

THE AFGHAN MISSION

Keep troops in Kandahar until 2011, Manley to recommend

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John Manley's report on Canada's future role in Afghanistan will likely recommend that troops stay in Afghanistan until 2011 while also criticizing the federal government agency responsible for delivering aid to the war-torn nation, *CTV News* reported last night.

The widely anticipated report from the former Liberal foreign affairs minister is also expected to criticize NATO for not taking on its share of the burden and will say that Canada's role should be reconfigured from counterinsurgency to training the Afghan police. The Canadian International Development Agency and Foreign Affairs will also come under fire for their aid programs, *CTV* said.

Mr. Manley, who was asked by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to chair a blue-chip panel to make recommendations on the mission, is expected to issue his report tomorrow.

Earlier yesterday, a University of Toronto expert said she expected that the report's analysis of Canada's effectiveness will be just as critical as its recommendations. Most informed sources have suggested over the past week or two that Mr. Manley will likely recommend retaining a Canadian presence in the area.

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"I think the story of the report will not be only in the recommendations, but in the analysis that the commission does," Janice Gross Stein, co-author of *The Unexpected War*, a book on how Canada got involved in the Afghan mission, told *CTV's* weekly current events program *Question Period*.

"I think we're going to have a look, a hard look at counterinsurgency, which we've really never had before."

Ms. Stein said she believes the current strategy has not been an effective one. Sources told *CTV* that individuals Mr. Manley has spoken

to believe that the report will be hard-hitting.

"I think Mr. Manley will really focus on effectiveness. There's no point in having a role, but not being able to be effective in that role," she said.

"I'd be very surprised, knowing Mr. Manley, if he didn't have something to say about what it's going to take to be effective."

On the same program, a military expert said Mr. Manley has been clear recently that Afghanistan has given Canada a significant role in the world and it shouldn't be given up easily.

"I would hope that would be reflected in his report," said Colonel Alain Pellerin, the executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations.

The appointment of Mr. Manley in October as head of the panel raised eyebrows among some Liberals. But Mr. Manley insisted he still remains a strong Liberal.

The Conservative government is in favour of extending the current military mission, and a parliamentary vote on the mission is expected this spring.

The panel has been asked to examine four options including the status quo; complete withdrawal from Afghanistan; a transfer to another region of the country; or refocusing efforts on reconstruction that would allow for a new military contingent from another country to take the Canadian combat role. When his appointment was announced, Mr. Manley said he would not be restricted to the four broad policy options enumerated by Mr. Harper.

At the time, Mr. Manley said the panel would canvass a cross-section of specialists on foreign relations, defence and foreign aid.

He said the panel would visit Afghanistan and meet with Canada's partners in the Afghan mission.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay, who recently visited the war-torn country, has made no secret of his minority government's desire to stay until 2011 -- and possibly even longer. "We do not want to leave work undone. We want to make sure Afghanistan is a fully functional, secure, self-sustaining country," he told reporters in Afghanistan last month.

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