

THE MANLEY REPORT ON AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

Focus

Two and half years after taking on the toughest military assignment in Afghanistan, Canadian politicians put their commitment to the mission at the top of their agenda. This *News in Review* story examines the release of the Manley Report and the national debate over whether or not to continue Canada's contribution to the war in Afghanistan.

Note

The official name of Manley's committee and the report they prepared is the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan. Many media outlets adopted the unofficial name the "Manley Report" when referring to the final document that included the panel's findings.

John Manley appeared before the media, report in hand, to deliver the most controversial recommendation of his intensive three-month study of Canada's role in Afghanistan. "The mission is in jeopardy," Manley explained. "There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province . . . we hope that this [report] is not a poison pill. We need to be very direct with NATO" ("Extend Afghan mission if NATO sends more troops," *cbc.ca*). In one bold pronouncement, Manley and his panel delivered their verdict, praising Canadian troops for their valour but calling for an end to the mission if NATO doesn't provide more troops in the battle against insurgents in Kandahar.

Harper's Afghanistan Dilemma

By the fall of 2007 it had become clear that the Afghan National Security Forces, comprising both the army and the police, would not be ready by 2009 to take over from NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the battle against insurgents. Facing this dilemma, Prime Minister Stephen Harper felt compelled to find a way to extend the Canadian mission until at least 2011.

Harper and his Conservative colleagues demonstrated their support for the Canadian mission in Afghanistan shortly after winning a minority government in 2006. Despite the risk of seeing their government brought down over the issue, the Conservatives put forward a motion to extend the Afghan mission to February 2009. Fearing repercussions from a vote-weary electorate, Parliament backed the extension, with the motion passing by a mere four votes. This boldness in

the face of potential electoral adversity proved to be the hallmark of the Harper approach to the war in Afghanistan. Clearly sold on the fundamental righteousness of the mission, Harper and the Conservatives moved full-steam ahead in their efforts to back the military's quest to bring stability to Kandahar. They authorized the purchase of new equipment and agreed to bolster the ranks of the Canadian Forces (CF) through aggressive recruitment. They pledged over a billion dollars to Afghanistan to aid in reconstruction, infrastructure development, and the promotion of democratic institutions. Reports from CF personnel indicate that the training of the Afghan National Security Forces is going well, and the efforts of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) are finally making a noticeable difference in Kandahar. Despite these seemingly positive developments, public opinion polls across Canada have never shown widespread support for the war effort. While Canadians are proud of the CF, they are divided over whether or not Canada should be risking the lives of their soldiers in Afghanistan.

The Blue Ribbon Panel

In the fall of 2007, Harper made public his belief that the mission should stretch beyond February 2009. Once again, he was willing to put his government on the line to get an extension—and he had a few tricks up his sleeve to get what he wanted. Perhaps one of the most astute political strategists Ottawa has seen in decades, Harper sent the Liberals into fits with the appointment of one of their own to head a blue-ribbon panel looking into the Afghan mission. Former Chrétien cabinet minister and Liberal star John

Further Research

To stay informed about this difficult mission, consider visiting the Web sites of the ISAF (www.nato.int/isaf), Canadian Forces (www.forces.gc.ca) and the PRTs (www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca).

Who's Who

The members of the panel that wrote the report were John Manley, Canada's former deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs; Derek Burney, former Canadian ambassador to the United States; Pamela Wallin, former Canadian consul general in New York City and well-known broadcaster; Paul Tellier, former clerk of the Privy Council; and the Honourable Jake Epp, a former federal cabinet minister.

Manley, a vocal and passionate supporter of Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, readily accepted Harper's invitation to chair the panel. Manley's panel got to work quickly and efficiently, convening four meetings in Ottawa, New York, Washington, and Brussels. The panel also took part in a four-province tour of Afghanistan. All this activity took place within a two-month time frame. By the end of 2007, the meetings were finished and the report was in the works, slated for release early in the new year.

The Manley Report

To the surprise of many Canadians, Manley's panel reported that the situation in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan had gradually become destabilized over the previous year. The panel concluded that the best way to combat the problem of instability was to bring in more NATO troops to support those doing the most fighting: namely the Canadians in Kandahar.

Noting that Canadians are suffering the highest fatality rate of any NATO partner, the Manley panel directed the government to pull Canadian troops out of Afghanistan if NATO did not provide a battle group of 1 000 soldiers by February 2009. The panel told the Canadian government to purchase helicopters to transport troops in an effort to minimize the risk of roadside bomb deaths and suicide attacks on Canadian convoys on Kandahar's dangerous roadways. The panel also called for the purchase of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance purposes. Further, Manley's report soundly criticized the Canadian government for failing to clearly communicate the reasons for our military involvement in Afghanistan to the Canadian people. The panel put forward the belief that public support would only follow candour and honesty regarding the mission. The

panel also advised the government to co-ordinate the war effort, shifting away from an almost exclusively military approach to one that involved more action and input from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the panel's opinion, the leader of this initiative should be the Prime Minister himself.

Reactions

The release of the Manley Report put NATO on notice that Canadians were tired of carrying the burden of the fighting in Kandahar. Canadian troops needed help and, if NATO wasn't willing to provide troops and equipment, Canada should withdraw from the volatile region. A Canadian withdrawal would have devastating repercussions for the people of Kandahar, not to mention disastrous consequences for the credibility of the NATO-led effort in Afghanistan. The troop commitment issue was at the top of the diplomatic agenda heading into the NATO meeting of heads of state in Bucharest, Romania, in April 2008.

At home, politicians took stock of their own positions. The Conservatives agreed to follow the recommendations of the Manley report and put forward a motion to extend the mission based on the panel's findings. The Liberals drafted an amendment to the motion that showed some common ground between Parliament's two largest parties—but no one was sure if there was enough common ground for the motion to pass. Meanwhile, the NDP, the Green Party, and the Bloc Québécois all called for an end to the mission either immediately or by the original February 2009 deadline.

What's Next?

The Manley Report and the subsequent debate put the war in Afghanistan back on the political front burner. Shortly after the release of the report, Harper

announced that the vote on the motion to extend the mission would be a confidence vote and that the defeat of the motion would trigger an election. Meanwhile, in late February, the Conservatives released a middle-of-the-road budget that left the opposition with little to complain about. It became clear that the budget would not bring down Harper's minority government.

However, continuing to bubble on the front burner rested the fate of the mission in the volatile province of Kandahar. With no troop commitments from NATO, and the future of Harper's Conservative government resting on the motion to extend the mission, Canadians faced the very real possibility of a spring election with the Afghan mission as the primary campaign issue.

Questions

1. What bold pronouncement did John Manley make at the news conference that corresponded with the release of his panel's report?

2. Identify Prime Minister Harper's strategy to get an extension to the Afghan mission.

3. How did NATO react to the Manley Report's troop commitment demand?

4. How did Canada's opposition parties respond to the report?

5. Outline your personal response to the major findings of the Manley Report.

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Video Review

Further Research

To learn the current positions of Canada's major political parties on the changing situation in Afghanistan, visit their official Web sites: Conservative Party (www.conservative.ca), Liberal Party (www.liberal.ca), New Democratic Party (www.ndp.ca), Bloc Québécois (www.blocquebecois.org) and Green Party (www.greenparty.ca)

Watch the video and answer the following questions.

1. What critical decision did the government of Canada have to make regarding the war in Afghanistan early in 2008?

2. a) Who headed the panel looking into Canadian efforts in Afghanistan?

b) Why did the appointment of this man seem like a strange choice for Prime Minister Harper to make?

3. Identify one of the options given to the Manley panel regarding the future of the Afghan mission.

4. According to former deputy minister of National Defence Robert Fowler, what is the overarching issue the panel needs to address?

5. What is the core weakness in the NATO-ISAF effort in Afghanistan?

6. Why is the departure of Canada's troops considered unthinkable by some?

7. Identify one of the recommendations made by the Manley panel.

8. What condition did Canada place on its continued involvement in the Afghan mission?

9. Where do the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and Liberals stand on the Afghan mission?

10. What criticisms did the panel have for the government's handling of the war in Afghanistan?

11. What "bipartisan consensus" does Prime Minister Harper hope to achieve going into a parliamentary vote on the Afghan mission?

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Timeline

September 11, 2001 Terrorists attack three targets in the U.S., including the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

September 12, 2001 NATO invokes treaty provisions that confirm that the attack against the U.S. was an attack against all of NATO's partners. Meanwhile, the UN affirms the U.S. right to self-defence and the need to bring the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks to justice.

October 7, 2001 The U.S. and Britain begin air strikes in the lead-up to a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan. Canada contributes with warships and aircraft deployed to the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Apollo.

December 5, 2001 The Bonn Agreement establishes an interim Afghan government in preparation for democratic elections once the country is stabilized. Hamid Karzai is later appointed interim head of the government of Afghanistan.

December 20, 2001 The UN Security Council gives NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) permission to begin operations in Afghanistan.

January 2002 After re-establishing diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, Canada pledges \$100-million to Afghan reconstruction. This amount rises to over \$1-billion over the next five years.

February - August 2002 850 Canadian troops are deployed to Kabul. Canadian Forces serve there until their redeployment to Kandahar in 2005.

October 7, 2004 Hamid Karzai wins the Afghan presidential election by a slim margin.

September 2005 Parliamentary and provincial elections take place in Afghanistan; the Canadian Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) is formed to advise the new government of Afghanistan. The Afghan National Assembly convenes for the first time in December.

January 31, 2006 The Afghanistan Compact is signed in London. International donors pledge over \$10-billion to aid the Afghan people between 2006 and 2011.

February 2006 Re-deployment to Kandahar is complete. Canada begins military operations in Afghanistan's most dangerous region.

May 17, 2006 Parliament approves a two-year extension to the Afghan mission, taking Canada's commitment to February 2009.

September 1-20, 2006 Canada leads an offensive against insurgents in the volatile Panjwahi and Zhari districts; Operation Medusa sees some of the heaviest direct fighting between Canadian troops and insurgents.

June 22, 2007 The Harper government announces that the Afghan mission will not be extended without the consent of Parliament.

October 12, 2007 Harper announces the formation of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future in Afghanistan; the blue-ribbon panel, led by John Manley, is directed to deliver their report in early 2008.

January 22, 2008 The final report of the Manley panel is released, and the debate regarding Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan shifts into high gear.

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Key Recommendations

Note

When the panel refers to the Afghan National Security Forces, they mean the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan released its report in late January 2008. This is a summary of the key recommendations. Read the recommendations and complete the questions that follow.

Our panel's objective is to proffer our best advice to Parliament on the manner in which Canada can best contribute to stability in Afghanistan, and to arrange for a timely handover of lead responsibility for security and economic development to the Afghan authorities.

We believe that Canada's role in Afghanistan should give greater emphasis to diplomacy, reconstruction, and governance and that the military mission should shift increasingly towards the training of the Afghan National Security Forces.

These efforts should be led by the Prime Minister, supported by a special cabinet committee and by a single task force directing the activities of all departments and agencies. The objective is to ensure better balance, tighter co-ordination, and more systematic evaluation of Canada's contributions.

We recommend that:

1. Canada should assert a stronger and more disciplined diplomatic position regarding Afghanistan and the regional players. Specifically, Canada, in concert with key allies, should press for:

- Early appointment of a high-level civilian representative of the UN Secretary-General to ensure greater coherence in the civilian and military effort in Afghanistan;
- Early adoption by NATO of a comprehensive political-military plan to address security concerns and imbalances, especially the need for more troops to bolster security and

expedite training and equipment for the Afghan National Security Forces;

- Forceful representations with Afghanistan's neighbours, in particular with Pakistan, to reduce the risks posed to regional stability and security by recent developments in that country; and
- Concerted efforts by the Afghan government to improve governance by tackling corruption and ensuring basic services to the Afghan people, and pursuing some degree of political reconciliation in Afghanistan.

2. Canada should continue with its responsibility for security in Kandahar beyond February 2009, in a manner fully consistent with the UN mandate on Afghanistan, including its combat role, but with increasing emphasis on training the Afghan National Security Forces expeditiously to take lead responsibility for security in Kandahar and Afghanistan as a whole. As the Afghan National Security Forces gain capability, Canada's combat role should be significantly reduced.

- This commitment is contingent on the assignment of an additional battle group (of about 1 000 soldiers) to Kandahar by NATO and/or other allies before February 2009.
- To better ensure the safety and effectiveness of the Canadian contingent, the Government should also secure medium helicopter lift capacity and high-performance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance before February 2009.

3. Canada's contribution to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan should be revamped, giving higher priority than at present to direct, bilateral project assistance that addresses the immediate, practical needs of the Afghan people, especially in Kandahar province, as well as longer-term capacity building.

4. The Government should systematically assess the effectiveness of Canadian contributions and the extent to which the benchmarks and timelines of the Afghanistan Compact

have been met. Future commitments should be based on those assessments.

The Government should provide the public with franker and more frequent reporting on events in Afghanistan, offering more assessments of Canada's role, and giving greater emphasis to the diplomatic and reconstruction efforts as well as those of the military.

Source: Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan – Final Report (January 2008), pp.37-38; www.independent-panel-independent.ca/main-eng.html.

Questions

1. What diplomatic efforts does the panel recommend that the government of Canada pursue with regard to the Afghan mission?

2. What military recommendations does the panel make?

3. Identify the conditions under which Canada should continue to pursue the mission in Afghanistan.

4. What role should the training of the Afghan National Security Forces and reconstruction play in Canada's future participation in the Afghan mission?

5. Rank order a point-form list of the key recommendations of the panel.

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Reactions to the Report

Did you know . . .

The production of opium is booming in Afghanistan. In 2007, it is estimated that opium from Afghanistan had a street value of USD\$60-billion. This is yet another complicating factor in the conflict in this poor country.

NATO's Reaction

A few weeks after the release of the report, Defence Minister Peter MacKay attended a NATO meeting in Lithuania. At the meeting he made it clear that other NATO nations needed to step up or, as was made clear in the Manley Report, Canada would be pulling out. Some NATO partners pointed out that as the U.S. had agreed to send 3 000 marines to Afghanistan—with 2 000 of those soldiers assigned to the south—Canada's demands had already been met. MacKay responded by saying that 1 000 troops were still needed because the U.S. troops were slated for only a seven-month deployment. Some nations—Poland and France in particular—indicated that they might be able to help in some small capacity, but no firm commitments were in place by the time MacKay made his way back home. The next step will come in April when Prime Minister Harper meets with NATO heads of state in Bucharest, Romania, where he is expected to let the alliance know whether or not Canada intends to proceed with the mission. Canada's "send troops or else" ultimatum has left more than a few NATO partners extremely anxious about future prospects in Afghanistan.

The Canadian Political Reaction

The release of the Manley Report also gave Canada's main political parties a chance to restate their positions regarding the war.

- The Conservative Party – Manley's panel gave the Conservatives exactly what they were looking for, and Harper agreed to follow the panel's recommendations. He put forward a motion in the House of Commons, and debate on the motion began shortly thereafter.

- The Liberal Party – The Liberals praised the candour of the report but called for an end to the combat mission by February 2009 with a new focus on training the Afghan National Security Forces and reconstruction efforts in Kandahar. Liberal leader Stéphane Dion met with Harper and put forward an amendment to the original motion with some common ground found between the two leaders.
- The NDP – With 80 Canadians dead and \$3.1-billion spent on the mission, the NDP renewed their call for a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- The Green Party – The Green Party advised the government to notify NATO that Canada is finished in Kandahar and move the mission back to Kabul to help bolster the nation's fledgling democratic institutions.
- The Bloc Québécois – Despite the conclusions of the Manley panel, the Bloc Québécois reiterated their point that Canada had done enough and should rotate out of Kandahar in February 2009.

Undeterred by the fragile status of his minority government, Harper announced debate on his motion to extend the mission in February with a vote on the motion to take place in March. The meeting between Liberal leader Stéphane Dion and Prime Minister Harper did show promising signs of compromise between the two leaders. However, things could change once the Afghan mission is put to a vote, with the Conservatives unwavering in their desire to extend the campaign and the Liberals calling for an end to active combat by early 2009. Which way the vote will go is still very much up in the air.

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Troop Commitments

One of the most pressing concerns mentioned in the Manley Report is the number of troops committed to ISAF by

NATO nations. Review the following chart and complete the activity that follows.

Country	# of soldiers	Fatalities	Location of troops	Mandate
Canada	2 500	78	South – Kandahar province	Combat and reconstruction
Afghan National Army	28 600	n/a	All over the country	Combat
Afghan National Police	30 200	n/a	All over the country	Law enforcement
United States	15 038	479	Eastern provinces bordering on Pakistan	Combat and reconstruction
Britain	7 753	86	South – Helmand province	Combat and reconstruction
Germany	3 210	25	North	Reconstruction; barred from combat
Italy	2 880	11	West – Hirat province	Reconstruction; barred from combat
Netherlands	1 650	14	South	Combat and reconstruction
France	1 515	12	Kabul and surrounding area	Security; allowed to engage in combat if necessary
Turkey	1 219	0	Central	Security; works closely with France to maintain stability in Kabul
Poland	1 141	1	Southeast	Combat
Australia	900	4	Central	Security; reconstruction
Denmark	780	8	South – Helmand province	Combat
Spain	750	23	West	Reconstruction
Other nations	4 500		All over the country	Many of these troops are barred from combat

Source: NATO-ISAF - www.nato.int/isaf

Note: NATO-ISAF has roughly 43 250 troops, including the 15 000 U.S. troops listed above. The U.S. also has 13 000 troops involved in Operation Enduring Freedom deployed in Afghanistan and has pledged an additional 3 000 marines slated for a seven-month deployment beginning in the summer of 2008.

Questions

1. Why do you think so many NATO nations have barred their troops from combat? Could the government of Canada bar Canadian troops from combat in the volatile south? Explain your answer.
2. Identify the three nations that have taken on the heaviest burden in Afghanistan. Do you think these nations should be entitled to rotate out of the more dangerous areas while others would rotate into the combat regions? Why do you think this isn't happening?
3. Most NATO countries send troops on six-month missions to Afghanistan. The U.S. generally sends soldiers on missions lasting 15 months. Which do you think might be most effective? Why? Which might be most dangerous? Why?

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Activity: Why Should We Stay in Afghanistan?

Quote

"I believe in a strong international role for Canada. I think this world is getting more complicated, more difficult, more dangerous."
— John Manley
(*Toronto Star*, January 23, 2008)

Your Task

The Manley Report criticized the government of Canada—both the ruling Conservatives and their Liberal predecessors—for failing to communicate the reasons why Canadians are fighting in Afghanistan. In an effort to bring clarity to Canada's position, the panel came up with four reasons justifying Canada's involvement in the Afghan mission. Your task is to review the following excerpt from the Manley Report and complete the task that follows.

Step One: Reading

Read the following excerpt from the Manley Report. Highlight the four main reasons for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. Be prepared to refer back to these reasons when completing Step Two.

For our part, panel members are persuaded by four strong reasons for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan:

First, Canada has sent soldiers, diplomats and aid workers to Afghanistan as part of an international response to the threat to peace and security inherent in Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks. The world had largely abandoned Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989; civil war and state failure followed. The haven that the Taliban gave to Al Qaeda before the 9/11 attacks showed how disorder and repressive extremism there could create a threat to the security of other countries—including Canada—far distant from Afghanistan's borders. A primary Canadian objective, while helping Afghans, has been to help ensure that Afghanistan itself does not again revert to the status of sanctuary and head office for global terrorism. Countries as fortunately endowed as Canada—and as interdependent with the rest of the world—owe obligations to the international community. Participating in the international intervention in Afghanistan, at the request of the Afghan government, has been one of those obligations. The consequences of international failure in Afghanistan—for Afghans and for the world—would be disastrous.

Second, Canadians are in Afghanistan in support of the United Nations, contributing to the UN's capacity to respond to threats to peace and security, and to foster better futures in the world's developing countries. This is not the same UN peacekeeping that Canadians have known and supported in the past; in Afghanistan there is not yet a peace to keep, no truce to supervise, or "green line" to watch. This is a peace-enforcement operation, as provided for under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It is a collective use of force, under international law, to address a threat to international peace and security posed by continuing disorder in Afghanistan. It reflects as well the changing nature of UN-mandated peace missions, which have become more robust in the use of force to protect civilians since the harsh lessons learned in the murderous disasters of Bosnia and Rwanda. Similarly authorized enforcement missions have served in Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In fact, these are the kinds of force the UN might be called upon to apply more often in future, where the human rights and human security of ordinary people are threatened. When the UN and its members authorize such

a mission, Canadians have a choice: Canada can participate where Canadian capabilities allow, or we can leave the mission to others.

A third reason for Canada's engagement is that the military mission in Afghanistan is chiefly, though not exclusively, a NATO endeavour (26 of the 39 ISAF partners are NATO members). NATO is the UN's instrument for stabilizing a durable peace in Afghanistan, enabling that country's development and the improvement of its governance. Canada's political and security interests for almost 60 years have been advanced by Canadian membership in the NATO alliance, a history reaching from the early years of the Cold War to life-saving NATO interventions in the Balkans. More often than not, Canadian interests are well served by active membership in an organization of democracies that gives every member country a voice in protecting our shared security. Afghanistan represents a challenge to NATO's credibility; to meet that challenge, NATO partners will have to assign more forces to Afghanistan and execute a more effective counterinsurgency strategy. NATO's success in that conflict will serve Canada's own security interests.

There is a fourth and equally powerful reason for Canadian engagement: the promotion and protection of human security in fragile states. Results in Afghanistan can influence the willingness of Canadians, and of others, to act in future to protect the lives and rights of people who cannot count on the protection of their own government. Rwanda's genocide in 1994 proved what can happen when the world ignores impending catastrophe. Time and again, failed and fragile states—and governments that betray responsibilities to protect their own citizens—jeopardize international order and test the strength of our convictions. These are times for capable countries to take a stand. Far from breaching its responsibility to its citizens, the Afghan government has invited international help. An effective international response can serve Canadian interests and give practical force to our shared values. Reasserting Canada's international reputation for reliability in Afghanistan can enhance Canada's own influence in resolving crises in the future.

The panel finds these reasons all the more persuasive because they are commonly reiterated by Canadians with deep professional experience in Afghanistan. Canadian soldiers and civilians have been articulate about their mission, and confident that they are making serious contributions to the well-being of Afghans and to the security of Canadians.

These are inescapable considerations that belong in any true assessment of the Canadian engagement in Afghanistan. They have informed the panel's analysis of Canada's military and civilian activities in Afghanistan so far, and they have shaped the recommendations that flow from the facts we have found on the ground.

Source: Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan – Final Report (January 2008), pp.20-23; www.independent-panel-independant.ca/main-eng.html

Step 2: Summarize the document

1. In one or two sentences, summarize each of the four reasons for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.
2. Rank the reasons in order of importance. Explain your ranking in a short paragraph (approximately 75 words).

