

Afghanistan: Chronology of Canadian Parliamentary events

THIS PAPER LISTS SIGNIFICANT PARLIAMENTARY events that have occurred on the subject of Canada's mission to Afghanistan, including debates, motions and the tabling of reports, for the period September 2001 to October 2007. Although the House of Commons, the Senate and their committees are important venues in which debate occurs and government announcements are made, many government announcements are also made outside of Parliament. These announcements are not listed in this chronology.

2001

September 17: The House of Commons returns from summer recess to debate and adopt a government motion condemning the attacks on the United States of America on 11 September 2001.¹

September 18: The Senate returns from summer recess to debate and adopt a government motion also condemning the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001.²

November 19: Minister of National Defence Art Eggleton updates the House of Commons on the contribution of the Canadian Forces (CF) to the international campaign against terrorism³ and proposes to send 1,000 ground troops from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to work with Coalition partners as a stabilization force in Afghanistan to help create conditions to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

2002

January 28: Subsequent to the 26 January 2002 announcement by Minister Eggleton that CF ground troops are departing for Afghanistan,⁴ a take note debate is held in the House of Commons on the deployment of CF personnel in Afghanistan.⁵

2005

May 16: Minister of National Defence Bill Graham makes a presentation to a joint meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs to announce a new and expanded course for the Afghanistan mission.⁶ The plan includes the deployment to Kandahar in early 2006 of an army task force of about 700 CF members, and a brigade headquarters of approximately 300 personnel, for a period of between 9 and 12 months, to conduct operations to strengthen security in the country and to play a key role in completing the transition from Coalition to NATO leadership in Afghanistan.

November 15: A take note debate is held in the House of Commons on the subject of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.⁷

2006

April 10: A take note debate is held in the House of Commons on the subject of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.⁸

May 17: Parliament votes to extend Canada's military presence in Kandahar until 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces an additional \$310 million in development funding, maintaining Canada's bilateral aid at \$100 million per year through 2010-2011. The motion is debated, put to a recorded vote, and carried (yeas, 149; nays, 145).⁹

June 15: Prime Minister Harper announces \$15 million in funding to the Asian Development Bank to help Afghanistan rebuild rural irrigation systems.¹⁰

2007

February 8: The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence tables its interim seventh

report, *Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission*.¹¹

February 26: The government's first annual report on the mission, *Report to Parliament – Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: Measuring Progress*,¹² is tabled in the House of Commons.

March 19: Minister of National Defence Gordon O'Connor rises on a point of order in the House to apologize for providing "inaccurate information relating to the role, relationship and responsibilities of the International Committee of the Red Cross with regard to Canada and detainees turned over by Canada to Afghan authorities."¹³

April 19: The Opposition brings a motion to call upon the government to confirm that Canada's existing military deployment in Afghanistan will be withdrawn at the end of February 2009. The motion is debated¹⁴ and on April 24 is rejected (yeas, 134; nays, 150).¹⁵

April 25: The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is told by Minister O'Connor that a revised arrangement is to be signed between Canada and the Afghan government regarding the proper treatment of detainees.¹⁶

April 26: The Opposition brings a motion to call upon the government to immediately notify NATO of Canada's intention to begin withdrawing the CF immediately. The motion is debated¹⁷ and on April 30 is rejected (yeas, 28; nays, 225).¹⁸

May 3: Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter MacKay tables a copy of the *Arrangement for the transfer of detainees between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, which is signed on this day by Afghanistan's Minister of Defence Abdul Raheem Wardak and by Arif Lalani, Canada's Ambassador to Afghanistan. It supplements the *Arrangement for the transfer of detainees between the Canadian Forces and the Ministry of Defence of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, which was signed on 18 December 2005 by the Afghan defence minister and by General R.J. Hillier, the Chief of Defence staff, on behalf of the Minister of National Defence.¹⁹

June 18: The House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence presents its first report, *Canadian Forces in Afghanistan*.²⁰

October 16: The 2nd Session of the 39th Parliament opens with the Speech from the Throne, which states, under the theme of "A Proud and Sovereign Canada," that "Canada should build on its accomplishments and shift to accelerate the training of the Afghan army and police so that the Afghan government can defend its own sovereignty. This will not be completed by February 2009, but our Government believes this objective should be achievable by 2011, the end of the period covered by the Afghanistan Compact."²¹

October 17: The government's *Response to the First Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence: Canadian Forces in Afghanistan* is tabled in the House of Commons.²²

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SOURCES

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3. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 37th Parliament, 19 November 2001, p. 7267.
4. Department of National Defence, "Canadian Forces Ground Troops Departing for Afghanistan and The Arabian Gulf Region," News release, 26 January 2002.
5. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 37th Parliament, 28 January 2002, p. 8358.
6. Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 37th Parliament, 16 May 2005, 10:15.
7. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 38th Parliament, 15 November 2005, Part B, p. 9693.
8. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 10 April 2006, p. 275.
9. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 17 May 2006, p. 1501.
10. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 15 June 2006, p. 2403.
11. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission*, Interim report, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, February 2007.
12. Government of Canada, *Report to Parliament – Canada's Mission in Afghanistan: Measuring Progress*, February 2007.
13. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 19 March 2007, p. 7571.
14. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 19 April 2007, p. 8412.

15. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 24 April 2007, p. 8647.
16. Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 25 April 2007, 15:35.
17. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 26 April 2007, p. 8711.
18. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 30 April 2007, p. 8886.
19. House of Commons, *Debates*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, 3 May 2007, p. 9060.
20. Standing Committee on National Defence, *Canadian Forces in Afghanistan*, First report, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, June 2007.
21. Senate, *Debates*, 2nd Session, 39th Parliament, 16 October 2007, p. 1.
22. Government of Canada, *Government Response to the First Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence: Canadian Forces in Afghanistan*, 2nd Session, 39th Parliament, 17 October 2007.