	6
<b>Department of National Defence</b> MGen Stuart Beare, Commander, Land Force Doctrine and Training System	2006/06/20	8
<b>Conference of Defence Associations</b> LGen (Retd) Richard Evraire, Chairman Col (Retd) Brian MacDonald, Senior Defence Analyst	2006/09/20	10
<b>Royal Military College of Canada</b> Dr. Sean Maloney, Associate Professor of History	2006/09/20	10

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>University of Calgary</b> Dr. David Bercuson, Director, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies	2006/09/25	12
<b>Queen's University</b> Dr. Douglas Bland, Chair, Defence Management Studies Program, School of Policy Studies	2006/09/25	12
<b>As an Individual</b> LGen (Retd) Michael Jeffery, former Chief of the Land Staff (2000-2003)	2006/09/27	13
<b>Department of National Defence</b> MGen Daniel Benjamin, Commander, Canadian Operational Support Command Col Jocelyn Cousineau, Operational Support J5	2006/10/04	14
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Hon. Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence Gen R.J. Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff Ward Elcock, Deputy Minister	2006/10/18	16
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Col M.D. Capstick, former Commander, Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan	2006/10/23	17
<b>The Senlis Council</b> Norine MacDonald, President and Founder Emmanuel Reinert, Executive Director	2006/10/25	18
<b>Department of National Defence</b> BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2006/10/30	19
<b>Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands</b> His Excellency Karel P. M. de Beer, Ambassador	2006/11/06	21
<b>Embassy of the Republic of Romania</b> Her Excellency Elena Sava Stefoi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary	2006/11/06	21
<b>Department of National Defence</b> LGen J.C.M. Gauthier, Commander, Canadian Expeditionary Force Command	2006/11/08	22



<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Department of National Defence</b> LGen A.B. Leslie, Chief of the Land Staff BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2006/11/20	23
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b> Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs Randolph Mank, Director General, Asia South and Pacific Bureau	2006/11/22	24
<b>Department of National Defence</b> VAdm D. Robertson, Chief of the Maritime Staff LGen J. S. Lucas, Chief of the Air Staff	2006/11/22	24
<b>Australian High Commission</b> His Excellency William Fisher, High Commissioner Lieutenant-Colonel Lyndon Anderson, Military Attaché	2006/11/27	25
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Cmdre M. F. Kavanagh, Commander of Canadian Forces Health Services Group and Director General of Health Services BGen Hilary Jaeger, Canadian Forces Surgeon General	2006/11/27	25
<b>Department of National Defence</b> BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2006/12/04	26
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b> Colleen Swords, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security Branch and Political Director Sabine Nölke, Deputy Director, United Nations, Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Section, Bureau of Legal Affairs	2006/12/11	28
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Vincent Rigby, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy) Col G. Herfst, Deputy Judge Advocate General Operations	2006/12/11	28
<b>Amnesty International Canada</b> Alex Neve, Secretary General, English Speaking Section	2006/12/11	28
<b>University of British Columbia</b> Dr. Michael Byers, Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier One) in Global Politics and International Law	2006/12/11	28
<b>Department of International Cooperation</b> Hon. Josée Verner, Minister of International Cooperation	2006/12/12	29

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Canadian International Development Agency</b> Robert Greenhill, President Philip Baker, Director General, Afghanistan Division	2006/12/12	29
<b>Afghan Women's Organization</b> Adeena Niazi, Director	2007/01/30	31
<b>Rights and Democracy</b> Ariane Brunet, Coordinator, Women's Rights	2007/01/30	31
<b>Open Society Institute</b> Rina Amiri, Lead Consultant for Afghanistan and Regional Matters	2007/01/30	31
<b>United Nations</b> Christopher Alexander, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Afghanistan	2007/02/27	39
<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</b> James Appathurai, Spokesman NATO International Staff	2007/02/27	39
<b>Department of National Defence</b> BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2007/03/22	42
<b>Department of National Defence</b> BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2007/04/24	47
<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</b> Gen Raymond R. Henault, Chairman, Military Committee LCol Anthony White, Public Information Officer to the Chairman, Military committee	2007/05/31	56
<b>Department of National Defence</b> BGen A.J. Howard, Director General Operations, Strategic Joint Staff	2007/05/31	56
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b> Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs	2007/06/06	58
<b>Department of Public Safety</b> Hon. Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety	2007/06/06	58

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>Department of National Defence</b> Hon. Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence	2007/06/06	58
<b>Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b> Hon. Helena Guergis, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade)	2007/06/06	58



## **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

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### **Organisations and individuals**

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**Afghan Women's Organization**

**Ministry of Interior (Afghanistan)**

**The Senlis Council**



# REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 31, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 and 59) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Casson, MP  
Chair





## **Supplementary Report (Addendum)**

**Pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)a), we include this brief complementary statement.**

The members of the Liberal Party of Canada on the Standing Committee approve all of the recommendations in the report produced by the Standing Committee on National Defence. We believe, however, that it is important to clarify certain points and reiterate some of our positions in an addendum to the report on the assessment of our Canadian troops in Afghanistan and other issues relating to the international mission in Afghanistan.

We therefore present this supplementary report.

You will note that there are some discrepancies, even contradictions, between the text of the report and its recommendations. We believe that the report references should not come solely from the evidence. The recommendations could also reflect the conclusions of the intense discussions, reflections and expert opinions obtained from additional consultations. We have some difficulty with some of the statements in the text of the report. Some of the unconditional assertions and the superlatives used to define a situation (or give it a certain slant) may lead to confusion and imbue the report with a perspective that is too partisan or too “governmental”. We prefer to throw light on certain points, considering that the recommendations helped to get the issues back on track. However, we reserve the right to have our say and express our own views.

It is also important to mention that there is no “all or nothing” approach to assessing the mission. We contest the simplistic interpretation sound throughout the report. Despite the mission's complexity, there may be good reason to agree or disagree with it. There is not just one single path to the truth. We understand that we can support the mission and our troops while at the same time being critical of the government's management of the situation. We also believe it is not enough to give the impression that Canadians want an immediate withdrawal or a specific date (February 2009) for it just because we do not want to assume our responsibilities. Some reservations are necessary, in our view.

As for the rest of the text, we support the spirit of the report, its orientations and its recommendations.

The Liberal Party of Canada supplementary report has five parts:

- 1) **Compliance with the commitments for the combat mission in southern Afghanistan until February 2009:** Interpretation, rotation strategy and the role of parliamentarians in the decision-making process.
- 2) **The importance of a balanced 3-D policy (Defence, Development and Diplomacy):** Imbalance and the “à la carte menu” syndrome, poppy crop eradication (opium), assessment of the decision-making process used by the Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan, or SAT-A.
- 3) **The military equipment procurement policy:** Interpretation, the matter of tanks.
- 4) **The issue of Afghan detainees and compliance with the Geneva Convention**
- 5) **The role of the media in the international mission in Afghanistan**

**1) Compliance with the commitments for the combat mission in southern Afghanistan until February 2009**

It is always a good idea to remember that the current Afghan mission was the outcome of the intervention by the international community. As a NATO ally, Canada plays a leadership role. We have been in Afghanistan since the beginning. We should be proud of what we have accomplished to date. We believe Canada has reason to be a full participant in this mission. It is normal that there should be some rotation because this is a NATO mission. We must respect our international commitments but we should be able to expect, without shame, that we would be replaced by another NATO member. And necessarily so. The Liberal Party of Canada believes that Canada must end its combat mission in southern Afghanistan by February 2009. We can always play a role in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and in monitoring, but we believe that another NATO country must take over our current role. In any case, Canada will still be active in development programs and at the diplomatic level.

On April 17, 2007, an official opposition day, we tabled a motion that clearly reflects our viewpoint on the possible extension of the combat mission for Canadian troops in Afghanistan:

(1) whereas all Members of this House, whatever their disagreements may be about the mission in Afghanistan, support the courageous men and women of the Canadian Forces;

(2) whereas in May 2006, the government extended Canada's military commitment in Southern Afghanistan to February 2009;

(3) whereas it is incumbent upon Canada to provide adequate notice to the other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of our intentions beyond that date;

(4) whereas by February 2009, Canada's military mission in Southern Afghanistan will represent one of the largest and longest military commitments in Canadian history; and

(5) whereas Canada's commitment to the reconstruction and security of Afghanistan is not limited to our combat operations in Southern Afghanistan;

this House call upon the government to confirm that Canada's existing military deployment in Afghanistan will continue until February 2009, at which time Canadian combat operations in Southern Afghanistan will conclude; and call upon the government to notify NATO of this decision immediately.

(1) attendu que tous les députés de la Chambre, peu importe les désaccords qu'ils peuvent avoir au sujet de la mission en Afghanistan, appuient les hommes et femmes qui servent avec courage dans les Forces canadiennes;

(2) attendu qu'en mai 2006 le gouvernement a prolongé l'engagement militaire du Canada dans le Sud de l'Afghanistan jusqu'en février 2009;

(3) attendu qu'il incombe au Canada d'aviser de façon adéquate les autres membres de l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) de nos intentions au-delà de cette date;

(4) attendu que, d'ici février 2009, la mission militaire canadienne dans le Sud de l'Afghanistan représentera un des engagements militaires les plus importants et les plus longs de l'histoire du Canada;

(5) attendu que l'engagement du Canada à l'égard de la reconstruction et de la sécurité de l'Afghanistan ne se limite pas à nos opérations de combat dans le Sud de l'Afghanistan;

la Chambre demande au gouvernement de confirmer que le déploiement militaire actuel du Canada en Afghanistan se poursuivra jusqu'en février 2009, date à laquelle les opérations canadiennes de combat dans le Sud de l'Afghanistan prendront fin; et demande au gouvernement d'aviser immédiatement l'OTAN de cette décision.

The motion emphasizes the importance of immediately informing NATO of our intentions and preparing ourselves accordingly. General Raymond Hénault, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, pointed out that this is normally how things are done and that countries often work in rotation in this type of mission (comments made during a scrum after giving his evidence to the Standing Committee on National Defence on May 31, 2007).

It is wrong to claim that, in rotating out of Afghanistan in February 2009, we are in some way abandoning the country. We will be making other kinds of contributions. It is important to have an open and democratic debate on the issues and the consequences without laying blame. It is also essential to inform the authorities as soon as possible to ensure that there are no last-minute transition problems. There must be clarity and transparency throughout the entire process. Like the Dutch, we believe it is necessary to hold a debate in Parliament now to make a final decision about extending our combat operations. Finally, we believe, like many others, that the lack of cohesion between the NATO countries (primarily with regard to the various roles played in the field) and the inequitable contributions made by the various allies are a source of concern. We must bring further pressure to bear on NATO in this regard.

## **2) The importance of a balanced 3-D policy (Defence, Development and Diplomacy)**

Canada's primary goal in Kandahar is to win over the hearts and minds of Afghans. We must remember this when preparing our mission for the next two years.

It is not absolutely necessary for a military intervention aimed at re-establishing security to come before reconstruction and economic development in Kandahar province. Nor do we have to wait until the region is completely safe and peaceful before we take steps to promote development. It is true that reconstruction work cannot take place without the protection of the troops, but reconstruction will be impossible if we wait until the situation is totally under control before we begin. In fact, reconstruction is a step toward security: the inhabitants of this unstable region will be more likely to stop supporting the insurgents if they see a substantial improvement in their living conditions.

Our troops have reason to believe that, if the Afghan people are to feel secure, they must develop a trusting relationship with them. Therefore, more than ever before, there is a need to balance the economic, diplomatic and military aspects of our mission in Kandahar. At present, the Coalition's total expenditures on military operations in Afghanistan are 900% higher than the amount they are spending on development and reconstruction, and only 20% of the development

aid sent by Canada to Afghanistan is destined for Kandahar province. This imbalance must be corrected.

The local population must be able to associate our troops and our country with the reconstruction efforts. Afghans must be able to see new schools, new hospitals and new government buildings, not military tanks.

However, as we attempt to reconcile military assistance, humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts in Kandahar, there is one error we should avoid: we must not encourage the local people to believe that the fight against the Taliban, the protection of villages, the construction of schools and road repairs are solely the responsibility of foreigners. As much responsibility as possible must be conferred on the police and elected Afghan officials. Canada should provide much more training and support to the members of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan police. We must never forget that the main way of measuring whether international operations in Afghanistan are successful is to find out whether or not they are contributing to the establishment of a stable and operational government.

Our objective must be to improve security, quality of life and autonomy for the Afghan people. We disagree with a statement in the report which says that the current 3-D approach followed by the Canadian government is not exceptionally unbalanced: recommendation 10 provides a correction.

### **Poppy crops**

Afghanistan will not be a stable, functional state as long as over half of its economy is dependent on the illegal drug trade. Canada should take the next two years of its mission to make significant progress on this front. The illegal revenue generated by the growing of poppies partly finances the Taliban, but also common criminals. To improve security for Afghans, an effective strategy needs to be found to combat this plague. The current policy by some of our allies of attempting to destroy the crops is ineffective. It raises opium prices and creates further incentives for growing poppies in other regions. Its main impact on security is negative, by generating hostility among the farmers against the Afghan authorities and against foreigners who are destroying their main source of income, which consequently forces them to go back and support the Taliban. We need to find better solutions.

We propose two strategies that NATO and the international community should seriously consider. First, a form of poppy control that would avoid harming the local farmers and destroying their crops, but would target only the processing laboratories and transportation networks, perhaps purchasing the product in some regions, and certainly encouraging different crops, through loans to

farmers, or creating a marketing infrastructure for their products at prices guaranteed by a public agency.

Second, over the long term, we propose that Canada helps fund the latest pilot project from the Senlis Council to use the poppy crop for medicinal purposes. This new proposal calls for the transformation of the poppy into morphine or codeine in the villages where the crops are grown to then be sold legally in the international market. Such a licensed cultivation would ensure that profits from medicine sales remain in the village and offer farmers a real and profitable alternative to the heroin trade.

Although we are aware that this matter is outside the scope of this report, we note that it is inescapable and intrinsic to the very success of the Afghan mission.

### **The assessment of the decision-making process used by the Strategic Advisory Team - Afghanistan, or SAT-A**

We believe that the Department of Foreign Affairs should further examine the issue of governance. More study is needed on the role of the SAT-A, which reports directly to military command, to determine whether this team could work under Foreign Affairs. We applaud the team's initiative, but in order to have a balanced 3-D policy, governance and staff structure should not be under military command. However, the military could help out in certain sectors by partnering with CIDA and Foreign Affairs.

We need to reassess the team's decision-making process from a comprehensive Canadian perspective.

### **3) The military equipment procurement policy**

The Standing Committee on National Defence is set to release a report on the military equipment procurement policy. We will make concrete recommendations to Canadians. We believe that the Canadian Forces must have the equipment needed to carry out their missions, as is currently the case in Afghanistan. However, we need to ensure that taxpayers get value for their dollar. It is imperative to strike a balance between the needs of the Forces, financial ability and economic benefits for Canada.

We must guarantee that a truly open, effective and competitive process based on verified and verifiable criteria is put in place to meet these needs. We do not share the report's more optimistic outlook on the current process or on certain purchases. It is worth noting that most purchases were made on the back of the Afghan mission. We now realize that they cannot be used for this purpose. We will have the opportunity to make our recommendations in the upcoming report on military procurement.

We agree with the emergency concept in procurement. However, it must be viewed as an exceptional measure and used as a last resort. We are keeping a close eye on this issue. In the meantime, we urge the government to cover the immediate needs of troops and the Canadian mission in general.

Nonetheless, we fully oppose the needless purchase of tanks as an offensive weapon. Many civil and military experts disagree about the practicality of the purchase, including our own Chief of Staff, and the tank's use. Furthermore, we need to question the soundness of our approach; since we are perceived as invaders when we send in tanks (the Soviet occupation is still fresh in Afghans' minds).

#### **4) The issue of Afghan detainees and compliance with the Geneva Convention**

The events of the past few months have shown us the extent to which compliance with international conventions, specifically the Geneva Convention, is just as important as the Afghan mission itself. It is clear that, were it not for the watchful eyes of various organizations, academics and journalists and the constant pressure of the opposition parties, Canadians would never have found out about this unacceptable situation. The never-ending duck-and-dodge tactics of the current government and the Minister of Defence have led only to trouble and confusion.

It is important to clarify and explain the nature of the second agreement on transferring detainees to Afghan authorities. It is especially appropriate to point out the facts surrounding the origin of this agreement. We support a framework agreement between NATO and the Afghan government. Failing such an agreement, we must ensure that a rigorous follow-up by Canadian authorities is also done after detainees are transferred by Canadian Forces so as to comply with the Geneva Convention to the letter. We also want to find out the truth about the allegations of torture in Afghan prisons. We cannot be satisfied with the promise of an inquiry and increased vigilance.

It is also important to ensure that the current agreements cover all operations in which our troops are involved, at every level. We are concerned about a legal void regarding the application of agreements in combined operations. We believe there are two types of processes that could override the application of Canada-Afghan agreements on the transfer of detainees. For example, in an operation conducted by the national Afghan army, Canadian troops could immediately—on the field—return detainees. This is a hand over, not a transfer.

We are concerned about the interpretation of the report's text on this matter. However, we are satisfied with Recommendation 18 on Afghan detainees, compliance with international agreements and the desire for a comprehensive agreement between NATO and the Afghan government.

## **5) The role of the media in the international mission in Afghanistan**

We believe it is critical to have an open and transparent communication strategy to help Canadians better follow and understand developments in the Afghan mission. This strategy must be inclusive, systematic and above all factual so that it does not border on propaganda.

We do not believe it necessary to point the finger at the media for its reporting on the Afghan mission. The media reflects the environment it works in. We cannot dictate our message to the media. It is up to Canadian authorities, among others, to give them the tools they need to do the job. Let's not forget that these are professionals. The ball is in the government's court; everyone must assume their rightful responsibilities.



# Dissenting Report from the Bloc Québécois on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan

Report authors

Robert Bouchard  
and  
Claude Bachand

June 13, 2007

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# Dissenting Report

## Preamble

After hearing many witnesses, the members of the Standing Committee on Defence worked for several months to present an impressive report on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan. While a real and laudable effort was made to produce a unanimous report, the Bloc Québécois cannot endorse two of the report's recommendations. We also believe three other recommendations should have been in the report, and we will present them briefly. Finally, we will take the opportunity to point out some inconsistencies in the report.

## **The two recommendations from which the Bloc Québécois wishes to distance itself**

### **First dissenting recommendation:**

The first recommendation we cannot support is the 8<sup>th</sup> recommendation in the report, which reads:

#### Recommendation 8

Recognizing its moral responsibility, the Federal Government should strongly encourage the Provincial and Territorial Governments to provide the resources needed to address the mental health support required by military families. (Page 128 of the report)

At present, the federal government is responsible for the mental health of Canadian Forces members, but the same is not true of the health of their families, for which Quebec and the provinces are responsible. Since combat operations in Afghanistan create psychological stress for the families of Forces members, the number of mental health problems is increasing in provincial hospitals located near military bases, greatly increasing the wait times for military families and others.

Since these new mental health cases are negative externalities created by the military activities of the federal government, it seems natural to us that the federal government would assume the costs of legitimate requests for mental health care from military families. A direct effect of this would be to make it possible to offer adequate services to military families and other families.

#### Dissenting recommendation proposed by the BQ

That the federal government fund, in whole, the care provided by Quebec and the provinces to members of military families suffering from mental health problems related to military operations.

## Second dissenting recommendation:

The second recommendation we cannot support is the report's 9<sup>th</sup> recommendation, which reads:

### Recommendation 9

The Government should accelerate its effort to procure medium-heavy lift helicopters to support combat operations of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and ensure that the helicopters acquired are effective in both domestic and international operations.  
(Page 133 of the report)

We feel that parliamentarians need the overview of the government's broad intentions with respect to defence and the procurement of military equipment that a comprehensive plan provides. We do not feel that piecemeal purchases are very wise when we are talking about sums as great as those involved in this purchase.

As well, the question of the military equipment procurement policy should be dealt with in an upcoming study from the Standing Committee on Defence, for which a specific report should be tabled in the House next session.

Finally, the Canadian mission in Afghanistan would be over before Canada took possession of the lift helicopters; so, it is not possible to invoke the urgency of the situation, since these aircraft will not serve in that mission.

### Dissenting recommendations proposed by the BQ

That the government modernize its defence policy and that it submit a defence capability plan that will define the major orientations with respect to the procurement of military equipment so that parliamentarians can assess military procurements in the context of a plan, not piecemeal announcements.

That all purchases of military equipment over \$100M be submitted for review to the Defence Committee.

## **The three supplementary recommendations that should be in this report**

### **First supplementary recommendation**

The Bloc Québécois notes a delay in the establishment of a competent and honest Afghan national police force. For the Bloc Québécois, the creation of an effective professional police force is an absolute necessity. The police must take the lead in combating insecurity in Afghanistan, with NATO providing support. That is the opposite of what is currently happening.

We are thus pleased that the government recently announced assistance for the creation of the Afghan Police Force.

Supplementary recommendation

Creation of the Afghan Police Force

Canada's current contribution to the creation of the Afghan National Police Force must be increased so that that force is able to carry out its role.

## Second supplementary recommendation

We think that Canada should convene an international conference on Afghanistan. While it is true that an international conference was held in London little more than a year ago, the context is changing quickly and we feel that another conference would be appropriate.

The issue of the poppy crop should be discussed as a priority, since it is now clear that trying to systematically eradicate the poppy crop is not the solution. It is also clear that the drug trade is closely linked to the insurgency.

Canada could also take this opportunity to propose the creation of a UN High Representative in Afghanistan, as was done in Kosovo.

### Supplementary recommendation

#### International conference:

Canada should convene an international conference on Afghanistan specifically on the urgency of rebalancing the mission. At that time, Canada would propose creating a UN High Representative in Afghanistan. This person would be responsible for coordinating the diplomatic, military and reconstruction efforts. He or she would work to facilitate relations among the foreign powers involved in Afghanistan, the neighbouring countries and all levels of Afghan government. The problem of the systematic eradication of the poppy crop, as currently administered, would also be raised in order to debate conceivable alternatives to this policy, which has already demonstrated its limitations.

## Third supplementary recommendation

The fate reserved for prisoners is an issue of capital importance to the Bloc Québécois. That is why the Bloc Québécois likes the idea of prisons co-managed by NATO and the Afghan authorities. This solution would allow Canada to respect the major international conventions of which it is a signatory without infringing the sovereignty of the Afghan state, which would remain responsible for these centres.

Supplementary recommendation

Co-managed prisons

The Government of Canada should undertake discussions with NATO to assess the possibility of establishing co-managed prisons to meet the needs of all the prisoners, in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Third Geneva Convention and other relevant instruments of international law.



## Other comments on the text of the report

Virtually no changes were made to the main text on which the Committee worked for several months, and the urgency with which we adopted it before the summer requires us to note some passages with which we disagree.

### **A) Since Canada supports the Afghan government and that government's "pace" is rather slow, it is natural that reconstruction is not going faster.**

Canadians do not do the work for Afghans, they help Afghans build the capacity to do the work themselves, giving development and reconstruction an 'Afghan face.' A corollary is that improvements come only as fast as the emerging capacity will allow — an 'Afghan pace,' so there is no advantage in simplistically throwing Canadian money, people or equipment at problems faster than they can be absorbed and used effectively.

Pages 10-11

#### *Political position*

*Recommendation 10 underlines the importance of rebalancing the reconstruction and diplomacy aspects of the mission in Afghanistan. It is thus inconsistent for this report not to stress the evidence that talked about doing so.*

### **B) Opposition to this war is attributable to poor communication efforts by the government and media.**

[T]he Canadian government and media have been less than wholly effective in providing ordinary Canadians and Parliamentarians with adequate information. Page 12

#### *Political position*

*While it is fair to say that the government has not done an adequate job of communicating with Canadians and Quebecers, it is unfair to accuse the media of not doing their job. On the contrary, we should be praising the work of reporters without whom we would have been kept in total ignorance by the Conservative government.*

### **C) The mission should not be rebalanced at the expense of security.**

Nearly everyone we met (...) agreed that more development was needed, but they pointed out that security trumps development and until an adequate degree of security existed, development aid could not flow to the degree desired. Page 12

#### *Political position*

*It is true that the mission must not be rebalanced at the expense of security, but the only way to vanquish insecurity is to convince the Afghans that peace is the best solution, and only reconstruction will allow us to demonstrate that.*

#### **D) Opponents of the mission have simplistic arguments.**

[C]ritiques of imbalance have usually been based on simplistic assumptions (...) Page 12

##### *Political position*

*This counter-attack often used by the Conservatives shows they are afraid of being criticized by their opponents for their poorly planned decisions in Afghanistan. They should instead use this report to thank everyone who has taken an interest in this conflict, because the time they take to learn about the in and outs shows that they sincerely want the mission in Afghanistan to end well.*

#### **E) The Committee hails the improvement in the military equipment procurement process.**

[T]he national defence procurement process has been dramatically successful in delivering new, important operational equipment quickly.  
Page 14

##### *Political position*

*The acceleration of the military equipment procurement process is based on the government's improvisation and its disdain for elementary rules of commerce. Not only is there no military equipment procurement plan, but the Conservatives are crowing about buying military equipment worth billions of dollars without a competitive process. The government is paying a premium to thank its friends with taxpayers' money, but when the time comes to tell the industry that it must respect our industrial base in aeronautics, the Conservatives rediscover the market laws they are constantly breaking.*

**Dissenting opinion of the New Democratic Party  
To the Standing Committee on National Defence**

**Respectfully submitted by:**

**Dawn Black, MP**

**INTRODUCTION**

Given the complexity, the severity and the stakes of the armed conflict in Afghanistan, the New Democratic Party does not see counter-insurgency warfare as the solution to Afghanistan's problems. We believe that the strategy being pursued by NATO and allied forces in Southern Afghanistan is endangering our forces, endangering the Afghan people, and damaging Canada's credibility.

The New Democratic Party asks for a withdrawal of Canadian Forces from the counter-insurgency mission in Afghanistan.

Consistent with the mandate of the Committee's Study the following points are addressed below:

**BACKGROUND**

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the US and allies under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) supported an anti-Taliban coalition of armed groups (the Northern Alliance) to overthrow the Taliban. The legal justification for the invasion was a series of UN Security Council Resolutions in the days and weeks following the 9/11 attacks. The resolutions refer to sections of the UN Charter pertaining to self-defence and the preservation of international peace and security.

Following the collapse of the Taliban Government, the United Nations oversaw the political transition and the establishment of an interim government in Afghanistan, and facilitated talks between key Afghan actors and key donor states in Bonn, Germany. The resulting Bonn Agreement established an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help the new government provide security, and to train police and the Afghan National Army.

From 2001-2003, ISAF was concentrated in Kabul, the capital, and managed by lead nations. In 2003, the management of ISAF was taken over by NATO, but countries outside the Alliance continue to play roles in the NATO mission. The mission is authorized by the United Nations annually (through a Security Council Resolution passed every fall). When Prime Minister Stephen Harper presented a motion before the house to extend the mission to 2009, he was asking

Parliament to extend the mission regardless of who authorized it, regardless of the partners.

In spite of the establishment of ISAF under UN mandate, the US has maintained its anti-terrorism coalition forces of approximately 8000 soldiers, which have no official UN mandate, nor any public agreement with the Afghan government, to this day. The Americans have focused on the ongoing search for al-Qaeda and fighting Taliban in the East and South of the country. Recently, reconstruction activities have also been part of US military strategy.

## **CANADA'S ROLE**

Canada's involvement in the mission dates back to 2001, when the Liberal Government joined Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to remove the Taliban. Canada continued to fight in OEF, particularly with the rotation of the PPCLI into Kandahar in 2002, during which four Canadians were killed in a "friendly fire" incident involving a US warplane, and by providing air transport and navy support.

In August 2003, Canada became heavily involved in the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul. Six thousand soldiers in total served over a five rotation period, and they handed over their camp to Afghan forces in November 2005.

Shortly before this hand-off, in August 2005, the Liberal government took on a role in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism in the South of Afghanistan with OEF. The mission in the South has now been transferred to NATO control, but approximately 8,000 US troops remain active in counter-terrorism and US Special Forces are still conducting operations in Afghanistan outside of NATO or ISAF<sup>1</sup>. Throughout the mission, Canada has consistently been in the top 10 of troop contributing countries, and often in the top five.

CIDA's current development strategy in Afghanistan is targeted at supporting the Karzai government. The major programs include security sector reform, governance training, and counter-narcotics operations. Building on earlier allocations of \$100 million per year, a 2006 decision extended that allocation for ten years to total \$1 billion in aid to Afghanistan. This makes Afghanistan by far Canada's largest aid recipient in history.

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1 The number of US troops outside ISAF, and the name of the US mission, change very often. 8000 troops is the estimate as of February 27, 2007. These figures were given to us by US Central Command

## THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Canadian Forces are currently deployed in a complex and increasingly unstable security environment. The year 2006 was characterized by increased violence, a growing insurgency, and a correspondingly dire humanitarian and human rights situation. Afghanistan is more violent now than it was in the post-invasion period. As we heard from Norine McDonald from the Senlis Council in her testimony, “Kandahar is now a complete war zone. The Taliban are not only winning militarily but, more importantly, they have begun to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the local Afghan people.”<sup>2</sup>

The United Nations reports that in 2006, there has been a “marked increase in insurgent forces”, with more than twice as many violent incidents in January 2007 than in January 2006. According to US military estimates, there were 139 suicide attacks in 2006, up from 27 in 2005. The International Crisis Group reports that 3700 people were killed in the conflict in the first nine months of 2006 – already a four-fold increase over the year before. Human Rights Watch estimates that more than 1,000 of those killed in 2006 were civilians. Attacks on Afghan teachers and schools, especially girls’ schools, doubled from their already high levels in 2005<sup>3</sup>. High profile assassinations are on the rise, making it hard for the Government to do its job and recruit people, particularly women.

Much of this rise in violence can be attributed to the two “tap-roots” of the growing insurgency: 1. the growing number of Afghans who are joining or otherwise supporting the forces of the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and other armed groups, and 2. the safe haven for these groups in neighbouring Pakistan.

### 1. Afghans joining insurgency

Civilian deaths – from insurgent, US and NATO attacks alike – are fuelling discontent among Afghans and increasing support for insurgents. US aircraft dropped more bombs in the first six months of 2006 than in the first three years of its campaign against the Taliban, according to figures released by the Pentagon<sup>4</sup>. Coalition air strikes have continued despite the high civilian death toll and the clear strategic disadvantage that they represent. According to the Christian Science Monitor, “the devastating air offences are undermining support

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2 NDDN Evidence 2006-10-25

3 Human Rights Watch “The Human Cost: The Consequences of Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan” April 2007 Volume 19, No. 6(C)

4 Christian Science Monitor, December 18, 2006 “Air War costs NATO Afghan supporters”

for the Afghan government...and are turning public opinion in the four southern provinces of Afghanistan against NATO forces..."<sup>5</sup> President Karzai has called repeatedly on NATO, US and Taliban forces to stop killing Afghan civilians.<sup>6</sup>

As General Andrew Leslie, now Chief of the Land Staff, said in the summer of 2005 "Every time you kill an angry young man overseas, you're creating 15 more who will come after you."<sup>7</sup>

The benefits of reconstruction and development have not reached large portions of the Afghan population. Six years into a major international engagement in Afghanistan — in which \$12 billion has been spent on aid — Afghanistan remains one of the world's poorest countries. Under these circumstances, the salaries offered by Taliban forces are drawing many young Afghan males into the insurgency.

Monopolization of power in the new Afghan government, and marginalization of those outside the dominant social and political groups, has further intensified popular alienation and support for the insurgency. Ernie Regehr, one of Canada's leading experts on armed conflict, suggests that the growing strength of the insurgency is partly explained by the "broad Pashtun community that is sufficiently disaffected with Kabul to be susceptible to the Taliban's offers of attractive pay envelopes".<sup>8</sup>

The aggressive poppy eradication strategies of the American and the British soldiers are further fuelling the alienation felt by Afghans. As Norine McDonald from the Senlis Council reported to the Committee, the people of Kandahar are almost entirely dependent on poppy crops for their livelihoods. Yet the US continues to push crop eradication, without adequate or appropriate alternative livelihood programs. The impoverished farmers left behind are ripe for recruitment by insurgents. Ms. McDonald was unequivocal in front of the Committee: "Eradication is generating support for the Taliban. The U.S.-led forced eradication of poppy fields that took place in Kandahar meant that many farmers lost their livelihood and they are now struggling to feed their families."<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Safe Haven in Pakistan

The safe haven in Pakistan has further emboldened Taliban and other armed leaders. Pakistan views the Karzai government as pro-India and therefore a threat to their security. They have been supporting and/or tolerating the regrouping of Taliban in Northern Pakistan. While there is some difference of

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5 Ibid.

6 "Bombings in Afghanistan are no solution to the Taliban. You do not destroy terrorism by bombing villages. You do not destroy terrorism by launching military operations in areas where only the symptoms have emerged." — Afghan President Hamid Karzai, speaking at the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, CBC Newsworld, 21 September 2006

7 Patrick Evans *The Toronto Star*, August 8, 2005

8 Disarming Conflict, IGLOO expert Blog, January 14, 2007

9 Evidence NDDN 2006-10-25

opinion over the extent to which Pakistan's aid to the Taliban is ordered by the highest levels of Musharaf's government, there is consensus among senior Western military and intelligence that the leadership in Pakistan could "disrupt the senior levels of Taliban command and control" but have chosen not to<sup>10</sup>. According to Barnett Rubin, "failing to address Pakistan's support of the Taliban amounts to an acceptance of NATO's failure".

Combined, these forces have heightened the conflict in Southern Afghanistan over the past year, diminishing the prospects of peace and stability in Afghanistan, and making the situation more dangerous for Canadian soldiers.

## **DURATION**

Despite the absence of government sponsored parliamentary debate on the duration of the mission past 2009, the Conservatives have alluded to a longer-term commitment past February 2009. Access to Information documents show that the Department of National Defence has plans for rotations of soldiers until at least 2011.

As outlined above, the key issues fuelling the insurgency are linked to the safe haven in Pakistan and the growing number of Afghans joining the insurgency. None of these issues – from the civilian deaths, to popular alienation, to poverty, poppy eradication and Pakistan's safe haven - will be resolved militarily.

While the primary victims of insecurity in Afghanistan are Afghans themselves, and this insecurity is undermining the rebuilding of Afghan society, it is our conviction that the current military-focused counter-insurgency strategy will not solve Afghanistan's security problems.

Afghans need a resolution to the war and sustained support to peacefully rebuild their society, not more warriors. Rather than fighting the growing insurgency with weapons, Canada should work for practical solutions to end the violence.

## **THE STATE OF PERSONNEL AND MATERIEL**

The current mission is taking a tremendous toll on the men and women of the Canadian Forces. The Kandahar mission has been difficult for members of the Forces and their families.

The high tempo of foreign operations during the 1990s along with stagnating pay levels had a deleterious effect on the quality of life of members of the Forces and their families. The Kandahar mission and its extension have increased demands on the CF. The Committee has noted the problems members of the Forces and their families have had in seeking counselling and Post Traumatic Stress related treatment.

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10 Barnett Rubin, Foreign Affairs, January 2007

Forces' members must now serve up to nine month rotations, and multiple tours in Afghanistan. The Government has also discussed "re-rolling" members of the Air Force and Navy to meet the needs of the mission.

On the ground in Afghanistan, members of the Forces have had to deal with two problems: 1) Old equipment such as utility trucks that are proving difficult to maintain in the harsh conditions and 2) An escalation of fighting, which has had a negative impact on the psychological health of the Forces.

On February 22, 2007 Lieutenant Gen Andrew Leslie, Chief of the Land Staff testified before the Standing Committee on National Defence that "it is projected that by the middle of the summer, the inside temperature for tank crews could be in excess of 60 degrees Celsius."

Because of this the Government has started down a path of "mission creep" with respect to acquisition and our role in Afghanistan. This creep threatens to change the doctrine and disposition of the Canadian Forces quickly and irrevocably.

In March 2007 the Government announced it would lease 10 Leopard 2 A6 tanks from Germany for use in Afghanistan as well as purchase 100 Leopard 2 tanks from the Netherlands at a cost of \$1.3 Billion<sup>11</sup>. This was a significant purchase by the Government, and was accompanied by a signal from the Minister of National Defence that Canada would be involved in heavy combat operations for the next ten to fifteen years.

This was an enormous announcement, with a huge effect on the future of the Canadian Forces. It prompted me to request an emergency debate with the Speaker of the House on April 16, 2007. As was said in the House:

I believe that the announcement made by the Minister of National Defence that Canada should expect to be involved in heavy combat with armour for the next 10 to 15 years in different parts of the world is actually momentous, historically significant and without precedent. The Minister was talking about an undertaking three times longer than the great war or than World War II.

The Afghan mission has launched Canada into a massive change in the role of our military without a White Paper, a policy review or even a publicly available capabilities plan. In the past, when great changes were made to defence policy, such as the build-up in World War II, the peace dividends of the post war period, the re-arming for Korea and the end of the Cold War, the government directed

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11 The initial announcement was of a purchase price of \$650 Million, but during Estimates of the Committee of the Whole, the Minister acknowledged the total costs including service support was twice that. *Hansard Debates* Thursday, May 17, 2007 p. 9701



policy and doctrine changes within the Forces. This Government has not undertaken a major policy review of defence. What changes are being contemplated seem to be under the Rumsfeld-like language of “transformation” and have been confined to the military, and not the civilian side.

The lessons learned by the United States in Iraq have not been heeded in Canada. A continuous push for more armour and more firepower as part of a counter-insurgency campaign will inevitably lead to more sophisticated weapons such as Improvised Explosive Devices by insurgent forces. We are already seeing evidence of this Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup>

Without a review and plan, it will be members of the Forces who bear the brunt of change.

## RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS

After 5 years of a major international engagement, Afghanistan is still one of the world’s poorest countries.

- It ranks 173<sup>rd</sup> out of 178 countries on the UN Human Development Index;
- One in four Afghan children do not live to the age of five;
- 70% of the Afghan population is malnourished;
- Maternal mortality of 1900 per 100,000 births.<sup>13</sup>

In the January edition of the journal *Foreign Affairs* Afghan expert Dr. Barnett Rubin catalogued the failures of Western countries in Afghanistan. There is *less* electricity in Kabul now than there was five years ago, the need for such basics as clean water, health centres and sanitation remains acute, crime and corruption is rampant, and the local economy (despite the infusion of billions of dollars in Western military and aid money) has flatlined.

Despite the dire situation of most Afghans, there have been development successes, some of which have been supported by Canadian aid. The National Solidarity Program, in particular, has brought much-needed assistance to many Afghan communities. Other projects focused on women’s rights, livelihoods and governance have also yielded results.

Generally, the reconstruction and development efforts that are led by Afghans and clearly separated from the counter-insurgency have been the most successful. The projects that have been overtaken by military strategy, or instrumentalized by NATO forces, have failed and/or put Afghan civilians and Canadian troops at risk.

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12 [New York Times](#) 2007-06-12, Page 8 “Afghan Forces Found Bomb Like Type Used in Iraq” Abdul Waheed Wafa

13 “The world health report 2005 - make every mother and child count” World Health Organization

Throughout this war, development advocates have argued that reconstruction by, or in close co-ordination with, coalition forces will put the beneficiaries and the deliverers of aid at risk. When assistance strengthens the military objectives of one side in the war, it becomes a weapon, and those who use it become targets.

Marc Andre Boivin of the Montreal research group, *Réseau francophone de recherche sur les opérations de paix*, made this point in his testimony before the Committee.

NGOs were present in Afghanistan long before any foreign military personnel were there, and the NGOs' concern at seeing their efforts so politicized is a serious one, because if they're seen as biased to one party or to the other, the Taliban or whichever insurgent will say, well, the grain you're providing is for the international effort, so we'll shoot you up. And that's it. You will not be able to provide any aid at all.<sup>14</sup>

In his comments before the Committee, Gerry Barr of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation re-enforced this message. He drew the Committee's attention to a statement, signed by 34 non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan. "Their message was unambiguous" he said, "The deliberate confusion of military and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan is seriously hampering the ability of NGOs to deliver aid to all communities in need"<sup>15</sup>.

One cannot expect to systematically link the reconstruction of the country to the military offensive against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban without making targets of those who benefit from and deliver the assistance.

Development must be a priority, not a tool to soften the counter-insurgency blow. Genuine development programming is essential to the future security of Afghanistan. The effectiveness of development programming will be compromised if it is perceived as a public relations exercise to win the support of Afghans.

## **MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS**

The criteria for assessing effectiveness of the mission have not been spelled out by Liberal or Conservative governments. Clearly the number of insurgents killed or the number of foreign soldiers deployed are not indicators of success.

In the view of the New Democratic Party, the military mission should be judged by its capacity to protect Afghans and decrease violence against them. Support for the establishment of a viable, law-abiding and civilian-controlled Afghan National Army should also be a central component of the mission's effectiveness.

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14 NDDN Evidence 2006-06-13

15 NDDN Evidence 2006-06-08

The diplomatic mission should be judged by its capacity to support, facilitate and catalyze efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan. Specifically, the diplomatic mission should be measured by progress in building international momentum for comprehensive peace negotiations at three levels: within Afghanistan, with international players, and in the regional context. Such international momentum might take the form of a UN Security Council resolution, the appointment of a UN special envoy, and/or the establishment of a safe space for negotiations to occur.

The development mission should be judged by its capacity to support the development of a vibrant Afghan civil society and deliver meaningful results to Afghans. The Afghan Compact has many good benchmarks in this regard, addressing governance, social, economic and security goals.

While these three missions are clearly related, the NDP acknowledges their distinct roles in Afghanistan, and sees the effectiveness of each mission as distinct but related.

## **CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS**

The enormous burden of operations in Afghanistan has limited the Canadian Forces ability to act both at home and abroad.

When the Minister of National Defence assumed his responsibilities in February 2006, he was told, in writing, that the Canadian Forces had the capacity to deploy a second land task force of 1,200 personnel. Since that time the Minister has denied being told this, and has claimed no such capacity for a second task force exists. Irrespective of the Minister's comments, it seems plausible that the capacity of the CF to deploy another large contingent has been reduced by the extension of the mission in Afghanistan.

The Minister was also briefed on the obligations the 2010 Vancouver Olympics would place on the CF. He was told that the requirements would be large and that it would place significant obstacles in the way of any foreign deployment at that time. The Government needs to explain to Parliament and to the people of British Columbia how it would maintain a battle group in Kandahar beyond February 2009, while simultaneously providing security for the Olympics.

## **DETAINEES**

Time and again, it has become clear that the Government of Canada simply doesn't get it when it comes to handling detainees: Canada must not turn detainees over to authorities who have a self-admitted record of torture. DND and Foreign Affairs officials refused to believe that Canada has a responsibility to ensure the fair and proper treatment of detainees once they leave our custody. This is an appalling failure on the part of the Government.

When the first agreement signed by the Liberal government with respect to detainees was finally revealed it was clear that it was a flawed document. The original arrangement had no right of access for Canadian or UN officials to Afghan prisons and no veto over the onward transfer of detainees to third countries. The Minister of National Defence was asked for over a year to amend and strengthen this agreement, but he steadfastly refused.

The Minister insisted that the agreement was adequate, since International Committee of the Red Cross workers were monitoring the detainees and would report violations to the Canadian Government.

Subsequently the Minister of National Defence had to admit that he had misled the House of Commons regarding the role of the Red Cross in monitoring detainees. He confirmed that the ICRC does not inform Canada of mistreatment at the hands of the Afghans.

Canada has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that our actions do not lead to abuse or torture. It is a mark on our country that we did not learn this lesson after the public inquiry into Maher Arar's deportation and torture.

Following the detainee abuse scandal of late April, precipitated by reporting in the *Globe and Mail* by Graeme Smith and Paul Koring, the front benches of the government were paralyzed: inconsistent stories, contradiction and cover-up become the order of the day. The Minister of National Defence quickly lost the support of the House and the support of the Canadian people.

Other NATO countries had sought assurances from the Government of Afghanistan, and ensured a right of access to individuals transferred. Since the detainee transfer arrangement was signed by General Hillier under the Liberal watch on December 18, 2005, the government had steadfastly refused to revisit the issue. Faced with the largest scandal the minority Government had ever dealt with, and a lawsuit from Amnesty International and the BC Civil Liberties Association, the Government was shamed into action just hours before appearing in Federal Court.

While the new agreement gives us hope, we have not received strong assurances from the Government on how it is actually being implemented on the ground. Until those assurances are enshrined, no more transfers must occur.

The Government has weakened Canada's long-standing position against the use of torture with a "no questions asked" policy of handing detainees over to the Afghan security forces. It is known that NATO is looking to create an Alliance-wide policy on the handling of detainees, and the Government should examine the possibility of jointly building a detention facility with NATO and the Afghan government.

Canada has been at the forefront on human rights. Now the world asks: “what happened to Canada on human rights?”.

## **AFGHAN WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

Afghan women are not being adequately protected or supported by the international military presence in their country. Women’s rights have not been made a central priority by either the new Afghan government, or the broader international community in Afghanistan.

There is little evidence of sustained progress in critical areas over the past five years in the situation of Afghan women. In spite of changes to the laws regarding women’s rights, women remain subject to arbitrary imprisonment, rape, torture, forced marriages and honour killings.

In spite of frequent references to the severe oppression of women’s rights as justification for the ISAF strategies in the South, Afghan women are not being protected by the international military presence. In the effort to fight the Taliban, ISAF and American forces have made alliances with local police and warlords, who have been implicated in human rights abuses against women. These figures are part of the machinery that continues to persecute women in their every day lives, arresting and imprisoning them for what are now, under new Afghan laws, legal actions.

The lack of real commitment to Afghan women’s rights by this Government was made clear on the Prime Minister’s May 2007 visit to Afghanistan. During his visit, one of the most outspoken promoters of human rights in Afghanistan and one of the youngest female Parliamentarians, Malalai Joya, was expelled from the Afghan Parliament for denouncing corruption. The Government of Canada has lodged no protest with the Afghan government, and our Prime Minister made no statement on the issue.

As Ariane Brunet, of the human rights organization, Rights and Democracy, commented before the Committee, “We are talking about women’s rights and it is not by concentrating on terrorism that the security problems of women can be solved in the towns, villages and schools.”<sup>16</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

In this context, the New Democratic Party believes that the safe and determined withdrawal of our troops from the counter-insurgency mission, in consultation with our allies, is now required.

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16 NDDN Evidence 2007-01-30

The Conservative position is clear: they have an open ended commitment to whatever is requested by NATO or the United States regardless of the cost to members of the Forces and their families. The Liberals and Bloc have publicly stated that they are open to continued Canadian deployments after 2009. While they criticize the way the mission is being administered, that criticism is undermined by the fact that they too would commit the Canadian Forces to this counter-insurgency mission regardless of the financial and human costs.

Many other NATO countries, mostly notably most of the European partners, have taken exception to the counter-insurgency mission and have shown no intention of participating.

Canada has wandered into an international conflict in the middle of Central Asia, with little control over the direction of the mission, or with much influence on its strategy. The outcome of this conflict will almost certainly be determined in Washington, Kabul, Islamabad, Tehran and points in between.

In the meantime we should not ask the Canadian Forces to be sacrificed for a mission with no clear opportunities for success or completion.