



## Background Paper

# ***Canadian Policy Toward Afghanistan to 2011 and Beyond: Issues, Prospects, Options***

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**Canadian Policy Toward Afghanistan to  
2011 and Beyond: Issues, Prospects, Options  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The current Afghanistan conflict, already the longest war in Canadian and American history, remains far from resolution almost nine years after foreign military forces entered the country. This intervention, engaging an internationally sanctioned coalition in alliance with Afghan fighters, was able to quickly oust the Taliban regime that was providing sanctuary to the al Qaeda network held responsible for the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The framework for a post-Taliban Afghanistan was first articulated at a December 2001 conference in Bonn, Germany, and has subsequently been the subject of numerous multilateral meetings and agreements, the latest in Kabul in July 2010.

An overriding aim of the international intervention has been to ensure that Afghanistan does not pose a threat to international security. At the same time, achieving stability in Afghanistan requires much more than the application of military force, especially in an extremely poor country devastated by decades of war. The international community has therefore made a commitment to work toward a range of interconnected goals in regard to security sector reforms, reconstruction and development, good governance and institutional capacity, law, justice and human rights. Although some progress has been made after the expenditure of billions of dollars in aid, many objectives are far from being realized. Even as foreign troop levels have risen to about 150,000, the Taliban-led insurgency has expanded its reach and shows little sign of being willing to negotiate, despite overtures of peace by the Afghan government. Higher casualties are being recorded among both security forces and the civilian population.

Canada has been continuously engaged in the international effort in Afghanistan through military and non-military forms of assistance. Indeed, these contributions represent both Canada's largest combat role since the Korean war and largest-ever investment of aid resources in a developing country. By 2011 Canada will have provided nearly \$2 billion in cumulative civilian aid and much more in military support. There were few Canadian casualties in the first years of military deployment. That changed in 2006 and subsequent years after Canada's decision in 2005 to undertake a dangerous combat role in Kandahar province. This military mission, with an authorized strength of 2,830 Canadian Forces personnel, has been extended several times but is due to end in July 2011.

The last extension was approved in a House of Commons motion passed in March 2008, several months after the recommendations of a government-appointed panel, chaired by former deputy prime minister John Manley, on the future of Canada's role in Afghanistan. In addition to setting the 2011 timeline for the withdrawal of combat troops from Kandahar, the House motion established ambitious goals for Afghanistan's security, governance and development. The motion led to the creation of a special House committee on the Canadian mission and, in the interests of transparency and

accountability for results, required that the government present quarterly reports to Parliament. The first report, released in June 2008, set out six priorities for Canadian policy in Afghanistan.

Assessing progress on the various benchmarks associated with these priorities suggests a very mixed picture that must take into account an extremely complex, evolving situation on the ground. Certain 2011 targets have been achieved or appear to be achievable within that time frame. But many others will likely fall short, and a number of trend lines are worrying.

With respect to enabling Afghan security forces, which are to expand to 400,000 by 2013, Canada has been training and mentoring army and police units in Kandahar. Their capability level has increased but is still well below what is needed. Deficiencies especially afflict the police. In 2010 Canada sent additional trainers, but NATO believes that many more are required. The Afghan government's goal of taking full responsibility for its security by 2014 raises hard questions about costs and feasibility. There are also doubts about counter-insurgency strategy and operations, notably in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. A key component depends on the ability to bring better governance and development to areas cleared of insurgents. That has been slow to materialize, and many Afghans do not see their security as improving.

In regard to law and order, justice, and human rights, most analyses still see a culture of impunity prevailing in Afghanistan. Perpetrators of serious war crimes continue in positions of power. Corruption is present in this as in many other areas. Afghans lack access to a proper justice system. Action plans agreed to by the Afghan government need to be renewed and updated. A particular concern is sustaining progress on women's rights.

The Canadian government's quarterly reports show significant advances in some areas of reconstruction and the delivery of basic public services such as education, health and water supply, as well as in economic development, literacy training and other areas. That said, Afghanistan is still near the bottom of the United Nations' human development indicators. The country's institutional structure is highly centralized and patronage-based. A pattern of heavy dependence on external aid, consultants and contractors contrasts with insufficient indigenous Afghan capacity. Moreover, donors have largely bypassed the Afghan government's budget process. The 2010 Kabul conference set an agreed target that, within two years, 50% of aid flows will be channelled through the budget and 80% will be aligned with Afghan national priorities. This is contingent, however, on reforms to improve financial accountability and public administration, and to curb corruption.

Given the large numbers of vulnerable people in Afghanistan, humanitarian assistance, including food aid, continues to be essential and is supported by Canadian contributions. There is concern about expanded zones of conflict and military operations restricting access to people in need. As well, a more difficult security environment raises the risks of attacks by armed opposition groups on NGO (non-governmental organization) workers and international agencies, including the United Nations.

Canada has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen border security, promote development in border regions, and foster cross-border dialogue – in particular with Pakistan, whose cooperation is essential to stemming the flow of insurgents. The effectiveness of Pakistan's counter-insurgency actions remains in doubt, however, and its long-running dispute with Afghanistan over the international border is unresolved.

One of Afghanistan's biggest challenges is to move toward democratic governance. Canada has contributed to electoral processes since 2004. The holding of presidential, parliamentary and provincial council elections in 2004–2005 was an important achievement. Nonetheless, the political system suffers from a number of flaws, and there was a critical failure to build capacity before the 2009 elections, which were marred by widespread fraud. Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's president since 2001, received a renewed mandate in November 2009 under dubious circumstances. He has also been seen as trying to weaken checks on his executive powers. And although numerous anti-corruption measures have been announced, the pervasiveness of corrupt practices, compounded by the influence of the illegal narcotics trade, adds to the government's credibility and legitimacy problems. Over and above the need to satisfy concerns about fairness in the September 2010 parliamentary elections, the Afghan government's ability to fulfill its commitments to long-term reforms will be a crucial test.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of all lies in the final Canadian priority of supporting Afghan-led efforts toward political reconciliation and a viable peace process. The hope is that some elements of the Taliban and other insurgent groups can be persuaded to renounce violence, cut ties to al Qaeda, and accept constitutional, human rights and rule of law principles. International support has been forthcoming for a peace and reintegration fund. The Karzai government held a large "peace *jirga*" (traditional Afghan assembly or council) in June 2010. But there is also considerable skepticism about its overtures to armed groups that have been guilty of war crimes and gross human rights abuses. Particular concerns, including those voiced by Canada, have been raised over the rights of women and non-Pashtun ethnic minorities. Many argue that any negotiations must be subject to parliamentary and public oversight and consent, and to scrutiny by Afghan human rights bodies and Afghanistan's international partners.

Canada is part of a much larger international endeavour in Afghanistan. Canadian decision-makers also face a daunting policy environment in which many factors are outside Canada's control. At the same time, opinion surveys indicate a decline in public support for the current military mission and decreasing confidence in the outcome of the war, notwithstanding the large increases in U.S. troop deployments. According to one poll, a majority of Canadians foresee a Taliban role in a future Afghan government.

The results of the 2010 counter-insurgency campaign in Kandahar will be a crucial measure of progress toward achieving 2011 security objectives. As more U.S. troops have arrived, the Canadian Forces' area of responsibility has been significantly

reduced. Government policy calls for the transition to a completely civilian mission by the end of 2011.

Although no political party supports the extension of a combat role, the Liberal party has proposed continuing some Kabul-based training of Afghan security forces. A June 2010 Senate committee report recommended that training and mentoring of Afghan forces “must continue beyond 2011.” The options up for debate range from a total withdrawal of Canadian soldiers to the retention of a significant if limited Canadian military presence of a nature and duration to be determined.

What seems clear is that the size, and accordingly the costs in lives and money, of the Canadian military mission will be greatly reduced after 2011, if not eliminated entirely. The major emphasis will be on reconstruction, human development, institutional capacity and governance objectives, all of which will continue to receive Canadian government support. Security arrangements, perhaps involving a combination of other international troops and private contractors, will still need to be considered. Also at issue will be the levels and focus of civilian assistance. Reporting in June 2010 on its first trip to Afghanistan, the House special committee concluded that “we need a fresh framework for the period beyond 2011.”

Although some Canadians feel that we have done our share in Afghanistan, others argue that the job is unfinished and that Canada should increase its contribution in key areas such as education, professional development of the public service, and support for democratic processes. There is also a case for vigorous diplomatic efforts to be continued if Canada wishes to retain a significant voice in discussions over Afghanistan’s future.

By the end of 2011, Afghanistan will have been a top Canadian foreign and defence policy priority for a decade. That engagement will undergo a major transition in 2011, but many questions, especially about next steps, remain open.

There was little parliamentary deliberation at the time of Canada’s controversial 2005 shift to a combat role in Kandahar. The first parliamentary report on the Afghanistan mission was not released until 2007. As the end of that military phase approaches, the present period to 2011 and beyond provides an opportunity for the kind of parliamentary and public involvement that the government-appointed Manley panel saw as having the best chance to produce sound, sustainable policy on Canada’s future role in Afghanistan.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Safety Office
CASC	Canada-Afghanistan Solidarity Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COIN	Counter-Insurgency Strategy
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DND	Department of National Defence
ECC	Electoral Complaints Commission (Afghanistan)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
IEC	Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KPRT	Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OMLT	Operational Mentor and Liaison Team
POMLT	Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team
RoCK	Representative of Canada in Kandahar
SIGAR	Office of the (U.S.) Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan



# CANADIAN POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN TO 2011 AND BEYOND: ISSUES, PROSPECTS, OPTIONS

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 will mark a decade since the 9/11 attacks on the United States by al Qaeda and the subsequent U.S.-led military coalition against the Taliban government of Afghanistan that had harboured the terrorist leadership responsible for those attacks. Following several United Nations Security Council resolutions and NATO's invocation of Article 5 on collective self-defence, Canada mounted Operation Apollo, which initially consisted mainly of Canadian Forces naval deployments, in support of the U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom. The toppling of the extreme Islamist regime occurred in a matter of weeks. By December 2001 an international conference held in Bonn, Germany, had set the parameters for a UN-mandated successor Afghan state. Canada was a participant in these transitional events and subsequently deployed a regular force of combat-ready land troops to the country in February 2002.<sup>1</sup> Since then, Canada has been among the principal countries making a range of contributions to Afghanistan. The country rapidly became and remains a dominant Canadian foreign and defence policy priority, as well as the largest recipient of Canadian development assistance.<sup>2</sup>

The intervening years have not, however, brought the hoped-for stability and peace to Afghanistan, which also remains one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries according to international indices.<sup>3</sup> The Taliban have re-emerged as a potent insurgent force in many parts of the country. At a strength approaching 150,000, foreign troops, mainly American, have risen to their highest post-invasion levels. The Afghan government is still heavily dependent on foreign assistance. President Hamid Karzai, in office since December 2001, was declared the winner of fraud-plagued national elections in 2009. In addition to questions of legitimacy, doubts have grown about his credibility and reliability as a partner for international efforts.

Current Canadian policy, following a March 2008 House of Commons motion, is that the existing combat mission in Kandahar province will end in July 2011 and that the redeployment of all Canadian Forces personnel will be completed by December 2011. Non-military contributions, of unspecified scale and scope, will continue. The Government's 3 March 2010 Speech from the Throne stated simply:

In Afghanistan, the Canadian Forces prepare for the end of the military mission in 2011 with the knowledge that – through great sacrifice and with great distinction – their efforts saved Kandahar province from falling back under Taliban control. After 2011, our effort in Afghanistan will focus on development and humanitarian aid.<sup>4</sup>

No official policy document has been released publicly elaborating Canada's future role. A key question is the specific nature of the Canadian resources and capabilities that should continue to be contributed to the international mission in Afghanistan.

Another concern is the ability of such undertakings to respond to changing circumstances, bearing in mind that international policy is always influenced by external events, contingencies and other variables. Notable among these will be the strength of the insurgency in 2011. According to most expert analyses, it will be years before Afghanistan can take charge of its own security needs. Regional factors, notably in Pakistan, will also come into play.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to address the evolving context affecting Canadian objectives in Afghanistan and to inform debate on Canada's future policy options regarding its post-2011 presence in Afghanistan. For example, even if the Canadian mission is reoriented to be of a purely civilian nature, security issues will still loom large in determining how to proceed.

This paper begins by briefly revisiting some antecedents to the current state of Canada's policy on Afghanistan. It then examines trends in the six areas of policy priority set out by the government in 2008. The subsequent section surveys factors that should be taken into account in assessments of the overall Canadian policy-making environment. Finally, possible roles for Canada's principal foreign policy instruments in the areas of peace and security, development and democracy assistance, and diplomacy are examined.

## 2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CANADA'S EVOLVING ROLE

Afghanistan is a complex, multi-ethnic, landlocked country that has been a civilizational crossroads for millennia. Although an object of invasions and geopolitical "great games" – notably between the British and Russian empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – it has retained a strong sense of independent national identity. Afghanistan has experienced brief periods of modernizing democratic reforms. Both its 1928 and 1964 constitutions also affirmed equality rights for women. Unfortunately, the country's politics have been highly unstable and marked by violent overthrow.

During the Cold War era, Afghanistan drew Western attention in the wake of several Communist coups and the large-scale Soviet invasion of December 1979. A great deal of support was provided, mainly by the United States, often covertly and funnelled through Pakistan to Islamic fighters, the *mujahideen*.<sup>6</sup> After the withdrawal in failure of Soviet troops a decade later, and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union itself, Western interest moved elsewhere. The devastating years of civil war among rival mujahideen factions, 1992–1996, were brought to a close only by the Pakistani-aided Taliban takeover of most of the country. Their extreme Islamist regime was recognized by only three countries<sup>7</sup> and occasionally provoked international condemnation. However, the chief concern of Western intelligence agencies was not Taliban atrocities but the haven afforded to Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network since 1996.<sup>8</sup>

Without al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on the U.S. homeland, it is very unlikely that Afghanistan would have attracted more than marginal interest in Canadian foreign and defence policy.<sup>9</sup> Although Canada took a limited military support role in the

ouster of the Taliban after their refusal to surrender bin Laden, Canada was fully supportive of the international coalition that was assembled and the United Nations Security Council resolutions mandating continued international intervention. Canada participated in the Bonn Conference of December 2001, where the first broad range of objectives were outlined for reconstituting a functioning Afghan government, establishing conditions of security, and providing for reconstruction and development.

When the Taliban fled, they left behind a collapsed state with virtually no capacity to deliver minimal services to the population and to reintegrate millions of refugees. The task was enormous. At this point, Canada had very little knowledge of the country or time to prepare. Canada faced a steep learning curve as it scaled up its contributions. Although these contributions have involved a growing civilian presence, the most visible component remains that of the Canadian Forces.

In February 2002, Canada deployed 850 troops to Kandahar for only six months, initially. A year later, Canada made a commitment to a new deployment of nearly 2,000 troops to Kabul for one year, beginning in summer 2003, thereby taking a lead role in the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), for which NATO assumed responsibility in August of that year. After that deployment period the number of Canadian Forces personnel dropped to 750. There were few Canadian casualties in these first three years.

A major shift occurred in 2005 as the ISAF expanded its operations outside Kabul, notably into the increasingly dangerous Pashtun-majority southern provinces. Notwithstanding presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004–2005, a Taliban-led insurgency re-emerged as a serious threat to security over large areas of the country. Canada announced in May 2005 that it would commit some 1,200 combat troops to the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. The first battle group arrived in August 2005, when Canada also took charge of the Kandahar provincial reconstruction team (KPRT).<sup>10</sup>

Why did Canada offer to undertake such a difficult combat mission? Although some Canadians had never supported sending Canadian troops to Afghanistan, there was no widespread opposition to the ISAF deployment in Kabul. It may be that, having not joined the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, and having spurned participation in the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence program, Canada was under some pressure to prove its military capability to the United States in an important conflict theatre that had NATO and UN backing. The 2005 decision seems to have been the result of political and military calculations at the highest level leading to what has been called the “unexpected war.”<sup>11</sup> It was not preceded by any parliamentary or public deliberation. Indeed, the first parliamentary report on Canada’s role in Afghanistan, issued by the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, was not released until February 2007, almost two years later.<sup>12</sup> (See Appendix A for the complete list of pertinent parliamentary reports, recommendations and government responses.)

The Canadian military mission, under the rubric Joint Task Force Afghanistan, has been extended several times (in 2006 and 2008), growing significantly to an established strength of 2,830 personnel. Although government spokespersons

warned in 2005 that Canadian casualties would increase as a result of counter-insurgency operations, Canadians did not seem prepared for the much higher numbers of fatalities recorded in 2006 and since. The deterioration of the security situation also raised doubts about the effectiveness of the mission, given its high costs in blood and treasure. News coverage, which had dwindled after 2002, sharply increased in 2006.

After 2001, Canada also quickly ramped up its development assistance to Afghanistan and its diplomatic assets. Formerly the recipient of a small amount of Canadian humanitarian assistance, by the end of the fiscal year ending 31 March 2002 Afghanistan was already the third-largest recipient of Canadian bilateral official development assistance (ODA). In 2002–2003, Afghanistan leapt ahead to become by far the largest recipient of net Canadian ODA (which includes disbursements through multilateral agencies and debt relief), at over \$122 million.<sup>13</sup>

Afghanistan has topped the list in every year since, receiving a high of \$345 million in 2007–2008. Beginning with the Tokyo pledging conference of 2002, and subsequently at the London conference of 2006 (where the five-year Afghanistan Compact was approved) and the June 2008 Paris conference, Canada has increased its commitment to a total of \$1.9 billion in aid over the period 2001–2011. In June 2008, the government also announced that over half of Canadian aid would be devoted to “Kandahar-focused programming.” Cumulative Canadian assistance to Afghanistan from 2001–2002 through 2008–2009 reached approximately \$1.375 billion. In February 2009, Afghanistan was named one of 20 “countries of focus” for bilateral CIDA programming, accounting for 18% of the Agency’s disbursements to those countries in that fiscal year. CIDA will have expended a total of about \$1.7 billion in Afghanistan by 31 March 2011.<sup>14</sup>

The amount of Canadian aid to Afghanistan for reconstruction, development and humanitarian relief can be seen as comparatively small in relation to the military costs of the Canadian mission. In an October 2008 report, the Parliamentary Budget Officer of the Library of Parliament projected that overall expenditures, predominantly military, could reach an estimated cumulative total of up to \$18.1 billion based on operations over 10 fiscal years from 2001–2002 through 2010–2011. However, according to the latest available government numbers, which exclude post-2011 disability and health care costs for veterans, the *incremental* cost to the Department of National Defence (DND) will total approximately \$9 billion over the same period.<sup>15</sup>

Canada re-established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan in January 2002 and opened an embassy in Kabul in September 2003, which has since grown to become one of Canada’s largest. Dr. Glyn Berry, a senior diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), was appointed the first political director of the KPRT in 2005. Tragically, he was killed by a roadside bomb in January 2006. After the January 2008 release of the report by the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan (Manley report), civilian capacity was again increased. A Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK) was named. In addition to departmental and agency task forces, responsibility for coordinating Canada’s

“whole-of-government” effort was moved to an Afghanistan Task Force within the Privy Council Office, supporting a new cabinet committee on Afghanistan.

Currently, about 120 civilian Canadian government officials are working in Afghanistan (up from only 20 in 2006), some 75 of these in Kandahar.<sup>16</sup> DFAIT’s expenditures in Afghanistan are projected to total approximately \$400 million through 2011.

Considerable debate has focused on whether Canada has devoted sufficient resources to development and diplomacy in Afghanistan relative to its military efforts. At the same time, Canada’s share of total ISAF forces, which reached almost 120,000 as of August 2010, has been declining.<sup>17</sup> U.S. troop levels have been sharply increasing, from about 32,000 when President Obama took office in January 2009, to a total of about 68,000 as a result of new commitments in the first months of his administration, to an expected near-tripling when a further 30,000 troops announced by the White House on 1 December 2009 are fully deployed in 2010. As of late May 2010, the Pentagon reported that there were 94,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, a force larger than the 92,000 U.S. troops then remaining in Iraq.<sup>18</sup> By late August the latter number had dropped below 50,000.

U.S. policy on Afghanistan has been explicitly linked with its policy toward Pakistan and has focused on national and international security imperatives. Its “overarching goal” has been described as “to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.”<sup>19</sup>

### **3 KEY PARAMETERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MOTION OF MARCH 2008**

[T]he ultimate aim of Canadian policy is to leave Afghanistan to Afghans, in a country that is better governed, more peaceful and more secure and to create the necessary space and conditions to allow the Afghans themselves to achieve a political solution to the conflict ...

*Motion adopted by the House of Commons, 13 March 2008<sup>20</sup>*

Following the government’s generally positive response to the Manley report, which set out modest conditions for continuing Canada’s Kandahar military presence,<sup>21</sup> a lengthy motion adopted by majority vote in the House of Commons on 13 March 2008 set out a framework for the extension of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan until July 2011. As cited above, the preamble asserts an extremely ambitious goal for Canadian policy that is, by all accounts, a long way from being realized. That goal is said to depend on having “properly trained, equipped and paid members of the four pillars of [the Afghans’] security apparatus: the army, the police, the judicial system and the correctional system.”

The main goals for the military mission are given as training Afghan security forces to take “increasing responsibility” for Kandahar and country-wide security, providing security for development efforts in Kandahar, and continuing the KPRT. The mission

extension is made expressly conditional on “the redeployment of Canadian Forces troops out of Kandahar and their replacement by Afghan forces”; this is to “start as soon as possible, so that it will be completed by December 2011.” The motion is silent as to what might happen if Afghan forces are not ready to assume that responsibility. There is an implicit assumption that they will be. (Since Canada is not acting alone, any eventual scenarios will have to be dealt with by the overall NATO-led mission.)

The motion calls for Canada’s reconstruction and development assistance to be “revamped and increased” so as to “strike a better balance” with Canadian military efforts. It does not specify how security is to be provided for this expanded activity once Canada’s troops are withdrawn. Areas of aid focus are “sound judicial and correctional systems,” “strong political institutions,” addressing chronic fresh water shortages and addressing the “narco-economy” in ways that do not alienate the local population. Although there is no specific mention of education, health or anti-corruption efforts, these naturally follow under better governance and human development goals.

The motion includes a number of points regarding greater transparency and accountability to the public and to Parliament. It requires that the government table in Parliament quarterly progress reports on the mission, which it has done, although these may not be as detailed and frank as some parliamentarians and members of the public would wish.

The motion also instructs the House to strike a special committee on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan that will be authorized to travel to Afghanistan and the surrounding region and to make frequent recommendations to the government. The committee was created and has been reconstituted several times after prorogations. It has a sweeping mandate to examine any aspect of the mission. The committee has not as yet made many recommendations and first travelled to Afghanistan in late May–early June 2010.

The committee has not reviewed, as specified by the motion, “the laws and procedures governing the use of operational and national security exceptions for the withholding of information from Parliament, the Courts and the Canadian people.” However, the committee did become deeply enmeshed in controversy over the disclosure of uncensored documents pertaining to the transfer of detainees by the Canadian Forces to Afghan authorities in light of allegations of the widespread abuse and torture of Afghan prisoners by those authorities, notably the Afghan National Directorate of Security. The 2008 motion specifies that:

- such transfers should take place only under the highest standards for the protection of the rights of detainees and “in keeping with Canada’s international obligations”;
- a NATO-wide solution should be pursued; and
- “a policy of greater transparency” must be adhered to, “including a commitment to report on the results of reviews or inspections of Afghan prisoners undertaken by Canadian officials.”

The motion, elements of which remain to be implemented, leaves open some policy options post-2011. Furthermore, the long-term context for progress depends on factors, many of which are outside Canada's control, that require an ongoing process of assessment and adjustment.

#### **4 TREND LINES AFFECTING CANADA'S SIX PRIORITIES**

As Afghanistan moves into 2010, Canada's mission remains, first and foremost, to help Afghans rebuild their country as a stable, secure, democratic and self-sufficient society.

*Government of Canada, seventh quarterly report to  
Parliament on Afghanistan<sup>22</sup>*

The first quarterly report to Parliament required by the House of Commons motion of 13 March 2008 was released on 10 June 2008. It set out six priority objectives for Canadian policy through 2011.<sup>23</sup> Two are at a national level, to:

- build Afghan institutions and support democratic processes such as elections; and
- contribute to "Afghan-led political reconciliation efforts aimed at weakening the insurgency and fostering a sustainable peace."

Four focus on Kandahar province with the aim of helping the Afghan government to:

- maintain a more secure environment and establish law and order by building the capacity of the Afghan army and police and supporting complementary efforts in justice and corrections;
- provide jobs, education, and essential services;
- provide needed humanitarian assistance including to refugees; and
- enhance Afghanistan-Pakistan border management and security.

In addition, three "signature projects" were announced for Kandahar, to:

- rehabilitate the Dahla Dam and its irrigation and canal system;
- build, expand and repair 50 schools; and
- support polio immunization with a view to eradicating the disease by the end of 2009.

As the seventh quarterly report emphasizes, Canada's mission objectives are directly tied to "self-sufficient" Afghan capabilities in crucial security, governance and development areas. The following sections assess the situation in Afghanistan across the six identified dimensions of Canadian policy.

## 4.1 ENABLING AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES AND PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW

### 4.1.1 MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY

Canada's Joint Task Force Afghanistan comprises approximately 2,830 Canadian Forces personnel, including a battle group of about 1,000 soldiers whose role is to conduct counter-insurgency and related operations in Kandahar province. In addition to Joint Task Force headquarters, tactical air operations and various support units, other main elements are:

- the military component of the 330-person KPRT (one of 27 in Afghanistan), which supports, among other things, short- to long-term development projects, police training and local governance; and
- a 300-person Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) for the training of approximately 3,000 members of the Afghan National Army (ANA) grouped into five "kandaks" (battalion-sized units). The OMLT accompanies kandaks on joint operations with the Canadian battle group. Since 2007, Canada's OMLT has expanded to include a Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (POMLT), which works with the Afghan National Police (ANP). On 8 April 2010, Minister of Defence Peter MacKay committed up to 90 additional personnel for the training of Afghan security forces "until the end of Canada's mission in 2011."<sup>24</sup>

According to the March 2010 report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council, "The deterioration of Afghanistan's security situation has continued, with 2009 being the most volatile year since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, averaging 960 security incidents per month, as compared with 741 in 2008."<sup>25</sup> The report also stated that incidents in January 2010 were up 40% over January 2009, and that civilian casualties increased by 50% in December 2009 compared with December 2008: "Overall, the intensification of armed conflict in the south, and its expansion into areas previously considered stable, made 2009 the worst year for civilian fatalities since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. A total of 2,412 civilian deaths were recorded, representing a 14% increase over the previous year."<sup>26</sup> Of these deaths, 25% were attributed to "pro-Government forces," that number being a slight decline from 28% in 2008. However, controversial night raids accounted for more than half of the nearly 600 Afghan civilians killed by foreign troops in 2009.<sup>27</sup>

An updated June 2010 report by the Secretary-General, pursuant to the Security Council's extension of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to 23 March 2011, observed the continuing rise in security incidents, with sharp increases in those involving improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks.<sup>28</sup> Civilian deaths were reported to have reached 1,074 over the period January–June 2010, an increase from 2009.<sup>29</sup> June 2010, during which 1,200 security incidents were reported, was also the bloodiest month for fatalities suffered by foreign troops – over 100 – since military operations began in 2001. By mid-August 2010, the total number of foreign military personnel who had been killed exceeded 2,000; over 60% were U.S. soldiers.<sup>30</sup>

U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, who took command of ISAF in July 2009, made protection of the population a central element of counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy.



He was relieved of command by President Obama in June 2010 and replaced by General David Petraeus. Although no major changes were expected in this regard, General Petraeus has been considering making the rules of engagement with insurgents somewhat less restrictive; one consequence of this could be to increase civilian casualties.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, with troop levels and the scale of military operations increasing, access has decreased for non-military government and aid workers. Out of 364 districts, 30% were “largely inaccessible” to unarmed public officials in December 2009. “Direct attacks against the aid community have limited the accessibility of development programmes in 94 districts considered very high risk and 81 districts assessed as high risk.”<sup>32</sup>

The targeted strength of Afghan security forces is set to increase substantially from current levels of about 104,300 for the ANA and 96,800 for the ANP to 134,000 and 109,000 respectively by October 2010 and, as approved by the London conference on Afghanistan of 28 January 2010, to 171,600 and 134,000 respectively by October 2011.<sup>33</sup> The financial costs are largely borne by international donors, being far beyond the fiscal capacity of the Afghan state. U.S. commanders have called for boosting overall Afghan force strength to 400,000 by October 2013 (240,000 for the ANA, 160,000 for the ANP).<sup>34</sup>

If and when the country’s security forces climb toward such totals, this will raise a major question about the long-term financial sustainability of maintaining such a large force. International resources will be required for as long as Afghanistan is unable to afford to provide for its own security. According to new ISAF commander U.S. General David Petraeus, “It is going to be a number of years before Afghan forces can truly handle the security tasks in Afghanistan on their own.”<sup>35</sup>

There is nonetheless a clear desire on the part of Afghanistan’s government and the international community to proceed with the transfer of responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The Kabul conference of 20 July 2010 gave explicit support to Karzai’s objective that the ANSF “should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014.”<sup>36</sup> According to an article in *The Economist*, U.S. General William Caldwell, who is responsible for training activities that will cost US\$11 billion in 2010, has criticized a past focus on quantity rather than quality in training efforts. The article included an estimate that it will cost US\$6 billion annually to run the ANSF at full strength and concluded bluntly: “Afghanistan cannot afford that, so outsiders will need to cough up. That would still be cheaper than paying for foreign troops: each American soldier costs \$1 [million] a year to sustain in Afghanistan.”<sup>37</sup>

In terms of quality and effectiveness, although the ANA still suffers from numerous deficiencies<sup>38</sup> it is generally considered to have made more progress than the ANP, of whom only an estimated 50% of members have received basic training according to the Secretary-General’s March 2010 report. Illiteracy and drug use are major problems for the security forces.<sup>39</sup> Complaints continue to be received about police involvement in corruption, smuggling, kidnapping and extortion. Canada’s quarterly reports on its Afghan mission acknowledge the ongoing challenges of recruitment, retention and attrition for the ANA, ANP and corrections officers.

The number of ANA kandaks that are “fully capable of planning, executing and sustaining near-autonomous operations” were stated in the seventh report (for the period ending 31 December 2009) to have increased from one to two, and in the eighth report (for the period ending 31 March 2010) to have increased from two to three. At the same time, a report released at the end of June 2010 by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction suggests that NATO commanders have tended to overestimate the actual capabilities of Afghan forces.<sup>40</sup>

The Canadian Forces area of responsibility has been reduced with the arrival of U.S. troops, including the transfer of Kandahar City to U.S. command in July 2010. Within that area, the eighth report found that 47% of total security operations were Afghan-led, below the 2011 target of 65%. As well, of six key districts, an Afghan approval rating of 85% or higher for the ANA was achieved in two, whereas the 2008 baseline was four. More police were trained, and a “Kandahar Model Police Project” was agreed to with the Afghan government. As yet, only 20% of police units have been assessed as having attained a capability level (“Capability Milestone 2”) that would enable them to “conduct basic law and order operations, management or leadership (appropriate to local circumstances) with occasional assistance from an international advisor or police mentor team.” The 2011 target is 80%.<sup>41</sup>

Under the expanded umbrella of the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan, 64 OMLTs and 19 POMLTs were in the field as of May 2010. However, NATO still foresaw a substantial shortfall in the number of trainers needed.<sup>42</sup> In early 2010, it had called for an additional 100 teams to support the October 2010 ANP force level targets. At the same time, some analysts worry that the pressure to put more ANSF “boots on the ground” gives inadequate “consideration to the trade-offs in quality that accompany the rush to meet force goals. Although many high-level military officers in the field understand the importance of training in community engagement for the ANA and civilian policing for the ANP, the intense pressure to build forces quickly demands that training in these less tangible skills be sacrificed in favour of training to survive ‘first contact’ with insurgents.”<sup>43</sup> Additional concerns have also been raised by incidents of Afghan soldiers firing on their trainers.

In the largest such offensive of the war to that point, in February 2010 Canadian and Afghan forces participated in a major counter-insurgency operation (“Moshtarak”), which involved about 15,000 troops targeting the Marja district in Helmand province adjacent to Kandahar. At the same time, noted U.S. analyst Anthony Cordesman cautioned that any military gains “will be wasted if the Afghan government cannot deliver far better governance and economic progress both inside and outside the Helmand area.” He added: “No one has ever really won a war until they have won a lasting peace. ... Unless the Taliban collapses from within, it is unlikely that Afghan forces will be fully ready to take over the security mission until well after 2015.”<sup>44</sup> By May 2010, there were reports of some Taliban infiltration back into the Marja area, an indication of just how arduous the multi-level counter-insurgency process will be. Former ISAF commander General McChrystal even referred to the situation as a “bleeding ulcer.”<sup>45</sup>

There is consensus that non-military as well as military elements are essential to achieving sustainable progress. Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie, former Canadian Chief of the Land Staff, stated in 2009 after the release of DND's *Counter-Insurgency Operations Manual*: "There's never been a case of a counter-insurgency being successfully resolved by the application of military force alone. Ever."<sup>46</sup> The idea is to clear and hold territory so as to enable the building of better civilian governance capacity and the eventual transfer of full responsibilities to Afghans.

The outcome of a larger, longer-term ISAF civil-military operation (code-named "Hamkari") planned for Kandahar will likely be critical to the achievement of 2011 security objectives for the province. A senior U.S. military official had even referred to the coming offensive as "our D-Day," with Canada taking a crucial role.<sup>47</sup> However, the start of operations was delayed until September 2010, and expectations have had to be lowered. An indication of the difficulties facing Canadian troops is the reported Taliban strength in areas of continued Canadian responsibility, notably the Panjwaii district.<sup>48</sup> During 2010 the Taliban's country-wide intensification of attacks has included brazen assaults on the two largest international military bases in Bagram and Kandahar, and a mid-July assault on the Kandahar City headquarters of the Afghan Civil Order Police. These events, combined with the Taliban's campaign of targeted assassinations, have caused many Afghans to be apprehensive about such COIN campaigns.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps the most sobering finding of the seventh Canadian quarterly report was that "Kandaharis did not see security as improving in any of the key districts."<sup>50</sup> The eighth report observed slight progress although there was no district in which a majority of Kandaharis saw improved security. More generally, although the Taliban-led insurgency has come under "unprecedented pressure," according to a Pentagon report to Congress covering the six-month period ending 31 March 2010, its "operational capabilities and operational reach are qualitatively and geographically expanding." In addition, the "strength and ability of [insurgent-run] shadow governance to discredit the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan government is increasing."<sup>51</sup> As well, other metrics show that Afghan perceptions of ISAF forces dropped in March 2010. Although 34% of Afghans surveyed were "neutral," only 29% had a "very good or good opinion" of foreign troops.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4.1.2 LAW AND ORDER, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Addressing matters concerning the rule of law, justice and correctional systems, and human rights, the Canadian quarterly reports point to training initiatives and infrastructure projects. Nonetheless, Afghans have many reasons to be skeptical. As a briefing by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) put it, these include "police who prey on citizens through arbitrary arrest, extortion, routine mistreatment and torture; corrupt judges and prosecutors in pay of racketeers; appointed officials who serve the interests of drug lords not the people. A culture of impunity ... thrives under these conditions, and represents a security risk as great as that posed by the Taliban."<sup>53</sup>

The Secretary-General's March 2010 report observed:

The fight against impunity was challenged with the publication of the law on public amnesty and national stability. The law was gazetted at the end of November 2008 but not publicized until recently. It grants amnesty to perpetrators of past serious crimes, including grave human rights abuses, in violation of the obligations of Afghanistan under its Constitution and international law.<sup>54</sup>

Concerns are also expressed about a restrictive media law, entered into force in July 2009, that could leave scope for violations of freedom of expression. "Similar wording in the previous media law often resulted in the arrest and intimidation of journalists who had criticized the Government or exposed corruption."

With respect to women's rights, the most controversial development in 2009 was the "Shia Personal Status Law" approved by President Karzai after its passage by the Afghan parliament.<sup>55</sup> This measure, which violates international conventions binding on Afghanistan, drew widespread condemnation. Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated: "For a new law in 2009 to target women in this way is extraordinary, reprehensible and reminiscent of the decrees made by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the 1990s."<sup>56</sup> A female Afghan parliamentarian even described it as "worse than the Taliban," since it was passed by a duly elected legislature (in which 89 of 351 members are women).<sup>57</sup> President Karzai claimed to have no problem with the law but, bowing to international pressure, submitted it to review by the justice ministry and also the conservative ulema (council of Islamic clerics and religious scholars). This episode had a significantly negative impact on Western public opinion. Yet the law was in fact promulgated by President Karzai in July 2009.

The ICTJ briefing argued that the Action Plan for Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice, which was developed by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, approved by an international conference in the Hague in June 2005, and adopted by the Afghan government in December 2005, remains valid but unrealized:

[T]he core of the Action Plan focused on promoting justice for past human rights violations and war crimes and ensuring that Afghan institutions are transparent and strong enough to resist corruption and further violations against the Afghan people remains unimplemented. Recommendations for senior appointments go unheeded, and many current militia leaders who have not disarmed including those against whom there is evidence of war crimes, continue to hold high positions.<sup>58</sup>

Laws that provide for candidates for elected office to be vetted for links to illegal armed groups have not been effectively enforced. The ICTJ also called for a redoubling of "efforts to carry out comprehensive disarmament, including the vital demobilization of illegal militias and incorporation of any newly recruited armed groups (tribal militias) into the regular Afghan armed forces."<sup>59</sup>

The timelines set out by the Action Plan expired in March 2009 and have not been extended by President Karzai. The Plan's intent clearly conflicts with that of the

amnesty law. A thorough review of transitional justice issues in Afghanistan concluded the following:

[T]he government has failed to live up to its responsibilities, outlined in the Action Plan, to acknowledge the suffering of the Afghan people. ... [T]he failure to address the legacy of impunity in Afghanistan is contributing to ongoing insecurity. Transitional justice is not just about addressing past crimes, but about dealing with continuing impunity, which delegitimises and hinders governance and counterinsurgency efforts.<sup>60</sup>

At the Kabul conference of 20 July 2010, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon underlined the need for action on justice and human rights issues:

Addressing the legacy of past and present human rights abuses is a core element of building a relationship of trust between the Government of Afghanistan and its people. For that reason, Canada urges the Government of Afghanistan to update the 2006 Three Year Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice.

We have heard time and again from Afghans that limited access to justice and weak rule of law are some of the greatest challenges to their sense of security. We therefore, strongly encourage the Government of Afghanistan to commit to a review and re-vitalization of the National Justice Programme as well as the pursuit of the priorities identified in the Justice for All Programme.<sup>61</sup>

#### **4.2 STRENGTHENING AFGHAN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER CORE SERVICES**

As previously indicated, Canada has committed \$1.9 billion in development assistance to Afghanistan through 2011, disbursing several hundred million dollars annually, half of that to Kandahar province. Core or basic services are defined in government documents as the “dependable provision of education, health care, sanitation, road infrastructure and clean water for homes and farmland.” Specifically, according to the Canadian government’s seventh quarterly report, Canada’s objective is that “Kandahar’s provincial administration and core ministries of the Afghan government will be better able to provide basic services to key districts of Kandahar province.” However, the assessment is that the Afghan government “does not yet have the necessary capacity to deliver these services, and the situation is further hampered at the provincial and district levels.”<sup>62</sup> There was no indication of how long it will take to achieve that capacity, but the sense is that long-term assistance will be required.

Varying degrees of progress have been reported on specific projects and sectors. The high-profile Dahla Dam rehabilitation “signature” project – involving a Canadian investment of \$50 million over three years – reported that work was proceeding on the irrigation system, albeit “in a highly insecure environment.” According to the eighth quarterly report, released in June 2010, the number of seasonal jobs created for Afghans increased to a cumulative total of 1,211; the 2011 target is 10,000.<sup>63</sup> The senior civilian official in Kandahar, Ben Rowswell, has estimated that the project is about 25% complete.<sup>64</sup> However, a press investigation reported serious conflicts over security arrangements that could threaten progress.<sup>65</sup>

Agricultural assistance was provided to almost 8,000 Kandahari farmers to encourage a shift from opium poppy cultivation to other crops such as wheat.<sup>66</sup> The Secretary General's March 2010 report, using data from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime from 10 February 2010, predicted that the level of opium cultivation would be the same in 2010 as in the previous year. At the time of the report, although there had been a significant decline of 36% in the past two years owing to rising prices for licit crops, those had begun to fall, "raising the possibility that farmers may again turn to opium."<sup>67</sup> At the January 2010 London conference, Canada announced an additional contribution of \$25 million for counter-narcotics efforts. (The UN estimates that there are about one million drug addicts in Afghanistan.)

In education, the eighth quarterly report stated that two more schools were completed, for a total of 16, with another 27 under construction; the 2011 target is 50. Across Afghanistan, Canada has helped to establish 3,700 community-based schools and "accelerated learning centres" (more than 200 in Kandahar) for 100,000 students, the majority of whom are girls.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, CIDA acknowledged: "Social attitudes toward educating girls remain a concern. Families face persistent threats – even attacks – to deter the participation of girls in formal education."<sup>69</sup> This is a deeper problem than Taliban hostility. The number of teachers trained had reached 1,472 as of March 2010; the 2011 target is 3,000. Over 23,500 people have received literacy training, and the target to provide vocational training to 5,000 people has been achieved. However, the 56% of Kandaharis surveyed who were satisfied with the provision of education represent a drop from the February 2008 baseline of 64%.<sup>70</sup> More broadly, the 56% of Kandaharis who said they were satisfied with Afghan government efforts to improve "quality of life" in their communities was well below the 75% 2008 baseline satisfaction level.<sup>71</sup>

The eighth quarterly report referred to infrastructure projects being completed in 71% of communities in key districts in Kandahar; an expansion of new business enterprises to over 1,100; and over 1,100 clients for small loans, mostly to women, through the Microfinance Investment Support Facility, to which Canada is the top donor. As well, "Canada committed an additional \$6 million for the provision of financial or business advisory services through a new Rural Enterprise Development-Kandahar project."<sup>72</sup>

The seventh report noted that Canada has launched an "Afghanistan Challenge" fund for vocational training, microfinancing and scholarships for Afghan women, matching donations from Canadians (\$280,000 to the end of 2009) dollar for dollar. Canada also supported a Kandahar trade fair for small- and medium-sized businesses. On a much larger scale, Canada has provided several hundred million dollars to the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, notably toward the National Solidarity Program, which supports village-level development projects. There is still a great need for economic development opportunities.

A number of the "end-2010" benchmarks in the 2006 Afghanistan Compact in support of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy may fall short of achievement. Thirteen related Afghan government ministries are being organized into four cross-cutting "clusters" – agriculture and rural development, human resource

development, infrastructure and economic development, and governance – each with a lead minister responsible for presenting plans to the 20 July 2010 Kabul conference.

The March 2010 Secretary General's report continued to express concern about the coordination and alignment of international donor aid with Afghan strategic priorities, noting that only 15 of 34 top donors provide complete data to the Afghan government, and that about 80% of aid during the first seven years of intervention bypassed the Afghan government, which would like to see 50% of total aid channelled through its budget over the next two years.<sup>73</sup> Of course, concerns about official corruption, discussed later in this report, will need to be addressed as part of aid reform.

As part of an overall "Kabul Process," the communiqué of the July 2010 Kabul conference set out principles of "effective partnership" between Afghanistan's government and international donors. There was agreement that 50% of aid should be channelled through Afghanistan's core budget within two years pursuant to "necessary reforms." Furthermore, international participants expressed "their readiness to align progressively their development and governance assistance behind the National Priority Programmes with the goal of achieving 80% alignment within the next two years. Implementation and costing for these programmes are to be brought forward by the Afghan Government by October 2010."<sup>74</sup>

The Secretary General's March 2010 report had noted some improvements with respect to revenue collection by the Afghan government, GDP growth, local procurement by international actors, and several other economic indicators. However, it observed that most development assistance is concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the country, while other areas remain "underserved." As well, "provincial development plans are not reflected in the central Government budget, and funds are not allocated to the provinces, owing to a lack of resources and the weakness of institutional delivery mechanisms."<sup>75</sup>

According to the Donor Financial Review released by Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance in March 2010, the country received US\$36 billion in total loans and grants during the period 2001–2009, out of \$62 billion pledged. Over half of this (\$19 billion) went to the security sector. Health received 6% of total funding; education and culture 9%; and agriculture and rural development 18%. Of these donor disbursements, \$29 billion were made with little or no input from the Afghan government.<sup>76</sup>

Afghanistan remains one of the world's most top-down as well as aid-dependent states, to the detriment of many aspects of good governance and public administration. A May 2010 U.S. report on Afghan state structures and development observed that, in addition to the problem of international donors circumventing the Afghan government, the Karzai government "operates on a highly centralized patronage model in which power and resources are channelled through Hamid Karzai's personal and political allies."<sup>77</sup> The system lacks the rules, checks and balances necessary for public accountability and invites corruption. The report further

questioned the degree of military involvement in aid delivery, arguing that “Afghan civilians with international civilian support should be driving state-building and development assistance.”<sup>78</sup>

### **4.3 PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

The eighth quarterly report of the Canadian government pointed to some achievements. In the signature project of polio eradication, 96% and 98% of targeted children were vaccinated during campaigns in February and March 2010 respectively. No new cases were reported in Kandahar in that quarter. The number of health care workers receiving training had increased to over 1,200, exceeding the 2011 target. Canada had allocated \$20 million to international civilian partners for humanitarian needs, including 22,300 tonnes of food through the World Food Programme. In demining activities, over 247,000 Kandaharis had received landmine-risk education training. The cumulative total of land cleared, released and made available had reached 426 square kilometres; the 2011 target is 500. Canada had also contributed \$2 million to the UN Mine Action Service in support of the Arghandab Irrigation Rehabilitation project.<sup>79</sup>

Some of the larger trends remain worrisome, however. Chief among them is lack of human security and of access to humanitarian assistance in conflict zones. In the words of Sheilagh Henry, head of field coordination at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): “If the increase in troop numbers means access to conflict areas diminishes further, that will exacerbate vulnerability.”<sup>80</sup> Counting all ISAF forces and those under separate U.S. command, the total of foreign troops was expected to rise from 126,000 to 150,000 by August 2010. Although some areas of Afghanistan are considerably safer than others, the potential for conflict is country-wide. The Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO) reported in January 2010 that what it calls “armed opposition groups” have a presence in 97% of the country.<sup>81</sup>

Fatalities among NGO workers dropped to 19 in 2009 from 31 in 2008. But this drop could not be attributed to foreign troop protection, and there was reason to anticipate increased risks in 2010. According to the ANSO report, “Neutrality and local acceptance, not the military and counter-insurgency, have become the dominant factors for security of NGOs in the vast areas of the country now dominated or controlled by the Taliban and other armed opposition groups.”<sup>82</sup> Moreover, observing “the deteriorating security environment,” the Secretary General’s March 2010 report observed: “In some areas, ongoing military operations have completely cut off access to populations.”

Large numbers of Afghans depend on humanitarian operations. Although the flow of returning refugees, 48,000 in 2009, was the lowest since 2002 (some 5 million have returned since 2001, and 2.5 million remain in neighbouring countries, mainly Pakistan), there are over 400,000 internally displaced persons. The World Food Programme fed some nine million vulnerable Afghans in 2009. In early 2010, it was forced to temporarily suspend operations in a north-western Afghan province after a



convoy of trucks was attacked. Any curtailment in the activities of UN relief agencies worsens the humanitarian situation.

Direct attacks have been made on UN personnel, most notoriously one in Kabul that killed five in October 2009. On 26 April 2010, after a fresh wave of insurgent violence in Kandahar City, the UN ordered its Afghan staff to stay home and relocated international staff to Kabul.<sup>83</sup>

#### **4.4 ENHANCING BORDER SECURITY AND FACILITATING AFGHAN-PAKISTANI DIALOGUE**

Afghanistan, which shares borders with the Central Asian republics, China, Iran and Pakistan, has been a major transit route for centuries. Border cooperation is essential to counter illegal movements of drugs and people. The most dangerous, disputed and porous borderland region is in the south and east, where Afghanistan adjoins Pakistan's turbulent north-west frontier provinces. Despite advances of the Pakistan army and U.S. drone attacks, this region is largely ungoverned by Islamabad and is a sanctuary of the Taliban leadership. It is from here, along the Pashtun portions of the disputed 2,639 kilometre Pakistan–Afghanistan border, that the flow of insurgents into and out of Afghanistan is the greatest.<sup>84</sup> As a result, it is generally agreed that Pakistan must be part of any effective counter-insurgency strategy for Afghanistan. Yet relations between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan have been fractious at best since 2001.

The eighth Canadian government quarterly report pointed to some forward movement on the implementation of a Canadian-supported Afghanistan–Pakistan “Dubai Process Action Plan,” formulated in March 2009 to cover counter-narcotics activities, law enforcement, movements of people, and customs. To that end, Canada has facilitated meetings of an Afghanistan–Pakistan Joint Working Group. Construction of a Joint District Coordination Centre in Spin Boldak was completed, and the centre was opened. The Canada Border Services Agency helped with the establishment and training curriculum of an Afghan National Customs Academy, which opened in Kabul in January 2010, and from which the first 48 recruits graduated on 15 March (150–200 are to be trained over 12 months). At the end of March 2010, Canada also announced a G8 “Afghanistan–Pakistan Border Region Prosperity Initiative” focused on infrastructure, trade and economic development.<sup>85</sup>

Canada's 2011 objective is for Afghan institutions to “exercise stronger capacity,” in cooperation with Pakistan, with regard to border management and economic development. That said, it leaves in abeyance any resolution of the basic bilateral border disagreement. A U.S. analyst contends:

With respect to the Afghan–Pakistan border, it is absolutely essential that the countries come to a final settlement concerning their border. The Durand Line, established by the British colonial administration, has never been fully accepted as the international border, particularly as Pashtun leaders see it as arbitrarily dividing the Pashtun people. Without a clear demarcation of the border and mutual recognition of its legitimacy, misunderstandings will inevitably arise about appropriate political jurisdictions, troop movements, governance, and so on. A treaty establishing Afghanistan's borders once and

for all, and with broad acceptance by various leaders and factions, is an essential undertaking that must be completed before foreign forces leave.<sup>86</sup>

#### **4.5 ADVANCING AFGHANISTAN'S CAPACITY FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

The ambitious aims of democratic state-building set out in the 2001 Bonn Agreement and reaffirmed in subsequent international conferences remain very far from realization. Rather than democratic consolidation, there is evidence of backsliding in the wake of the 2009 elections, which, marred by massive fraud, cast doubt on the integrity of the parliamentary elections postponed to 18 September 2010. The Secretary General's report of March 2010 stated that this delay "still does not allow sufficient time for fundamental reforms that could substantially address flaws in the electoral process."

The scope of such reforms was outlined in detail two weeks before the September vote in a report released by the Office of the (U.S.) Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). The report observed that Afghanistan's electoral system "suffered from long-term issues that will take years to address. Specific issues include improving voter registration by developing a reliable list of voters, vetting candidates to disqualify ineligible candidates, creating independent electoral organizations to provide transparency, considering changes to the single, non-transferable vote system to provide wider representation, and reducing the number of elections to lessen the financial burden."<sup>87</sup>

The Canadian government's seventh quarterly report offered continued support for "the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to reform and transform the institutions that are needed for credible, transparent and inclusive elections." The 25–26 June G8 Summit Declaration stated: "Clear steps by Afghanistan towards more credible, inclusive and transparent parliamentary elections in September will be an important step forward in the country's maturing democracy."<sup>88</sup> Yet it is not at all clear that adequate reforms are being put in place. Moreover, the Karzai government is clearly part of the problem – as is the UN itself, according to independent analyses. Some background is required to underline the seriousness of the situation.

##### **4.5.1 THE 2009 PRESIDENTIAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS**

Circumstances were far from optimal leading up to Afghanistan's second electoral cycle. The 2004 presidential and 2005 legislative elections, while reasonably successful, left many problems unaddressed. Indeed, in late 2008, Canadian Grant Kippen, who would become chair of Afghanistan's Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) in 2009, observed:

The optimism surrounding the initial elections appears to have been replaced by disappointment, skepticism and frustration among the Afghan population. The deteriorating security situation, rising ethnic tensions, and the increasing influence of local warlords and commanders now threaten to undermine the upcoming electoral process.<sup>89</sup>

Matters were not helped in February 2009 when President Karzai, whose term was to expire on 21 May, abruptly called for early April elections even though they would have been logistically and operationally impossible. Although in the end his appointed Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) confirmed the 20 August date, the Supreme Court ruling he should continue in office until then, the disputed tactics increased domestic and international suspicions of his motives. “[I]t is a very dangerous game that is being played here,” observed Grant Kippen about the confrontational manoeuvring for advantage over the date between the Karzai government and its political opposition in the Afghan parliament.<sup>90</sup>

Although these were the first Afghan-led elections, they were supported, according to SIGAR figures, by a total of almost US\$500 million in international funding, of which over half was provided by the United States and C\$35 million was contributed by Canada. Resources were managed mainly by the Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) mechanism of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A thorough pre-election review by the International Crisis Group (ICG) stated at the outset: “The expense of the current exercise is unsustainable and highlights the failure after the 2005 polls to build Afghan institutions and create a more realistic electoral framework.” It went on to identify a host of deficiencies, among which were a biased IEC, unreformed electoral and political party laws, poor security and inadequate UN preparations, and a much-abused voter registry update process.<sup>91</sup>

With respect to the voter registry, Kippen observed:

The major issues were multiple and under-age registrations. A lot of the men registered their “women” with no proof being offered or in many cases demanded by the VR [voter registration] officials. The overall registration number is probably inflated by at least one million people, and that doesn’t include the cards that are being printed up in Pakistan as we speak. You will probably see a lot of Pakistani Pashtuns crossing the border in the week or so before August 20, so that they are in-country and able to vote on election day.<sup>92</sup>

In addition, the provincial council elections, as remained the case for the 2010 parliamentary elections, were complicated by a dysfunctional and party-inhibiting single non-transferrable vote (SNTV) electoral system that in all likelihood is poorly understood by the average Afghan.<sup>93</sup> In the SNTV system, a rarely-used variant of proportional representation, voters select only one candidate within multi-member electoral districts. In a five-member constituency, the five candidates with the highest number of votes would be elected, and so on. This may seem simple but, as the SIGAR report explains, SNTV “can hamper the development of political parties and weaken the operation of elected bodies by resulting in a majority of votes being cast for candidates who are not elected. For example, if enough candidates compete for a position, someone can win with only a small number of votes, which could lead to vote rigging and election fraud. Ballots can also be unwieldy. For example, in Kabul, voters had a choice of 520 provincial council candidates printed on a 9-page ballot.”<sup>94</sup> (For the 18 September 2010 parliamentary vote, more than 650 candidates ran for the 33 seats allocated to Kabul province.)

Following a rushed vetting process by the ECC, 41 presidential and 3,178 provincial council candidates were qualified for the official campaign period, which began on 16 June 2009. Given the voting system, most of the latter ran as independents. In any event, these councils have very little power in comparison with the presidentially appointed provincial governors. The main focus of attention was the presidential race, in which only one candidate, former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah, emerged as a serious challenger to the incumbent Karzai. If the campaign was hardly fair, much worse was to come. Polling day itself, 20 August, was the country's most violent day of 2009 to that point, with 300 incidents reported and 31 people killed.

In a devastating analysis of the results, the ICG documented the staggering vote-rigging on Karzai's behalf abetted by the IEC.<sup>95</sup> Even using the preliminary, fraud-inflated vote tally that, released on 16 September 2009, showed Karzai the victor, turnout was dismal: only 38.7% of registered voters participated, far below the level of 75% recorded in 2004. The ECC was flooded with thousands of complaints. The ECC's final audit, published on 18 October, threw out fully 1.2 million of 5.2 million valid votes cast, giving Karzai 48.3% to Abdullah's 31.5% and thereby necessitating a run-off. Although the Karzai camp denied responsibility for fraud and alleged foreign interference in the ECC, the IEC conceded to a second round, to be held on 7 November. This round did not take place: Abdullah withdrew, citing the impossibility of a fair vote. Hence, on 2 November 2009, Karzai was declared "re-elected."

What is surprising is how muted Afghanistan's international partners were in their criticisms. In fact, a senior UN official, Deputy UN Envoy to Afghanistan Peter Galbraith, was fired for being too openly critical. (In an online debate held by *The Economist* magazine in May 2010, he maintained that the war in Afghanistan was no longer "winnable" in view of the lack of a credible Afghan partner and of any prospect that one would emerge.<sup>96</sup>) The ICG report cited above was almost as excoriating about the failings of the UN mission and UNDP ELECT as it was of the Afghan role in widespread fraud, going so far as to call for the resignation of then UN Special Representative Kai Eide. It stated bluntly: "The international community demonstrated a complete lack of resolve in pressing for a credible electoral process."<sup>97</sup> In this and subsequent reports, the ICG has concluded that nothing less than a fundamental reform of the Afghan political system is required.

Even before the electoral debacle, ECC Chair Grant Kippen, writing about "The Long Democratic Transition," put the situation bluntly:

If the international community is committed to the democratization process in Afghanistan, then it needs to not only recalibrate its expectations about how long this process will take but also take a hard look at the breadth and depth of the programmatic activities that are needed to inculcate a democratization process and culture among the diverse stakeholder communities in the country.<sup>98</sup>

Among Kippen's recommendations for moving forward in practice were: fewer guns (i.e., finally making progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of illegal or extra-legal armed groups); civic education (a big challenge, given an illiteracy rate of over 70%, and a neglected one since the 2004–2005 elections); professionalization and a cleaning up (starting with the worst corruption abuses) of

the civil service, executive, legislative branches and the courts, the security forces, public institutions and political parties. He argued compellingly for “a community-focused public-awareness campaign” and for serious international and Afghan coordination, with Afghans ultimately taking over responsibilities for their own democratic affairs.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4.5.2 2010 ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE SEPTEMBER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Increased presidential control is no way to achieve a more “Afghanized” democratic political process. As noted earlier, the Afghan state already suffers from excessive centralization. Although a sub-national governance policy was finally introduced in 2010, President Karzai continues to enjoy sweeping patronage powers at all levels of government. In contrast, some analysts argue that Afghanistan’s best chance of success lies in evolution toward a system of “decentralized democracy”.<sup>100</sup>

The trends have not been promising. In February 2010, President Karzai introduced amendments to the electoral law that would see the respected ECC fully subject to his power of appointment, with no international or independent commissioners.<sup>101</sup> Canada protested publicly; the United States gave the impression of tacit acceptance.<sup>102</sup> In late March, Afghanistan’s lower house, the Wolesi Jirga, which had earlier voted against many of the President’s cabinet choices,<sup>103</sup> rejected the amendments. Karzai intensified his attacks, now acknowledging that massive electoral fraud had occurred, but blaming it on foreigners – a bizarre accusation, given that they had accepted his victory notwithstanding the documented evidence that his supporters were mainly responsible.

The composition of the ECC became the subject of intense negotiation.<sup>104</sup> Finally, in May 2010, President Karzai confirmed the appointment of two international commissioners nominated by the new UN Special Representative Staffan de Mistura. The five-member ECC, reconstituted by presidential decree on 18 April, became operational as of their arrival on 20 May. On 29 May, President Karzai also approved the appointment of 113 members (of which 6 are women) to provincial electoral complaints commissions in all 34 provinces. The cost, to be picked up by international donors, was projected at US\$150 million, considerably less than half that of the 2009 presidential/provincial council elections.<sup>105</sup>

As of July 2010, there were over 2,500 confirmed candidates, including about 400 women candidates, for the Wolesi Jirga’s 249 seats. Yet, as *The Economist* observed, “fraud may be harder to detect as a result of a ludicrously crowded field ... which means relatively fewer votes will need to be stolen in each provincial battleground to affect outcomes.” Moreover, “[t]he electoral register is still hopelessly flawed, with an estimated 5 [million] of its 17 [million] voters thought to be fraudulently listed or duplicates.”<sup>106</sup> (This is out of a population that by some estimates is above 30 million.<sup>107</sup>) The campaign was marred by violence and intimidation. Indeed, the IEC decided against opening at least 938 polling stations (of 6,835 in total) in areas of the country, mostly in the south and east, considered too dangerous. More generally, poor security is a key factor restricting actual voter turnout,

which was only 53% nationally (significantly lower in Kabul and the Pashtun south) for the 2005 parliamentary elections.

Independent observers have also warned about the consequences of a weakened ECC in such a deeply flawed voting system. According to Candace Rondeaux of the International Crisis Group, “vetting processes designed to keep known criminals off the ballot have broken down under pressure from Afghan power brokers. ... [A]fter a prolonged game of political ping-pong between Afghanistan’s electoral bodies, only 31 candidates were excluded on the basis of their links to armed groups, leaving many warlords on the ballot.” Observing that “many Afghans have grown deeply sceptical of democratic processes,” she called for a postponement of elections until necessary reforms can be established rather than risk “delivering another easy win for Afghanistan’s insurgents.”<sup>108</sup> Other voices favouring postponement accepted, with major reservations, the reality of elections taking place. *The New York Times* warned in an editorial that “[w]hile the allies pressed the Karzai government on reforms, they seem curiously resigned to whatever may happen. ... But cynical and disenchanted Afghans need to see there is a way for their voices to count.”<sup>109</sup>

Beyond the doubts about the electoral process lies the larger question of the standing of the Karzai government as a credible and legitimate partner, both as viewed by Afghans and by donor-country publics. Interviewed after the 2009 elections, the U.S. commander of ISAF, General Stanley McChrystal, accepted that no counter-insurgency strategy could work if Afghans perceived their government as illegitimate: “[W]e are going to have to avoid looking like we are part of the illegitimacy. That is the key thing.”<sup>110</sup> The Pentagon report to Congress released on 28 April 2010 found that only 24% of Afghans surveyed in 121 districts “considered strategically important because of large populations, economic resources, commercial importance or key infrastructure ... sympathize with or support Karzai’s government.”<sup>111</sup>

The seventh Canadian government quarterly report referred to continued support for national projects aimed at civic education and improving women’s political participation. There was also mention of technical assistance to some important Afghan ministries and institutions. Some of this would be through the Canadian Governance Support Office, a civilian-led initiative that replaced the Canadian Forces Strategic Advisory Team Afghanistan in 2008. Canadian assistance has been provided at both the national and sub-national levels. The eighth quarterly report released in June 2010 noted Canada’s concerns over President Karzai’s manoeuvres with respect to the ECC.

Addressing the Kabul conference on 20 July 2010, foreign minister Lawrence Cannon stated:

We also urge the [Afghan] government to address the need for comprehensive electoral reform. Some steps have been taken to address the challenges of the 2009 election, but there is still much more work that needs to be undertaken to build an electoral system that is both sustainable and credible in the eyes of all Afghans.<sup>112</sup>

The conference communiqué included a pledge to “initiate within six months a strategy for long term electoral reform that addresses in particular the sustainability of the electoral process.”<sup>113</sup>

Will this commitment be honoured? Unfortunately, the September 18 elections appear to have repeated many of the mistakes of the August 2009 presidential poll. Although there was less election-day violence, numerous attacks did take place (305 insurgent actions, according to the Afghan Ministry of Defence), including one on a convoy in which Kandahar's Afghan-Canadian governor, Tooryalai Wesa, was travelling. No one was injured in that incident. However, across the country at least 30 Afghan deaths were reported along with many more injuries. An estimated 4.3 million votes were cast (as compared with 6.4 million in the 2005 legislative elections); this appears to be a record-low turnout, even before the ECC rules on the validity of the votes. As of late September, the ECC had received some 3,700 complaints. Preliminary election results are expected in October, with their final certification due by the end of that month, upon completion of the electoral bodies' work. Delays are possible. On September 26, the IEC reported that recounts had been ordered in parts of seven provinces, with that number set to increase when all results have been examined.

Although the quality of the elections can only be fully evaluated over time, the Kabul-based Free and Fair Election Foundation, a coalition of civil-society organizations that had nearly 7,000 election observers in the field, expressed "serious concerns" soon after the vote about mounting evidence of election-related problems and improprieties. At the same time, its preliminary report stated: "Against the backdrop of a violent campaign season, millions bravely voted anyway, demonstrating again that the people of Afghanistan are strongly committed to democracy. ... Protecting the integrity of the votes that were cast and bringing the electoral process to a just conclusion should now be the top priorities of all stakeholders."<sup>114</sup> The observer mission of the Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs put forward a dozen areas for crucial reforms in its preliminary statement, released on September 20.<sup>115</sup> There seems little doubt about the Afghan government's desire to have a more compliant lower house. That intention was signalled when, just prior to election day, Ahmad Wali Karzai, President Karzai's half-brother and the key power broker in the south, was quoted as saying: "We want to send a team to the Afghan parliament which will not be against the Afghan government."<sup>116</sup>

The relatively optimistic early official reaction of the international community can probably be attributed in part to lowered expectations.<sup>117</sup> Some expert opinion took a more skeptical view of signs of progress. Thomas Ruttig of the independent Afghanistan Analysts Network observed: "I think the institutions in Afghanistan are generally too weak and I don't see a step forward in democratization."<sup>118</sup>

Whether a measure of success can be realized from the election results remains at issue, pending longer-term political reforms. What is clear is that any weakening of Afghanistan's emerging legislative institutions would undermine their credibility and set back democratic governance goals.

#### 4.5.3 GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

Speaking for Canada at the July 2010 Kabul conference, Minister Cannon underlined that "[g]ood governance, in particular combating corruption, is central to all our objectives."<sup>119</sup> Undoubtedly, confidence in Afghan governance institutions has been

greatly undermined by persistent and pervasive corruption at all levels of the state. Indeed, the Secretary General's March 2010 report cited the finding of a January 2010 report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime that corruption ranks even higher than security among Afghans' concerns. Dexter Filkins, a long-time reporter on the region, observes that rationalizations about Afghans' supposed tolerance of corruption "have turned out terribly wrong. It now seems clear that public corruption is roundly despised by ordinary Afghans, and that may constitute the single largest factor driving them into the arms of the Taliban."<sup>120</sup> In addition, the prevalence of corrupt practices provides a funding source for the Taliban insurgency.<sup>121</sup>

International donors had expressed satisfaction that President Karzai pledged to take action against corruption in his 19 November 2009 inaugural address. Additional mechanisms were agreed to at the 2010 London and Kabul conferences. However, anti-corruption promises are nothing new. Various anti-corruption measures, strategies and benchmarks have been introduced in the past. The question remains one of political commitment to prosecute the worst abuses. The Secretary General's report, while noting the creation of anti-corruption units and tribunals, observes that "[t]he formal justice system remains beyond the reach of many Afghans."<sup>122</sup> Anthony Cordesman, although agreeing that "corruption is as much of an enemy as the Taliban," points out that "anti-corruption drives are largely a triumph of hope over experience in societies with a history of systematic corruption."<sup>123</sup> He also argues that donor nations, notably the United States, need to examine their own actions in order to achieve a realistic reduction in corruption.

An extensive survey of Afghans, the most fully national to date, released by Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) in July 2010, presented a very disturbing picture in which "rampant corruption" had become increasingly entrenched, resulting in the exclusion of citizens from public services, the creation of conflict, and the erosion of state legitimacy. The worst burden fell on the poorest people. Bribery was found to have doubled since 2007, to a total of nearly US\$1 billion. The IWA appealed to policy-makers to undertake new citizen-oriented accountability measures.<sup>124</sup>

The Canadian quarterly reports mention support for some anti-corruption efforts aimed at building institutional capacity to address this scourge – in the Attorney General's Office, the ministries of education and the interior, the Afghan National Police – as well as to put in place sound public financial management systems. Still, the Karzai government's willingness to clean house is doubtful. Dr. Ramazan Bashardost, who resigned from the government over this issue in 2004, and who ran third in the flawed presidential elections of 2009, has not had much success pushing for special prosecutors and courts to bring to justice corrupt officials and alleged war criminals who hold high positions in the Afghan government.<sup>125</sup>

Capital flight is also a major problem. The Afghan government's domestic revenue from all sources managed to exceed US\$1 billion only in fiscal year 2009–2010.<sup>126</sup> The vastly greater foreign inflows – not to mention the immense profits of the drug trade – are an ongoing source of temptation. There have been reports of Afghan Ministry of Finance estimates of US\$9 million a day leaving the country illegally. These and related allegations have sparked U.S. Congressional investigations.<sup>127</sup>



#### 4.6 FACILITATING AFGHAN-LED EFFORTS TOWARD POLITICAL RECONCILIATION

Perhaps no area of policy toward Afghanistan is as contested and vexed as that concerning the establishment of a viable peace process. It is widely conceded that the conflict can be resolved only through an eventual political solution. The majority of Afghans and the international community certainly do not want to see endless insurgency or, worse, a reversion to civil war. The Taliban, who were excluded from the terms of the Bonn agreement, are not a monolithic force and are for the most part locally based.<sup>128</sup> No negotiation may be possible with hard line elements affiliated to al Qaeda. As well, as Antonio Giustozzi points out, “The Taliban seem immovable with regard to at least a symbolic gesture toward a withdrawal of foreign troops as a precondition for the opening of any serious negotiations.”<sup>129</sup>

The hope is that some parts of the insurgency – which includes other armed groups such as the Pakistan-based Haqqani network and the Islamist Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Righteous), also operating in India and the disputed region of Kashmir – may be amenable to political overtures from the Afghan government. However, those that have already taken place for several years have been to little avail. Moreover, such overtures would have to be subject to firm preconditions: disarmament and a renunciation of violence, acceptance of the Afghan constitution, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. In other words, a tall order, even assuming the existence of significant incentives for some insurgents to lay down arms in favour of negotiations.

With the Afghan government itself accused of using warlord alliances, President Karzai’s overtures to Taliban commanders and notorious Islamist warlords such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hezb-e Islami have stirred up considerable controversy and opposition.<sup>130</sup> The Secretary General’s March 2010 report took note of the stated objectives of a program for peaceful dialogue leading to political reconciliation that were put forward by the president at the January 2010 London conference: “to encourage rank-and-file Taliban members and their mid-level commanders to put an end to violence and join an constructive process of reintegration ...; and to prepare the ground for a peace dialogue at the strategic level with the leadership of the Taliban-led insurgency.” The report immediately went on to add: “The success of any reconciliation process will depend on broad national support. Within Afghanistan, there is the concern that such a process could lead to an erosion of fundamental human rights that have been established in recent years.”<sup>131</sup>

The current Karzai initiative envisages a national peace council to oversee the reintegration of armed fighters, and a related peace and reintegration trust fund to provide employment opportunities and financial incentives to those who disarm and renounce violence. In London, donors pledged some US\$140 million toward such a fund, with total costs for a full reintegration program estimated at \$500 million. A proposed “Grand Peace Jirga” bringing together tribal and community leaders – including, in the Secretary General’s words, “those who have felt marginalised by the Bonn process” (possibly amenable Taliban sympathizers, though the Taliban itself vowed to disrupt the event<sup>132</sup>) – was postponed several times to 2–4 June 2010. The Afghan government invited support from other countries in the region and

approached Saudi Arabia about opening a channel of dialogue with the Taliban leadership.

The National Consultative Peace Jirga was held on the above dates with 1,600 participants, mainly government supporters. It was chaired by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former Afghan president during the mujahedeen civil war of the early 1990s. Although the proceedings were marred by a Taliban rocket attack, a resolution adopted on 4 June called for the creation of a “high Peace Council or Commission.”<sup>133</sup> The assembly included President Karzai’s warmest public overtures to Taliban fighters to date. It did not alter the deep skepticism of his many domestic and external critics. Haroun Mir, former director of the Afghanistan Center for Policy and Research, described the jirga as “more about Karzai’s personal political manoeuvrings than it is about peace.”<sup>134</sup> A wider observation was made by Steve Coll:

To have any hope of achieving their goals in the country, the United States and NATO will require – with as much of Karzai’s leadership as they can obtain – the largest possible anti-Taliban coalition, encompassing not only the presidential palace and its self-protecting networks, but also Karzai’s political opposition, the parliament, women’s groups and civil society, as well as military, tribal, religious and regional leaders. To date, coalition-building efforts of this character, such as the Kabul peace jirga staged in June, have been instrumental and controlled by the presidential palace; they have not been seen as credible by many important groups fearful of the Taliban.<sup>135</sup>

Canada has offered “timely support” for Afghan government communications, dialogue and reconciliation activities, amounting to up to \$14 million through 2011. The seventh quarterly report released in March 2010 referred specifically to “the Afghanistan Government Media and Information Centre in Kabul, which distributes information, links local communities with the national government and could enable a dialogue on reconciliation issues affecting all Afghan citizens.”<sup>136</sup>

The July 2010 Kabul conference provided endorsement in principle of the Afghan government’s peace and reintegration program, “which is open to all Afghan members of the armed opposition and their communities who renounce violence” and adhere to a number of conditions. Conference participants looked forward to “local Peace Jirga meetings that include men and women at district and provincial levels to discuss elements of an enduring peace.”<sup>137</sup> Expressing Canada’s position to the conference, Minister Cannon stated that:

Central to [a political way forward] is a reconciliation process that is inclusive of all Afghans, no matter their ethnicity, tribe or gender. Those who are reconciling must renounce violence, accept the Afghan constitution and cut all ties to terrorist groups such as al Qaeda. It is, of course, equally important that the reintegration efforts be consistent with the Afghan constitution and Afghanistan’s international legal obligations.<sup>138</sup>

Actual progress on reconciliation appears mostly aspirational, however, and the issue remains fraught with mistrust of the Karzai government’s intentions.<sup>139</sup> The Canada–Afghanistan Solidarity Committee (CASC), in a noteworthy advocacy report on future policy toward Afghanistan released in March 2010, expressed concern that

“President Karzai has used the phrase ‘peace at any cost’ to describe his new policy.” The prospect of a possible power-sharing accommodation with the Pashtun-based Taliban arouses suspicions of unacceptable concessions or compromises being offered that might bypass the Afghan parliament and undermine the place of Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara ethnic minorities. Although Afghans are undoubtedly weary of war, the perception of such a trend could be dangerous and destabilizing.<sup>140</sup>

In these circumstances, peace-building is a highly complex and delicate matter. The CASC report proposed that firm parameters be adhered to:

Any negotiations process that unfolds, no matter how unlikely, must be open and transparent, accountable to ISAF member states, inclusive of all Afghan national minorities, and subject to the full engagement and consent of the Afghan Parliament. The process must also be subject to the scrutiny of Afghanistan’s Independent Human Rights Commission, the participation of a cross section of civil society groups (particularly the women’s rights movement), the review of the Afghan Supreme Court, and existing commitments regarding transitional justice.<sup>141</sup>

A week before the July 2010 Kabul conference, Human Rights Watch released a report warning that:

Afghan women want an end to the conflict. But as the prospect of negotiations with the Taliban draws closer, many women fear that they may also pay a heavy price for peace. Reconciliation with the Taliban, a group synonymous with misogynous policies and the violent repression of women, raises serious concerns about the possible erosion of recently gained rights and freedoms.<sup>142</sup>

At the conference President Karzai raised some alarm when he stated: “I am telling you, dear brother Taliban, this is your country. Come and have a peaceful life in the country.” Yet, as of September, very little money had been expended under the reintegration program announced at the London conference. The peace council has been slow to be formed, and many doubt whether it can be effective. The initiative to reintegrate Taliban fighters is close to being moribund according to some reports.<sup>143</sup>

## **5 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CANADIAN POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENT**

The major factors influencing Canadian policy toward Afghanistan are domestic and external. In recent years there has been a sense that Canadian public opinion has become increasingly less committed to Afghanistan’s future. The election of Barack Obama to the U.S. presidency in November 2008 did not translate into increased support for the coalition war effort. Indeed, a 23 February 2009 survey in *Maclean’s* magazine found that, whereas Canadian respondents gave President Obama an 82% approval rating, only 20% answered “Yes” to the question: “Should Canada stay in Afghanistan if Obama asks?”<sup>144</sup> An Ekos poll released on 8 April 2010 found that just 36% of respondents supported “Canadian military participation in Afghanistan,” and only 28% supported “Canada extending its mission in Afghanistan.”<sup>145</sup>

Other surveys report similar findings, including a significant regional dimension, with support for the military operation highest in Atlantic Canada and Alberta and lowest in Quebec. An Angus Reid poll released on 21 April 2010 found 75% opposition in Quebec.<sup>146</sup> That survey also indicated growing overall skepticism about Canada's military intervention in Afghanistan. By 42% to 36%, more Canadians thought that it was a "mistake" to have sent soldiers, as opposed to a correct decision. Strikingly, 13% expected an ultimate Taliban victory, while only 8% believed that NATO and U.S. forces would clearly prevail. Given these perceptions, a majority of Canadians foresaw the Taliban having a role in a future Afghan government, whether through a negotiated settlement or by military means. Notwithstanding a tripling of U.S. forces since 2008, just 36% of Canadians expressed confidence that the Obama administration's approach would be successful.<sup>147</sup>

In light of the state of Canadian public opinion, it is hardly surprising that no federal political party favours extending the current military combat mission beyond 2011. There is also a sense that Canada has done its share, having paid a high price in blood and treasure, and that the Canadian Forces need a period of respite to recover from the punishing pace of operations in Kandahar. A significant number of Canadians would like to see the forces return to a larger role in "blue helmet" UN peace operations.

The external factors weighing on Canadian decision-making are more difficult to predict. A proximate one will be the relative success, or lack thereof, of the major 2010 counter-insurgency campaigns in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. The ISAF strategy behind these is to hold territory so that security, basic services and better governance can be delivered to the local population. Frank Harvey described this as "beginning with what [former ISAF commander] General McChrystal describes as 'government in a box,' essentially a government-in-waiting ready to set up when insurgents are cleared."<sup>148</sup> This means that the military phase of operations must immediately be followed by large-scale civilian operations. As Harvey put it:

[T]his piece of the puzzle will require a massive influx of Afghans committed to rebuilding governance structures and working with aid organizations to coordinate development projects. The goal here is to improve the quality of life for Afghans by providing them with a sense of responsibility for their own future. Efforts are being reinforced with what appears to be a stronger commitment to post-conflict governance and reconstruction. But these promises have been made before, and failures to accomplish these same goals in the past have produced a deeply-rooted cynicism among Afghans that will be very difficult to overcome, unless the successes are obvious.<sup>149</sup>

Other expert analysts have questioned the premises of this increasingly U.S.-led strategy, both in its own terms and in light of wider factors, in particular the problematic role of Pakistan.<sup>150</sup> Even Bruce Reidel, who chaired President Obama's first review of Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy in 2009 and remains a key non-government advisor, has strongly cautioned that: "We won't know whether the counterinsurgency strategy we've embarked upon is working until at least 2011. Be very skeptical of anyone who tells you it's working before then."<sup>151</sup>

In the face of rising levels of insurgent violence in Kandahar, many Kandaharis are said to oppose the ISAF offensive.<sup>152</sup> Between now and July 2011, a number of contingencies will need to be taken into account. Will Canadian objectives for the training of Afghan security forces be met? Could a worsening of security conditions complicate the scheduled withdrawal of Canadian troops? And what will happen if President Karzai makes good his intention, announced in mid-August 2010, to disband by the end of 2010 the operations of all private security contractors? These are used extensively by Canada and other ISAF member countries as well as by international organizations and NGOs working in Afghanistan.<sup>153</sup>

The questions continue. Will the regional situation become more, or less, stable? What will other NATO/ISAF partners do? For example, in February 2010 the Dutch government fell over the issue of maintaining its military presence in Afghanistan, with the result that almost 2,000 Dutch troops will leave Uruzgan province by the end of 2010. After the May 2010 UK elections, the new Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government announced that 8,000 of Britain’s 9,500 troops would soon come under U.S. command. Before visiting Kabul in late May, defence secretary Liam Fox also expressed a desire to speed up the process of transferring security responsibilities to the Afghans so that British forces can be pulled out as soon as possible.<sup>154</sup> In July 2010 a combat troop withdrawal timeline of 2014 was indicated, although a British training mission would remain beyond that.

The ability of the Karzai government to demonstrate progress on long-standing international objectives in areas of governance, delivery of services, rule of law and anti-corruption will be crucial to sustain public support for continued large inflows of non-military support. This should become more apparent after the September 2010 parliamentary elections and as the Afghanistan Compact’s deadlines for the end of 2010 are assessed.

Finally, Canada will likely face significant foreign policy pressures to maintain a substantial role in Afghanistan, notably from NATO and the U.S. administration. Canada has used its contributions to the international mission in Afghanistan to gain diplomatic credit with allies. Assuming the combat mission ends, Canada will not want to be seen as walking away from other engagements in Afghanistan, especially if Canada becomes a member of the UN Security Council in 2011. Good relations with the U.S. are a constant Canadian foreign policy priority. Given the increased importance of Afghanistan to the Obama administration, there may be aspects of security sector assistance and reform – e.g., training and mentoring activities – that the U.S. will encourage Canada to continue.

## **6 PROSPECTS AND OPTIONS FOR FUTURE CANADIAN POLICY**

The biggest worry for Afghans is that the international community will leave.

*Grant Kippen, former Chair of  
the Afghanistan Electoral Complaints Commission<sup>155</sup>*

Afghanistan will need substantial amounts of international assistance for a long time if it is to achieve even minimally the goals set out for it in the international agreements to which Canada is a party, i.e., to become a state that can provide for its

own security, to provide for the other basic needs of its population, and to adhere to fundamental rule of law, human rights and democratic norms. These goals are sometimes discussed in terms of generational investments. At the same time, there is no appetite within the international community for protracted military conflict. Although the United States has greatly increased troop levels, its strategy anticipates a gradual withdrawal beginning in summer 2011. The July 2010 Kabul conference set the end of 2014 as the target date for Afghanistan to take full charge of its own security, albeit with continued international support.

The UN Secretary-General's Report of March 2010 included an important observation about striking a balance between military and civilian efforts in ways that support the transition to an Afghanistan capable of shouldering its sovereign responsibilities:

While I have welcomed the additional international military forces, I must at the same time caution against a militarization of the overall effort in Afghanistan. As many civilian tasks as possible must be handed over to Afghan civilian institutions. The temptation to achieve short-term results from unsustainable projects aimed at meeting political deadlines in troop-contributing countries must be resisted. And the tendency to allocate the distribution of aid according to where donors' troops are most heavily focused – while understandable and, to a certain extent, justifiable – must begin to give way to a more coherent, nationally based assistance strategy that can provide the real economic growth needed to underpin a transition strategy.<sup>156</sup>

The costs of maintaining large numbers of foreign soldiers in Afghanistan becomes prohibitive in the long term, and arguably stokes the insurgency the more it appears as an occupation force. As well, dependence on large numbers of expensive foreign consultants, already a source of local resentment, is unsustainable if it fails to build Afghan civilian capacity.

For Canada, the termination of the high-profile military combat component of the mission could be an opportunity to refocus efforts on those elements of capacity-building for which Canadian experience and expertise best match Afghan need. A range of options remain open.

Before Parliament's summer recess of 2010, significant attention was focused on the future of Canada's role in Afghanistan after 2011. During a June 2010 trip to Afghanistan by the House Special Committee on Afghanistan, some members expressed support for the continuation of a military and police training role.<sup>157</sup> In a report presented to the House on 17 June, the committee suggested that, with the 2008 House motion as "background":

It is also clear that we need a fresh framework for the period beyond 2011. ... We therefore recommend that the Parliament and government of Canada enter into an intensive and constructive discussion as soon as possible about Canada's work in Afghanistan and the region for the post July 2011 period. In particular, the Committee recommends that the focus of this discussion should continue to be on how to strengthen the ability of the Afghan government to provide basic services to its people: security, rule of law, health, social services and education.<sup>158</sup>

In mid-June 2010, the Liberal Party released a foreign policy platform stating that “Canada should pursue a post-combat role, for a fixed period, based on training of police and military personnel in a staff college setting in Kabul, and civilian capacity-building in various areas of public administration vital to building stable, competent and transparent governance in Afghanistan.”<sup>159</sup> The proposed residual military role appears limited to training “inside the wire,” excluding “outside the wire” mentoring activities involving soldiers accompanying Afghan forces in field operations. The document added: “Any post-combat presence for Canada must also include a substantive role in the diplomatic process and any political talks on Afghanistan’s future. A Liberal government would appoint a Special Envoy to the peace process for the region.”<sup>160</sup>

In the context of a special study on the national security and defence policies of Canada, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence held a number of hearings commencing in spring 2010, concentrating on Afghanistan and NATO-related issues. In an interim report presented to the Senate on 22 June 2010, the committee recommended that “Canada’s important and highly-valued contribution to the development of the leadership, training and mentoring of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police must continue beyond 2011, and that Parliament should, at its earliest opportunity, give careful consideration to the question of the role of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan after 2011.”<sup>161</sup>

## **6.1 THE ROLE OF THE CANADIAN FORCES**

Although the House of Commons motion of March 2008 is not so restrictive, one option is to have no Canadian Forces personnel left in Afghanistan after 2011. This could be seen as in line with public opinion trends that show shrinking minority support for the Canadian military mission. At this point it also appears to be the government’s preferred option. Prime Minister Stephen Harper was quoted in early 2010 as saying that “we will not be undertaking any activities that require any kind of military presence, other than the odd security guard guarding the embassy.”<sup>162</sup> That assurance has been repeated.

During an April 2010 visit to Kabul, defence minister Peter Mackay announced that up to 90 additional military and civilian trainers would be sent to assist in the development of Afghan security forces. Although these would also be withdrawn in July 2011, the minister left a note of ambiguity when he stated: “There are other ways we will contribute. Training is obviously one of those options, and I suspect there will be further discussion about what the mission will look like post-2011.”<sup>163</sup>

The option that has been firmly ruled out is any extension of the existing combat mission in Kandahar. The argument will be over whether a very reduced and limited Canadian military presence should remain, and if so, what that should consist of. The training issue has already been raised. The Liberal party has explicitly called for a training element to be continued, based in Kabul. The Senate committee’s June 2010 report calls for a continued Canadian contribution to mentoring as well as training activities. In addition to Canadian forces personnel, it appears that the RCMP may continue to provide police mentors (the current authorized deployment for Afghanistan

is 50<sup>164</sup>) to assist the Afghan National Police. They will require security arrangements yet to be determined.

Even as planning proceeds for repatriating soldiers and equipment, important questions arise that bear on mission-related objectives. How will Canadian knowledge gained over nine years of operations be transferred? Should all Canadian Forces personnel be withdrawn from ISAF headquarters in Kabul and ISAF Regional Command Headquarters in Kandahar? What should happen to the military component of the Canadian-led provincial reconstruction team, KPRT, one of 27 throughout the country?

A minimalist option might be to leave just a few Canadian Forces personnel in advisory and planning capacities. In contrast, the Canada-Afghanistan Solidarity Committee has advocated a much more considerable presence covering the following three elements:

- Leadership and guidance to our NATO allies in Kandahar and other southern provinces; Accelerated training of the Afghan National Security Forces by building on the existing Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) model; Accelerated contributions to the national capacity of the Afghan police services, justice services and prisons; Enhance the “human terrain” capacity of Canada’s special forces, i.e. Joint Task Force – Two (JTF-2).
- Canada should also consult with ANSF and NATO allies on the potential for continued contributions from elements of Canada’s Air Wing, especially UAV [Unmanned Aerial Vehicles] reconnaissance and surveillance capability, and helicopter airlift services.
- Canada should maintain its leadership role with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, carrying on its polio eradication program and completing its Education and Dahla Dam signature projects. The PRT should explore the possibility of initiating further hydroelectric and irrigation projects in Kandahar province. The PRT should also assist in the development and expansion of Kandahar University, with an emphasis on women’s education and Canadian-Afghan academic partnerships, and should provide greater support for collaborative initiatives such as the Afghan-Canadian Community Centre in Kandahar City.<sup>165</sup>

None of these options is without controversy. All merit further parliamentary and public debate.

A related issue is the provision of security for ongoing Canadian civilian diplomatic, development and humanitarian assistance efforts.<sup>166</sup> Grant Kippen does not see this as necessarily requiring the presence of Canadian soldiers, pointing out that “most Canadians who are over there [in civilian roles] don’t fall under any Canadian military umbrella.”<sup>167</sup> The complex combination of military activities with governance and development objectives has nevertheless left its mark.<sup>168</sup> Some have argued that the blurring of the military and civilian missions as part of a “whole-of-government” approach has exposed NGO workers to greater risk by making it harder to maintain their independence in a conflict situation.

Canada, along with other donors, multilateral agencies and NGOs, already makes extensive use of private security contractors, of which there are an estimated 25,000 – and counting – in the country. Accountability and corruption concerns come with



that, including allegations that insurgents have been bribed to provide protection, which have led to U.S. Congressional investigations and reports.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, as noted earlier, President Karzai's August 2010 threat to close down private security operations by the end of this year has added an unwelcome complication for future security needs. Although no one wants to see an indefinite presence of foreign military forces, how best to provide the security essential to meeting development and governance goals remains in question.

## 6.2 THE ROLE OF CANADIAN DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

More than 80% of Canadian expenditures on the Afghan mission have gone toward military operations. In theory, therefore, resources will be freed up, and at least some of these could be put toward increased development and governance aid. Afghanistan is still one of the poorest countries in the world, so it would not be unreasonable for it to continue as one of CIDA's 20 countries of focus. (At the time of the July 2010 Kabul conference, the UK announced a 40% increase in its aid to Afghanistan.) At the same time, for some years Afghanistan has received far more Canadian aid than any other developing country. With the prospect of the aid budget being frozen in the next two fiscal years, there may be pressure to reduce the proportion going to Afghanistan.

In terms of quantity, the options are threefold: a decrease in aid amounts; a maintenance of aid efforts at roughly the same level as in 2010–2011; a scaling-up of aid efforts, including beyond Kandahar province. Especially if aid is kept at the same level or increased, there will be renewed questions about its demonstrable effectiveness and concentration in appropriate sectors.

The CASC, which has called for an ambitious Canadian program, makes the following argument:

If CIDA is to continue as Canada's lead agency for humanitarian aid and basic services in Afghanistan, the agency must come to terms with its own shortcomings in Afghanistan – its cumbersome bureaucracy and its lack of coherent, long-term direction. Also, CIDA should step up its efforts to raise Canadian awareness of its work in Afghanistan, and CIDA should be required to make a clearer accounting of its activities, expenditures, and achievements. Similarly, CIDA-funded NGOs should be required to place a higher priority on informing Canadians of the work they are undertaking in Afghanistan.<sup>170</sup>

Education and professional development have been suggested as areas for Canadian concentration. Grant Kippen argues that, mobilizing the Afghan diaspora in Canada and working with Afghans, more could be done through enhanced educational exchanges and partnership programs, public administration training and the like to impart skills and knowledge that will remain in the country.<sup>171</sup> The most specific non-government proposals that have been made in this regard are by the CASC, which recommended that:

Canada should proceed with an ambitious, closely-monitored, root-and-branch investment in Afghanistan's education ministry, with the objective of

universal access to primary school education, widely-accessible vocational, trades and business administration programs, and flourishing universities. [...] Canada should further enhance Afghanistan's intellectual, academic, trades and technical capacities by fostering partnerships between Canadian and Afghan universities and institutions, and by investing in scholarships, academic exchanges, civil-service exchanges, and a range of vocational and skills-transfer programs.<sup>172</sup>

A more controversial area that evokes considerable skepticism is that of democratic development. The debacle of the 2009 elections and the Karzai government's erratic, sometimes autocratic, moves since have eroded confidence in the Afghan political process. Moreover, Afghanistan is an "Islamic republic," and it is certainly true that democratization efforts must be sensitive to the socio-cultural sensitivities of the Afghan people if they are to be accepted.<sup>173</sup>

At the same time, Afghanistan has committed itself to certain basic human rights, rule of law and democratic principles. Many Afghans share democratic aspirations. However wanting the current government and state institutions, it can be argued that it would be a mistake for international partners not to hold firm in maintaining constitutional government while pushing for political and governance reforms, and providing support to indigenous pro-democratic Afghan initiatives. The alternative would be to retreat from democratic "nation-building" objectives to focus solely on reducing or at least containing the security threat. But even that entails a minimum of political stability, and it is not clear how stability could be achieved in the absence of any democratic legitimacy.

The CASC is the most overt in promoting democracy assistance as a central thrust of future Canadian policy:

Canada's new mission in Afghanistan should be country-wide, long-term and well-resourced, guided by a single, overriding policy: The entrenchment, growth and development of democratic culture in Afghanistan. (...) Canada should directly fund broad-based Afghan institutions with Afghan mandates to promote the study of democracy and the dissemination of democratic ideas, to advance national unity and the administration of justice, to elevate the legal and social status of women, and to restore Afghanistan's central place in the intellectual, cultural and economic life of Central Asia.<sup>174</sup>

Can the electoral process be salvaged in Afghanistan? In the short term, donors could insist on the independence of the Electoral Complaints Commission and closely monitor the results and aftermath of the September parliamentary elections. But this in itself will not be a sufficient response to the long-term need to build up Afghan capacity between elections. As indicated earlier, there was a missed opportunity to do so after the 2004–2005 electoral cycle. Reports by the respected International Crisis Group have identified a number of failings by the international community associated with the 2009 elections. It would be facile and wrong to simply blame Afghans or claim that they are not interested in democratic self-government. The question is how international actors could work with pro-democracy Afghans to bring about systemic political reforms.

Although highly critical of the Karzai government in many respects, the CASC argues that democratic institution-building, including elections-related support, is still possible, and that Canada has much to contribute:

Canada's role in assisting Afghanistan with its elections processes should be elevated to include an ambitious, long-term program of education and training aimed at all participants in the elections process – prospective candidates, their campaign teams, government officials at the national, provincial and district level, and all relevant Afghan National Security Forces components. Voter education should be dramatically enhanced. Canada should actively recruit among Canadians with experience in running and monitoring elections to train and mentor their Afghan counterparts.<sup>175</sup>

### **6.3 THE ROLE OF CANADIAN DIPLOMACY**

Canada has greatly increased its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan since the opening of its embassy in Kabul in 2003. The move of Canadian Forces to Kandahar in 2005–2006 was accompanied by the deployment of diplomatic staff, notably the political director of the Kandahar PRT – the first of whom, Glyn Berry, was tragically killed in January 2006 – and the creation of the post of Senior Civilian Coordinator, now called the Representative of Canada in Kandahar (RoCK). There are currently about 120 civilian officials working in Kabul and Kandahar, making this Canada's largest and most expensive foreign mission. The Afghanistan task forces in DFAIT, CIDA and the Privy Council Office number about 250 personnel, counting both Ottawa-based staff and those in the field.

Issues have arisen with respect to security, turnover and Afghan language skills. The current RoCK, Ben Rowswell, calls the ability of Canadian civilians to go “outside the wire” something that is “absolutely essential to mission success.”<sup>176</sup> Security arrangements once Canadians soldiers leave will be an important consideration. Although Canadian diplomats are learning how to operate in conflict zones, there are concerns that civilian deployments are subject to frequent turnover. William Crosbie is Canada's fifth ambassador to post-Taliban Afghanistan. Only a handful of Canadian civil servants working on and in Afghanistan have knowledge of Afghan languages. It has been argued that there should be more recruitment from among Canada's 48,000-strong Afghan diaspora.<sup>177</sup> If Canada is to maintain or increase its diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan, these areas will need to be addressed.

Canadian diplomatic initiatives are possible at several levels. Canada can continue to push for more international coordination of aid and reconstruction efforts. Canada can work with others to put pressure on the Afghan government to live up to its international commitments. This is particularly important in regard to issues of justice and human rights, electoral reform and anti-corruption.

Although most agree that the Afghanistan conflict cannot be resolved militarily, the matter of negotiations with militants remains extremely delicate. As explored earlier, Canada can offer support to political reconciliation and peace-building processes, with the proviso that these are tied to disarmament and the renunciation of violence, the acceptance of constitutional principles and international obligations, and that any

overtures to armed opposition groups be conducted in a fully transparent and democratically accountable manner.

Afghanistan's neighbours and regional powers, notably Pakistan and India, will have to be involved in constructive dialogue on regional security and development cooperation. Canada can use its diplomatic assets to encourage this.

Canada will still be a major donor to Afghanistan after its military engagement ends. However, it cannot assume that it will have a strong voice at the table. Vigorous diplomacy will be required if Canada is to continue to exert influence through bilateral and multilateral channels.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Afghanistan represents Canada's largest military commitment since the Korean war, at a cost of over 150 lives lost and the largest investment that Canada has ever made in a developing country. Apart from the Canada-U.S. relationship, during the past nine years no foreign policy priority has been more dominant than Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. Moreover, Canada's role in Afghanistan has become an increasingly significant issue in Canada-U.S. relations.

Within a year, Canada's Afghan mission will undergo a fundamental reorientation. Canada's combat role will cease. There may be an argument for a residual presence of Canadian Forces personnel in other roles. But the Canadian mission will become essentially a civilian one. Even if there is a scaling up of non-military assistance, Canada's expenditures on Afghanistan should fall dramatically.

Undoubtedly there is planning going on within the relevant government departments and agencies with respect to the transition from a military to a civilian mission and the nature of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan beyond 2011.<sup>178</sup> At the same time, Nipa Banerjee, Canada's head of aid in Afghanistan from 2003-2006, sees honest, transparent assessment of past failures, combined with public dialogue, as essential to the consideration of future options.<sup>179</sup>

As preparations have to be made that will affect the course of Canadian policy on Afghanistan, there has been limited public deliberation on future Canadian policy options. Although parliamentary committees in the House and the Senate have begun to turn their attention to these matters as indicated by reports released in June 2010, there is much ground still to be covered. Many questions remain open.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan that reported in January 2008 was critical of the paucity of political debate and public engagement that surrounded Canada's 2005 shift to a robust military mission in Kandahar province. It would be ironic if that were to be repeated in the lead-up to the ending of that mission. In the panel's words: "Fully informed public involvement has the best chance of producing well-founded, sustainable policy."<sup>180</sup> Let the discussion proceed.

**NOTES**

1. The force was sent to Kandahar for six months. In addition, it should be noted that a small number of Canadian special forces, involving covert commando operations under Joint Task Force-2 (JTF-2), had already entered Afghanistan in the last several months of 2001.
2. For a useful series of recent articles examining various dimensions of Canada's role in Afghanistan since 2001, see the special issue of the *American Review of Canadian Studies* on "Canada's Commitment to Afghanistan," co-edited by Kenneth Holland and Christopher Kirkey, Vol. 40, No. 2, June 2010.
3. Afghanistan ranks second to last – out of 182 countries, Niger being ranked last – on the human development index of the [2009 United Nations Human Development Reports](#), last among 135 countries on the human poverty index, and last among 155 countries on the gender-related development index. The country also ranks second last among 180 countries – only Somalia is worse – on [Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index](#).
4. Canada, Governor General, *A stronger Canada. A stronger economy. Now and for the future*, [Speech from the Throne](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3 March 2010.
5. A report released by the RAND Corporation on 21 June 2010 presented disturbing findings that parts of the Pakistani leadership continued to provide support to militant Islamist groups that posed a grave threat to the region, and that Afghanistan's most important neighbour had yet to develop an effective counter-insurgency strategy that protected the local population. See Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, [Counterinsurgency in Pakistan](#), RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA., 2010.
6. An excellent source about this period is Steve Coll's Pulitzer-prize winning *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and bin Laden, from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin Books, New York, 2005.
7. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
8. Although a number of sources address the geopolitics of Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion, much of the country's 20<sup>th</sup>-century history is little known. For useful background see Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, City Light Books, San Francisco, 2009; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2010; *Le Monde diplomatique*, [Manière de Voir—Imprenable Afghanistan: l'histoire, les acteurs, les enjeux](#), No. 110, April–May 2010.
9. On the impact of 9/11 on Canadian policy see Paul Chapin, "Into Afghanistan: The Transformation of Canada's International Security Policy," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, June 2010, pp. 189–199.
10. A useful analysis of the work of the KPRT is Kenneth Holland's "The Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team: The Arm of Development in Kandahar Province," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, June 2010, pp. 276–291.
11. See, notably, Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, Viking Canada, Toronto, 2007. For more recent analyses, see Christopher Kirkey and Nicholas Ostroy, "Why is Canada in Afghanistan? Explaining Canada's Military Commitment," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, June 2010, pp. 200–213; and, in the same issue, Kimberly Martin, "From Kabul to Kandahar: The Canadian Forces and Change," pp. 214–236.

12. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence report was entitled *Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission*. There have been subsequent reports by this committee and the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, as well as by the House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has issued one report with recommendations on Afghanistan policy, in July 2008. The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has not yet done so.
13. See the CIDA's yearly [Statistical Report on International Assistance](#).
14. Ibid., consecutive fiscal years since 2001–2002.
15. Government of Canada, "[Cost of the Afghanistan Mission 2001–2011](#)," Backgrounder, updated 9 July 2010. Incremental costs include only those additional to what the Department of National Defence would have spent had there been no mission.
16. See Matthew Fisher, "[Canadian civilians helping Afghans re-connect with government](#)," *The Gazette* [Montreal], 16 March 2010.
17. International Security Assistance Force, "[Key facts and figures](#)," 6 August 2010.
18. "More US Troops in Afghanistan than Iraq: Pentagon," *Agence France-Presse*, 24 May 2010.
19. The White House, [Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan](#), Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, D.C., 1 December 2009.
20. The full text of the motion can be found as [Appendix I](#) to the Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Canada in Afghanistan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, July 2008.
21. The panel, initiated by the Conservative government and chaired by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, was designed to appeal to support from within the ranks of the official opposition. For details of this and other recommendations, see [Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan](#), Ottawa, 20 January 2008, pp. 37–38.
22. Government of Canada, [Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan – Quarterly Report to Parliament for the Period of October 1 to December 31, 2009](#) [Seventh Report], 2009.
23. Government of Canada, [Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Setting a Course to 2011](#), June 2008. The government's latest report, [Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan – Quarterly Report to Parliament for the Period of April 1 to June 30, 2010](#) (its ninth report to Parliament), was released on 22 September, too late for details to be incorporated into this study. The report reaffirms commitments made in previous reports, and, although acknowledging "Afghanistan's increasingly volatile security situation," continues the pattern of focusing on incremental improvements under a series of "progress indicators" associated with the six priorities.
24. Department of National Defence, "[Government of Canada commits additional CF personnel to train Afghan National Security Forces](#)," News release, 8 April 2010.
25. UN Secretary General, [The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), Report of the Secretary-General to the UN Security Council, S/2010/127, New York, 10 March 2010, p. 7.
26. Ibid.
27. "Night raids on militants in Afghanistan: Thinking the worst," *The Economist*, 22 May 2010, pp. 45–46.

28. UN Secretary General, [The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security](#), Report of the Secretary-General, S/2010/318, 16 June 2010.
29. See "ARM Mid-Year Report: Civilian Casualties of Conflict January–June 2010," *Afghanistan Rights Monitor*, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 2010.
30. "Foreign troop deaths top 2,000 during nine-year Afghan war," *Reuters*, Kabul, 16 August 2010. Canadian military deaths to that point accounted for 7.6% of the total.
31. See Amitai Etzioni, "Unshackle the troops," *The National Post*, 3 August 2010. This opinion piece is one of nine on "the way forward in Afghanistan" reprinted from *The New Republic* in *The National Post*, 28 July–7 August 2010.
32. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), pp. 7, 18.
33. "[Communiqué: Afghan Leadership, Regional Cooperation, International Partnership](#)," Afghanistan: The London Conference [London Conference Communiqué], 28 January 2010.
34. Ewen MacAskill, "[Obama takes final gamble with Afghanistan troops surge](#)," *The Guardian*, 1 December 2009.
35. Cited in Matthew Fisher, "[The silent road home](#)," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 July 2010.
36. See Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, "[Communiqué](#)," 20 July 2010, point 18. The conference was co-chaired by the UN Secretary-General and included 68 high-level delegates representing countries and international organizations.
37. "Afghanistan's troubled national army: Fixing the unfixable," *The Economist*, 21 August 2010, pp. 32–33.
38. A detailed analysis of these, with recommendations for improvement, is contained in the International Crisis Group's [A Force in Fragments: Reconstituting the Afghan National Army](#), Asia Report No. 190, Kabul/Brussels, 12 May 2010.
39. A recent assessment by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly is that an estimated 75% of the ANP lack basic literacy skills and that up to 40% of ANP recruits fail drug tests. See Frank Cook, General Rapporteur, "[Partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces](#)," 047 DSC 10E, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Spring Session, 2010.
40. Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction [SIGAR], [Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments](#), 29 June 2010.
41. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), pp. 4–5 and 14–16, and Government of Canada, [Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan - Quarterly Report to Parliament for the Period of January 1 to March 31, 2010](#) [Eighth Report], pp. 4–5 and 13–15.
42. "[Hundreds more trainers in Afghanistan may be needed](#)," *The Gazette* [Montreal], 18 May 2010.
43. Centre for International Governance Innovation, "[Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan](#)," No. 3, 26 May 2010, p. 14.
44. Anthony H. Cordesman, [The Afghan Test Bed in 'Marja': Key Tests of Victory are Still Months and Years Away](#), Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 18 February 2010, pp. 7–8.
45. "After McChrystal: Barack Obama has sacked his commander. But the real worry is that the war is being lost," *The Economist*, 24 June 2010, p. 13; see also pp. 29–31.
46. Cited in Jeff Davis, "Into the Age of Counter-Insurgency," *Embassy*, 11 March, 2009, p. 3.

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49. Laura King, "'Why announce an offensive in advance?'" *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 May 2010.
50. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), p. 14.
51. Jonathan S. Landay, "[Pentagon issues downbeat assessment on Afghanistan](#)," *McClatchey Newspapers*, 28 April 2010. See U.S. Department of Defense, [Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces](#), Report to Congress, April 2010.
52. Anthony H. Cordesman, [Shaping the War in Afghanistan: The Situation in the Spring of 2010](#), Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., 29 April 2010, p. 42. See also Anthony H. Cordesman, "[Realism in Afghanistan: Rethinking an Uncertain Case for War](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., 16 June 2010, and subsequent analyses on the [CSIS website](#).
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57. Interview from Kabul, "As It Happens," *CBC Radio*, 2 April 2009.
58. ICTJ (January 2010), p. 2.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
60. Emily Winterbotham, [The State of Transitional Justice in Afghanistan: Actors, Approaches and Challenges](#), Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Discussion Paper, Kabul, April 2010, pp. 27, 31.
61. Government of Canada, "[Minister Cannon's Intervention at the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan on July 20 in Kabul](#)" [Minister Cannon's Intervention], 20 July 2010.
62. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), p. 5.
63. Government of Canada, [Eighth Report](#) (January–March 2010), p. 18.
64. Bill Graveland and Tara Brautigam, "Canada hopes signature Dahla Dam project anchors country's legacy in Afghanistan," *The Canadian Press*, 1 July 2010.
65. Mitch Potter, "[Security standoff stalls Canadian dam project in Kandahar](#)," *The Toronto Star*, 9 June 2010.
66. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), pp. 6 and 17.
67. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), pp. 10–11.
68. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), p. 6.



69. CIDA, "[Canada's International Assistance at Work: Development for Results 2009](#)," p. 19.
70. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), pp. 18–19.
71. Government of Canada, [Eighth Report](#) (January–March 2010), p. 19.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
73. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), pp. 5–6.
74. [Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan](#) (20 July 2010), point 8.
75. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), p. 6.
76. Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN], "[Afghanistan: Money well spent?](#)" Kabul, 22 March 2010.
77. Colin Cookman and Caroline Wadhams, [Governance in Afghanistan: Looking Ahead to What We Leave Behind](#), Center for American Progress, Washington D.C., May 2010, p. 2.
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81. IRIN, "[Afghanistan: Warning over heightened risk to NGO staff in 2010](#)," Kabul, 20 January 2010.
82. *Ibid.*
83. "Kandahar security situation worsens," *Ottawa Citizen*, 27 April 2010. According to the Secretary General's report of 16 June 2010 to the UN Security Council, the plan was to reduce the number of UNAMA staff in Afghanistan, relocating some support operations to Kuwait. The number of staff vacancies had dropped, but remained high at 39% for international staff and 30% for national (Afghan) staff as of 16 May.
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92. Grant Kippen, email to the author from Kabul, 25 March 2009.

93. For a detailed examination and analysis see Andrew Reynolds, "Electoral Systems Today: The Curious Case of Afghanistan," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2, April 2006, pp. 104–117. Although the non-transferable vote system is supposed to produce a form of proportional representation, as an indication of the perverse results in practice Reynolds observed that of the about 50% of eligible Afghans who voted in the 2005 parliamentary elections (turnout was below 35% in Kabul and below 30% in Kandahar province), fully 68% voted for candidates who lost.
94. SIGAR, [Lessons Learned in Preparing and Conducting Elections in Afghanistan](#), p. 9.
95. ICG, [Afghanistan: Elections and the Crisis of Governance](#), Asia Briefing No. 96, 25 November 2009.
96. See "[Afghanistan: This house believes that the war in Afghanistan is winnable](#)," *The Economist*, 17–22 May 2010. Readers were invited to vote. The final tally was 69% against the proposition that "the war in Afghanistan is winnable."
97. ICG (25 November 2009), p. 9.
98. Grant Kippen, "The Long Democratic Transition," in *The Future of Afghanistan*, ed. J. Alexander Thier, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 2009, p. 36.
99. Ibid.
100. Stephen Biddle, Christia Fotini, and J. Alexander Thier, "Defining Success in Afghanistan: What Can the United States Accept?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 4, July/August 2010, pp. 48–60.
101. The 2009 ECC members comprised three UN-appointed experts, one chosen by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and one by the country's Supreme Court.
102. Canadian foreign minister Lawrence Cannon issued a statement on 23 February that "[a] strong and independent ECC is vital for the future of a democratic Afghanistan, and any efforts to weaken this body are disturbing." In contrast, a U.S. State Department spokesperson stated on 24 February: "We are supportive of the Afghan government stepping up and assuming its responsibilities for its own [election] process."
103. As of the UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council of 16 June 2010, President Karzai had yet to submit to parliament names of candidates for 12 vacant cabinet positions, almost half of its normal full strength.
104. Grant Kippen warned, however, that "redrawing the election laws shouldn't be done behind closed doors" (interview with author, 19 April 2010). The Secretary-General's 10 March 2010 report concurred: "[I]t is important that decisions regarding the electoral process be made within the framework of the broadest possible consultations across the political spectrum, including with the opposition and civil society, in order to ensure the independence and credibility of the electoral process" (p. 3).
105. UN Secretary General (16 June 2010), pp. 3, 6–7.
106. "Parliamentary polls in Afghanistan: Bloody democracy," *The Economist*, 4 September 2010, p. 44.
107. No proper census has been completed. The last partial one was conducted in the 1970s.
108. Candace Rondeaux, "[Why Afghanistan's September elections ought to be postponed](#)," *The Washington Post*, 11 July 2010.
109. "Afghans Vote Again," *International Herald Tribune*, 7 September 2010, p. 6.

110. Dexter Filkins, "[Stanley McChrystal's Long War](#)," *The New York Times Magazine*, online edition, 14 October 2009, p. 47.
111. [Landay](#) (28 April 2010).
112. [Minister Cannon's Intervention](#) (20 July 2010).
113. [Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan](#) (20 July 2010), point 9.
114. See Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan, "[Election Day 2010: First Preliminary Observation Report September 20, 2010](#)," Kabul, updated and posted online 21 September 2010, p. 1.
115. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, "[Preliminary Statement of the National Democratic Institute Election Observation Mission to Afghanistan's 2010 Legislative \(Wolesi Jirga\) Elections](#)," Kabul, 20 September 2010.
116. Cited in Graeme Smith et al., "[Voting in a Karzai-style democracy](#)," *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], p. A16, 18 September 2010.
117. See "[Low bar](#)," *The Economist*, Asia view, 20 September 2010.
118. Cited in Jonathan S. Landay and Saeed Shah, "Afghan watchdog gathers fraud evidence," *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. A6, 20 September 2010; McClatchy-Tribune News, Kabul. For a broader critique, see Anthony Cordesman, "[The Afghan Elections: Another Milestone on the Road to Nowhere?](#)" Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 21 September 2010.
119. [Minister Cannon's Intervention](#) (20 July 2010).
120. Dexter Filkins, "Afghans beset, from 2 sides," *International Herald Tribune*, 7 September 2010.
121. See Louis Imbert, "Guerre en Afghanistan: D'où vient l'argent des talibans?" *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 2010, pp. 1 and 22.
122. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), p. 3.
123. Anthony Cordesman, "[How America Corrupted Afghanistan: Time to Look in the Mirror](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 8 September, 2010, pp. 1-3.
124. For details, see Integrity Watch Afghanistan, [Afghan Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption: A National Survey 2010](#), Kabul, 8 July 2010.
125. David Pugliese, "A lonely war against corruption," *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 April 2010.
126. For further analysis see [Cookman and Adams](#) (May 2010), esp. pp. 25-28.
127. Ben Farmer, "[Billions flown out of Kabul in suitcases](#)," *National Post*, 29 June 2010.
128. Steve Coll cites U.S. military estimates that about "three-quarters of Taliban guerrillas fight within five miles of their home." (Steve Coll, "Letter from Afghanistan: War by Other Means," *The New Yorker*, 24 May 2010, p. 44.)
129. Antonio Giustozzi, *Negotiating with the Taliban: Issues and Prospects*, The Century Foundation, New York, 2010, p. 24. The study provides a useful analysis of the Taliban's structures and operations.
130. See, for example, Nick Grono and Candace Rondeaux, "[Dealing with brutal Afghan warlords is a mistake](#)," *The Boston Globe*, 17 January 2010.
131. UN Secretary General (10 March 2010), p. 4.

132. The London Conference Communiqué referred to an environment where “Afghan men and women of all backgrounds and perspectives” can contribute, offering “an honourable place in society to those willing to renounce violence, participate in the free and open society and respect the principles that are enshrined in the Afghan constitution, cut ties with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and pursue their political goals peacefully.”
133. See Office of the President, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, “[The Resolution Adopted at the Conclusion of the National Consultative Peace Jirga](#),” Kabul, 2–4 June 2010, for the full text of the resolution.
134. Cited in Sonia Verma, “The Afghan Mission: Path to peace or pure delusion?” *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 2 June 2010; see also Sonia Verma, “Afghan plan: Strengthen Islamic law, free Taliban,” *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 5 June 2010.
135. Steve Coll, “A big tent: To beat the Taliban, build a coalition from every possible corner of Afghan society,” *National Post*, 30 July 2010.
136. Government of Canada, [Seventh Report](#) (October–December 2009), p. 9.
137. [Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan](#) (20 July 2010), point 14.
138. [Minister Cannon's Intervention](#), (20 July 2010).
139. Observing the complex manoeuvrings among the various parties, international, regional and domestic, Steve Coll saw no coherent strategy in place for negotiating with the Taliban (“Letter from Afghanistan,” 24 May 2010, pp. 42–53). He added: “Not even the most ardent advocates for talking to the Taliban are certain that negotiations can succeed” (p. 53).
140. For more post-jirga analysis, see Dexter Filkins, “[Overture to Taliban Jolts Afghan Minorities](#),” *The New York Times*, 26 June 2010.
141. Canada-Afghanistan Solidarity Committee [CASC], [Keeping Our Promises, Canada in Afghanistan Post-2011: The Way Forward](#), Vancouver, 9 March 2010, p. 21.
142. Human Rights Watch, [The “Ten-Dollar Talib” and Women’s Rights: Afghan Women and the Risks of Reintegration and Reconciliation](#), July 2010, p. 5. See also Lee Berthiaume, “[Finish the job, Afghan rights leaders urges](#),” *Embassy*, 21 July 2010, and Aryn Baker, “Afghan women and the Return of the Taliban,” *Time*, 29 July 2010.
143. See Rod Nordland, “Taliban reintegration stalled,” *International Herald Tribune*, 7 September 2010.
144. Charlie Gillis, “[Canada’s Love Affair with Obama](#),” *Macleans.ca*, 13 February 2009, pp. 16–17.
145. Ekos Politics, “[Political Landscape Frozen: Canadians continue to oppose both the Afghanistan mission and an extension](#),” Ottawa, 8 April 2010. For more in-depth analysis of the factors influencing these trends, see Claire Turenne Sjolander, “The Obama Charm? Canada and Afghanistan Under a New US Administration,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, June 2010, pp. 292–304; and, in the same issue, Jean-Christophe Boucher, “Evaluating the ‘Trenton Effect’: Canadian Public Opinion and Military Casualties in Afghanistan (2006–2010),” pp. 237–258.
146. The effect of Quebec opposition needs to be considered with caution, however. For an unconventional view, see Justin Massie, Jean-Christophe Boucher, and Stéphane Roussel, “Hijacking a Policy? Assessing Quebec’s ‘Undue’ Influence on Canada’s Afghan Policy,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, Issue 2, June 2010, pp. 259–275.
147. Angus Reid Public Opinion, “[War in Afghanistan: Support for Afghanistan Mission Falls Markedly in Canada](#),” Vancouver, 21 April 2010.

148. Frank Harvey, "A crucial test for the West's Afghan strategy," *National Post*, 11 March 2010.
149. Ibid.
150. See C. Christine Fair, [Obama's New "Af-Pak" Strategy: Can "Clear, Hold, Build, Transfer" Work?](#) The Centre for International Governance Innovation, The Afghanistan Papers, No. 6, July 2010.
151. Bruce Reidel, " [Obama's War: Prospects for the Conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan](#)," Centre for International Governance Innovation," Washington, D.C., The Afghanistan Papers, No. 7.
152. "Afghanistan: The troubling dynamics of insurgency," *The Economist*, 8 May 2010.
153. See Paul Koring, "[Karzai threatens to shut all private security firms in four months](#)," *The Globe and Mail*, 16 August 2010. Karzai had stated in his November 2009 inaugural address the goal of eliminating private militias and security firms within two years. But this suddenly accelerated timeline, which international observers consider completely unrealistic, has provoked concerns in NATO capitals.
154. In an interview with the *Times* of London, Fox stated provocatively: "We have to reset expectations and timelines. National security is the focus now. We are not a global policeman. We are not in Afghanistan for the sake of the education policy in a broken 13<sup>th</sup>-century country. We are there so the people of Britain and our global interests are not threatened." "[Liam Fox Flies to Afghanistan seeking to speed up troop withdrawal](#)," *The Times*, 22 May 2010.
155. Grant Kippen, Interview with author, 19 April 2010.
156. UN Secretary-General (10 March 2010), p. 14.
157. Agence France-Presse and Canwest News Services, "Door Open to Afghan Extension: MPs hint at keeping troops beyond 2011 withdrawal," *National Post*, 4 June 2010.
158. House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Report on a Trip to Afghanistan, 28 May–3 June 2010](#), First Report, p. 4.
159. Liberal Party of Canada, [Canada in the World: A Global Networks Strategy](#), June 2010, p. 16.
160. Ibid.
161. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, [Where We Go from Here: Canada's Mission in Afghanistan](#), June 2010, p. 21.
162. Cited in John Ivison, "Canada's post-Afghan role crucial," *National Post*, 31 March 2010.
163. Ethan Baron, "Canada may stay to train Afghan army, police," *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 April 2010.
164. Royal Canadian Mounted Police, [Current Operations](#), "Afghanistan."
165. CASC (9 March 2010), p. 18.
166. Matthew Fisher, "Canadians seek U.S. protection after 2011," *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 May 2010.
167. Grant Kippen, Interview with author, 19 April 2010.
168. See, for example, Andy Tamas, [Warriors and Nation Builders: Development and the Military in Afghanistan](#), Canadian Defence Academy Press, Kingston, 2009.
169. Joanne Allen, "Pentagon fuelling Afghan protection racket," Reuters, 23 June 2010. See also David Pugliese, "When warfare goes private," *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 April 2010; Bill Twatio, "Privatizing War," *National Post*, 31 May 2010.

170. CASC (9 March 2010), p. 5.
171. Grant Kippen, Interview with author, 19 April 2010.
172. CASC (9 March 2010), p. 3–4.
173. For a probing survey of policy challenges, see Anna Larson, [Toward an Afghan Democracy? Exploring Perceptions of Democratisation in Afghanistan](#), Discussion paper, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, September 2009.
174. CASC (9 March 2010), pp. 3–4.
175. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
176. Cited by Matthew Fisher in “[Canadian civilians helping Afghans re-connect with government](#),” *The Gazette* [Montreal], 16 March 2010.
177. Jeff Davies, “Canadian diplomats largely speechless in Afghanistan,” *Embassy*, 11 November 2009.
178. Although nothing official has been released in this regard, a declassified spring 2010 internal draft document obtained through an Access to Information request in August 2010 suggests that civilian-oriented spending could be in the range of \$600 million over the three-year period 2010–2014. See Steven Chase, “Ottawa Maps a New Mission,” *The Globe and Mail*, 24 August 2010.
179. Nipa Banerjee, “Time to learn from past Afghan mistakes,” *Embassy*, 26 May 2010, p. 7.
180. [Report of the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan](#), Ottawa, 20 January 2008, p. 9.

## APPENDIX A – PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS ON CANADA’S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES, FEBRUARY 2007–JUNE 2010

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### FEBRUARY 2007

- Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, [Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking A Hard Look at a Hard Mission](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, February 2007, 11 recommendations, pp. 15–16.

### JUNE 2007

- House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, [Canadian Forces in Afghanistan](#), First Report, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2007, 19 recommendations, pp. 117–120.

### OCTOBER 2007

- Government of Canada, [Government Response to the First Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence: Canadian Forces in Afghanistan](#), June 2008. October 2007.

### JANUARY 2008

- House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, [Canada’s International Policy Put to the Test in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Report](#), Third Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, January 2008, no recommendations.

### JUNE 2008

- House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Canada’s Mission in Afghanistan: Initial Report](#), First Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2008, no recommendations.
- Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, [How Are We Doing in Afghanistan? Canadians Need to Know](#), Ninth Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2008, 16 recommendations, pp. 103–106.



## **JULY 2008 (RE-ADOPTED FEBRUARY 2009)**

- House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, [Canada in Afghanistan](#), Tenth Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament, July 2008, 35 recommendations, pp. 105–113.

## **APRIL 2009**

- House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, [Women's Rights in Afghanistan](#), Fourth Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, April 2009, one recommendation in the form of a motion.

## **JUNE 2009**

- House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Visit to Washington, D.C.](#), First Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2009, no recommendations.
- House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Report on Canada's Priority Number One in Afghanistan: Helping to Advance the Afghan National Security Forces](#), Second Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2009, four recommendations, p. 2.

## **SEPTEMBER 2009**

- Government of Canada, [Government Response to the First Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on "Canada in Afghanistan."](#) September 2009; concurred in by the House October 2009.

## **OCTOBER 2009**

- Government of Canada, [Government Response to the Second Report of the Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan](#), October 2009.

## **DECEMBER 2009**

- House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Transfer of Afghan Detainees – Question of Privilege](#), Third Report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, November 2009.
- Adopted by the House December 2009; [Speaker Peter Milliken's Ruling](#), April 2010.



## JUNE 2010

- House of Commons Special Committee on the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan, [Report on a Trip to Afghanistan, 28 May – 3 June 2010](#), First Report, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2010, “future considerations” but no recommendations.
- Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, [Where We Go From Here: Canada’s Mission in Afghanistan](#), Fourth Report, 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, June 2010, one “conclusion and recommendation,” p. 21.

## APPENDIX B – WEB LINKS TO USEFUL SOURCES ON AFGHANISTAN

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[Afghana](#)

[Afghanistan Analysts Network](#)

[Afghanistan Conflict Monitor](#)

[Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit](#)

[Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan](#) (Government of Canada)

[Center for Strategic and International Studies: Burke Chair on Afghanistan-Pakistan](#)

[Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies: Afghanistan](#)

[Integrity Watch Afghanistan](#)

[International Crisis Group](#)

[International Security Assistance Force: Afghanistan](#) (NATO)

[Peace Operations Monitor: Afghanistan](#)

[United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#)