



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA**

**CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY PUT TO THE
TEST IN AFGHANISTAN:
A PRELIMINARY REPORT**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs and International Development**

**Kevin Sorenson, MP
Chair**

JANUARY 2008

39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), and the motion adopted by the Committee on November 20, 2007, your Committee has undertaken a study of Canada's international policy in Afghanistan and has agreed to report the following:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Canadian Reconstruction and Development Assistance in Afghanistan and the role of CIDA	3
Canadian Support for Lasting Peace in Afghanistan	9
LOOKING AHEAD	14
ENDNOTES	17
APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES (39-1).....	21
APPENDIX B: LIST OF WITNESSES (39-2).....	25
APPENDIX C: LIST OF BRIEFS	27
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.....	29
DISSENTING OPINION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA	31
DISSENTING OPINION OF THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	33

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INTRODUCTION

It is easy to criticize what is happening in Afghanistan. It is a far more difficult task to recommend what *should* be done. In my long professional life, I have not encountered a more difficult policy challenge. I am not sure we have all the right solutions. But I do know that we in Canada urgently need a more informed debate on these issues. Much is at stake.

- Dr. Gordon Smith, Executive Director, Centre for Global Studies,
University of Victoria, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
and former Canadian Ambassador to NATO¹

In the nine months since that was written, the challenges of Afghanistan for Canada's international policy have certainly not lessened and the stakes, not only for Canada, but for other donor nations and multilateral organizations—notably NATO and the United Nations—are higher than ever. The need for more informed public debate on Canadian policy options is also an ongoing one.

Parliamentarians have been actively engaged in this debate. In addition to deliberations and questioning in the House of Commons, several committees have devoted large amounts of time to Afghanistan issues. In terms of the Canadian Forces dimension, the House Standing Committee on National Defence tabled a report in Parliament in June 2007.² We have approached Canada's role in Afghanistan from a more comprehensive perspective, including emphasis on the necessary diplomatic, reconstruction and development dimensions of our efforts now and in the future.

To that end, since October 2006 the Committee has held 18 public hearings specifically on the situation in Afghanistan with well over 40 witnesses, including Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada and both the current and previous ministers of foreign affairs, international cooperation and national defence. Most of these hearings, including that with Dr. Smith, took place during the first session of the 39th Parliament. In addition, the Committee met with leading Afghanistan expert Dr. Barnett Rubin, Director and Senior Fellow of the New York University Centre on International Cooperation, on 7 February 2007 during the course of its study on advancing support for international democratic development.³ He subsequently testified in Ottawa on March 29, 2007.

Following the reconstitution of the Committee in November 2007, a motion was adopted on November 20, as follows:

That the Committee undertake a study on Canada's mission in Afghanistan; that this study begin with the adoption of all testimony pertaining to this question and heard by the Committee during the previous session of Parliament, so that testimony can be deemed adduced by the Committee in the current session; that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee invite the relevant representatives of the government, stakeholders from non-government organizations and experts to appear before the Committee at the earliest possible time, with a view to completing this study, **making sure to assess, among other aspects, CIDA's participation in Afghanistan and also making sure to investigate possible approaches to establishing a lasting peace in Afghanistan**, and, in order to make recommendations on Canada's role in Afghanistan at the end of the present mission; and that the Committee make a preliminary report to the House of Commons by December 14, 2007.⁴

Given the scope and complexities of examining Canada's policy choices in Afghanistan, the Committee stresses that this is only a preliminary report, a prelude to the full study of the issues which we intend to pursue during 2008, following the release of the report of the Prime Minister's Independent Panel on Afghanistan expected at the end of January 2008. However, as a timely contribution to the public debate, we want to draw attention to some key concerns prior to the publication of that report—notably in terms of the nature and effectiveness of Canada's reconstruction and development assistance to Afghanistan, the role of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in that regard, and the best possible approaches for Canada to pursue in supporting the achievement of lasting peace in Afghanistan. These are the subject of the following two main sections of the report.

Afghanistan has emerged as the principal priority of Canada's international policy and it is also where the evolving "whole-of-government" approach that seeks to coordinate the activities of the main departments and agencies involved—the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), CIDA, and the Department of National Defence (DND)—faces its greatest test. Experts differ on what are realistic objectives for ultimate overall "success" in Afghanistan. But the Committee's chief concerns at this point can be boiled down to two questions:

1. Are the resources (current and planned) that Canada is expending in Afghanistan being delivered in the best possible way to the maximum positive effect?
2. What is required of Canada in order to help substantially improve the lives of all Afghans and to make possible the attainment of sustainable peace in Afghanistan?

In a short report, it is not possible to do justice to the breadth and richness of the testimony already received. We will refer to selected highlights from that testimony but we

encourage the Government and the Independent Panel to take into account the full transcripts available on the Committee's website.⁵ We are also mindful of the following:

- The situation in Afghanistan and in the region is constantly evolving. Some witnesses have been more optimistic than others about the benefits of Canada's presence and about Afghanistan's long-term prospects. But as well, some may have revised their outlooks since they testified and could be recalled by the Committee.
- The Committee also plans to hear from additional witnesses in 2008 and intends to travel to Afghanistan in order to get a firsthand picture that is as accurate as possible of developments on the ground prior to making any final recommendations.

All members of the Committee recognize that Afghanistan is not a short-term issue for Canada's international policy and for the international community as a whole. Facts about Afghanistan are often based on varying estimates⁶, fraught with caveats or contested; opinions over what should be done, how, and in what sequence diverge widely. There are no easy, simple, quick or obvious "fixes". Even those with expert knowledge are usually cautious in their assessments. Indeed, in a May 31, 2007 address to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., the former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan (July 2005-April 2007), Ronald E. Neumann, stated that, while he is fundamentally optimistic about Afghanistan's future, the rocky road ahead can be difficult to discern:

Afghanistan is a country where the more you know, the more confused you become. It is a country where there are always multiple indicators going in different directions, which, of course, also makes it an easy place in which to go out and document the presumption that you brought to the subject in the first place, but harder to draw a balanced bottom line. And it is one that is going through a lot of turmoil.⁷

At the same time, the Committee believes that the Government of Canada must continue to evaluate conditions in Afghanistan in as objective a manner as possible in order to adjust policy to changing circumstances and to make the most lasting positive impact possible for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan. We offer these preliminary reflections in that spirit.

Canadian Reconstruction and Development Assistance in Afghanistan and the role of CIDA

One of the policy challenges facing the government of Afghanistan and outside actors is that many problems are interconnected and therefore multi-dimensional approaches are required involving progress in external interventions of all kinds, internal governance reforms, the rule of law and law enforcement, counter-narcotics, and so on. It is frequently said that security is required for development to proceed and also that

development—or more pointedly, tangible, visible improvements in the living conditions or ordinary Afghans—are required for security objectives to be met. Ideally, measures taken should be both simultaneous and mutually reinforcing. Indeed, as Afghanistan’s ambassador to Canada His Excellency Omar Samad underlined to the Committee: “Afghanistan is not a uni-dimensional matter, nor is it an isolated concern. It cannot be defined in simplistic, sound bite terms, since we are dealing with a serious and complex matter of strategic importance.”⁸

Canada, which has one of the largest Afghan diasporas in the world, also ranks among Afghanistan’s top five donors, and will soon be among the top four as Ambassador Samad told the Committee. Afghanistan itself is Canada’s largest single country bilateral aid commitment. In this respect, Canada has already pledged C\$1.2 billion in total aid until 2011, the end of the five-year period of the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS).⁹ CIDA President Robert Greenhill told the Committee on November 27, 2007, that “the Agency will spend more than \$250 million in grants and contributions in Afghanistan in 2007/2008.”¹⁰ To manage the disbursements, he added that CIDA is increasing the number of staff in Kabul and Kandahar. “Our field presence has more than doubled in the past two years: we will have 35 professional staff working in Afghanistan by April 2008 compared to just 10 in 2006. Overall with the creation of the Afghanistan Task Force, we have grown from a program of just 20 full-time employees to a staff of almost 80.”¹¹ According to Mr. Greenhill’s oral testimony, CIDA currently has “about 22” personnel in Afghanistan, including “nine in Kandahar overseeing projects.”¹²

In this preliminary report, the Committee cannot address all of the factors requiring attention, but we can underline some basic concerns. We agree with Gordon Smith that: “Ultimately, the alleviation of poverty must become a primary strategy for achieving security in Afghanistan. Yet the country still receives far less funding from the international donor community overall than most other post-conflict nations.”¹³ We believe this is an area for Canadian leadership and innovation, building on existing efforts. Dr. Smith told the Committee that he was “impressed by the ways in which CIDA is really trying to change the way it does business, in a fundamental way, so that it can operate in the real world of Afghanistan.”¹⁴ Appearing at the same hearing, Dr. Rubin made similar points in stating that “Afghanistan needs more—and more effective—development assistance. Canada has actually been one of the best donors in terms of the way it gives assistance.”¹⁵

Virtually all witnesses, including Christopher Alexander, UN Deputy Special Representative to Afghanistan and former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan, shared the view that international assistance to reconstruction and development has been insufficient to the needs. This deficiency has been exacerbated by other factors. Scott Gilmore of the Peace Dividend Trust, which has several projects in Afghanistan, observed that “only a very small portion of the money that the international community spends on Afghanistan is spent in Afghanistan. There is a massive lost opportunity to use the operational spending of the donors and international agencies to drive economic recovery through local procurement in the hiring of Afghan staff.”¹⁶ Seema Patel of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies argued that assistance has been “slow to impact

Afghans” and that “the improvement in the economy has not trickled down to the ordinary Afghan.”¹⁷ She added:

It's our belief that reconstruction efforts to date have been too Kabul-centric. Much of this is driven by a class of Afghan leadership that is threatening the entire enterprise with exclusionary, corrupt, and controlling practices. Traditional donor constraints are also to blame. Large-scale contracting, the need for certifiable partners, dependence on central government, and the expenditure of funds has become a standard way of doing business for many donors. We believe the best way to ensure that R and D funds go further, particularly in the tough southern provinces, is to engage ordinary Afghans, from planning to implementation. The process is as important as the programs. At various times, from *shuras* to micro hydro projects to informal government justice structures, Afghanistan has shown the value of local ownership.¹⁸

According to Barnett Rubin: “What I see that has been really missing in the agricultural sector has been the type of infrastructure and institutional changes that are needed above the village level—for instance, larger-scale and medium-sized water projects, which are very essential, and measures that would improve marketing, such as roads, more information, and things like that.”¹⁹ More broadly, Sara Chayes of the Kandahar Arghand Cooperative pointed out how weak governance combined with corruption, including at the provincial and local level, can undermine the entire aid effort. As she put it: “Within this context of corruption, no matter how much development assistance you provide, it's going to be distorted, because it's passing through corrupt channels...if you spend a fortune on development assistance and it passes through corrupt hands, it's only going to reinforce what is essentially a governing system that people are suffering from.”²⁰

At the same time, most witnesses acknowledged the role that Canada is playing as one of the largest donors to Afghanistan. A number commented favourably on the results of CIDA funding. For example, Linda Jones of the Mennonite Economic Development Associates of Canada (MEDA), which has been operating in Afghanistan for three years, told the Committee that during that time “we have also seen the tremendous impact that Canada's development contribution is having on the rebuilding of the nation. ... we would suggest that Canadian dollars can be effectively used to build bridges between Canadian and Afghan individuals, groups, institutions, businesses, and other agencies.”²¹ Scott Gilmore was very positive in his message to the Committee that “Canada's investment is producing a tangible and direct and positive impact on the lives of Afghans. Whether it's microcredit, health care, justice, or private sector development, CIDA money and Canadian agencies are making an impressive difference in Afghanistan. ... CIDA's overall impact in Afghanistan is another success story. ... Unfortunately, these success stories are not being heard, and they're being overshadowed by political controversies.”²²

In such a difficult operating context, however, a range of critical concerns were raised with the Committee. After pointing out that “there are maybe six or seven government ministries out of 25 that are effective”, Christopher Alexander argued that “we need more NGOS that have what it takes to implement national programs, and national programs are where Canada, for many years now, has shown leadership.”²³ He also

emphasized the importance of Afghan private sector development and local procurement. Dr. John Watson, then President and CEO of CARE Canada, which has a long history of involvement in Afghanistan, accepted that the National Solidarity Program (NSP) “is doing extremely good work.” But he worried about a lack of willingness to invest in local business in high-risk areas and a kind of “groupthink” that does not pay enough attention to grassroots impacts. As he put it to the Committee:

I have never seen such a dense, self-referring realm of groupthink, if you like. I think it has given us an unbalanced aid program, in being focused on national programs. ... I don't think it is balanced, because it is putting too much weight on programming that's going via the Afghan government. In my view, if the Canadian government is doing a national program, it should also be doing, at the same time, a program at the grassroots that funds a Canadian or Afghan NGO, so that a committee like this can get feedback as to what those top-down programs are doing at the grassroots level.²⁴

Professor Pierre Beaudet of the University of Ottawa was not satisfied with the accountability for results of Canadian “quick impact” projects under the framework of CIDA's support for the NSP that is “intended to rebuild villages and small communities”. As he explained to the Committee: “I do not know the practical results of all this, but I do know that CIDA is refusing, despite access to information requests, to release information on the estimated and partial results of those operations. ... I would like for CIDA to be transparent and provide us with the information, because it does exist.”²⁵ Lina Holguin, Policy Director of Oxfam-Quebec, which has worked in Afghanistan since the early 1990s, related to the Committee her concern that ‘rapid impact’ projects associated with Provincial Reconstruction teams (PRTs) “usually lack community participation, and as a result are inappropriate or unused.”²⁶

CIDA, for its part, given its responsibility for the \$1.2 billion that Canada has so far pledged for reconstruction and development in Afghanistan over the decade 2001-2011, affirms that it is attempting to do more to reach ordinary Afghans. As former Minister of International Cooperation Josée Verner told the Committee in March 2007:

Turning to our efforts in Kandahar province, ... (we) anticipate spending more than \$30 million this year, five times more than in 2005-06. One of our top priorities has been to meet the basic needs of Kandaharis. ... CIDA staff within the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) have a number of ways to report to their CIDA superiors. I have had numerous opportunities to speak with them, either by telephone or upon their return to Canada. The information comes from them, from the Afghan government which provides us with figures relating to their achievements, from United Nations organizations, for example, which provide us with information on what is being done in Afghanistan, and from our partners, including Rights and Democracy, which conducts strict audits of the achievements in Afghanistan.²⁷

There are obviously differences of perception in terms of what CIDA is able to accomplish. By far the most negative view heard by the Committee was that of Norine MacDonald of the Senlis Council who argued that “Canada's development and aid failures in Kandahar are endangering our substantial military successes there.” She called on the government to “dramatically overhaul Canada's development aid and counter-narcotics

policies” and “for CIDA to be relieved of its responsibility for development efforts in Afghanistan and to be replaced by the appointment of a special envoy to Afghanistan to coordinate development aid and counter-narcotics policy, with a development and aid budget equal to the military budget. We need a major and immediate overhaul of our approach in Afghanistan.”²⁸ Recently, the Senlis Council has gone so far as to recommend that “a Combat CIDA/DFID should be established whereby the Canadian and British militaries assist in the delivery of aid to ravaged parts of the south [of Afghanistan]. The military should also be given control of development agencies’ war-zone budgets.”²⁹

From the Committee’s testimony, it is apparent that no other witness supports such a position; indeed quite the opposite.³⁰ Even critics of international aid such as Sarah Chayes of the Kandahar Arghand Cooperative, have argued that the best response to improving CIDA’s operations is to not give up on CIDA. As she told the Committee by video-conference from Kandahar:

I think CIDA procedures need to be streamlined. Like every public development agency, it’s way too bureaucratic. ... The fact is that CIDA has now been on the ground for a year and a half to two years and it has built up an experience. In other words, there were a lot of programs that took way too long in the pipeline that are now, finally, beginning to hit the ground. If you were to halt all of that and create a whole new structure, believe me, you would create a lot more bureaucracy. What I would look at, again, as a committee, is bypassing some of the extremely rigid procurement requirements and think about how we can make our public development agency more flexible, a more rapid-reaction kind of agency, not just for Afghanistan but for all the other crises that are going to face Canada and other western countries in the future. I think it would be a real waste of an investment to pull CIDA out now.³¹

Responding to the latest Senlis Council report, Nipa Banerjee, who was head of Canada’s aid program in Kabul from 2003-2006, and is currently with the University of Ottawa’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, stated the following:

It must be understood that there are no quick fixes in Afghanistan. In a country ravaged by decades of war and with a slim skilled human resource base, even massive reconstruction and development efforts will not yield immediate results, especially in remote rural areas. It will take generations to make the advances expected. Fanning unrealistic expectations of the Afghan public and the publics of the donor countries is the last thing that should be done to temper tensions at these critical times.

Sustainable social, economic and political transformation that will mark longer term development can only be done through Afghan state institutions and with the support of Afghan civil society. The institutions that will lead the transformation process must be strengthened. Continued international support is critical for this strengthening process. Diverting the resources and attention of development agencies toward the short-term will not help build a sustainable peace.³²

Most witnesses generally wanted to see greater emphasis on the developmental and peacebuilding dimensions of Canadian assistance within a truly “whole-of-government” approach for Afghanistan. In that regard, the seven witnesses from

the Afghanistan Reference Group—a network of Canadian NGOs involved in Afghanistan—who appeared before the Committee on November 29, 2007³³, outlined a range of issues for Canadian policy consideration, inter alia:

- So as to achieve long-term security on the basis of development and peace, ensuring that military operations in Afghanistan, including those associated with the PRTs, minimize Afghan civilian casualties, provide protection to ordinary Afghans, and not endanger the activities of humanitarian aid workers (given the high and increasing threat level they have been facing in 2007);
- Giving greater attention to humanitarian access to Afghanistan and to diplomatic efforts;
- Emphasizing assistance approaches that respond to Afghan grassroots needs and priorities, that support NGO partnerships from the bottom up, that include community-based participation and help to build local capacities in terms of development, governance and peacebuilding;
- Engaging all sectors of Afghan civil society—notably women and youth (almost 70% of the population is under the age of 25)—as well as the Afghan diaspora, in Afghanistan’s development process;
- Increasing pro-poor contributions towards “job creation, capacity building, alternative livelihoods and community-based initiatives effectively bridging the urban-rural gap in Afghanistan.”³⁴

A far-reaching concern expressed by nearly all witnesses is that of sustaining a long-term commitment to development assistance for Afghanistan at the level that is required. For example, Nigel Fisher of UNICEF Canada argued that: “Assistance to Afghanistan should be a high priority for Canada today and for the foreseeable future. It’s in our self-interest to invest in Afghanistan’s security and reconstruction... An increase in non-military development assistance to Afghanistan is absolutely essential.”³⁵ Yet, notwithstanding additional development aid announcements by Canada and the United States in 2007, Marc-André Boivin foresaw that “with the initial anti-terrorism impetus gone, this more long-term approach is also faced with the renewed insignificance of Afghanistan on the world scene.”³⁶

The Committee hopes that this outlook is misplaced and that the international community will augment, not diminish, its assistance efforts in Afghanistan. Canada, in particular, must plan for a long-term development engagement. Anything less puts at risk not only our considerable investments to date and commitments under the 2006 Afghanistan Compact³⁷, but more importantly the prospects of the Afghan people for a better life.

Canadian Support for Lasting Peace in Afghanistan

The goal of the international community in Afghanistan since 2001 has been to assist that country through a combination of military and non-military means to finally emerge from some three decades of conflict and achieve lasting peace and prosperity for its citizens.

Afghanistan has made real progress toward this goal—adopting a constitution, holding elections and implementing other elements of the 2001 Bonn Agreement and subsequent international accords on Afghanistan. Indeed, Afghan-Canadian Mirwais Nahzat of World University Services of Canada (WUSC) began his presentation to the Committee on November 29, 2007 by recognizing that “Afghanistan has achieved remarkable political, social and economic progress since the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001.”³⁸

At the same time, there is general agreement that Bonn was only the beginning of a long-term engagement of the international community in Afghanistan that has and must continue to evolve. As Graeme MacQueen cautioned the Committee: “Once we are clear that our chief goal and highest priority is the well-being of Afghans and Afghanistan, we must acknowledge that this goal cannot be achieved until the root conflicts in Afghanistan have been identified and addressed.”³⁹ Moreover, the re-emergence of a Taliban-led insurgency in the south and east of the country has made further progress much more difficult, and threatens to roll back some of what has been already achieved. As the UN Secretary-General reported to UN member states in September 2007:

As the transition in Afghanistan comes under increasing strain owing to insurgency, weak governance and the narco-economy, the Government of Afghanistan, supported by the international community, will need to demonstrate political will by taking the bold steps necessary to recapture the initiative in each of these fields and restore confidence to the population in tangible ways. Without stronger leadership from the Government, greater donor coherence—including improved coordination between the military and civilian international engagement in Afghanistan—and a strong commitment from neighbouring countries, many of the security, institution-building and development gains made since the Bonn Conference may yet stall or even be reversed.⁴⁰

While success will obviously require significant military and development assistance, coordinating assistance and increasing dialogue between the international community, regional powers and the Government of Afghanistan will in particular demand strengthened diplomacy. Seema Patel, who spent nearly seven weeks in Afghanistan in the fall of 2006 coordinating a survey of Afghan attitudes on a range of issues, argued before the Committee:

The security and development strategy, in my opinion, is in line with what works best in Afghanistan. However, I think Canada can go one step further on the diplomatic front... Canada, whose troops are in the most difficult area and who has respect in the U.K., the U.S., and throughout Europe, particularly for its thoughtful approach to post-conflict

reconstruction, can and should play a more aggressive role on the diplomatic front. It is a critical niche role for Canada, and we would like to see more of it.⁴¹

Witnesses before the Committee agreed that Canada and the rest of the international community should continue to help Afghanistan in its efforts to achieve a lasting peace. Gerald Ohlsen of the Group of 78 put it well when he told the Committee that “Canadians have a profound interest, purchased at great cost, in the future peace and stability of Afghanistan. Let us work together, with Afghans, with our allies and with the global community, to bring peace to the Afghan people.”⁴²

While witnesses sometimes differed on the means to achieve such a peace, most recognized that a purely military solution to the problems in that country is not possible and that there is a need for complementary military and non-military assistance. Most also agreed that the achievement of a lasting peace for Afghanistan would require both increased resources and better coordination on the part of the international community. At the same time, many underlined the concomitant need to strengthen Afghanistan’s national dialogue and reconciliation processes, and to address Afghanistan within its regional context. Indeed Mr. Ohlsen expressed concern that “there is a vacuum when it comes to constructive and responsible promotion of a political settlement in Afghanistan”, identifying “helping to shape a comprehensive peace process” as a potential area for Canadian international leadership.⁴³

As already noted, there was wide agreement that the international mission in Afghanistan has been under-resourced from the beginning, *both* in terms of money and in terms of military forces. In the fall of 2006, Professor Roland Paris of the University of Ottawa told the Committee that “from the beginning, this mission has been hampered by a lack of international forces to help the Afghan government establish its presence throughout the country. We are dealing with the consequences today, as we belatedly enter regions that have been neglected for the past five years. So we are living the consequences of early decisions about under-resourcing this operation. In fact, for the size of the country and the population, this is the most under-resourced international stabilization mission since World War II.”⁴⁴

While international assistance to Afghanistan has been multifaceted, the continuing insurgency has led to an ever-greater focus on the security aspects of the mission. Although security assistance remains a high priority, witnesses were generally in agreement that more attention should have been paid earlier on to challenges such as governance and the rule of law—which includes issues such as corruption, the drug economy and human rights. In practical terms, while the training of an Afghan National Army remains a priority, much more attention should have been placed sooner on training the Afghan National Police, and the international community must move to address this shortcoming as quickly as it can.

Witnesses also generally agreed on the need to address the many problems of Afghanistan within a broader regional context. That this is a perilous and constantly

evolving context was reinforced to the Committee by Afghan Ambassador Omar Samad in his statement to the Committee of December 4. In particular, many underlined the need to recognize and address the important role played by Pakistan in the resurgence of the Taliban. In a videoconference from Kandahar, where she has lived for the last five years, American former journalist Sarah Chayes told the Committee that: "It's really important that you understand what's happening in southern Afghanistan, not so much as an insurgency—that is, an indigenous uprising by locals—but rather as a kind of invasion by proxy of Afghanistan by Pakistan using Afghans. Fundamentally, this so-called insurgency is being orchestrated, organized, financed, trained, and equipped across the border in Pakistan."⁴⁵

While most witnesses did not go that far, they agreed that more needs to be done to address the issue of Pakistan and its relations with Afghanistan. Chris Alexander told the Committee in early 2007 that: "Pakistan... remains the partner of Afghanistan with whom we all need to work most intensively to solve some very key outstanding problems. Key to the solution is a recognition that the Taliban represents a threat to the established order, to the constitutional order in both countries. I think there is a dawning recognition in Pakistan itself that this is the case."⁴⁶ He added: "Quite frankly, in the first four or five years of transition, the importance of this issue was under-recognized by all the relevant players... we are only now generating the critical mass of dialogue with Pakistan that we need on these issues."⁴⁷

Seema Patel agreed on the need to address Pakistan as a priority, but underlined the need to also include other regional countries, which had played a key role during the initial Bonn process. In her words, "The diplomatic front in the regional countries I think is critical. It was during Bonn, and it should be for the long term."⁴⁸ As noted above, she also argued that Canada should play a stronger diplomatic role. As she explained:

The U.S. dominates the mission in Afghanistan, and it needs its allies that are committed to Afghanistan's recovery to push for better, more effective policies. I have met officials from the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Canada, and the U.K. who are all committed to making positive changes and to creating a unified approach to some of the tougher issues, such as the role of Pakistan and Iran, the approach to countering narcotics, short-term strategic planning, a geographic balance of reconstruction assistance, and international accountability. These officials from these countries need to be brought together and need to work together to influence U.S. and Afghan leadership.⁴⁹

In terms of the achievement of peace in Afghanistan, Graham MacQueen of McMaster University was among those who argued for a "serious peace process", but he added that "it would probably be very unwise to go directly to negotiation between leaders of main belligerent groups. This would encourage undemocratic backroom deals, which is not what we are advocating." Instead, he recommended a process that begins with dialogue and problem-solving, then moves on to negotiations and reconciliation.⁵⁰

While there has been much controversy in Canada and elsewhere over the question of whether or not to "negotiate with the Taliban," most witnesses before the Committee

agreed that achieving peace in Afghanistan will require simultaneous political as well as military efforts. Former deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and Canadian Ambassador to NATO Gordon Smith argued that: "The political dimension of this, both with Pakistan and the internal political dimension in Afghanistan, is key. I say that without having any illusions about how difficult this is to do."⁵¹ Most witnesses agreed it would be useful to talk with some elements of the insurgency. Ernie Regehr of Project Ploughshares argued before the Committee in November 2006:

I don't think the point is to search out the Taliban leadership and make it even stronger by making it the centre of negotiation. I think it's to search out the people who have grievances against the government, who are disenchanting with the government, and who, for a lack of other political housing, go to the Taliban as the umbrella under which they express their dissidence. I think it's this kind of non-Taliban leadership, which expresses grievances, that you want to go to in the negotiations.⁵²

Gordon Smith agreed: "With respect to the Taliban and whether it can be split, that's exactly what we suggest Again, it's controversial. Some people think it's possible to try to exclude some of the more extreme elements and to try to bring people who are associated with the Taliban into the political process in Kabul. That will, among other things, end up giving the Pashtun people a greater degree of power in the overall governance of the country."⁵³ Unfortunately, the difficulties involved in national reconciliation in Afghanistan are underlined by the fact that not all Afghans *want* the Pashtun people to have a greater degree of power in the governance of the country.

On the question of an increased regional perspective on the problems of Afghanistan, there have been some positive developments, notably in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In mid-October, however, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Tom Koenigs, reported to the UN Security Council that there was still a "capacity deficit in regional cooperation." He argued that this capacity deficit "must be addressed first and foremost within the Government of Afghanistan by the creation of supporting regional units in the lead ministries, led by the reinforced Ministry of Foreign Affairs." He added: "For the region, a key target remains complementing the focus of Afghanistan's neighbours on their bilateral relationships by furthering, and expanding upon, multilateral approaches to enduring stability for Afghanistan."⁵⁴ Canada may be able to play a useful role in both of these areas.

Among other approaches to increasing regional cooperation, a number of nations have favoured the appointment of a new higher-level UN special envoy to Afghanistan. In September 2007, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Maxime Bernier explained that: "we believe that at the leadership level in Afghanistan we need someone of a high level and with a clear mandate." He continued, "The UN mission is already there, and Canada is there under UN mandate, but we believe that the UN itself has to be more active in the co-ordination process."⁵⁵

In terms of Afghan national reconciliation, in September 2007 Afghan President Hamid Karzai took the unusual step of appealing publicly to Taliban leader Mullah Omar to

hold discussions. While the Taliban refused to do so unless the government met certain preconditions such as the withdrawal of foreign military forces—which it refused to do—there is no longer a debate about *whether* such negotiations would be proposed, only about the circumstances in which they might occur. In the meantime, continued military assistance will be necessary to establish the conditions for effective dialogue. As Barnett Rubin told the committee:

...people don't surrender when they think they're winning ... As long as there is, from their point of view, a part of Afghanistan that is not under the control of the Government of Afghanistan because it's in the tribal agencies and in Pakistan, and as long as that area is also not really controlled by Pakistan and Pakistan does not do more to effectively shut down that recruitment centre, then there is a vast reserve that they have that makes it very difficult to create conditions for that kind of political discussion, although it can be done on a local basis within Afghanistan.⁵⁶

Gerald Ohlsen underlined to the Committee the need for the United Nations to play a key role in support of a “broadly-based political dialogue, one that engages all sectors of society and all communities of interest... given that only the UN can even notionally lead the peace implementation process, if only because no other single body is acceptable to the international community.”⁵⁷ Tom Koenigs stated in September 2007 that “we from the United Nations will certainly support peace talks because the insurgency cannot be won over by military means only and we have to keep the door open for negotiations.”⁵⁸ At the same time, he agreed with Barnett Rubin and others that general negotiations were not imminent. In mid-October, he provided more detail to the Security Council as follows:

In the past two months, the President and the parliament have increasingly expressed the desire to conduct outreach to insurgents willing to reconcile with the Government. However, to be effective, national reconciliation will require a comprehensive strategy defined by the parameters of the Afghan constitution. I was told that several Taliban commanders have expressed the wish to live in peace under the current constitution—out of fear for their survival and uncertainty about the sustainability of their sanctuaries and in response to signals pointing towards the need for dialogue at many levels, above all in the wake of the Afghanistan-Pakistan peace jirga held in early August. The Taliban as an organization remains, at least in part, determined to continue its military campaign. There are currently no prospects for negotiations with the top leadership of the Taliban.⁵⁹

Over the past several years, Canada has significantly increased the diplomatic resources it devotes to Afghanistan, and has also recently given the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade responsibility for coordinating all Canadian government activities there—the so-called “3D” or “whole-of-government” approach. In April 2007, former Canadian diplomat Scott Gilmore argued before the Committee that:

Canada's relative influence in Kabul is unique, and I can say this as a former diplomat ... Unlike most other post-conflict missions, Canada is one of the lead players in Kabul. This is partly due to the size of our commitment, but it's also due to the effectiveness of the three-D approach and the leadership of such people as our former Canadian ambassador, Chris Alexander, who has now left the foreign service to work for the UN; General Hillier; and General Andrew Leslie.⁶⁰

Making the most effective use of this influence, Canada should explore how it can help to strengthen political processes both within that Afghanistan and throughout the region, since both will be critical elements in the achievement of a lasting peace. The Committee is fully aware that such processes will be difficult, long-term, and certainly not without risk. Nevertheless, as Gerald Ohlsen pointed out, it is important to begin the dialogue now and to pursue these issues on multiple levels.⁶¹ Further action is imperative.

LOOKING AHEAD

Canada is fortunately engaged at the most critical levels, and adjusting well to the dynamic environment. Canadians in civil and military affairs in Afghanistan are indeed serving a noble cause and deserve all the support you give them.

We all need to contemplate for a minute what the consequences of failure would mean to Afghans, to the region, to the forces of oppression and to those in the family of nations who are invested in blood and in kind? ...

Whatever the decision, I urge you beforehand to contemplate strategically, using broad analysis and a grand perspective.

His Excellency Omar Samad
Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada⁶²

As the Committee has underlined at the start, Canada's future role in Afghanistan constitutes a great challenge for our international policy in the months and years ahead. The members of the Manley panel had the complexities of the situation reinforced during the course of their visit to Afghanistan in late November 2007.⁶³ We look forward to their findings, but we do not expect that they will be able to come up with definitive answers between now and the end of January 2008. With this preliminary report, the Committee's objectives are modest: namely, to contribute some of what we have learned to date to the necessary ongoing public debate. We are not yet ready to draw firm conclusions. These must await the deeper and fuller study that we intend to undertake during 2008.

The Committee can, however, make some interim observations based on the testimony we have received so far and in line with the two major studies that we have completed and presented to the House in the past year. First and foremost, while witnesses differed on the specifics of how best Canada should support the Afghan people, all witnesses without exception argued that Canada must make a long-term commitment to helping Afghans achieve sustainable poverty-reducing development and a lasting peace.

In the wake of decades of devastating wars and civil conflicts, Afghanistan remains one of the world's most fragile states. In the final recommendation of the Committee's December 2006 Report *Canada's International Policy Put to the Test in Haiti*, we argued that: "Canada should formally commit to a 'whole of government' strategy for Haiti that envisages involvement for at least ten years and that indicates long-term

funding—beyond the five-year allocations already announced in July 2006—will be available to fully support this strategy.”⁶⁴ In chapter nine of the Committee’s July 2007 Report, *Advancing Canada’s Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, the Committee, reflecting on the “hard cases” of Afghanistan and Haiti—the number one and two recipients of Canadian international assistance respectively—we recommended that:

Recognizing that the circumstances of “failed” or “fragile” states are the most difficult and complex for democratic development interventions, Canada should concentrate its efforts in countries where it is already heavily invested with much at stake, and where it is capable of making a difference by sustaining high levels of democracy and peace-building assistance over long periods of time.⁶⁵

That does not mean just doing more of the same. In both reports, the Committee emphasized the need for continuous learning that feeds back into the policy planning, decision-making, and accountability processes. We called for better coordination of efforts at all levels from multilateral undertakings to the processes within our own government. We called for better, more regular and more transparent context-specific assessments and independent evaluations for effective results. We repeat those calls here.

Moreover, in the case of Afghanistan specifically, we acknowledge the many witnesses who have appealed for greater emphasis on the socio-economic, governance, peace support and diplomatic dimensions of what must be an eventual and sustainable Afghan political solution. Especially when Canadian lives are at risk, Canada’s Afghanistan strategy must also always strive to put our resources, both military and non-military, to the best possible use under difficult and changing circumstances. Canada’s approach must take into account the voices of ordinary Afghans. As importantly, it must do so in a way that includes the participation of Parliament and the Canadian public.

Many of our witnesses raised important issues and concerns that remain pertinent through 2008 and beyond. For example:

- To what extent is our current level of assistance sufficient, and the manner in which it is delivered appropriately configured, in order to be most effective in raising living conditions for the greatest number of Afghans, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and in providing for their security? What policy changes may need to be considered?
- How can Canada best work with Afghan and international partners in order to achieve the security and stabilization objectives necessary to permit sustainable development of a democratic Afghan state and society, “Afghanization” of that development process, and ultimate resolution of civil conflict to the point that Afghans themselves can realize their national goals through peaceful, political means?

It comes down to why Canada is and must remain in Afghanistan, and to making sure that all of our interventions are really helping, in the best ways possible under the circumstances, the Afghan people to secure a better future for themselves. That is the overall long-term question that the Committee will bear in mind as it pursues its study of future Canadian policy choices in Afghanistan.

We close with the stirring words to the Committee of a young Canadian, Mirwais Nahzat, who fled Afghanistan with his family almost 15 years ago. Recently returned from a visit to his native country in October 2007 to, as he put it, “assess first-hand some of the major challenges and changes in ordinary Afghans’ lives”, he made the following appeal to us:

Saving Afghanistan is within our grasp and we owe it to Afghans, and to the Canadian public to leave behind a meaningful legacy in the war-battered Afghanistan. As an Afghan-Canadian, I urge you to remember the plight, problems and dreams of the people of Afghanistan.⁶⁶

ENDNOTES

- 1 Gordon Smith, "Foreword", *Canada in Afghanistan: Is It Working?*, Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, March 2007, p. 3, <http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/Canada%20in%20Afghanistan%20Is%20it%20Working.pdf> ; see also his testimony before the Committee, 39th Parliament, 1st Session, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007.
- 2 See House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, *Canadian Forces in Afghanistan*, presented to the House June 18, 2007, and the *Government Response*, presented to the House October 17, 2007, <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteeList.aspx?Lang=1&PARLSES=391&JNT=0&SELID=e24 &COM=10470> .
- 3 The case of Afghanistan is addressed in chapter nine of the Committee's Report, *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, presented to the House July 11, 2007, <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10475&Lang=1&SourceId=213353>; see also the *Government Response*, presented to the House November 2, 2007, <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10475&Lang=1&SourceId=216092> .
- 4 *Minutes of Proceedings*, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session, FAAE Meeting No. 2, November 20, 2007.
- 5 <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteeHome.aspx?Lang=1&PARLSES=392&JNT=0&SELID=e17 &COM=13185>
- 6 This includes even basic demographic information. For example, Afghanistan has not had an official census since 1979, before the decades of war and massive population displacements that followed. Estimates of Afghanistan's population in recent official and academic sources consulted range from a low of 20 million to a high of 32 million.
- 7 Ronald Neumann, "Success in Afghanistan: Why It Matters? Can It Be Done?", Address at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., May 31, 2007, transcript by Federal News Service, Washington D.C., p. 2, http://www.csis.org/media/isis/events/070531_csis_sfrtranscript.pdf .
- 8 Statement to the Committee by Afghan Ambassador to Canada Omar Samad, FAAE Meeting No. 6, p. 3.
- 9 Detailed documentation is available at <http://www.and.s.gov.af/ands/I-ANDS/ands-documents.asp?page=883736&numbpar=css&lang=eng&cont=right&class=dari> .
- 10 Robert Greenhill, President, CIDA (on behalf of Minister Beverley Oda) , "Speaking Notes", Appearance before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Supplementary Estimates 2007-2008, November 27, 2007, p. 1; see also *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 4, November 27, 2007.
- 11 Ibid. Minister of International Cooperation Bev Oda elaborated on CIDA's current role in her testimony to the Committee on 11 December 2007, FAAE Meeting No. 8. In addition, CIDA President Greenhill provided to the Committee the Agency's "Review of the Afghanistan Program: Final Version", Evaluation Division, Performance and Knowledge Management Branch, May 2007, <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/ANN-6513594-P4G> .
- 12 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 4, November 27, 2007, p. 13.
- 13 Smith, *Canada in Afghanistan: Is It Working?*, p. 5.
- 14 *Evidence*, 39th Parliament, 1st Session, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007, p. 3.
- 15 Ibid, p. 8.
- 16 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 51, April 26, 2007, p. 12.
- 17 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 54, May 8, 2007, p.3.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007, p. 16.
- 20 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 58, May 29, 2007, p. 2.

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- 21 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 28, November 8, 2006, p. 9.
- 22 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 51, April 26, 2007, p. 13.
- 23 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 42, February 27, 2007, p. 9.
- 24 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 31, November 22, 2006, pp. 1ff.
- 25 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 48, April 17, 2007, p. 10.
- 26 Lina Holguin, Submission to the Committee, Meeting No. 5, November 29, p. 3.
- 27 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 46, March 27, 2007, pp. 2 and 8.
- 28 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 58, May 29, 2007, p. 3.
- 29 Senlis Afghanistan, “Stumbling Into Chaos: Afghanistan on the Brink”, The Senlis Council, London, November 2007, p. 8, http://www.senliscouncil.net/modules/publications/Afghanistan_on_the_brink . DFIF stands for the UK Department for International Development.
- 30 See also Gerry Barr and Kevin McCort, “Aid as a Combat Tool is a Very Bad Idea”, *Embassy*, November 28, 2007, p. 8. Mr. Barr is president and CEO of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and Kevin McCort is interim CEO of CARE Canada.
- 31 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 58, May 29, 2007, p. 6.
- 32 Nipa Banerjee, “What the Critics Don’t Get About Afghanistan”, *The Ottawa Citizen*, December 4, 2007, p. A15.
- 33 The witnesses who made statements on the record were: Gerry Barr, Canadian Council for International Cooperation; Emmanuel Ish, World Vision Canada; Lina Holguin, Oxfam-Quebec; Mirwais Nahzat, World University Service of Canada, Graham McQueen, McMaster University; Gerry Olsen, Group of 78; Stefan Lehmeier, Coordinator, Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee. See *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 5 November 29,2007.
- 34 Mirwais Nahzat, Program Officer, World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Submission to the Committee, 39th Parliament, 2nd session , FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p. 4.
- 35 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 48, April 17, 2007, p. 4.
- 36 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 48, April 17, 2007, p. 11.
- 37 The five-year Compact between the international community and the government of Afghanistan was agreed to in London on 1 February 2006. For the full text see <http://www.unama-afg.org/news/londonConf/docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf> .
- 38 Mirwais Nahzat, Submission to the Committee, Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p. 1.
- 39 Graeme MacQueen, Submission to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p. 1.
- 40 Report of the Secretary-General, “The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security,” United Nations, September 21, 2007, *A/62/345–S/2007/555*, [http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/ UN-Docs/ repots-SG/2007/07sep21-report.pdf](http://www.unama-afg.org/docs/UN-Docs/reports-SG/2007/07sep21-report.pdf).
- 41 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 54, 8 May 2007, p. 4.
- 42 Gerald Ohlsen, Submission to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p. 4.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 44 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 28, November 8, 2006, p. 11.
- 45 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 58, May 29, 2007, p. 1.
- 46 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 42, February 27, 2007. p.6.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 54, May 8, 2007, p. 10.
- 49 *Ibid.*

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- 50 Graham MacQueen, Submission to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p .2.
- 51 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007, p. 3.
- 52 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 28, November 8, 2006, p. 5.
- 53 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007, p. 5.
- 54 UN Security Council, "The Situation in Afghanistan", 5760th Meeting, October 15, 2007, **S/PV.5760** (Provisional).
- 55 Steven Edwards, "Canada pushes for Afghanistan Envoy; Bernier to make case for UN role in War-torn Nation," *Calgary Herald*, September, 29, 2007.
- 56 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 47, March 29, 2007, pp. 13-14.
- 57 Ohlsen, Submission to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, p. 1; see also *Evidence* , FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007.
- 58 "Afghan Government and People Want Talks With Taliban, UN Envoy Says," UN News Centre, September 21, 2007, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23912&Cr=afghan&Cr1=#>
- 59 UN Security Council, The Situation in Afghanistan, 5760th Meeting, October 15, 2007, **S/PV.5760** (Provisional).
- 60 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 51, April 26, 2007, p. 13.
- 61 *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, pp. 12-15.
- 62 Statement of Ambassador Omar Samad to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 6, December 4, 2007, p. 3. see also *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 6, December 9, 2007, p. 9.
- 63 Kelly Cryderman, "Manley hopes to elevate Afghan dialogue", *The Calgary Herald*, November 29, 2007, p. A11.
- 64 House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Canada's International Policy Put to the Test in Haiti*, December 2006, Recommendation 7, p. 25, <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10475&Lang=1&SourceId=188702>.
- 65 *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, July 2007, Chapter nine, Recommendation 27, p. 171, <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteePublication.aspx?COM=10475&Lang=1&SourceId=213353>.
- 66 Mirwais Nahzat, Submission to the Committee, FAAE Meeting No. 5, 29 November 2007, pp. 1 and 4; see also *Evidence*, FAAE Meeting No. 5, November 29, 2007, pp. 5-9.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES (39-1)

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Department of National Defence		
R.J. Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff	2006/10/25	24
Rodney Monette, Acting Deputy Minister		24
Gordon O'Connor, Minister		24
Mennonite Economic Development Associates of Canada	2006/11/08	28
Linda M. Jones, Technical Director, International Operations		
Project Ploughshares		28
Ernie Regehr, Senior Policy Advisor		
University of Calgary		28
David Bercuson, Director, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies		
University of Ottawa		28
Roland Paris, Associate Professor, Public and International Affairs		
Mihreya Mohammed Aziz, Camerawoman		31
Hooshang Riazi		31
A. John Watson, President and Chief Executive Officer, CARE Canada		31
As individuals		
Najiba Ayoobi, Manager, Radio Killid	2006/11/22	31
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade		
Leonard Edwards, Deputy Minister	2007/03/20	44
Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs		44
David Mulroney, Associate Deputy Minister		44
Queen's University		
Douglas Bland, Chair, Defence Management Studies Program, School of Policy Studies		45

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
As an individual		
Walter Dorn, Professor and Co-Chair, Department of Security Studies, Canadian Forces College	2007/03/22	45
Minister of International Cooperation		
Josée Verner, Minister	2007/03/27	46
Center on International Cooperation		
Barnett Rubin, Director of Studies and Senior Fellow, University of New York	2007/03/29	47
University of Victoria		47
Gordon Smith, Executive Director, Centre for Global Studies and Adjunct Professor of Political Science		
Conference of Defence Associations		
Brian MacDonald, Senior Defence Analyst	2007/04/17	48
Alain Pellerin, Executive Director		48
Réseau francophone de recherche sur les opérations de paix		48
Marc André Boivin, Assistant-director		
UNICEF Canada		48
Nigel Fisher, President and Chief Executive Officer		
University of Ottawa		48
Pierre Beaudet, Professor, International Development and Globalization Program, Faculty of Social Sciences		
Royal Military College of Canada		49
Houchang Hassan-Yari, Professor, Political Science		
As an individual	2007/04/19	49
David Van Praagh, Journalist		
Department of National Defence	2007/04/25	50
Ward Elcock, Deputy Minister		
R.J. Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff		50
Gordon O'Connor, Minister		50
K.W. Watkin, Judge Advocate General, Operations, Office of the Judge Advocate General		50
Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)	2007/04/26	51
Mark Sedra, Research Associate		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Peace Dividend Trust Scott Gilmore, Executive Director		51
Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.) Seema Patel, Lead Project Consultant, Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project Steven Ross, Research Consultant, Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project	2007/05/08	54
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Musa Javed Chohan, High Commissioner for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Najm us Saqib, Deputy High-Commissioner Saqlain Syedah, First Secretary	2007/05/10	55 55 55
The Senlis Council Norine MacDonald, President and Lead Field Researcher, Security and Development Policy Group		58
As an individual Sarah Chayes, Founder, Arghand (cooperative in Kandahar)	2007/05/29	58

APPENDIX B LIST OF WITNESSES (39-2)

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Afghanistan Reference Group	2007/11/29	5
Gerry Barr, President-Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council for International Cooperation		
Lina Holguin, Policy Director, Oxfam Quebec		5
Emmanuel Isch, Vice President, International and Canadian Programs, World Vision Canada		5
Stefan Lehmeier, Coordinator, Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee		5
Graeme MacQueen, Associate Professor, McMaster University		5
Mirwais Nahzat, Program Officer, World University Service of Canada		5
Gerry Ohlsen, Vice-Chair, Group of 78		5
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada	2007/12/04	6
Omar Samad, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada		
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	2007/12/11	8
Maxime Bernier, Minister		
Yves Brodeur, Assistant Deputy Minister, Afghanistan Task Force		8
Minister of International Cooperation		8
Bev Oda, Minister		
Canadian International Development Agency		8
Stephen Wallace, Vice President, Afghanistan Task Force		

APPENDIX C LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and Individuals

Fisher, Nigel
Unicef Canada

Barr, Gerry
Afghanistan Reference Group

Holguin, Lina
Afghanistan Reference Group

Isch, Emmanuel
Afghanistan Reference Group

Lehmeier, Stefan
Afghanistan Reference Group

MacQueen, Graeme
Afghanistan Reference Group

Mirwais, Nahzat
Afghanistan Reference Group

Ohlsen, Gerry
Afghanistan Reference Group

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings from Session 39-1 ([Meetings Nos. 24, 28, 31, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 58](#)) and Session 39-2 ([Meetings Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Sorenson, MP
Chair

December 28, 2007.

DISSENTING OPINION submitted by CPC Members

*CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY PUT TO THE TEST IN AFGHANISTAN:
A PRELIMINARY REPORT*

On December 13, 2007, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (SCFAID) passed a Motion supporting a report entitled, *Canada's International Policy Put to the Test in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Report*.

The Government members of the committee did not vote for the motion on which the preliminary report is predicated because of the following objections:

First, Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) committee members have consistently maintained that the mission in Afghanistan merits serious and fulsome discussion executed in a manner that respects the importance of all aspects of the mission. As such, CPC members would be remiss to support a preliminary report that, by virtue of its unrealistic timeframe, prohibited any level of thorough and rigorous analysis of the evidence; not only is there an intention to invite more witnesses to appear before SCFAID but the possibility also exists that the committee may travel to Afghanistan, among other possible options on studying Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

Second, the motion that yielded this preliminary report required the report to be merely and purely a summation of facts obtained from evidence already presented before the committee. The report as passed by SCFAID, through a combined opposition vote, was not a neutral representation of facts but was a report peppered with implicit recommendations and editorials many with which the committee could not agree. By definition preliminary, implies something that is a work in progress. Therefore, the inclusion of recommendations, whether implicit or explicit, would be premature as the committee's study of Canada's Mission in Afghanistan will be continuing in 2008.

Third, CPC committee members share the view that this intended preliminary report was not assigned due time to create an accurate and full summation of the evidence placed before the committee thus far. Instead, it was rushed through without adequate debate, reflective of the efforts by opposition party members to act in a clearly partisan direction.

For these broad reasons, the CPC members cannot support the preliminary report as it currently reads. CPC members of the committee direct readers to review the evidence contained in the transcripts of the meetings held thus far during the committee's Study of Canada's Mission in Afghanistan at the website:

http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/cmte/CommitteeHome.aspx?Lang=1&PARLSES=392&JNT=0&SELID=e17_&COM=13185

**Dissenting Opinion from the Bloc Québécois
on the Preliminary Report of the
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International
Development, entitled:**

***“Canada’s International Policy Put to the Test in
Afghanistan:
A Preliminary Report”***

The Bloc Québécois has always defended the principle that elected representatives must be front and centre in public debates and take part in them: that is a basic democratic principle. And yet, by mandating the independent advisory panel on the Afghan mission to study Canada’s future role in Afghanistan when the current mission ends, set for February 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has ignored this principle, preventing parliamentarians from fully carrying out their role and debating one of the most important questions for both Quebeckers and Canadians.

The *Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development* is fully capable of performing the work mandated to the *Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan*. In order to reinforce the role of parliamentarians, the Bloc Québécois tabled a motion on November 20, 2007, in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development asking that the Committee “[. . .] make recommendations on Canada’s role in Afghanistan at the end of the present mission; and that the Committee make a preliminary report to the House of Commons by December 14, 2007,”¹ that is, before the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan tables its report, slated for late January 2008.

Contrary to the request of the Bloc Québécois, the current preliminary report contains no recommendation on Canada’s role in Afghanistan after February 2009. The Bloc Québécois therefore makes the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1 – End of the current Canadian mission in Kandahar**

In line with the Government of Canada’s commitments to NATO, Canadian military forces will reach the end of their mission in the Kandahar region in February 2009. The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada not extend the mandate of the current mission within NATO’s

1 FAAE, 39th Parliament, 2nd session, *Minutes of Proceeding*, Meeting No. 2, November 20, 2007.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the Kandahar region once it ends in February 2009. The Bloc Québécois calls on the Government of Canada to announce immediately that it will not renew the mission when it ends in February 2009.

- **Recommendation 2 – Withdrawal of Canadian military forces from the Kandahar region and the non-participation of Canada in combat zones**

The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada inform the members of NATO as soon as possible that it will withdraw its military forces from the Kandahar region when its ISAF mission ends in February 2009, so that they can find relieving troops.

The Bloc Québécois also recommends that the Canadian military forces do not participate in any mission in a combat zone.

- **Recommendation 3 – Maintaining some Canadian military presence in Afghanistan**

While the Bloc Québécois calls on the Government of Canada to withdraw its military forces from the Kandahar region in February 2009, the Bloc Québécois believes that the Government of Canada should continue to maintain some military presence in Afghanistan in order to protect the humanitarian workers and should thus leave a military contingent in Afghanistan. However, this contingent's mission should be to establish and maintain security perimeters in order to allow reconstruction, and it should also have a mandate to continue training Afghanistan's national army.

- **Recommendation 4 – Rebalancing the Canadian mission in Afghanistan**

The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada rebalance its mission in Afghanistan by increasing development assistance and putting more emphasis on diplomacy.

- **Recommendation 5 – Development assistance for Afghanistan**

The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada prioritize development assistance in a clear and concrete fashion.

1. To that end, the Government of Canada should increase its development assistance for Afghanistan. Canada's greater financial leeway means that Canada could invest more in Afghanistan by considerably increasing the development assistance budget, so as to

meet the objective committed to by the Government of Canada and set by the UN of 0.7% of GDP in development assistance by 2015.

2. All the development assistance that Canada offers should be awarded taking the interests of the Afghan people into consideration, focus on sustainable development and ensure respect and protection of the local population's fundamental human rights. To that end, the Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada increase the number of CIDA employees in Afghanistan in order to be better able to gain knowledge in the field and of Afghan needs and to ensure better control and management of funds and assistance programs.
3. The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada direct as much of its development assistance as possible through multilateral organizations, and UN agencies in particular, in order to eliminate overlapping and conflicting efforts.
4. The Bloc Québécois supports the Government of Canada in its desire to have a UN High Representative for Afghanistan appointed who would be responsible for coordinating the entire reconstruction effort in consultation with the Afghan government. The Bloc Québécois therefore urges the Government of Canada to pursue its efforts, inspired by what was done in Bosnia and Kosovo. This High Representative must also be able to liaise between NATO and the reconstruction teams in order to steer the assistance toward the priorities identified during the London Conference. It would be desirable that this High Representative become the veritable overseer of international intervention with the Afghan government. The Bloc Québécois therefore believes that the Government of Canada should convince its partners to make coordination of the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan a priority.

- **Recommendation 6 – Investing in diplomacy**

For the Bloc Québécois, successful reconstruction in Afghanistan cannot be attained by force of arms alone. For this reason, the Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada invest more heavily in diplomacy.

1. The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada firmly support all the Afghan government's efforts to reach out and integrate into civil society those Taliban and Afghan insurgents prepared to lay down their weapons without demanding unacceptable conditions.
2. The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada intensify its diplomatic efforts with Afghanistan's regional actors, including

Iran, Pakistan, India and China. These countries must be involved in the resolution of the conflict and, if possible, the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

3. The Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada be the instigator of the organization, as quickly as possible, of an international conference on Afghanistan. This conference will review the reconstruction and development assistance provided by the international community in Afghanistan, the poppy cultivation issue, and the security situation in Afghanistan. The conference should include Afghanistan's regional actors, including Pakistan, Iran, India and China.

- **Recommendation 7 – The poppy cultivation issue**

Given the ineffectiveness of the strategy currently pursued by NATO and the United States to stem the increase in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, the Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada review its approach to this issue and encourage its allies to do the same, while keeping in mind that eradication is not a viable or conceivable solution because it increases the vulnerability of farmers and their dependence on opium trafficking, as pointed out by many experts and international organizations, including the World Bank. To that end, the Bloc Québécois recommends that the Government of Canada adopt and apply a three-stage strategy:

1. Help fight opium trafficking and traffickers;
2. Help fund and set up alternative crop programs and build infrastructures—roads, public markets and refrigeration equipment—to market products from alternative crops and help introduce mechanisms that would encourage Canada to buy the harvests directly from farmers in order to help this market get established.
3. In consultation with the international community, determine the possibility, for a transitional period, of buying some or all of the poppy harvests directly from farmers for medical purposes, for example for making codeine or morphine.

- **Recommendation 8 – Treatment of prisoners**

The Bloc Québécois urges the Government of Canada to ensure that the prisoners it transfers to the Afghan authorities are treated in accordance with the Canada-Afghanistan agreement on the treatment of prisoners and the Geneva Convention. The Government of Canada should ensure that the prisoners it transfers are not tortured and that their basic rights are respected. If it cannot obtain these assurances, the Government of Canada must stop transferring prisoners.