

CANADA'S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN: SUBMISSIONS
TO THE MANLEY PANEL

Compiled by Richard McCutcheon and John Derksen

The involvement of Canadian forces in Afghanistan marks the first time since the Korean War that the Canadian military has been engaged in a combat mission. When the first Canadian troops deployed to Afghanistan in October 2001, they were part of the US-led international force fighting the "War on Terror" in response to the 9/11 attacks. The earliest Canadian contribution to the mission involved naval units sent to patrol the north Arabian Sea. Later, in January 2002, 750 Canadian soldiers were sent to Kandahar province for six months to assist US troops in a combat role.

In December 2001, following the November 2001 overthrow of the Taliban regime, the UN passed resolutions that endorsed the establishment of a transitional authority in Afghanistan and authorized the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a multi-national military force charged with securing Kabul and surrounding areas in cooperation with the Afghan Transitional Authority.¹ NATO took over command of the ISAF in August 2002, making this the first NATO operation outside of Europe.²

From August 2002 onward, Canadian military units served under the ISAF in Kabul and surrounding areas. In May 2005 the Canadian government began sending troops from Kabul back to the more volatile province of Kandahar with a mandate to secure the area to enable civilian reconstruction and development efforts.³ Between February 2002 and May 2008 the Canadian forces in Afghanistan incurred a total of 83 fatalities, most of them since 2006 during the current mission in Kandahar.⁴

In May 2006, one year after the original decision to redeploy troops to Kandahar, the Canadian parliament approved an extension of the military mission to February 2009. As with earlier decisions about Canadian forces in Afghanistan, there was little official public debate about this extension. From the inception of the mission to Afghanistan, Canadian federal opposition parties have questioned the lack of official debate on the issue in parliament.

The ongoing controversy prompted Prime Minister Stephen Harper in October 2007 to establish an independent advisory panel to examine options for the Canadian mission in Afghanistan at the end of the current mandate, February 2009. The

former Liberal deputy prime minister and former minister of foreign affairs John Manley chaired the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan; the other members were Jake Epp (former Conservative federal cabinet minister), Paul Tellier (former clerk of the privy council), Derek Burney (former Canadian ambassador to the US), and Pamela Wallin (former Canadian consul general in New York City). The panel was charged with examining the following four main options for Canada's military forces in Afghanistan:

- Option 1: Train, support and develop the Afghan army and police towards a self-sustaining capacity in Kandahar Province, with a phased withdrawal of Canadian troops starting in February 2009 consistent with progress towards this objective.
- Option 2: Focus on development and governance in Kandahar, with sufficient military to provide effective protection for our civilians engaged in development and governance efforts. This would require another country (or countries) to provide a military force sufficient to ensure the necessary security in which such efforts can take place in Kandahar province.
- Option 3: Shift the focus of Canadian military and civilian security, development and governance efforts to another region of Afghanistan.
- Option 4: Withdraw all Canadian military forces from Afghanistan after February 2009, except those required to provide personal security for any remaining civilian employees.⁵

The Panel consulted with military, government, and non-governmental experts in Canada and Afghanistan, with minimal input from the wider public. The limited opportunities for public engagement caused controversy, as also did three other factors: (1) all the panel members had recently held high level official government positions, and its chair had been part of the original cabinet discussions about sending Canadian troops to Afghanistan; (2) the panel's time frame was only three months long; (3) the panel's support staff was mainly drawn from the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and the Canadian International Development Agency, both of which are directly involved with the implementation of the Afghanistan mandate.⁶

A final report from the panel was submitted to Prime Minister Stephen Harper in January 2008. It recommended a continued Canadian presence in Afghanistan, and the development of a new Canadian policy approach. In essence, the Panel proposed that Canada's role in Afghanistan "should give greater emphasis to diplomacy,

reconstruction and governance and that the military mission should shift increasingly towards the training of the Afghan National Security Forces.”⁷ On 13 March 2008 the Canadian parliament approved an extension of the military mission in Kandahar to 2011, contingent upon military commitment from other nations to the province. This decision was supported by the Conservative government and the Liberal opposition, but not the New Democratic and Bloc Québécois opposition parties.

Canada’s role in Afghanistan is continually evolving and is far from certain. According to interviews conducted by one policy analyst during recent travel to the country in April-May, 2008, some non-governmental workers and individual Afghans have questioned the ability of international forces reliably to provide the kind of local-level security needed to carry out community development, while others believe that the removal of the ISAF forces could lead to civil war. The conduct of the international forces has also been widely criticized in Afghanistan for the disrespect their members have shown towards Afghani languages and culture(s). It is clear that the challenges facing Afghanistan are immense, particularly the growing poverty and risk of famine faced by millions of Afghans.⁸

To this point, the Canadian public has had little opportunity to weigh in on the important issues related to Canada’s role in Afghanistan. Public input to the Panel’s deliberations was allowed only in the form of written submissions—without opportunity for public hearings and wider debate. The Panel received 219 written submissions from individuals and organizations between 1 November and 3 December 2007. There are some indications that Panel members only read summaries of these submissions.⁹ According to the Panel’s website, which is no longer available to the public, “only some 30% of the submissions directly addressed one or more of the options included within the panel’s terms of reference.” Furthermore, “a majority of the briefs indicated that Canada needed to change the current orientation of its efforts, proposing strategies to improve Canada’s effectiveness, whether through an augmentation of investments in development and humanitarian work, greater diplomatic focus, or some kind of scaling down of Canadian forces presence.”¹⁰

A member of *Peace Research’s* Advisory Council first alerted us to the presence of these 219 submissions on the website of the Independent Panel. Noting the significant allocation of resources and energy expended to produce them, and the likelihood that these submissions would not remain online for long, he suggested that *Peace Research* could provide a service to academic and activist communities by publishing a selection of these submissions as a historical marker of alternative

thinking about Canada's mission in Afghanistan. This advisor's words were prescient; in the week before the final copy of this issue was to be sent to the printer, it appears that the Panel's website, including all of the submissions, was taken off-line. Although some of the submissions can be found by searching the title of the panel and responses, many of these pieces of work are already lost to the public realm. The following eight give some indication of the depth and breadth of thinking that went into the submissions, serving as a reminder of citizen engagement with the issues.¹¹ We trust they might also enrich our thinking for the future of Canada's involvement with Afghanistan.

ENDNOTES

1. United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Afghanistan are found at http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/_UN-Docs/_sc/resolutions.htm, accessed 24 June 2008. See Resolution number 1383 (6 December 2001) and 1386 (20 December 2001).
2. From December 2001 to July 2002, the ISAF was led by the UK, Turkey, and a shared Dutch-German Corps. See Ken Epps, "Canadian Troops in Afghanistan," *Ploughshares Monitor* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2003): np. Electronic document, <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/monitor/mond03b.htm>, accessed 22 June 2008.
3. Final Report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, 10-11. Electronic document, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/013003/f2/013003-1000-e.pdf>, accessed 20 June 2008.
4. Simon Fraser University's Afghanistan Conflict Monitor provides updated statistics. Electronic document, <http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/CF-Afgh0707.jpg>, accessed 23 June 2008.
5. From "Terms of Reference" on the now-defunct Independent Panel website, <http://www.independent-panel-independant.ca/terms-eng.html>, accessed June 2008.
6. John Siebert, "The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan," *Ploughshares Monitor* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2007): np. Electronic document, <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/monitor/mond07h.pdf>, accessed 22 June 2008.
7. *Final Report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan*, 37. Electronic document, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/013003/f2/013003-1000-e.pdf>, accessed 20 June 2008.

8. Ernie Regehr, "Conversations in Kabul on military intervention and political reconciliation," *Ploughshares Monitor* 29, no. 2 (Summer 2008): np. Electronic document, <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/monitor/monj08c.pdf>, accessed 24 June 2008.
9. According to participants, the submissions themselves were never read by the panel's members, but rather, read by students who provided the panel members with summaries. This may or may not be the case and would bear further investigation.
10. The original link from which our notes were taken—and which is no longer available—is <http://www.independent-panel-independent.ca/submissions-eng.html>, accessed June 2008.
11. These eight submissions—taken from those that were still available—offer a variety of individual, non-governmental, and religious viewpoints, Afghan perspectives, concrete data, and clarity of expression. All represent an alternative to that adopted by the Canadian Government. With one exception, all of these submissions were produced in 2007. Dr. Seddiq Weera, an Afghani medical doctor, wrote his initial report in 2004, which was subsequently updated for the 2007 submission. All submissions are reproduced here with the express permission of the authors and their organizations. Except for minor corrections of typographical errors, and some changes to the format for consistency, we have left each submission as it was presented to the Panel. For submissions that include endnotes, we have inserted the notes at the end of the submission in their original form. We sincerely thank each of the individuals and organizations for their interest in this project, and Dr. Graeme MacQueen for suggesting the idea.

SUBMISSIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS

Paul Maillet

(Retired Canadian Air Force Colonel)

I am pleased to present this submission in response to your request for feedback on a subject that I believe is pivotal to Canadian values, our standing in the global community, and to the cause of global peace. I would like to comment primarily on the

military aspect of this mission and propose an additional option—a “peacemaking” approach.

For the record, I would like to make the observation that I am astonished with the fact that there is no professional military expertise or retired military representation on a panel so deeply involved with military affairs. I deeply subscribe to the principal of civil control of the military, but this authority should be better informed in a representative sense on this panel.

As a retired Colonel (since 2001) after a thirty-three year career, and as a former Director of Defence Ethics (appointed after the Somalia affair in 1997 in response to the report to the Prime Minister), I would begin with the concern that the military has undertaken a fundamental shift in the way we conduct international military operations in conflict zones, and what it will harbour for our global reputation, our future defence expenditures and future operational mandates. I suggest we have strayed from some very core values and hard won lessons of the past.

I would point out that polls of Canadians regarding the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan show a marked shift to growing disapproval. I also point out that there are many “support the troops” stickers on cars these days. I suspect that people do not give this much thought to what this really means beyond some sense of encouragement and concern for the welfare of the individual soldier. We may want to consider this from the soldier's perspective. In my experience, the support they want is first that we look after their families if they are seriously injured or killed, next they want to know they will be looked after if they are injured, next to have the equipment and leadership they need to achieve the mission. This means to have a mission they feel important enough to risk their lives and consistent with the best of Canadian values. The mission is the direct responsibility of the elected parliamentary authority. I do not believe that Canadians want to abandon Afghanistan at this point. The message is to get the mission right, consistent with our values and traditions, and get the support and the care right.

Exploring the Canadian Context

I suggest that Canadians view international missions as very important to how we define the best of human existence. There is no doubt for Canada, that a stable and prosperous world is the defence of Canada. The question is how we assert our values, our aspirations for prosperity, our independence in foreign policy, and our right to choose in how we wish to contribute to global stability and to our national interests. We have chosen as a nation to be bound by human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and in this case by international law for armed conflict. In this respect, we must

agree that violence is an absolute last resort, and only employed with a reasonable probability of success, proportional, where political means have been exhausted, and with all possible efforts to avoid collateral damage.

To all this, we add the 2005 Defence policy statement (quotes in italics are from the DND website) which states that Canada “. . . maintain their contributions to international institutions such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and that . . . the Government is committed to enhancing Canada's ability to contribute to international peace and security. . . .” We have decades of experience in this regard which demonstrated the utility of neutrality and peace-keeping, to the point of significant recognition involving the nobel peace prize.

An enduring commitment to contribute to international **peace** and security has been an abiding feature of Canadian foreign and defence policy since 1947. In 1988 Canada shared in the **Nobel Peace Prize** that was presented to all United Nations peacekeepers.

Canadians are internationalist and not isolationist by nature. We uphold a proud heritage of service abroad. We take pride in Lester B. Pearson's Nobel Prize for Peace not simply because it did a great Canadian considerable honour, but because it was a reflection of our evolving international personality. (1994 Defence White Paper)

This is reflected in our 3D (diplomacy, development, defence) policy approach to foreign policy. We should be cognizant that this is translated in the military parlance into: “The ability of our military to carry out three-block war operations will be critical to the success of Canada's efforts to address the problems of these states.” How the subtleties of *The Three Block War* concept and this policy statement got past Canadian public awareness is beyond me.

Developed in 1997 by U.S. Marine Corps General Charles Krulak, the concept is aimed directly at operations in an urban environment. Operational forces must be prepared to engage in high-intensity combat against a well-trained and well-equipped enemy in one city block, while in another be up against irregular forces fighting guerrilla style and in a third block engaged in humanitarian and peace keeping efforts. The Three Block War has since become a military doctrine adopted by all major countries.

In practice, this means we traumatize, kill or injure both combatants and in many unintentional instances—innocent civilians. We kill, damage or destroy homes and their property one day, and show up to rebuild and provide aid on another day.

Then we expect their goodwill and respect, and wonder why we get hate and violence and Canadian casualties. Canada can do much, much better than this.

The hidden catch in the current operational mandate is a military wish list for both funding, equipment and manpower that is bottomless and far beyond the capacity of Canada to support. We can never afford a full spectrum military capability and nor do we wish to do so. The military will never stop asking as long as the political authority does not firmly prioritize and select where and how Canada wants to contribute. We should specialize in areas that suit our values and capacities.

At any given point in time, we are a nation of great possibilities within our value and resource limits. I would suggest that if we are so enamored with a three block concept, that infinitely more constructive would be a three block peacemaking concept, where the primacy of dialogue and diplomacy is conducted on all these blocks simultaneously with the disparate interests involved. The creating of safe spaces and conditions for dialogue, ceasefire and carried out from a posture of neutrality. The military role would become one of participating in and facilitating a protected diplomacy in very dangerous conflict environments. A very challenging and dangerous task indeed, but one worthy of our values and participation.

To achieve this, I suggest we need to explore the development of a more coherent and "values based" (as opposed to power based or violence based) approach to missions in conflict zones. This would entail exploring options for reworking Defence strategic, policy and operational frameworks, followed by developing rationalized employment, resource and support frameworks.

Engaging the Afghanistan Conflict Zone

Within this Canadian context we find ourselves in Afghanistan, and in which traditional Canadian peacekeeping approaches were changed for unexplained reasons, other than to seemingly buy into a violent response to this so-called "war on terror". Words like "offensive combat operations" and "war" are now in our lexicon. Canadians are uneasy with this. Development, humanitarian aid, diplomacy are not commonly perceived as active as the "war". Either our long and hard won expertise and reputation for peacekeeping is no longer relevant in current and future conflicts, or it is needed more than ever. I believe that the events and tragedies of the past years argue strongly for the latter.

The price of peacekeeping for over forty years before the Afghan and Gulf wars was over 100 Canadians killed. The good we did, the lives we saved, the suffering we alleviated was concrete and in many cases lasting and a source of pride for Canadians. Since we changed our approach to a heavy focus on war fighting we have had 74

killed in a few years, not to mention growing numbers of wounded and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) casualties. You have only to notice the subtle change in military advertising, “join and fight with the Canadian forces. . .” to feel the hand of the military attempting to shape and influence public and political opinion and options. Is our military about fighting or protecting or peace or aid or all of the above and in which priority? I believe “fighting” is the absolute last resort. Our business is not killing, not looking at any people as “murders and scumbags”, (and other threatening and hostile public comments made by Canadian military commanders), and we are not into labelling operations as “war”, not by counting success in numbers of insurgents killed, and left with expressions of regret for collateral damage when we destroy property and kill innocents whether by accident or not. It would be instructive to ask the military for their estimate of the number of innocent civilians we have killed or injured. Death and suffering as an accident does not make it right, given the military power being thrown around. Using heavy armour and air power against scattered insurgents in urban built up areas makes such accidents inevitable, and to those people we hurt, we incur hate and retaliation. What do we expect, open arms for destroying our village and killing our people. I can see where this would be very confusing and traumatizing to the resident population. This is not a fight where Canada is in the business of killing, but in the business of peace. Peacemaking is what Canadians want absolutely and unequivocally.

We must take great care how we equip the military, and what we permit them to take in theatre, because capacity often defines how they look at solutions. When you have tanks in theatre, problems soon take on the aspect of “tank targets”. When overwhelming force is not available, problems take on the dimension of diplomacy and dialogue. We do not give police forces in North American cities access to military airpower and 2000 lb laser guided bombs to deal with criminals in apartment buildings, or even terrorists located in cities. We owe the Afghan population at least the same level of respect and care.

Another concern of note occurs when we go in search of enemies and dehumanize them, call them “murderers or scumbags”, to quote our Chief of Defence Staff. The message to soldiers is that insurgents are to be hunted and anyone can do anything to a “murderer or scumbag”. With those fateful words, we diminish ourselves and our country. We put ourselves on a slippery slope to war crimes. You have only to recall what happened in Somalia and how quickly torture and a killing can have strategic and national effects.

It does not take a military professional to know that the Afghan war is unwinnable from a military standpoint. This conflict has its roots in the far distant past

with deep-seated mimetic structures for passing on cultures of hate and violence. The Soviet Union with their far less constrained rules of engagement were unable to accomplish this. What makes us think we can do otherwise? There is no doubt that the killing or capture of all insurgents is impossible, that future generations of insurgents are just being born, that their patience is measured in decades or longer, and that they are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. However, to mitigate this environment we must create again and again safe opportunities for dialogue when conciliatory leaders emerge or sufficient pressures or exhaustion arises. In these cases, someone has to have the framework, objectivity, neutrality, credibility and trust to facilitate talks whenever and wherever the opportunity arises. The value that Canada can add to this conflict is to prepare for and facilitate these eventualities when they occur.

It is also now clear that we did not plan the Afghan mission strategy and operations in a manner that paid much attention to Canadian values and tradition. We are not, and should not be, bound by the U.S. model of foreign policy and combat operations. As a Canadian, this mission should not be about winning or defeating or killing anyone, but of incremental achievement and direction to stability and peace. At best, we can only hope to help orient Afghanistan towards security, democracy and human rights. We can aspire to help this country find a direction that has a future and hope, instead of a future of more suffering, violence and corruption. This is what justifies the cost, effort and sacrifice involved.

Way Forward

So what is achievable? I believe what is achievable begins with what we do best, our peacekeeping experience. It becomes a matter of developing a "peacemaking" concept and designing such operational practices suitable to this concept and the conflict zone involved. I believe that we need to evolve and update the practices that served us well in the past.

The assertion of a values based approach has to mean something concrete. In this respect Canada can explore the inclusion of such values and principles in mission operations as:

Primacy of diplomacy. The Canadian mission would ascribe to the primary aim of "stopping the violence" by talking to all parties and seeking reconciliation. The Defence role would be the protection of diplomatic activity. We talk to anyone and all parties, be they Taliban, Al Qaeda, regular or irregular forces, tribal, religious or civil authorities.

We are a safe space where the hope of a ceasefire resides, where peace and a future resides.

Neutrality. The basic principle is that Canada talks to all parties, no matter how extreme. In this posture, defence roles are to protect the diplomacy and development activity. We are not part of the killing. That is where we bring neutrality, our good will and reputation. We are where the foundations of a cease-fire and peace begin.

Non-violence. Canada should not become a third warring party in what began as a two party conflict. We should not be an offensive combat extension of the Afghan army or their political authorities. We do not use deadly force except in clear instances of self-defence, in defence and protection of Canadian mission components, and prevention of harm mission activity and the ability to stop or prevent harm in progress to anyone "at hand". We hand off threat intelligence to the proper national authorities to deal with.

Building relationships. In this area, Canada would seek to provide trust building measures and exercise the ethic of care to alleviate suffering. This could be accomplished through fostering dialogue on building governance (prevention of corruption and building integrity), humanitarian aid, human rights, gender equity practices, development and reconstruction projects, security provision and police training. We can assist the Afghan people in areas of building global competitiveness, environmental protection and economic sustainability.

The opportunity we seek to exploit is to weaken the mimetic structures of violence that have passed hate and violence from generation to generation, and begin building mimetic structures of peace. We acknowledge that this is a journey of generations, but must start somewhere. The strategy to attempt to destroy or kill insurgents is rejected in favour with the opportunity to bring them out of the field, out of active hostilities, and into a dialogue that hopefully reaches into their chain of command.

Traditional peacekeeping missions involve the monitoring of an agreed ceasefire at the invitation of both parties. Perhaps the greater opportunity is to pioneer an approach of peacemaking in conflict zones with ongoing hostilities, almost a "diplomacy under fire" mission.

Summary of Recommendations

The question of Afghanistan is a global issue and Canada is part of the global community. The question is how we should contribute. In summary, I propose the following:

1. That Canada develops and asserts a true values-based approach to restoring peace, stability and alleviating suffering in Afghanistan.
2. That Canada develop and contribute to peace in Afghanistan through a revised mission mandate emphasizing a “peace making in conflict zones” mission concept. I believe that a reputation and proficiency in “high risk diplomacy” may be useful to the UN in the context of the current and foreseeable threat environment. Given our peacekeeping experience and former reputation, I believe that Canada can become a role model and world leader in this.
3. That Canada reorient the Canadian military and the overall mission towards neutrality and against offensive combat operations in Afghanistan. That Canadian tanks are withdrawn or given to the Afghan military forces, and the Canadian military force structure in Afghanistan realigned with the new “peacemaking” role.
4. That Canada shift offensive combat operations to the Afghan national authority but agree to assist with Afghan force training and operational support.
5. That the primary function of Canada’s mission in Afghanistan is diplomacy (by both foreign affairs and defence) through the creation of safe spaces for belligerents and the facilitation of dialogue with the aim of stopping the violence and beginning the process of reconciliation.
6. That the primary military role would be to contribute to diplomatic activity, through the making of initial contact with belligerents, protection of military and civilian diplomatic staff, and protection of safe space activity.
7. That a secondary military role is the protection of all mission components be they defence forces, diplomatic staff, humanitarian aid agencies, governance development and reconstruction staffs and activity.
8. That in support of peace and security development, Canada conducts training for Afghan policing and security authorities.

9. That in support of human rights, environmental and economic strengthening, Canada conducts humanitarian aid, governance development and reconstruction projects.

I believe that the above better reflects Canadian values and expectations regarding our presence in Afghanistan than the status quo. I realize that my comments are very brief in what is a very complicated issue, but I do hope my comments are useful. I do offer to visit and discuss any questions you may have, or any other related matters of interest to you on this subject.

Patricia Hartnagel
(*Peace and social advocate for over thirty years*)

A Government's decision to go to war is perhaps the most important one that it will ever have to make. Yet, the decision by the Canadian government to commit 2500 troops to a war fighting role in Afghanistan, was made with very little discussion, virtually no input from the Canadian public and passed by only four votes in the House of Commons.

No extensive debate and discussion of the complexities of the situation in Afghanistan took place; further, there was no consideration of how Canada, as a middle power, might appropriately respond. Instead, we rushed into war. This has in turn led to an extreme polarization of public opinion—with various polls showing less than one half of the Canadian public supporting our current role, while the remainder oppose our involvement. The government insists that the low level of support for the mission is because they have not adequately explained it to Canadians—if we had a better sense of the mission—then support would rise dramatically.

Unfortunately, the government has done little to expand the discussion of our role in Afghanistan beyond the classic labelling—that you are either with us or against us—you either support our troops—or the implication is that you are a friend of the Taliban. This type of false dichotomy only serves to shut down any kind of enlightened discussion of what we are doing, how we are doing it, and what other options or alternatives might be considered.

It is imperative that we bridge the “with us or against us” rhetoric and look at some very important options that must be considered as Parliament looks at whether or not to extend the Canadian mission past February of 2009.

Canadians want to do the right thing. However, until the formation of your Committee, the government and the opposition parties have focused on primarily two options—to remain in Afghanistan in a war fighting capacity under NATO command—or to withdraw—either immediately or in February 2009. Canadians feel uncomfortable with both of these options and many are wondering about whether or not there are other alternatives that, for example, concentrate on humanitarian relief and/or capacity building—rather than our overwhelming emphasis on a military role. The imbalance of our priorities in Afghanistan is starkly contrasted by our spending—with only **one** of every \$10 spent going to development assistance.

I feel that the government, the opposition parties, and the media have all been remiss by not providing us with any viable options to consider. I would like to briefly highlight 3 alternative roles that Canada could consider playing—if it is decided that we should remain in Afghanistan in some constructive capacity past February 2009. The three alternative suggestions are:

1. Adopt the Dutch model of engagement
2. Emphasize and facilitate diplomatic solutions, and
3. Coordinate the implementation of constructive plans to deal with the opium poppy debacle.

1. We are constantly being told that there has to be security before development can take place—and that is why we are pursuing a war-fighting model. However the Dutch approach belies that statement and provides a useful model of engagement. The Dutch have approximately 1400 troops that took over the Uruzgan province in Southern Afghanistan over a year ago. That area, along with the Khandahar region (where our troops are based) are both considered volatile strongholds of the Taliban insurgency—but the Dutch encountered a completely different response than we did.

After hundreds of patrols, establishing forward bases and building roads, bridges, schools and clinics—they have sustained very few deaths and a handful of injuries—a stark contrast to the deaths of 73 of our soldiers, one diplomat and injuries in the hundreds.

The Dutch approach is unique—and effective. The “Dutch Philosophy” as it is called, is a strategy focused on supporting the local government; they talk with the Taliban instead of fighting them. The Dutch tread carefully because they realize how little any foreigner knows or understands about the history, culture and traditions of Afghanistan.

Unlike Canadian troops, who send convoys out to the farthest regions and assert their presence, the Dutch move with extreme caution and set up far away from the villages. They send in a delegation to see if the elders are willing to negotiate. The Dutch then spread the word, throughout the region, that they want to come in without fighting. They know that this strategy has worked because they have listened to the radio frequencies used by the insurgents; the Dutch interpreters have heard locals discussing the new type of foreigner that was replacing the U.S. troops. The locals were heard to say that the Dutch weren't there to fight, rather, they are here to talk. The Dutch talk to the elders and, using Provincial Governors as the intermediary, they also talk to the Taliban.

The Dutch commanders have been quoted as saying that, if you are willing to talk, it is surprising what results. But they also caution that it is a time consuming approach; it can take months and months—and at all times—you have to show in everything that you do and say, that you are genuinely trying to understand their conflict.

The Canadian and American approach is quite different. They go into unstable areas and establish forward operating bases—often building them into fortresses with giant sandbags and razor wire. These bases are the launching point for their operations. The Dutch, on the other hand, build mud walled compounds that they call multi functional *qalas*—which is the Pashto name for house—these *qalas* are designed with a traditional guest room for Afghan visitors. The soldiers, who live in these dwellings, are given designated areas for which they are responsible and they are expected to visit every household in their area (usually 12-30 sq kilometres) and monitor their needs of those residents.

An added feature of the Dutch approach is that not only do they help the local residents with the basics of survival, but they also try to serve as honest brokers for villagers whose relatives have been captured by coalition forces. As well, the Dutch forces also try to protect villagers from the actions of corrupt or undisciplined Afghan soldiers and police.

The Dutch model works on a number of levels to make the area safer—in addition to working at a very personal level with the Afghan civilians. What a respectful model for gaining the confidence of the Afghan people—particularly when compared with our aggressive, more confrontational approach.

2. We need to engage in a new political dialogue. According to a report by the International Crisis Group—when Afghan citizens were polled, the same reasons were repeated over and over as to why they were increasingly opposing the government

of Hamid Karzai. What are some of these factors? Corruption, abuses by the local and national security forces, the favouring of one group or tribe over another (thus disenfranchising people from decision making and power structures), and resource quarrels—particularly over land and water.

What is so striking about these grievances is that they are fairly typical of grievances that you would find in any conflict—and most important of all—*these grievances are amenable to negotiation*. We need to redirect our emphasis to addressing *these* factors and working to build accommodation between the government and its people. If we do not, as the counterinsurgency war continues, many Afghans will transfer their allegiance from a government that has not lived up to their expectations—and turn instead to the very groups that we (and the other international forces) are fighting.

There are models for negotiation and conflict resolution in divided societies that are well suited to resolving these differences. Interestingly one of the most effective is virtually identical to the process that Canada used 10 years ago to bring about the International Ban on Landmines. We have shown leadership in the past in bringing together conflicting parties and forging consensus—we could certainly apply these skills and leadership in Afghanistan—if we so choose.

3. Given that opium production is *the* key component of Afghanistan's economy it is crucial that a viable plan for dealing with the poppies be implemented. The eradication of the poppy fields is not feasible given that hundreds of thousands of farmers depend on the poppies for their livelihood. Canada has been pushing the idea of alternative crops—however, for a number of reasons, it is not a realistic option—for example, wheat farmers had to plant three times the amount of land—but received one third less income.

We know that poppies fuel the insurgency—obviously something must be done to manage the poppies—particularly since production is doubling virtually every year. What alternatives might there be to provide economic security for the Afghan people?

The Senlis Institute, an independent think tank based in the U.K. specializes in security and development issues. It has developed a remarkable blueprint for dealing with the opium production; it would provide a village based economic solution to the poppy crisis. Recognizing that poppy cultivation *can* be a constructive endeavour, they build their plan on the tradition of strong, local village control systems.

They are proposing the controlled cultivation of opium poppies for the village based production of codeine and morphine. Calling it a “village based poppy for medicine model”—they have developed a highly detailed plan to bring the illegal

poppy cultivation under control—and in a sustainable manner. The key feature of their plan is to have the entire production process—from opium seed to the resulting medicinal tablets be controlled in the village—in conjunction with government and international NGOs. Further, all economic profits from the medicinal sales would remain in the village—thus providing needed dollars for economic diversification. They advocate that pilot projects be established for the next planting season, in various regions. This actual trial of the proposal would enable measurement of the economic effectiveness of this imaginative initiative—and an opportunity to refine the programme, if necessary.

Coincidentally, the International Narcotics Control Board—whose mandate is to ensure an adequate supply of morphine and codeine for medical and scientific purposes, cites that 80% of the world's population faces an acute shortage of these medicines. The Senlis Institute's proposal provides an extraordinary opportunity, not only diffuse the contentious poppy production dilemma, but also to provide a creative way for a post conflict society to diversify its economy. Moreover, it would allow Afghanistan to constructively participate in international trade and, at the same time, meet a global need for medicines.

By considering one or more of these alternatives (or combinations thereof)

- utilizing the Dutch approach
- emphasizing the negotiation process and
- implementing the Senlis Institute's poppies for medicine proposal

Canada could make a tremendous contribution to the betterment of the Afghan people and stabilization of their economy—and it would be accomplished with far fewer Canadian and Afghani casualties.

We have choices in terms of our mission in Afghanistan and I feel very strongly that we must move away from our war-fighting model, and move into more constructive and creative presence in Afghanistan. Canada **must** shift gears.

We have entered into the sinkhole of counterinsurgency war and its death and destruction knows no bounds. The Taliban has forever—do we? How many Canadian and Afghan lives will be lost as a result of rudimentary 200\$ roadside bombs and improvised explosive devices? And on a crass—but relevant level—how many millions of dollars of our high tech military equipment will these inexpensive bombs destroy? How We must ask the hard questions—about our role in Afghanistan:

- Is it an effective engagement of our human and financial resources?
- Does our mission truly reflect Canadian values?
- Is our currently configured mission in Afghanistan the best contribution we can make to the global community?

Our rush to war in Afghanistan has obscured and run roughshod over the complexities of the situation and, many would say, our reliance on a military approach has exacerbated those pre existing conditions. We must redirect the discussion to include other options and alternatives that Canada can bring to this conflicted land—if we choose to remain past 2009.

To close, a quote from a commentary that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* in late April of this year succinctly describes potential, unintended consequences of our uninformed military venture into Afghanistan. We have a chance to redress some of the harm that we have caused (should we decide to remain in Afghanistan); continuing down the same path that we have taken would be a grave and unforgivable mistake in judgment.

Killing civilians in Afghanistan not only causes unintended deaths, it creates unintended enemies for U.S. and NATO troops.

Pastuns, the most common ethnic group in the country, live by a centuries old tribal code of honour called the *pashtunwali*—and one of its central tenets is “*badal*” or revenge.

If a member of ones family is killed, the blood of the aggressor or the aggressor's family must be spilled.

An unavenged death is the deepest shame a Pashtun can carry—and neither time, compensation, nor uneven odds can erase the obligation for payback.

There is a saying that goes: “a Pashtun waited 100 years, then took his revenge. It was quick work.”

Pashtun lore is filled with tales of family members devoting their entire lives to seeing retribution for a slain relative and accounts of weak individuals settling scores with much stronger opponents. In this way, civilian deaths not only create anger among members of the population, they make Afghans duty bound to take up arms against coalition forces.

Seddiq Weera
(*Afghani Physician and Senior Policy Advisor*)

In this brief paper, I will recount the measures taken thus far to bring security in Afghanistan, identify the gaps or unattended problems, and propose solutions. In light of consultations carried out by McMaster University's Centre for Peace Studies

and by the international peace organization TRANSCEND in Kabul, Nangarhar, Wardak and Mazar-e-Sharif, I will suggest that, unless measures are taken to address these gaps and unattended problems, the achievement of stability and peace in Afghanistan is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future.

Following the Bonn agreement of December 2001, investments have been focused on government institution-building, creation of a national army and national police, organizing and holding emergency and constitutional Loya Jirgas, and fighting armed enemies of the government. Government institution-building, capacity strengthening, infrastructure rehabilitation and public service reform, despite numerous challenges (weak human resources, unqualified leadership in many offices, fraud and corruption), can be considered a relative success, especially in the capital city of Kabul. National army and police development, although curbed by holders of private armies, is gathering momentum, particularly with changes in the leaderships of the ministries of Interior and Defence. But the presence of the 13,500 and 6,500 Coalition and ISAF forces, respectively, has failed so far to bring a level of security necessary for reconstruction, economic growth and stability. Finally, measures to combat severe poverty (compounded by drought) have not brought notable changes to the lives of ordinary Afghans. **Failure to achieve durable security, reconstruction, economic growth and stability will persist until the major causes of insecurity are adequately addressed.** What are the major threats to security in the country and what measures might be taken to address them?

THE BIG FIRE: ARMED OPPOSITION TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Who are the opponents of the government and why are they fighting?

According to the Afghan and international media, armed opposition to the central government of Hamid Karzai includes non-Afghan and Afghan members of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban Movement and some sections of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami of Afghanistan. Analysis of the discussions facilitated by peace educators from McMaster University's Centre for Peace Studies and TRANSCEND in the spring of 2003 in Mazar-e-Sharif, Samangan, Kabul, Wardak and Nangarhar reveals mixed motivations for the fighting of the above parties. Some seem to be driven by ideology, which they may adhere to inflexibly. Others might be genuine "spoilers," trying to retain the status, money and power gained from war and the drug trade. But a third group (in this case almost all Afghans rather than foreigners) appears to feel unfairly treated, discriminated against or "forced to take up arms." There are also substantial numbers of Afghans who oppose the presence of foreign troops in the

country, threats to Afghan autonomy, dependence on foreign powers, and the influx of Western values and customs. In addition, all of the above groups—as well as the central government—are affected by the “culture of war” (lost empathy and vision, diminished compassion, rigid thinking and habitual conflict) created by more than two decades of warfare and destruction.

What is the global context of the conflicts within Afghanistan?

The Cold War was a global binary conflict that brought enormous destruction to Afghanistan. Since the demise of the Cold War a different global binary conflict (the “war on terror” and its adversaries) has moved to the centre of the world stage, and, once again, Afghanistan finds itself caught in the middle. World opinion polls since 2001 have shown a dramatic and disturbing polarization of opinion, the sharpest splits being between the U.S. population and the populations of predominantly Muslim countries. The March 16, 2004 Pew Research Center Poll, for example, found that “in the predominantly Muslim countries surveyed, anger toward the United States remains pervasive;” and “Osama bin Laden...is viewed favorably by large percentages in Pakistan (65%), Jordan (55%) and Morocco (45%).” In this global context, while an Afghan government seen as a threat by the United States will be unstable, an Afghan government perceived by a substantial portion of Afghans or by a substantial portion of the Muslim world as a “puppet” of the United States will likewise be unstable.

What has been the impact of internal armed conflict on security?

The continuing armed civil conflict is the largest impediment to all efforts towards security, democratization, reconstruction and stability. It is also a major impediment to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and basic services.

What has been done to this point?

- (a) Extensive military operations have been carried out by Coalition forces, and to some extent by the national army.
- (b) Occasional (but unsystematic and professionally questionable) dialogues by some levels of the Afghan government or Coalition forces have been carried out with supporters of the Taliban and Hekmatyar.

What else could be done?

Measures to address these problems should include systematic dialogues, as well as educational consultations, led by professional mediators and peace workers.

Dialogues need not, initially, bring representatives of government and of opposition groups to the same table. They can be undertaken by mediators separately with each party involved in conflict. The purpose of such dialogues and peace education should be (a) to discover, through sincere and active listening, the grievances and areas of flexibility of all parties; (b) to work with all parties to solve areas of disagreement and dissension; (c) to help all parties to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate goals; (d) to begin building trust between the parties in conflict; (e) to initiate the creation of permanent institutions for dialogue and reconciliation; (f) to get a basic agreement from all parties that they will suspend the use of arms against each other and transform armed disagreement into either agreement or unarmed disagreement—whether expressed through political parties entering the formal democratic processes or through other activities of civil society.

These dialogues and consultations will not succeed, of course, without considerable flexibility from the relevant parties, including the central government and the armed forces operating on its behalf. The effort, if carried out properly and consistently, may allow many Afghans who fight because they feel they are labelled and fear unfair prosecution and unjust treatment to lay down their arms. The work of McMaster University's Centre for Peace Studies and of TRANSCEND in Afghanistan has demonstrated changes in views, attitudes and positions of politicians who have taken part in peace and reconciliation dialogues and consultations.¹ If there are parties that are completely unwilling or unable to engage in dialogue, this will become clear.

THE SCATTERED FIRE FACTORS: THE PRIVATE ARMIES

Who are they and why are they trying to remain independent?

Analysts and governmental and non-governmental media constantly talk about the private armies and their supporters within Karzai's government (Professor Sayaf's groups, Jamiat-related groupings such as Marshall Fahim, Ustad Atta, General Dostum's group, Ismael Khan's army and Khalili, Kazemi and Mohaqeq's groups, to mention the main ones). While the spoiler factor (status, power, drug and other money) is undoubtedly a motivation for some, many have important concerns (e.g., fears about unfair treatment of former Mujahideen, concerns about ethnic rights) that have not been heard and properly dealt with.² No doubt these groups, like others in the country, are also under the influence of a "culture of war," and maintain various degrees of biased views, ethnic prejudice and hatred, conflictive thinking and habits, as well as the inability to think creatively and open-mindedly and to seek solutions that can be beneficial for all parties.

How do these groups affect security?

These groups not only prevent democratization and public service reform but also contribute to periodic infighting (e.g., Herat and Faryab in March and April 2004) as well as fraud and corruption, especially in the government. Measures taken so far include attempts to gain their support for the transitional government and efforts to disarm or dislocate them.

What could be done?

As in the cases mentioned earlier, there is room for dialogues and consultations led by professional mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation specialists to identify the concerns of these groups and to help them distinguish legitimate from illegitimate concerns. Moreover, peace education is needed to assist those with some flexibility to help build a national vision, transform their objectives and views from a culture of war to a culture of peace, invest their efforts in the transition, and participate in rebuilding the country instead of engaging in destructive activities. The dialogue effort will clearly identify those with such flexibility, as well as those unable to make the transition.

THE FUELLING FACTORS: THE SUPPLIERS AND SUPPORTERS

Who are they and what are their motivations?

In Afghan circles there is talk of countries such as Iran, Russia, India, governmental or private groups from Arab nations and Pakistan as the financial, military, technical, political and moral supporters of the Big Fire and the Scattered Fires Factors. While there is a paucity of credible proof, there are publications about several kinds of motivation for these countries and groups to meddle in the affairs of Afghanistan:

- Economic rivalry (Central Asian resources and markets for Pakistan, Iran, U.S.)
- Political rivalry or competition (Iran-U.S., India-Pakistan, Russia-U.S., Afghanistan-Pakistan over Durand Line, etc.)
- Military competition (U.S.-Japan-Taiwan-South Korea versus Russia-China-India-Iran).

What impact do these factors have on security?

The impact of the fuelling factors is crucial to the functioning, morale and even existence of the armed opposition and the private armies. Measures taken so far include rather mild pressure from the U.S.A. on Pakistan in the past followed by

renewed joint measures by U.S.-Afghan-Pakistan military operations on both sides of Durand border (e.g., the Mountain Storm operations by the Coalition Forces and the Wazirestan operations by Pakistani army); guarding of borders by Coalition and Afghan forces; establishment of the U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan joint working group on border issues, and eventually the anti-drug trafficking treaty signed by Afghanistan and its six neighbours in Berlin on April 01, 04.

What else could be done?

- Establishment of a permanent dialogue mechanism between Afghanistan and Pakistan (with a mandate to address recent and long-standing issues such as Durand Line, as well as future concerns as they exist or arise to find creative and mutually acceptable solutions)
- Studies of modalities for further economic cooperation among Afghanistan and its neighbours (learning from the contribution of the steel and coal industries in establishment of the European Union)
- Establishment of traders, merchants and business persons' working groups from countries in the region to find mutually beneficial means of trade and trans-regional economic ventures
- Setting up of academic taskforces to develop creative means of equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation and cultural exchanges in the region around Afghanistan
- Creating an initiative for a regional security mechanism in this part of Asia.

THE WIND FACTORS: THE RECRUITEES, THE SYMPATHIZERS AND THE DISCONTENTED

Who are they and what are their motivations?

The dialogues and consultations facilitated by McMaster University and TRANSCEND reveal at least three kinds of seriously unhappy people in Afghan society who, as a result of their discontentment, either do not cooperate with Mr. Karzai's government or serve as supporters of, or as a pool of recruitees for, armed opposition or private armies. These groups of Afghans can further be broken down into:

- (a) Sympathizers and recruitees for the armed opposition or private armies
- (b) Concerned intellectuals and political and social activists
- (c) The unemployed, the poor and the under-served or non-served

(a) The Sympathetics and the Apathetics: Afghans say that this group is made up of the supporters (formerly or presently affiliated members) of the parties in the armed opposition and the owners of the private armies as well as those seriously unhappy about injustices and discrimination. They may be motivated by witnessing major injustices and discrimination on the part of the government, or by feeling sympathy for groups that they take to be unfairly targeted. They may either be ready for recruitment by, or provision of support to, the armed opposition (sympathetics); or they may simply do nothing to prevent armed activities against Mr. Karzai's government (apathetics). They may contribute to disruption of security, prevention of humanitarian assistance and basic services and reconstruction; and they may contribute to fraud and corruption. Measures taken to deal with them so far have simply reinforced their perceptions (bombing villages or innocent civilians and depriving them of humanitarian and development projects, to mention two). Measures taken should include: (a) systematic consultations through public forums and townhall-type meetings to identify their legitimate concerns, unresolved issues, conflictive thinking and habits and biased views; (b) peace education combined with mini-Loya Jirgas to find solutions that are in line with the transition towards democracy and human rights in order to gain support of these communities.

(b) The Activists: These are individuals who are concerned about ethnic rights, as well as past and present injustices. To some extent, they share in the "culture of war," with conflictive thinking, lack of empathy, biased and exaggerated views and fixed (ideologically driven) solutions. However, they are also motivated by real and perceived concerns, painful memories and hatred born of experience; and to their credit most of them are anxious to see progress, development and justice in Afghanistan. As for their impact, in many cases these individuals are behind the scattered fires; on other occasions they disrupt political processes, or they create or exacerbate the friction between urban progressive values and rural traditional and religious values. Measures taken so far include instituting freedom of the press and freedom to form political parties and social groups, which are extremely important but not sufficient. Additional measures needed included consultations, dialogues and peace education, as well as scholarly conferences and intellectual Jirgas to help individuals with opposing ideas develop mutual understanding and jointly find win-win solutions.

(c) The poor, unemployed and un-served masses: These are millions of Afghans who have suffered from lack of security, extremes of poverty, lack of basic services and deprivations of human rights by armed groups. They are motivated by their obvious life circumstances and their immersion in a culture of war. Their impact on the situation may be expressed through apathy (e.g., not bothering to register to vote or

to report activities of the armed opposition) or through involvement in mercenary activities (selling their skills to the armed opposition or private armies). Measures taken so far include many attractive projects that are in the planning stage but that have to wait until the problem of armed opposition and private armies is solved. Additional measures needed include finding creative ways to implement sizable poverty-reduction and reconstruction initiatives as well as carrying out community reconciliation, reducing conflictive thinking and habits and promoting social responsibility.

THE SYNERGETIC INTERACTIONS

All of the above factors interact with each other (synergetic effects), so comprehensive measures that address all of these determinants in parallel need to be prescribed.

OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE MEASURE RECOMMENDED IN THIS DOCUMENT

A national mechanism, with assistance from international experts, is needed to work on at least two levels—political and societal. Components of the societal level can be supplemental to important initiatives such as the DDR and Public Service Reform (our experience leaves no doubt that this will assist these processes). A combination of political and societal initiatives can be applied to address major conflicts like those of Dostum with Atta, Pashtoons and non-Pashtoons in the north, Ismael Khan and others in Herat. A political and inter-party approach can be used to address the tension in the cabinet between former *mujahideen* and the technocrats. Another combined approach can be used to assist former and newly established parties to dialogue with one another and to transform their structures and objectives to unarmed and non-violent strategies. Attempts to resolve major conflicts can be combined with consultations on reconciliation approaches. While the South African, Peruvian, Guatemalan and Rwandan models provide rich experiences, Afghanistan needs a model of national reconciliation that accomplishes the central goals of any national reconciliation program in a post-war society but is specifically designed for the Afghan situation.

This national mechanism can be established in the form of an Independent National Commission on Peace and Reconciliation or can be created within UNAMA or as an Advisory Ministry to President Karzai. Such an initiative may be needed for three to five years. It could be started as a pilot or feasibility study. Whichever route is taken, the Afghan and international communities cannot afford to ignore the need for reconciliation.

FINAL POINTS

Expecting to bring security by means of dollars and bombs without parallel efforts to gain the cooperation of discontented segments of the population is naïve and will fail. While the attempt to address the legitimate concerns of all may appear to take too much time, human resources and money, we should recall that:

- (a) Afghanistan is already paying the price of previous failures to carry out the work suggested here.
- (b) The resources available for Afghanistan may be short-lived: the international community's attention to Afghanistan, despite its pledges, is not guaranteed to last, and Afghanistan may well be sacrificed for other, emerging priorities.
- (c) Peace and security that are imposed and do not emerge from within the society are short-lived.
- (d) It is possible, if one takes the time and makes it a priority, to gain the cooperation of the Afghan people.
- (e) There are national and international experts who have experience in the types of initiative outlined in this document.
- (f) There is preliminary evidence that there are more people in Afghan society potentially ready to join a transition to democracy than there are spoilers and inflexibles.

ENDNOTES

1. See <http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~mpeia/>.
2. Personal communications with Mohaqeq, Dostum's Political Chief, Haji Deen Mohamed and many intellectuals and political activists in the spring and summer of 2003.

Richard J. Preston

(On behalf of the Hamilton Chapter of the Department of Peace Initiative)

As it seems to us, a first necessity for the Canadian government is to reassure Canadians whose radical distrust of political power requires the clear and convincing explanation of what interests, and whose interests, are being

served by the presence of our forces fighting with NATO in Afghanistan. Is it to protect the western world from terrorists? Is it an attempt to pacify a militaristic region that has long resisted colonial domination? Or is it to provide help for an ally, or a safe corridor for a proposed Trans Afghanistan Pipeline?

The idea that Canadian troops are there simply to help the Afghan people build schools and hospitals in order to improve the lot of women and children rings hollow in terms of global, NATO, or U.S. *realpolitik*. Nor does the line between good and evil put the Taliban on one side and former Northern Alliance on the other, especially in light of the huge increase in opium production since the Taliban were ousted. Much Afghan opinion is turning against foreign troops as they see many losses and little gains in an ongoing war which is supported by a government which many believe to be both inept and corrupt.

The authors of this submission are fortunate in having access to some of the findings of a small team of researchers from McMaster University Centre for Peace Studies who have been working with several levels of Afghan society since the mid-90's. According to this view, which corresponds most closely to your second option, Canada should not withdraw its troops immediately, but adopt five elements that would greatly improve its chances of success in a conflict, which appears to have no military solution, and could become un-winnable if events in Pakistan or elsewhere turn against the west.

The five steps are:

1. Shift to peacekeeping operations through a ceasefire.
2. Dialogue with the armed opposition.
3. Stop the killing while strengthening peacekeeping or peace support operations.
4. Continue development and aid.
5. Support and expedite a reconciliation process.

We see some urgency in this change of policy because the war is hurting more people in multiple ways every day, including child starvation and the continued suppression of women. War breeds militarization of the daily life of non-combatants.

We believe that Canadians generally would support a move toward peacekeeping operations while protecting development in an expanding zone. We have not seen Federal advocacy for this policy, and strongly urge the formation of a Canadian Minister of Peace and Federal Department of Peace to balance our readiness for strategies of this kind.

Like many a casualty of war weakened by loss of blood, Afghanistan has been drained of its material, psychological and spiritual vitality by thirty years

of war. It needs help. Its problems cannot be solved by missions to kill Taliban or Al Qaeda. But it seems the international community has little appreciation that these fighting groups contain diverse factions, many of which are relatively moderate. They are not a few bedraggled remnants of a spent force easily 'mopped up'; they are legitimate members of the Afghan nation, some of whom formed the country's government not long ago. As a senior military officer recently said: "each time we kill a man overseas we are creating fifteen who will come after us."

To sum up, we urge the government to adopt a realignment of its Afghan mission by taking into consideration the five points listed above.

The objective of the exercise must be changed from killing Taliban to negotiating a ceasefire and dialogues with opposing forces. A change to peacekeeping rather than war fighting would enable our forces to protect districts where aid and development is located. If these measures were to be conducted within a UN mandate (possibly including an all-Muslim peacekeeping force to replace foreign troops) real movement towards a more stable Afghanistan may be possible. Finally, if peace in the country is an objective, then it may be necessary to work with political and ethnic groups to assist in a national vision-building exercise to promote a culture of peace, non-violence and national unity through schools and the media.

SUBMISSIONS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

*Canadian Council for International Cooperation**

Introduction

Canada's 'integrated' 3D, or whole-of-government, approach encompassing development, diplomacy, defence (and sometime other departments) in Afghanistan has had adverse effects on development assistance and peacebuilding. In effect, this approach has elevated the military component to the neglect of development and diplomatic efforts. Worse still, the integrated whole-of-government approach has served to militarize peacebuilding and humanitarian and development assistance. This is a fundamental flaw in 3D or whole-of-government approaches, and it has serious implications on the ground for the delivery of aid and prospects for peace.

The last two years have seen an increasing shift towards putting security first, on the assumption that development will follow.¹ Security is indeed important, but

cannot come at the expense of development and diplomatic efforts. Indeed, the way in which we are currently pursuing security efforts is hampering the effective delivery of aid, progress in development assistance and, therefore, prospects for peace.

The four options the government presents to the panel for review reveal how the whole-of-government approach fails to give adequate attention to humanitarian, development, and diplomatic considerations. A military effort alone cannot guarantee security.

This paper will explore some of the practical constraints of the 'full integration' whole-of-government approach on development and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.² It will also make the case for a fundamental re-orientation of Canada's role that enables CIDA and DFAIT, as the development and diplomatic arms of Canadian international policy, to play stronger roles in Canada's engagements in Afghanistan. It calls for a co-coordinated approach that clearly differentiates between development, diplomatic, and military functions in policy and in practice.

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES OF THE INTEGRATED WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Full integration, as evidenced in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) structure, poses one of the largest practical challenges.

The first PRTs in Afghanistan were established in December 2002, based on the former U.S. model of Joint Reconstruction Teams. The goal of PRTs is to provide security, to support the central government and to enable reconstruction. PRTs vary in approach depending on the country leading them.

Canada took over the Kandahar PRT in 2005 from the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom. Canada has 330 personnel³ in the K-PRT, the vast majority of whom are military, leaving a handful of development workers and diplomats. Civilian police and RCMP, as well as some USAID personnel, have also participated in the K-PRT. Because of Canada's role in combat operations in Kandahar, this means that the military is simultaneously engaged in combat and a state-building process through PRT activities.

The military also engages in Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) through the PRTs. These are generally quick reconstruction or infrastructure repair projects by soldiers intended to provide force-protection benefits to the military. Sometimes, these are referred to as 'hearts and minds' initiatives, designed to gain the support of the local population.

From a military perspective, such projects may make good sense. They are able to repair or build infrastructure or deliver provisions that help win the support of local populations, and perhaps the additional pay-off of information and tips.

However, this approach actually impedes the ability of civilian humanitarian and development personnel to reach populations. Unarmed civilian aid workers rely on their political and military neutrality to win acceptance by the local community.

In this sense, these two approaches are critically at odds with one another.

The protracted conflict and insecurity in Kandahar and other areas in the south raises the question of how long military personnel can simultaneously engage on both the military and development fronts. At the same time, the longer they continue, the stronger the association between the international military effort and development efforts. In the context of insurgency and counter-insurgency warfare this is tremendously problematic, since the projects built by the military may themselves become targets. Worse, Afghan and international aid workers, and civilians associated with the military, may also become targets. Aid workers who begin operations after the military leaves may also be suspect.

For these reasons, Quick Impact Projects are indeed controversial. The military believes they provide force-protection benefits integral to the mission. However, there is little documented evidence to suggest that is the case and the efficiency and effectiveness of these projects is also questionable.⁴ There are other important questions: How does Canada fund such projects? What are our criteria for such funding?

The primary obligation to protect civilians should not be secondary to the military goal of winning hearts and minds. Soldiers handing out school kits to children is not effective if this association causes harm to them in the end.⁵ While the list of K-PRT Projects and Activities on the DND website is full, it remains unclear where funding for K-PRT Projects and Activities come from (CIDA and DFAIT are listed separately), how they are approved, and who within the KPRT is ultimately responsible.⁶

Organizations operating outside Kandahar in the north and north west question the utility of PRTs in such areas, particularly when PRTs are engaged in QIP and development work. Where they do exist, they argue PRTs should focus on security sector reform and disarmament and leave aid to organizations outside the PRT structure. There is also concern that a lack of expertise in programming creates potential for harmful side effects.

Afghan organizations indicate they are not comfortable receiving funding from the PRTs due to targeting and fear of association with the military. They prefer to

receive funding from Embassies, NGOs, the UN or the government.⁷ When PRT teams settle into an area, Afghan organizations say these locations become insecure since the PRTs are targets for the Taliban.⁸

Under exceptional circumstances, when there are no civilian organizations and personnel to deliver aid, the military can be called upon. In such cases, they must respect the humanitarian operating environment. This is firmly recognized in UN and Canadian Guidelines that recognize the damage done to humanitarian and development efforts that are too closely associated with political and military efforts.⁹ Canada committed itself to these standards in the 2003 Government of Canada Guidelines on Humanitarian Action and Civil-Military Coordination and has a responsibility to ensure they are upheld on the ground as well.

The key point is that humanitarian aid must be delivered in accordance with international humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality.¹⁰ This means that under no circumstances can aid be used as a tool in the pursuit of military objectives. This is true even where the military is engaged in supporting or delivering aid. Aid as a force multiplier is completely inconsistent with these internationally sanctioned norms.

This isn't to pit civilian aid workers against the military presence. It is to emphasize not just *what* we do, but *how* we do it. An approach that integrates humanitarian, development and military efforts, jeopardizes success in all areas. Unclear policy direction plays out in unclear roles on the ground, and poorly supported aid efforts that, in turn, hinder vital progress.

Recommendations

- Canada should support external objective evaluations of PRT performance and, in particular, their impact on humanitarian and security outcomes and impact on local communities. This will require coordination among donors.
- Specifically, Canada should support an external evaluation of the K-PRT for both effectiveness and impact on the humanitarian operating environment, security, and local communities.
- For the K-PRT, Canada should develop indicators or standards of effectiveness to determine whether it is fulfilling its stated objectives.
- To the greatest extent possible, civilian and military functions in the K-PRT should be separated. Guidelines should be developed and disseminated on the appropriate role of the military within PRTs and for interaction with the local population.

- Ensure that CIDA is not funding QIP projects, since these are fundamentally military projects. If they continue, funds should come from either the DND or DFAIT budget.
- Any support channelled through the PRT by CIDA must be consistent with Official Development Assistance rules of the OECD.
- Canada must make clear its end-strategy for the K-PRT and when roles will be transferred to the relevant local authorities.

The targeting of aid and aid workers

Canada's (and indeed other donors') integrated, whole-of-government approach has created a close association between the military presence and aid, linking the international aid effort to the international military effort. This blurring of the lines has led to targeting of aid and aid workers.

In Afghanistan, at least forty aid workers have been killed in this year alone. Seven of these were international staff. The other thirty-four were Afghans. On top of that, seventy-six humanitarian workers were abducted (forty-four national, twenty-five international). In addition, fifty-five humanitarian aid convoys and forty-five humanitarian facilities were attacked, ambushed or looted by gunmen.¹¹ Clearly, the majority of victims are Afghans. At the same time, there is an increasing reliance on Afghans to deliver aid because the security situation is so precarious and because internationals are seen as part of the international military effort against the Taliban. Unfortunately, this means an increasing number of Afghans themselves are also targeted for attacks.

The situation is even worse for female Afghan aid workers. In turn, this has had adverse effects on access to aid by the female population, undoubtedly one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.¹²

The current situation is the worst aid agencies have had to cope with. We are talking of organizations who have been active in Afghanistan for decades, through the Soviet era, the Mujahideen, the Taliban, and even the 2001 ousting of the Taliban by U.S. forces.¹³ In almost thirty years of war, only now has the threat to aid workers reached such levels.

Traditionally, the international humanitarian presence has provided two basic services: the first, life saving assistance, the second, witnessing to what is actually happening to vulnerable populations. In Afghanistan, the reduction of international aid staff has meant less witnessing on the ground and increased vulnerability for national staff. This means that the Afghans trying to rebuild their society are the ones being killed and threatened.

Aid workers tend to be targeted for economic and political reasons. This year, 106 criminal and conflict-related incidents against NGOs have been confirmed.¹⁴ Attacks on aid workers have occurred in both the north and south. In the north, the attacks are the work of criminal networks after economic gain and, in the south, by the Taliban and anti-government forces.¹⁵ According to the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO), anti-government forces this year have abducted more than sixty NGO workers, compared with twenty by criminal gangs.¹⁶

Aid worker insecurity threatens access to civilians in dire need in at least two ways. First, because aid workers who are threatened, abducted and killed are simply unable to deliver and support assistance.

Second, because aid agencies must be assured of reasonable levels of safety for their staff. The more insecure the situation, and the more aid staff are targeted, the less likely are organizations to continue programming. In both instances, aid may not reach those in need. This has severe repercussions on the country's ability to make vital progress in development.

Some suggest this dire situation requires the military to take up the role of delivering humanitarian and even development assistance. CCIC and its members, including those active on the ground, suggest this will only make a bad situation worse. As argued earlier, integrating military and development efforts in state-building in Afghanistan, turns development organizations into targets.

Recommendations

- Canada must advocate separation of development and military functions. It should discourage statements by the military that link aid efforts to the international military effort. A plethora of images on the Government of Canada website associate soldiers with Afghan children and aid. This, too, should be discouraged.
- Support to the fullest extent the ability of organizations like the ICRC, UN agencies, and NGOs to negotiate humanitarian access to populations in need. This will include negotiations between these entities, the government of Afghanistan and anti-government groups.
- Increase training for Canadian forces on codes of conduct and Guidelines in relation to Civil-Military Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance, including the 2003 Oslo Guidelines and the Government of Canada's Guidelines.
- Pressure the Afghan government to end impunity for attacks against aid workers, whether of the result of rampant criminality or insurgency.

- Increase security-related training in Canada for aid workers operating in conflict zones.
- Support low profile efforts to provide security training to nationally recruited staff.
- Canada should support monitoring and reporting mechanisms, perhaps through the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, on attacks against aid workers and assets, in addition to conflict-related attacks against civilians.

Placing an emphasis on effective aid

Poverty in Afghanistan is about inequality of access to assets and social services, poor health and nutrition, limited access to education, displacement, vulnerability to natural disasters such as floods and drought, gender inequities, conflict, and political marginalization. Development is a multi-faceted and complex endeavour which takes time. While short- to medium-term progress can be measured by the number of facilities built and services provided (as just one example), real successes in eradicating poverty in a country like Afghanistan will take decades. And this will only be possible if concerted efforts are maintained well past 2011.

Yet, initially our development assistance was minimal as compared with our military efforts. Between January 2002 and July 2003, CIDA contributed \$26 million to Afghan Transitional Administration through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, the United Nation's Mine Action Program and civil-military cooperation projects.¹⁷

The next phase of funding, announced in March 2004, was for \$250 million between 2005 and 2009 for a Security Sector Reform Fund, the Microfinance Investment and Support Facility (MISFA), and support for the National Solidarity Program.¹⁸ CIDA disbursements between March 2004 and March 2007 totalled \$285 million.¹⁹

That means between 2002 and March 2007, CIDA spent \$311 million on Afghanistan programming. In 2007, Canada committed another \$200 million with a total pledge of \$1.2 billion between 2001 and 2011. The government is now under pressure to remedy its lagging commitments to development, once simply an after thought to the military commitment.

Canada must ensure it now delivers on its pledges. But money alone, while important, will not solve the challenge of poverty and inadequate development in Afghanistan. We need to address the reasons why aid is not reaching Afghans as

effectively as it should if we are to make progress. The low priority on development assistance has been one of those reasons.

Different approaches by different donors is another major challenge. Some donors fund through the core budget, others through the external budget.²⁰ Peace Dividend Trust estimates that only about thirty-one percent of aid is spent on Afghan goods and services, as opposed to foreign goods and services. This is largely the result of major donors like the U.S. and Germany channelling funding through foreign organizations and contractors.²¹ This severely limits the beneficial local impact of assistance.

In September of 2007, a review of CIDA's current project browser suggested about fifteen percent of current CIDA projects specifically target Kandahar Province.²² According to DND, twenty percent target Kandahar Province. The U.S. spends more than half of its budget on the four most insecure provinces.²³

The U.K. allocates one fifth of its budget to the south.²⁴ The UN and NGOs on the ground are increasingly concerned that aid is being diverted disproportionately to insecure areas.²⁵ The UN has stated that development actors' failure to ensure less strategically useful provinces in the north and west receive a peace dividend accentuates the north-south fault-line enhancing tensions in the country. Perceptions are rising in the north that the poppy-growing areas in the south are treated preferentially by donors because they receive more assistance for poppy alternatives.²⁶

CIDA is under pressure to demonstrate development results in the south, but we urge, that media and other pressures do not become the basis for allocation of much needed resources in Afghanistan. Humanitarian and development aid should be need-driven, not be used to win over the support of populations in strategic areas. Working with other donors to meet needs across the country should be a priority for Canada. Even the most effective Canadian aid will not have substantial impact if other donors do not also adopt such an approach. The annual donor conference on development is one possible avenue to achieve this.

CIDA has invested a large proportion of resources in pooled or multi-donor Trust Funds, such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA), and the National Solidarity Program (NSP). A review of CIDA's project browser suggests Trust Funds receive a majority of CIDA funding, followed by Multilateral organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank, the UNDP, WFP, and WB. A significantly smaller amount is channelled to NGOs, the ICRC and to the CIDA-PRT. Small amounts are channelled directly through the government, and a small Embassy Fund.²⁷ Precise numbers are hard to determine due to multi-year allocations, but in terms

of direct impact, this suggests CIDA could do more to support community-based work through international and Afghan civil society. CIDA could also ensure the effectiveness of the pooled funding mechanism by supporting regular evaluations.

The same information suggests disarmament and mine action receive the most support followed by counter-narcotics (non-eradication approaches), education and literacy, including for girls, livelihoods, including alternative livelihoods, reconstruction of roads and buildings, health, food aid, legal sector, IDP and returning refugees, gender equality support, and human rights treaty reporting.²⁸

Assessing these areas against core poverty reduction needs and conflict-induced complications in Afghanistan, we conclude that much more needs to be done in the area of strengthening human rights, and more direct support to IDPs, the health sector, and livelihoods.

Interestingly, there is no indication of support for youth-centred programming, particularly in the area of youth employment and vocational training. Given that forty-one percent of Afghanistan's population is fourteen years of age or under, this area needs more attention. Again, civil society organizations could play a more active role in targeted programming.

In general, channelling funding through civil society organizations would have greater impact. While strengthening the government is important, much more needs to be done simultaneously to support Afghan civil society, including women's groups and networks. Canadian organizations are well positioned to do this.

Recommendations

- Support evaluations for the ARTF, MISFA, and the NSP and other pooled funds through which CIDA channels funds for their effectiveness and impact in providing development benefits.
- Press other donors to invest more directly in Afghan resources to increase the overall local impact of aid.
- Develop indicators for aid effectiveness in Afghanistan along with other donors.
- Emphasize support for civil society, including more funding to support Afghan civil society. This will increase direct benefits to the population.
- Increase funding for gap areas: youth, disabled, and agriculture.
- Support rolling needs assessment throughout the country to ensure total donor resources are allocated according to need.

- Increase CIDA's annual budget progressively to meet the 0.7% of our GNI within ten years. This would help ensure that support to Afghanistan will not detract from pressing needs in other parts of the world such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Peacebuilding and support for peace processes

As with development and humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding in Afghanistan has become increasingly militarized. Indeed, many conflate the military effort with a peacebuilding effort. Terminology often confounds this confusion. Peacebuilding can generally be described as activities that address the root causes of conflict, as well as the consequences of conflict. Some examples include conflict-sensitive development, peace education, dialogue and conflict resolution, transitional justice, de-mining, and human rights strengthening. Depending on the activity, this can be supported by CIDA or DFAIT.

A review of our aid commitments suggests that there is no CIDA or Government of Canada strategy or framework in place to support peacebuilding in Afghanistan. In other war-affected countries, efforts are made to make sure development avoids exacerbating conflict and tensions in society. For example, as previously mentioned, perceptions that the south receives more assistance feed the north-south conflict divide.

CIDA should support conflict assessments for development work in Afghanistan, including the development of conflict-sensitive frameworks and evaluations. Practically speaking, this means increased support for activities that support dialogue and inter-tribal or communal peacebuilding. It means support for curriculum in schools, peace education, working with minority communities, and supporting human rights and an end to impunity.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade can also play a much stronger role in supporting peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan. This could include support for developing parliamentary mechanisms for conflict resolution, support for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and human rights monitoring in Afghanistan, security sector reform, and transitional justice, including supporting renewal of the Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice (APPRJ).²⁹

Canada should also investigate all possibilities for supporting formal and/or informal peace processes. Canada should invest along with the Afghan government and other donors in an assessment of what may be possible and most effective in Afghanistan. More wars today are stopped by negotiated settlements than by

military victory.³⁰ In 2006, two conflicts ended, seven were in full peace processes, and twenty-seven were in interrupted or semi-processes.³¹ However, to date, despite thirty years of war, concerted efforts to support a peace process in Afghanistan have been elusive. Past efforts by the UN in the 1990s were overshadowed by the Gulf War.

As the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs stated at an Annual Retreat of Mediators in June 2007: "Dialogue is a viable tool."³² Any such support for a peace process must include a role for Afghan civil society, including a meaningful role for women. Culture and religion are clearly factors in effectively involving women in such processes, but they should not be allowed to be an impediment to such involvement.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security obligated states to ensure that women are indeed involved in the design, negotiation, and implementation phases of any peace agreement.³³ Canada has been a 1325 champion for years, including supporting Afghan-Canadian women's roundtables in 2002.³⁴ As such, Canada should do more to support the effective participation of women in any peace process in Afghanistan.

Negotiations with the Taliban must take into account the perspectives of the Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara and other minority communities, as well as the Pashtun community, and their legitimate concerns—a mediation process must explicitly include mechanisms to account for their views.

As with any peace process, the challenge is managing or determining the extent to which former and current belligerents, including those responsible for human rights violations, are treated. This is a process of social negotiations that occurs between those affected by war. Accountability to the people that have suffered the brunt of conflict must be a priority. This is done by ensuring justice mechanisms are sufficiently addressed, discouraging blanket amnesty clauses, having strong weapons control provisions, backed up by a strong international commitment and monitoring of implementation.

Peace processes are not a silver bullet, nor are they easy. Follow-up on part of the international community to ensure robust implementation in these areas is necessary if a re-lapse to war is to be avoided.

Recommendations

- Canada must dramatically boost its diplomatic efforts. A first step is to become a tireless advocate for a comprehensive peace process to build the political consensus now absent.

- Canada should support an assessment in partnership with the UN, other donors, and the Afghan government and civil society to determine who may be best positioned to support a sustained peace effort.
- Canada can also provide technical and financial resources to facilitate initiatives and to ensure that Afghan women and civil society have the resources to participate effectively.
- Canadian civil society has a role to play in supporting grass-roots community-based peacebuilding through community development initiatives.
- Support the development of national political and social institutions capable of mediating conflict without resort to violence.
- Canada must champion the involvement of women in design, negotiation, and implementation phases.
- Internally, DFAIT must dramatically increase its mediation and negotiations support capacity.
- Non-partisan political support in Canada is required to support such a process. Lessons from Norway and elsewhere demonstrate that if Canada is to become involved in supporting a peace process, there must be a political consensus and commitment in Canada to support long-term efforts at peace in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The time is now for Canada to dramatically re-orient its role in Afghanistan to place a much greater emphasis on political negotiations, community peacebuilding, effective development assistance and humanitarian aid. To do so, it will have to re-evaluate how the whole-of-government approach has succeeded and failed in Afghanistan. We urge Canada to re-consider the 'full integration' approach in light of its negative impact on the ground and, instead, support a coordinated approach that recognizes and maintains the distinctions between development, diplomacy, and defence, in policy and practice. Most importantly, Canada must place diplomacy and development and humanitarian access at the front of its efforts.

DISCLAIMER

* The views presented in this article do not necessarily reflect views of individual Canadian Council for International Cooperation members.

ENDNOTES

1. Comparison on 2006 and 2007 Throne Speech statements. 2006: Government will support a more robust diplomatic role for Canada, a stronger military and a more effective use of Canadian aid dollars. 2007: Canadians understand that development and security go hand in hand. Without security, there can be no humanitarian aid, no reconstruction and no democratic development.
2. For background on the evolution of Canada's whole of government approach in Afghanistan, Sudan and Haiti, see: "Failed States": Canadian Action in Conflict-Affected States: http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/humanitarian_peace.shtml.
3. Rebuilding Afghanistan website, accessed November 25, 2007: <http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/library/kprt-en.asp>.
4. Humanitarian Policy Group, "Resetting the rules of engagement: Trend and issues in military – humanitarian relation," March 2006. Pp. 42 – 47.
5. As listed under KPRT Projects and Activities, DND website accessed November 25, 2007: http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/kprt-eprk/act_e.asp.
6. Ibid.
7. Phone conversation with a researcher on civil-military relations, report forthcoming.
8. Correspondence from a CCIC member partner organization in Afghanistan.
9. See UN Guidelines On the Use of Military and civil Defense Assets in Disaster Relief (1994) and Complex Emergencies (2003).
10. *Humanity*: meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found. *Impartiality*, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations. *Neutrality*, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out. *Independence*, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented. See The Principles and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship endorsed by Canada in 2003: <http://www.reliefweb.int/ghd/a%2023%20Principles%20EN-GHD19.10.04%20RED.doc>.

11. IRIN News, "UN warns of humanitarian crisis in inaccessible areas," *29 October 2007*.
12. Discussion with Farida Nekzad, November 13, 2007.
13. IRN News, "ICRC warns of growing humanitarian emergency," *21 October 2007*.
14. IRIN News, "NGOs vulnerable to criminal violence and insurgency," *7 November 2007*.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Canada's Development Commitment for Afghanistan, CIDA, July 2005, accessed at: <http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/cidaweb/acdicida.nsf/En/JOS-426165819-SLH>. Cited in Patrick Travers and Taylor Owen, *Peacebuilding While Peacemaking: The Merits of a 3D Approach in Afghanistan*, The University of Oxford, 2006.
18. Ibid.
19. Government of Canada, Performance and Knowledge Management Branch, *Review of the Afghanistan Program*, May 2007.
20. 2007 National Human Development Report, p. 31.
21. See "Too few development dollars are actually spent in Afghanistan," Andrew Mayeda and Mike Blanchfield, *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 November 2007, and the 2007 National Human Development Report, p. 31.
22. According to CCIC calculations for current projects funded by CIDA, see: http://www.ccic.ca/e/docs/002_humanitarian_2007-10_briefing_note_aid_commitments.pdf.
23. "Afghanistan aid must be spread," *Financial Times*, 19 March 2007.
24. Ibid.
25. See the 2007 National Human Development Report, Oxfam International Overview of Priorities for Canada in Afghanistan, November 2007 and Afghanistan Reference Group Statement of Development and Humanitarian Assistance, November 2007.
26. United Nations, Report of the Secretary General, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security," 21 September 2007, par. 24.

27. See CCIC backgrounder on aid in Afghanistan.
28. Ibid.
29. For more on Transitional Justice, see IRIN News: "Revitalise transitional justice system - UN human rights commissioner," 21 November 2007.
30. "Charting the roads to peace: facts, figures and trends in conflict resolution," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, October 2007.
31. Ibid.
32. Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, "Beyond the boiling point: Is dialogue a viable tool in Afghanistan?" Oslo Forum, June 2007.
33. For more on Resolution 1325 see the Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group: http://www.peacebuild.ca/upload/fact_sheet_new.pdf.
34. See "A STONE IN THE WATER, Report of the Roundtables with Afghan-Canadian Women On the Question of the Application UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan," July 2002.

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It is time to step back from debate over the use of force in Afghanistan and to draw on the wealth of experience that has been accumulated in the area of peace keeping, peace support and crisis stabilization since the end of the Cold War. There have been sixty-three UN-led peacekeeping operations and a handful of UN-authorized, but not UN-led missions from which we may gather lessons to guide our discourse and, more significantly, the actions Canada must take to help bring Afghanistan forward into a lasting peace.

Peacekeeping: Traditional or Comprehensive

Peacekeeping was never meant to supplant the peaceful resolution of disputes. It was never meant to replace the central tool of conflict resolution and negotiated settlements. The "traditional" understanding of peacekeeping, that which is considered to be the Canadian invention of Lester Pearson, was based on a negotiated ceasefire agreement and a separation of military forces, monitored by UN peacekeepers. This ceasefire was meant to provide a window of opportunity for the negotiation of an overall comprehensive peace settlement. Cyprus is the quintessential example of this

approach and was often cited as a military peacekeeping success, whereby the opposing Greek and Turkish Cypriot military forces have, generally, kept on their respective sides of the famous “green line” of separation for over 40 years, even though the political issues were not resolved.

Post Cold War “comprehensive” peacekeeping has broadened the scope of what had been largely military “peace” operations. It has come to encompass a wide variety of civilian actors and elements, all necessary to help parties implement a comprehensive peace settlement.

From what has been learned, it is clear that the starting point in any successful peacekeeping operation is a comprehensive peace agreement that addresses all relevant issues underlying the conflict. Ideally the agreement will seek to lay the political, security and socio-economic foundations for a sustainable peace. They include:

- disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into civil society of former combatants
- the rule of law (police, judges, courts, penal system)
- democratic development, including free and fair elections within inclusive political structures
- improved respect for human rights
- reform of the military
- rehabilitated economic infrastructure and
- the promotion of sustainable development when the situation is sufficiently stabilized.

A particularly important aspect of this negotiation process will be the identification of mechanisms and procedures, down to the grass roots level, to allow the post-conflict society to find the right balance between justice and reconciliation processes.

Each of the above elements contains many issues to be resolved (type of political structures, constitution, legal framework and so on). For these reasons, and many more, external facilitation will be critical to help the parties negotiate this type of agreement. Here the UN has considerable expertise and should be an integral part of this process. We must strive for the most comprehensive peace agreement possible, one that addresses all relevant issues. In turn, we must understand the importance of impartial third party facilitation and expertise in this area.

A comprehensive peace agreement presupposes not only that the full range of issues will be on the table but as well that all necessary parties to the conflict will be involved in the negotiation. This must include all the various factions engaged in

the conflict (government and rebels, all sides of the conflict). There may be some "irreconcilables" but they must be kept to a minimum if there is to be any chance of success. Ultimately the more factions that remain outside the negotiation process, the less chance there is of a lasting peace.

It will not be sufficient for the negotiations to involve only political and military leaders. The negotiations must be informed by an inclusive consultative process down to the grass roots level if it is to replace elitist, exclusionary forms of governance with pluralistic, inclusive institutions and mechanisms. We must envision a peace process that, itself, is emblematic of the goals being sought.

Beyond the internal factions of a civil war there are external parties that must be part of the overall negotiating framework. Typically there will be a number of such parties actively aiding one side or the other. Here we may look to the example of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where at one point armies from eight different neighbours were directly engaged in the conflict, either in support of a faction or in pursuit of natural resources. At a minimum, external entities must agree to withdraw their forces and cease other forms of assistance to internal factions of the given conflict. In all likelihood, there will be a host of related issues to resolve, ranging from border and resource disputes and the treatment of ethnic minorities to issues of political influence and trade relations. Ultimately the external actors are involved in the conflict for a variety of reasons relating to their own perceived interests and it is unlikely these intertwined issues can be resolved without a negotiating framework expressly designed to do so.

If the peace agreement is to receive the blessing of the UN Security Council, then the veto-wielding "Permanent 5" (China, France, Russia, UK and USA) must see it in their interest, or at least not against their interest, to support the agreement. This in turn means that, where one or more of the "Permanent 5" have specific interests, they must be satisfactorily addressed. It is precisely in these cases that it will be critically important for the negotiation to be facilitated by an impartial, competent third party. At the same time, the more important the vested interest, the more difficult it will be for those powerful actors to step back and allow disinterested mediation.

Here we may look to the example of the power held by the U.S. in the negotiation of the Dayton Accords, in relation to the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. There is much evidence that this control led to an agreement that proved very difficult to implement. The quartet mechanism in the Middle East peace process is allegedly a mechanism to bring into play both the UN Secretary-General and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the EU, as honest brokers, counter-balancing U.S. and Russian special interests, but the evidence to date suggests that its main effect has been to dilute the

voices of moderation and balance. In short, the most vexing negotiation challenge is how satisfactorily to address concerns of powerful external actors without creating an imbalance that fails to reflect the needs of the main parties in the conflict. The case of Darfur, where the reluctance of China to bring necessary pressure to bear on Khartoum to secure its agreement to a robust implementation force because of its dependence on Sudanese oil, is a significant example of powerful third party interests impeding a robust implementation capacity.

Once a comprehensive peace agreement has been achieved it must be implemented. This is where the modern, multidisciplinary peace operation comes into play: a UN mission under the overall political and diplomatic direction of the Special Representative of the Secretary General and typically comprised of

- military,
- police,
- judiciary,
- corrections and rule of law components,
- a humanitarian coordinator,
- human rights and development components,
- an electoral assistance unit,
- a civil affairs unit,
- child protection experts and
- a gender advisor.

The type and scope of third party implementation must also be negotiated, ideally as part of the overall peace negotiation.

In addition to all of the elements within the UN peacekeeping operation, there will be a diverse array of more or less independent actors operating outside the mission, focusing on humanitarian relief or other aspects of the post-conflict peacebuilding process. These independent entities come from the family of UN funds, programs and agencies, such as UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and UNDP, from the international financial institutions (notably the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction (CPR) Unit of the World Bank), from the donor community (CIDA, DFID, USAID, etc), the international non-governmental community (CARE, World Vision, Oxfam, etc) and from the utterly unique and utterly independent International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). All will be interacting with a multitude of local, national, governmental and non-state actors from the post-conflict country itself, from the neighbouring countries, from sub-regional groupings and, increasingly, from regional

entities such as the African Union, NATO or the EU. Indeed, regional groupings may be mandated formally by the Security Council to assist in the peace implementation process.

Slowly, with much effort, this extraordinarily diverse array of international 'interveners' is coming to understand that, for such a complex effort at reconstruction and nation building to succeed, an agreed multilateral framework is required. Ideally this framework will reflect a comprehensive approach, will be freely negotiated and agreed upon by parties and will address all aspects of the governance failure that led to the original conflict. Simply put, the mandate for a peacekeeping mission must be based on a comprehensive peace agreement.

The UN may or may not be the lead entity in the peace negotiation process. UN-led "blue helmets" may or may not be the military force that provides security assistance during the peace implementation phase. At the same time, however, only the UN Security Council can mandate a multidimensional peace operation under UN civilian leadership to oversee and facilitate implementation by the parties of the peace agreement. Only the UN can mandate a comprehensive multilateral peace implementation framework legitimizing international action, and within which governments need to identify and agree on their areas of action and on specific programs and projects within those areas of action. This includes the identification of how specific projects and plans can support the overall strategy. Equally important, only the UN can even notionally lead the overall peace implementation process, if only for the reason that no other single entity is acceptable to the international community. Ultimately there are three components in play here:

- the consent of the parties,
- the comprehensive framework and
- the coherence of the international assistance effort.

A Comprehensive Approach for Afghanistan

Consider now the case of Afghanistan and the indescribably sad, frustrating and inexcusable fact that none of these essential factors for success have been put in place. There has been no peace negotiation whatsoever, let alone a comprehensive one. Key parties to the conflict, notably the Southern Pashtuns, the largest single tribal group in Afghanistan, were conflated with the Taliban, who were in turn lumped in with al-Qaida; all were left out of the Agreement. The Bonn Agreement, which created the country's elected bodies, was almost entirely developed by external parties and was never the subject of negotiation by Afghans. The framework developed at the London Conference at the end of January 2006 (the Afghanistan Compact)

was developed by an even narrower group of foreigners and then 'presented' at the Conference. The lower house of the National Assembly, which has the power under the new Constitution to ratify treaties and international agreements, was given no role in developing or approving the Compact.

Afghanistan has long standing conflicts with Pakistan over relations with India, the border, ethnic issues and the transit trade. Iran is a vital economic partner for landlocked Afghanistan. The issue of Taliban insurgents receiving safe haven in the tribal areas of Pakistan is inextricably intertwined with fundamental issues of governance in those areas. These fundamentally political issues cannot be resolved by pushing the Government of Pakistan into sending yet more troops into Baluchistan or North Waziristan, yet no serious attempt has been made to bring these parties to the negotiating table.

No provision was made in the Bonn Agreement for an overarching, coherent framework for peace implementation. In the immediate post 9/11 period, United States' unilateralism confined the UN to a narrow humanitarian coordination role, while key peacebuilding tasks were parceled out to a series of lead nations, utterly unequipped to handle them (UK—drug eradication, Germany—police training, Italy—the judiciary, Japan—DD&R, USA—the new Afghan military). Later, when election planning ran into serious problems, the UN role was expanded to take on this task. The new Afghan government-led coordination mechanism established under the London Compact (JCMB) is too unwieldy to be effective and key activities, such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (each unique to the international military force that created it), take place completely outside its orbit.

Just as the international political leadership in Afghanistan is fragmented, so is the military effort. From the beginning there have been two distinct and fundamentally incompatible military efforts: the U.S.-led Coalition, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Coalition, whose primary mission is defined as counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, and which enjoys freedom of action under the United States' right of self-defence, came to Afghanistan to assure, first, the security of Americans from al-Qaeda and, secondly, that of the Afghan government from the insurgency. ISAF's mission is to help the Afghan authorities provide security according to the Bonn Agreement, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and a bilateral agreement with the Afghan government.

ISAF, a UN-authorized but NATO-led post-conflict stabilization force, was meant to be a robust peace operation, loosely modeled on those deployed in the

former Yugoslavia to help implement the Dayton Accords and in Kosovo. It was to have been in place while a comprehensive political settlement was worked out. Unfortunately, during the critical immediate post-conflict phase, when the Taliban government had been routed, ISAF was only mandated to operate in and around Kabul. The U.S.-led Coalition effectively was given freedom of action in the rest of the country to track down Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents, operate on the basis of overwhelming force, make deals with local warlords when it was expedient, and, in the process, to put the security needs of ordinary Afghans constantly at risk.

In the end, what occurred was the worst of all possible developments: the expansion in late July 2006 of ISAF into the South when the insurgency there had not been quelled but had steadily grown in strength. This occurred under relentless pressure from the U.S. as it sought to free up American troops for Iraq. The result was that ISAF too was sucked into the counterinsurgency quagmire.

The aim of a peace operation, however robust, is not to go to war with the parties but to help them build the democratic institution and processes that will enable them to manage societal conflicts in a non-violent way. A robust force can deter violations, effectively address them when they occur and thus build confidence in the peace process. However, this presupposes that all or most of the key players want peace more than war, so individual spoilers can be effectively isolated and dealt with. Without a credible peace process, the international military force, as it seeks to take action to address violations, risks becoming just another party to the conflict, as it has done in Afghanistan.

On June 12, 2007 the ICRC, which has had an uninterrupted presence in Afghanistan since 1987, gave a press briefing entitled "*Afghanistan: three decades of war and no end in sight*". Their statement emphasized that the conflict between Afghan and international forces on the one hand and armed opposition groups on the other had "significantly intensified" and had spread, during the previous twelve months, beyond the south, to parts of the east, west and north. The September 21, 2007 Report of the UN Secretary General to the Security Council states that 2007 is turning out to be the worst year, in terms of security, for Afghanistan since 2001, with an average of 548 insurgent and terrorist related incidents per month. This represents a twenty percent increase in violence since 2006. The ICRC and UN reports are the latest in a long, grim list dating back to late 2004 with each one documenting a further deterioration in the security situation in Afghanistan.

NATO military commanders themselves know that there is no military solution to Afghanistan's myriad problems. According to respected analyst, Paul Rogers of Bradford University, "There is a widespread and bleak consensus among NATO

commanders: unless there is a significant change in policy, foreign forces will remain in the country for decades, tied down in bitter counter-guerrilla operations.”

Fighting the Taliban, al-Qaida, and other disaffected groups loosely aligned with them, involves tactics that rely heavily on air power and aggressive search and destroy missions. These tactics have led to at least as many civilian casualties by international and allied Afghan forces as by opposition groups. This breeds hatred against foreign forces and, in the south, builds support for the insurgents. Equally problematic, the use by the military of humanitarian aid as a tool in the information campaign against the Taliban carries the grave risk of making humanitarian workers themselves a target, as well as the civilians they seek to assist.

Fighting the Taliban et al also means that military forces cannot focus on helping build and support the institutions that the Afghan people desperately need for long term security, particularly a professional, accountable police service and national army. Similarly neglected are the disbanding of armed groups, the countering of government corruption and the ending of impunity for abuses. The Canadian military and other NATO forces in the South are in an impossible situation. They cannot help build a secure environment without ending the war and they cannot end the war by military means. How then can the war be ended? Without a decisive victory, history tells us that the only way to end such internal conflict is through negotiated settlement.

The optimum time to negotiate with the Taliban was when they were defeated and routed by the U.S. military in late 2001, a strategy that would have had the added benefit of separating them from al-Qaida, rather than pushing them ever closer. Now they are infinitely stronger despite the short-term tactical gains that have been made by ISAF and the OEF on the battlefield at significant human cost.

President Karzai, an array of Afghan Parliamentarians and even former high profile members of the Taliban have realized there is no other way forward but, incredibly, negotiations are being opposed by Canada. This is surely the most powerful evidence that Canada has become part of the problem, not the solution.

What is not needed in Afghanistan is another backroom deal forged by elites to save their political hides. Yet this is what will happen and, to a certain extent, what is already underway, if a new direction is not taken by the international community. What is urgently needed is a UN-led broadly-based political dialogue in Afghanistan engaging all sectors of society and communities of interest. Canada has a key role to play, one we have bought with the blood of young Canadians, in securing support within NATO for a comprehensive peace process to build the political consensus that is now absent.

To be an effective peacemaker, Canada must devote its efforts at resolving conflict and helping build a sustainable peace within a whole of government peacebuilding policy that is itself embedded in a UN-led, international strategic framework. This is where Canada should focus. This means, in turn, giving priority in our foreign policy, together with the eradication of poverty and the promotion of fair trade, to the peaceful resolution of disputes and the prevention of conflict through “deep prevention” efforts focused on systematic change, the promotion of human security and a sustained commitment to post-conflict peacebuilding. Embedding Canadian peacebuilding activity in a UN-led international strategic framework also means a rededication by Canada to the principles of the UN Charter; to one set of rules for all, fairly applied to all; and to the principle that security of each state is equally important and can be truly safeguarded and enhanced only by means of the twin objectives of human and common security. This ultimately lends itself to the paramount need for Canada to work actively to support and strengthen UN institutions and capacities for peacebuilding.

*The CRC Committee for Contact with the Government
(On behalf of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada)*

Introduction

Public debate on the scope of Canada's mission in Afghanistan has been narrow. It has focused on the end date of the military mission, and a simplistic polarization between military defeat of the Taliban and development. Peace with Justice in Afghanistan is a complex matter that demands greater nuance in public debate and policy-making. The Government of Canada has argued that security is a prerequisite for development. Security, development and diplomacy are all critical to a sustainable peace. Sustainable security and development depend on addressing the roots of the conflict in partnership with the peoples of Afghanistan. Wise support and empowerment for *made in Afghanistan* approaches to reconciliation/transitional justice and accountable-and-just governance ought to be a key orientation of Canada's engagement now and beyond February 2009.

In 2006 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC) concluded a landmark bi-national study on peace and war. The key finding of that study is a call for governments and the Christian community to dedicate more

attention to building peace with justice. Building on this finding, the Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) of the CRC believes that peacebuilding requires the integration of reconciliation, just governance, development and security. These principles have characterized CCG's perspectives on Canada's mission to Afghanistan and also motivate CRC participation in ecumenical dialogue concerning it.

The CCG is well aware of the complexity of Afghanistan and our limited understanding of its peoples and their struggles. We offer the following comments from a point of conviction—that in spite of the enormous challenges there is hope for peace, and that the path to peace is through genuine reconciliation. This hope must be realistic and persistent, and be built on the contributions of Afghan peoples.

The Orientation of the Mission

Behind the simplified public debate are legitimate questions about the orientation and balance of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. Public communication on the mission often centers on military security objectives of defeating the Taliban. Security is indeed a legitimate goal but it is more complex than military victory—a *victory* which an array of policy makers and shapers agree is elusive. We believe that *human security* elements of the mission (including civilian protection, development and reconciliation) need a more explicit and leading profile in public debate and policy making. We say this for pragmatic and principled reasons.

- On the pragmatic side: Canada's counter-insurgency efforts in Kandahar have intensified since 2005 in terms of cost to the national treasury and in significant loss of troops. In the same period security has deteriorated as evidenced by increases in insurgency incidents and in diminished capacity to safely deliver humanitarian and development aid. Reports from the UN, the Red Cross, the International Crisis group and others detail these disturbing trends. The question then: is the investment of Canadian blood and treasure having the intended effect? And if not, what changes are necessary to make tangible progress for genuine security?
- On the level of principle: In light of the CRC's reflections on peace with justice, the CCG has been urging the government to give greater priority and visibility to efforts to build peace in Afghanistan. Security in the fullest sense of the term will come from deliberate actions for reconciliation and restoration of just governance.

These principled and pragmatic ideas suggest that a different orientation is needed for Canada's strategy in Afghanistan. A clear peacebuilding orientation

could shape efforts to address the root causes of the conflict in reconciliation and transitional justice initiatives.

Peacebuilding for and with the Peoples of Afghanistan

In recent history most ethnic groups in Afghanistan have tasted the bitterness of oppression. Testimony of this brokenness, as detailed by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in *A Call for Justice*, is echoed by representatives of Afghan civil society that we have met here in Canada in ecumenical consultations on Afghanistan. Breaking the painful cycle of violence, oppression, and exclusion is the root of sustainable peace. Deliberate and persistent efforts for reconciliation need to have priority in Canada's efforts to build peace in Afghanistan. In this light CCG has called for the following in recent interaction with policy makers:

- tangible support for the Afghanistan Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice.
- further support for non-governmental and civil society initiatives dedicated to genuine reconciliation between the peoples of Afghanistan;
- direct interaction with the peoples of Afghanistan specifically focused on the connections between reconciliation, just governance, human development and sustainable security.

The Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice is a formal element of the Afghanistan Compact. This plan, developed in consultation with Afghan civil society, is a thoughtful and culturally appropriate approach to accountability, forgiveness and reconciliation as a basis for lasting peace. The CCG has been told that Government of Canada supports the Action Plan and other transitional justice initiatives (correspondence with Minister MacKay, March 30, 2007). In subsequent discussion with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) we have been informed that Canada is supporting three elements of the Action Plan: acknowledgment of suffering; civil service reform and the promotion of reconciliation and national unity. We have, as yet, been unable to get information on the extent of this support. What is clear is that the completion target of 2008 for this plan is unlikely to be achieved (according to available official reports). Ongoing issues of impunity and corruption in state institutions may well indicate a lack of authority and political will in Afghanistan to implement this rigorous Action Plan.

Canadian support for reconciliation and transitional justice most certainly rests on partnerships with peoples in Afghanistan. Their perspectives need to shape any initiatives in order to be reality based, culturally appropriate, and achievable in this

deeply challenging context. In this light it is heartening to know that DFAIT is partnering with the International Center for Transitional Justice, an organization with an exemplary track-record of facilitating civil society approaches to reconciliation.

Genuine reconciliation will be a long-term process of trust-building that will ultimately enhance security and human development in Afghanistan. Indeed, the Afghanistan Compact affirms this principle by the very inclusion of the Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice within it. The Secretary General has noted an

urgent need for an integrated political and military strategy that compliments the Afghan national development strategy, but also encompasses wider issues and provides sharper focus on the achievement of national reconciliation and regional stability.¹

Canada's continuing pursuit of the Afghanistan Compact and peacebuilding ought, therefore, to include new public profile and well-resourced support for Afghan civil-society led reconciliation. Canada will exercise profound international leadership by building peace *for and with* the peoples of Afghanistan in this way.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset of this brief, the CCG has noted oversimplifications in public debate on Canada's role in Afghanistan. The weight of public debate and available information suggest that Canada has given priority to the counter-insurgency effort. However the polarization of public discussion does not give us confidence of a fulsome understanding of the nature and balance of the mission. This indicates need for a transparent and non-partisan public and parliamentary debate. Peace with justice in Afghanistan demands a nuanced approach to the mission that includes diplomatic, developmental, transitional justice and security/civilian protection goals. Sustainable peace will be rooted in a balanced approach that addresses the root causes of the conflict in partnership with the peoples of Afghanistan. We hope that such a partnership for peace with justice—shaped by the energetic and realistic pursuit of reconciliation—will characterize Canada's role in Afghanistan henceforth.

ENDNOTE

1. See, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/502/15/PDF/N0750215.pdf?OpenElement> September 21, 2007, Item #4.

Canadian Friends Service Committee
(*On behalf of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada*)

We, the Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers), wish to express to the Government of Canada our concern that the very premise on which the four suggested options on which the Panel is focused precludes consideration of non-military peacebuilding. With due respect, policy with regard to Canada's role in Afghanistan is not only, or even primarily, a question of what to do with our military resources.

If the goal of Canada's foreign policy is to build peace, then deep consideration of non-military, peacebuilding action is needed. Within the terms of reference of this panel, the only option which offers an opening for this sort of discussion is number four, that is, "To withdraw all Canadian military personnel except a minimal force to protect aid workers and diplomats." Peacebuilding action goes far beyond humanitarian relief and diplomatic presence in the country.

When the criminal atrocities of September 11th, 2001 were committed, international and national legal structures already existed to pursue the perpetrators and hold them accountable for their actions. To pursue this course, and to strengthen such structures, would have been peacebuilding action. Instead, military retaliation was chosen. The violent and overwhelming assault on an already impoverished and war-damaged country, the inevitable killing of innocent bystanders, and the bypassing of tenets of international law were, we believe, immoral and counterproductive choices. The outcome of these choices is that Canada's traditional and cherished role as a peacemaker is now extremely compromised.

Reliance on war and militarism will not achieve lasting and genuine peace. It fails to address the root causes of conflict and pre-empts constructive approaches to just solutions. Each episode of violence sows the seeds for further violence.

Individually and collectively, we can create a lasting peace only by recognizing each other's God-given humanity, whatever our national or ethnic origin, and then acting with the loving justice that follows such recognition. We in the Canadian Friends Service Committee, invest our effort in developing such responses, and shall continue our work toward that end, to (in the words of William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania) "see what love will do" in situations of conflict. The Government of Canada, with its different position and resources, could follow the same path.

Concretely, at this juncture, this type of approach could involve actions such as:

- 1) Mediation by a low-profile mediator facilitating dialogue among all the actors, armed and otherwise. This person and his or her team would be

independent of any individual state's direction or identity, and would be respected for having demonstrated understanding of the political and social history of Afghanistan and Islam. The first goal of the dialogue would be a cease-fire agreement linked to the second step listed below. The cease-fire agreement would include a structure for the delivery of aid and reconstruction to meet the basic needs of the people, with clear expectations of how Afghan (and international) human and material resources will be equitably used and built through the process. This would include a plan of action for transforming the opium industry into a legal and more diverse alternative. We note that a large part of the Afghanistan Compact is dedicated to solving this economic root cause of the conflict, but this aspect is ignored in the terms of reference of the Panel.

- 2) A very inclusive process, including all the Afghan actors involved in step one, to frame a constitution for Afghanistan which provides a high level of autonomy to all major parts of the country.
- 3) Firm support in the multilateral diplomatic world for the decisions and directions arising from the processes of (1) and (2). Here, Canada could have a very important role, although minimally present on the ground in Afghanistan.
- 4) Use of the international legal structures that were ignored in 2001 to pursue the small number of criminal organizers of terrorist action.
- 5) Assistance with funding for the international support workers and observers who would be needed for the political and material reconstruction activities defined in items (1) and (2). Recognition that the Organization of the Islamic Conference might be a more appropriate organizing framework than NATO. The OIC, established in 1969, is a high-level intergovernmental organization with 57 member states. It condemns terrorism in all its forms and undertakes actions to address its root causes. The OIC engages in high-level multilateral diplomacy, including brokering peace agreements and organizing cooperative contributions to humanitarian relief.
- 6) A similar and linked low-profile consultative process in each of the neighbouring countries.
- 7) Adherence and promotion by Canada to key international disarmament, human rights and environmental agreements, in order to overturn the conflict-feeding perception that NATO countries want restrictions on other countries but resist accepting restrictions themselves. Such agreements

would include the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the Program of Action on Limitation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Kyoto Accord. A special concern is that Canada must stop all complicity in torture, and roll back the untenable restrictions on domestic civil liberties that are found in "anti terrorism" legislation here at home.

- 8) Direct assistance by Canada in de-mining and cleaning up depleted uranium munitions used during and since the invasion of 2001, thus recognizing our responsibility as participants in the use of these weapons.

We ask that the Canadian Government withdraw its present support of a violent, and ultimately dangerous, strategy, and turn its resources instead to the creation of a more just world, in which the incentives to terrorism would be steadily reduced. This course does not promise a mythical and unattainable absolute security for the Developed World, but it would vastly increase the genuine safety of all the world's inhabitants.

While we realize that Friends' pacifist tradition is the path taken less frequently, we are disturbed by our government's lack of interest in and failure to consider alternative non-violent means to resolve conflict. There are many NGOs and peace organizations offering an array of alternatives.

How can we break out of the spiral of violence in which we are now caught without exploring these other options? We ask that our government forsake its overwhelming focus on military action and explore more independent, creative and non-violent approaches to foreign and defence policy in general, and to Canada's role in Afghanistan specifically.

We hold you in the Light as you struggle with these difficult issues which affect the well-being of those now on earth and of future generations.