

# NEWS IN REVIEW



FEBRUARY 2008



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R E S O U R C E G U I D E



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# ***News in Review***

## **Resource Guide**

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February 2008



## Credits

**Resource Guide Writers:** Jill Colyer, Sean Dolan, Peter Flaherty, Jim L'Abbé

**Copy Editor and Desktop Publisher:** Susan Rosenthal

**Resource Guide Graphics:** Laraine Bone

**Production Assistant:** Carolyn McCarthy

**Resource Guide Editor:** Don Quinlan

**Supervising Manager:** Karen Bower

**Host:** Carla Robinson

**Senior Producer:** Nigel Gibson

**Producer:** Lou Kovacs

**Video Writers:** Nigel Gibson, Mark Harrison, Jennifer Harwood

**Director:** Rob Evans

**Graphic Artist:** Mark W. Harvey

**Editor:** David Smith

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### ***News in Review*, February 2008**

#### **1. The Assassination of Benazir Bhutto**

(Start: 00:46; Length: 12:36)

#### **2. Cracking Down on Tasers**

(Start: 13:31; Length: 14:07)

#### **3. The Oil Sands and the Environment**

(Start: 27:50; Length: 17:37)

#### **4. The Hidden Wounds of War**

(Start: 45:39; Length: 14:42)

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## In This Issue . . .

### NiR Study Modules

Using print and video material from archival issues of *News in Review*, teachers and students can create thematic modules for independent assignments, and small group study.

### Related CBC Videos

Other videos available from CBC Learning; see the back cover for contact details.

### THE ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO (Start: 00:46; Length: 12:36)

On December 27, 2007, former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto was murdered as she left an election rally in Rawalpindi. Bhutto's death caused widespread rioting and forced the government to postpone a general election until February. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at the life of Benazir Bhutto and what her death could mean for her troubled country.

#### NiR Study Modules

State of Emergency in Pakistan  
December 2007  
London Bombers: Alienation and Terror  
September 2006  
Kashmir Quake: Disaster in South Asia  
November 2005  
London Bombs: A Summer of Terror  
November 2005  
Routing the Taliban, December 2001  
Terrorist Attack: The Retaliation  
November 2001  
The Indian Subcontinent: Turning 50  
October 1997

#### Related CBC Videos

*Murder Unveiled*

### CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS (Start: 13:31; Length: 14:07)

In late December, the RCMP announced it would be restricting its use of electric stun guns, or Tasers. The announcement came two months after a Polish immigrant at the Vancouver airport died after police used Tasers and then restrained him. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at how that death set off a national debate about the safety of stun guns.

#### NiR Study Modules

Gang Wars: Bloodbath in Vancouver  
February 2006  
Guns and Gangs: Toronto Fights Back  
January 2006  
The Police and Changing Times  
December 1992

#### Related CBC Videos

*Eye Witness: Unreliable Evidence*  
*Inside the Interrogation Room: Police Tactics*  
*Police Diversity: To Serve and Protect the Changing Face of Canada*

## **THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT (Start: 27:50; Length: 17:37)**

Alberta's oil sands have transformed Canada into a world energy superpower. The profits are staggering but so are the costs to the environment. In this *News in Review* story we'll look at the effects of this modern-day black gold rush. We'll also examine how the rising demand for oil is forcing the Alberta government to make some very difficult choices.

### **NiR Study Modules**

Going Green to Fight Global Warming  
October 2007

Dangers of Global Warming, May 2007

A Call for Action on Climate Change  
March 2007

The Big Melt: Canada's Changing Arctic  
September 2006

Boom Times: Alberta's Red-hot Economy  
May, 2006

After Kyoto: Trying to Cool the Planet  
February 2006

Oil and the Dollar: The Canadian Crunch  
December 2005

Energy Shock: The Rising Price of Oil  
November 2004

Kyoto: The Battle Lines Are Drawn  
December 2002

Rising Oil Prices: The New Energy  
Crisis, April 2000

### **Related CBC Videos**

*Arctic Rush*

*Ghosts of Future Past: Tom Berger in the North*

*Land of Fire: Searching for Natural Gas Hydrate*

*Powering the Future: Hydrogen the New Oil When is Enough, Enough?*

*When Less Is More*

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## **THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR (Start: 45:39; Length: 14:42)**

Many Canadian soldiers have been killed and wounded in Afghanistan. Now some "healthy" soldiers are returning home to discover they too, have been wounded, but didn't even know it. In this *News in Review* story we'll examine the devastating psychological impact of war on soldiers. We'll also take a very personal look at the struggle of a Canadian soldier who served in Afghanistan.

### **NiR Study Modules**

Selling Canada's Military to Canadians  
November 2007

The Van Doos Head for Afghanistan  
October 2007

Afghanistan: The Dead and the Wounded  
February 2007

Canada's Bloody War in Afghanistan  
November 2006

Afghan Fighting: Canadians Under Attack  
May 2006

Afghanistan: Canadians Prepare for War  
March 2006

Dying for Peace: Our Soldiers in Kabul  
March 2004

Canada Returns to Afghanistan  
November 2003

Canada's Forces Go to Afghanistan  
March 2002

Afghanistan: Telling the Story  
February 2002

### **Related CBC Videos**

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*The Great War*

*Beyond Words: Photographers of War*

*Inside Information: Stories from the War Zone*



Sections marked with this symbol contain content suitable for younger viewers.

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a major opposition leader in Pakistan, and the consequences of her death for that country's already troubled and unstable political situation.

On December 27, 2007, moments after completing a campaign speech in the city of Rawalpindi, Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's main political opponent to the regime of President Pervez Musharraf, was assassinated. A suicide bomber fired shots at Bhutto while she emerged briefly through an opening in the roof of her vehicle to acknowledge the cheers of her supporters. Then he blew himself up. Along with Bhutto, another 20 people were killed in the attack, including members of her security staff and bystanders. Bhutto's death, while not completely unexpected, threw an already chaotic and unstable country into a downward spiral of crisis and conflict, leading many observers, both in Pakistan and elsewhere, to fear for the country's future.

Bhutto had returned to Pakistan in October 2007 to resume her position as leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the main political rival to Musharraf, and to campaign in elections that were to be held on January 8, 2008. Shortly after her arrival, she survived a massive bomb attack that struck her entourage as it made its way through the streets of Karachi. Over 140 people were killed in this attack. Since that failed attempt on her life, Bhutto knew that the political forces inside the country that opposed her policies and hated her as a woman in the public arena would not rest until they had removed her from the scene once and for all. Nevertheless, she refused to stop campaigning. Bhutto defiantly proclaimed that she was confident Islamic fundamentalist extremists, her main enemies, would not try to assassinate her, since their religion strictly forbids the murder of women.

In the aftermath of this dramatic and tragic event, Pakistan's ongoing political crisis reached a new point of danger and

unpredictability. The elections originally scheduled for January 8 were postponed to February 18, ostensibly to give the PPP time to regroup after its leader's untimely death. But elements within the party believed that the government's real motive for the delay in the vote was to enable Musharraf's own unpopular party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) more time to consolidate its position and possibly even tamper with the electoral process. A wave of sympathy for their fallen leader spread throughout areas of Pakistan where the PPP was strong, especially Bhutto's home province of Sindh, where her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged in 1979, had originally built the family's political power base. In the ensuing instability that gripped the country after Bhutto's killing, pro-PPP mobs ransacked government offices and police stations, venting their anger and frustration against Musharraf's regime. Many people lost their lives as a result.

Bhutto's will named her son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as her political heir, but since he is only 19 years old, the PPP's real leaders will be her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and Makhdoom Amin Fahim, a senior party backroom official and former Bhutto aide. The party expects that the sympathy generated in the wake of Bhutto's killing should translate into votes when the election is finally held and anticipates its return to power and the removal of Musharraf's unpopular government.

In the meantime, PPP officials are extremely skeptical of the government's explanation of her killing, which alleges that she died from a skull fracture after the explosion of the bomb threw her head against the open hood of the car. Instead, they believe that she died from two

**Quote**

"She was practising politics of reconciliation. I don't think there will be any reconciliation now. People are very angry. What is next? This is total darkness. Nobody can say what the future of Pakistan can be." — Rana Suhail, editor of *The Khabarnama* (Canadian Pakistani newspaper, in the *Toronto Star*, December 29, 2007)

bullet wounds to her head and neck. The PPP has also called for an international investigation of the killing, indicating that it does not trust the Pakistani government to handle the affair itself. In fact, some PPP elements have actually charged that Musharraf, or at least some factions within his party, may have been behind Bhutto's assassination.

Yielding to considerable domestic and international pressure, Musharraf reluctantly permitted the elite British security agency, Scotland Yard ([www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk)), to enter the country to take part in the investigation. But his comments in a press conference called shortly after her death, where he speculated that Bhutto herself bore some of the responsibility by exposing herself to potential attackers through the sunroof of her vehicle, angered many of her supporters.

In the days following Bhutto's death, Musharraf and much of the international community were quick to put responsibility for the murder

squarely at the feet of Baitullah Mehsud, a leading Islamic fundamentalist figure in Pakistan who is believed to have close links to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist group. Bhutto was the sworn enemy of these organizations because of her strong support for the U.S.-backed war on international terrorism and her moderate, secular policies at home. But Maulvi Mohammed Umar, a Mehsud spokesman, rejected the allegations, claiming that his group had played no part in Bhutto's assassination. The arrest in late January of a 15-year-old suspect in the killing, who stated that he was part of a five-man team Mehsud had dispatched to Rawalpindi to kill Bhutto, appeared to bolster the government's case. However, the exact circumstances of her death, to say nothing of the identity of those responsible for it, and even more importantly what its long-term impact will be on Pakistan's political future, still appeared very unclear a month after she was killed.

**To Consider**

1. Why does the assassination of Benazir Bhutto lead to the worsening of Pakistan's already serious political crisis?
2. Why are members of Bhutto's political party skeptical of the government's explanation of her death and those responsible for it?
3. How is Bhutto's death likely to influence the results of the elections that have been rescheduled for February 18, 2008?
4. What group is believed to have been responsible for the assassination? Why? How have its leaders reacted to this charge?

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## Video Review

### Quote

"As long as the sun and moon are alive, so is the name of Bhutto."  
— chant of Bhutto mourners (*Toronto Star*, December 29, 2007)

Watch the video and answer the following questions.

1. Why was Pakistan already in a state of political crisis before the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto?

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2. Why is Pakistan regarded as a key player in Asia?

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3. What is the name of Bhutto's political rival who promised he would carry on her fight after her killing? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the name of the president of Pakistan? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why does Bhutto's death pose a problem for his regime?

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5. What Pakistani leader was killed in the same park where Bhutto was assassinated?

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6. What was the official explanation for Bhutto's death?

7. What investigative agency has been permitted to enter Pakistan to investigate Bhutto's killing? \_\_\_\_\_

8. According to the Pakistani government, who was behind the assassination?

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9. In the view of Akbar Ahmed, why is Pakistan not an ordinary Muslim nation?

10. Why is the future of Pakistan so important to other countries, both in the region and far away?

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**Did you know . . .**

Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey, the four most populous Muslim nations, had female leaders long before Germany elected its first woman chancellor in 2005.

11. Who has been named as Bhutto's successor? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is so remarkable about him?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Why do many Pakistani women have mixed feelings about Bhutto and her political legacy?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Why is the situation women face in Pakistan so difficult? In what respect was Bhutto a role model for Pakistani women?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**For Discussion**

After viewing the video, discuss the following comments made in it with your classmates, stating whether or not you agree with them and why:

"Musharraf is probably the one to lose the most from Benazir Bhutto's assassination because, with her demise, any possible power-sharing deal between him and her party has now ended. Musharraf is going to have to go it on his own. He doesn't have any allies or friends inside Pakistan." — Sajjan Gohel, Pakistani security analyst

"We should all be very concerned because Pakistan is not an ordinary Muslim nation. This has to be understood in the West. It has 165 million people. It is the only nuclear power in the Muslim world, and what happens in Pakistan does not only affect the region; it has an impact on the entire area . . . and then far beyond the region. It is a country with very motivated, very committed individuals, and therefore if Pakistan swings left or right, it will impact world politics." — Akbar Ahmed, former Pakistani diplomat

"[Bhutto's killing] will scare off many Pakistani women now from entering politics. I mean, their families would tell them off completely. . . . This was a new process for us where we were just beginning, and look at what happened to her. What a sad and tragic way to go." — Nilofer Bakhtiar, Pakistan Senator

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Pakistan: Timeline of a Crisis*

**Did you know . . .**  
70 000 Pakistanis living in Canada are eligible to vote in the February 18, 2008, elections. However, they must vote overseas back home.

Here is a timeline of the mounting political crisis that has been developing in Pakistan since early 2007:

**March 2007** Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf suspends Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry for questioning Musharraf's legal eligibility to stand as a candidate in upcoming elections.

**May 2007** Many people are killed and injured in Karachi following clashes between supporters of the ousted chief justice and pro-Musharraf factions.

**July 2007** Pakistani military units storm the Red Mosque in Islamabad, the country's capital, ending a standoff between radical Islamic students and Muslim clerics that had lasted for over a week. The ensuing firefight results in 43 deaths. Pakistan's Supreme Court rules that Musharraf's removal of Chaudhry was unconstitutional and orders his reinstatement.

**August 2007** The Supreme Court defies Musharraf again by ruling that exiled opposition leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif may return to Pakistan from Saudi Arabia. One month later he is arrested at the airport on arrival and sent back to Saudi Arabia.

**September 2007** Benazir Bhutto announces that she will return to Pakistan from exile in Dubai and resume leadership of the PPP in the upcoming national elections. Prior to this she and Musharraf have discussed a possible power-sharing agreement to be implemented after the vote.

**October 2007** Musharraf is re-elected president, but the Supreme Court challenges the result, arguing that as

head of the army he is ineligible to hold the presidency as well. Benazir Bhutto returns to Pakistan, but a suicide bomb detonated near her vehicle kills over 140 people in Karachi.

**November 2007** Musharraf proclaims a state of emergency, citing the threat of Islamic extremists and a hostile Supreme Court as his justification. The constitution is suspended, and many opposition leaders, including Bhutto, are placed under house arrest. In response, the Commonwealth suspends Pakistan's membership. A new Supreme Court, containing a number of judges hand-picked by Musharraf, recognizes the legitimacy of his re-election as president. Musharraf promises to step down as head of the army before being sworn in again as president. Nawaz Sharif returns again from exile.

**December 2007** Musharraf lifts the state of emergency after resigning as army head and being sworn in as president and announces that parliamentary elections will be held on January 8, 2008. On December 27, Benazir Bhutto is assassinated shortly after addressing a political rally in Rawalpindi.

**January 2008** In the wake of Bhutto's assassination, a wave of violent protest sweeps Pakistan. The PPP alleges that Musharraf was at least partly responsible for the killing because he refused to authorize adequate security for Bhutto. The official explanation links the crime to a radical Islamic leader, Baitullah Mehsud, who has close ties with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Elections are postponed to February 18, and the PPP names Bhutto's husband and son as its new leaders.

## Activities

1. Rank order what you feel are the top five events over the past year that contributed to Pakistan's current political crisis. Be prepared to explain your choices.

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2. In what ways does the assassination of Benazir Bhutto further complicate Pakistan's political situation and add to the uncertainty of its people regarding their country's future?

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# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Pakistan Profile*

Here is an overview of important information about Pakistan, including its political system, economy, and society.



Pakistan is strategically located in a volatile part of the world.

Pakistan is officially known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in recognition of the fact that about 97 per cent of its population adheres to the Muslim faith. Its capital city is Islamabad and its total population is 162.4 million, approximately 40 per cent of whom live below the poverty line, according to a 2000 estimate. Karachi, the former capital, is the country's largest city. Almost half the population is literate, with approximately two-thirds of men and one-third of women able to read and write. The official languages are English and Urdu, although many other languages are also spoken, including Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun and Baluchi.

Pakistan shares borders with Iran to the west, Afghanistan and China to the north and India to the east. Its coastline on the Arabian Sea is 1 064 kilometres long.

About two-thirds of Pakistan's people belong to the Punjabi ethnic group, which is also found in the province of Punjab in neighbouring India. Other important ethnic groups include Sindhis (13 per cent), Pashtuns (11 per cent), Muhajirs (8 per cent), and Baluchis (2.5 per cent). Islam is the dominant religion, comprising 97 per cent of the population, most of whom belong to the Sunni branch of that faith. Hindus, Christians, and other religious minorities account for barely three per cent.

Pakistan is a federal state, divided into four provinces: Baluchistan, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), Punjab, and Sindh. In addition, there are also the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA), and the Islamabad Federal Territory. The part of Kashmir under Pakistani control is known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Pakistan's unit of currency is the rupee, with one Canadian dollar worth about 61 rupees. Its Gross National Product per capita is \$690, according to a 2006 World Bank estimate, and its rate of economic growth from 2006 to 2007 was seven per cent. Life expectancy for men and women is 63 years. Pakistan's major industries include the production of cotton yarn and thread, raw cotton, cotton fabrics, leather goods, and rice cultivation. Its main trading partners are the United States, Hong Kong, Germany, and Japan.

Pakistan is a tropical country, with three seasons: cool (October to February), hot (March to June), and wet

### Further Research

To stay informed about current politics in Pakistan and to learn more about the Muslim League-Q in Pakistan go to the official site at <http://pakistanmuslimleague.info>.

To find out more about the Muslim League-N go to [www.pmln.org.pk](http://www.pmln.org.pk).

To find out more about Benazir Bhutto's People's Progressive Party, visit [www.ppp.org.pk](http://www.ppp.org.pk).

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam's official Web site is [www.jamaat.org](http://www.jamaat.org).

All these political party sites have English portals

The progress of the February 2008 elections in Pakistan may be followed at [www.elections.com.pk](http://www.elections.com.pk).

Note: It is possible that these Web sites may be blocked during times of political crisis.

(July to September), although there are important climatic variations, with the low-lying coastal regions generally much hotter and wetter than the mountainous interior to the north.

Pakistan's head of state is Pervez Musharraf, who came to power as a result of a military coup in 1999 that overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. This action was widely condemned by the international community, and led to Pakistan's expulsion from the Commonwealth, an organization of former British colonies of which Canada is a member. However, after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, Musharraf became a key ally in President George W. Bush's war on international terrorism. He broke with his former ally, the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan, which had harboured Al Qaeda, and its leader Osama bin Laden, and permitted U.S.

forces to use his country as a base from which to attack and eventually overthrow the Taliban.

After lifting the state of emergency, which he had proclaimed in November 2007, Musharraf stepped down as head of the army and was sworn in as a civilian president. He promised free elections would be held on January 8, 2008, but the assassination of his main political rival, Benazir Bhutto, on December 27 led to their postponement until February 18. The main political parties contesting the election are Musharraf's Pakistan Muslim League-Q, the Pakistan Muslim League-N, led by Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), now led by Bhutto's husband and son, and the Islamic fundamentalist coalition known as the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA). There are also two smaller parties, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and the Awami National Party (ANP).

### Activities

1. Based on your reading of the information above, what evidence would you provide to conclude that Pakistan is a developing nation?
2. What would you regard as the main sources of instability and division within Pakistan today?
3. Describe what role, if any, you think Canada should play in Pakistan. Be specific.

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Bhutto in Her Own Words*

Here is a compilation of quotes from Benazir Bhutto, reflecting on her political beliefs and career:

“We have to modify our campaign to some extent because of the suicide bombings. We will continue to meet the public. We will not be deterred.” — shortly after she narrowly avoided death when a suicide bomber attacked her entourage in Karachi in October 2007, killing over 140 of her supporters

“I told him on my oath in his death cell that I would carry on his work.” — recalling her visit to her father, former Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, just before his execution in 1979

“The primary message of the visit and the talks will be that freedom has returned to Pakistan. It is not only a success for the people of Pakistan but for all those who believe in freedom.” — preparing for a visit to the United States, shortly after assuming office as Prime Minister for the first time in 1989

“The voter has gotten more demanding. In 1988, the voters just wanted democracy. Our campaign was much more general then. Now we are more specific.” — comment made after the PPP gained power

“I always said that I was innocent and a victim of a politically motivated trial.” — commenting in 2001 on her 1999

conviction on charges of corruption after Musharraf’s *coup d’état*

“I haven’t given myself away. I belong to myself and I always shall.” — promising in 1987 that her arranged marriage to Karachi business executive Asif Ali Zardani would not affect her political career

“Democracy needs support, and the best support for democracy comes from other democracies. Democratic nations should come together in an association designed to help each other and promote what is a universal value—democracy.” — 1989 speech at Harvard University

Source: CBC News In Depth: Pakistan. In *Her Words, Quotations from Pakistani Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto* ([www.cbc.ca/news/background/pakistan/Bhutto-quotes.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/pakistan/Bhutto-quotes.html))

“We will handle the [Islamic fundamentalist] extremists. I will handle them. You will save the country and so will I.” — her last words to her supporters shortly before she was assassinated in Rawalpindi on December 27, 2007 (CBC *News in Review* video, February 2008)

“They might try to assassinate me. I have prepared my family and my loved ones for any possibility.” — said before returning home to Pakistan in October 2007 (Reuters, December 28, 2007)

### Analysis

1. After reading the quotes above, prepare a profile of Benazir Bhutto, stating what you think were her main political views, her attitude toward her political career, and her goals for herself, her party, and her country.
2. Do you find anything prophetic or ironic about her last statement? Why?
3. Outline your general opinion of Benazir Bhutto.

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Bhutto: Pro and Con*

### Definition

*Jihadi* is an Arabic term that refers to an individual who participates in waging *jihad* or “holy war.” The concept of “holy war” is hotly debated in Muslim communities today and does not generally refer to support for religious violence.

Here is a selection of viewpoints on Benazir Bhutto’s political career and legacy from a number of Pakistani and international commentators:

“Benazir Bhutto’s death is, of course, a calamity, particularly as she embodied the hopes of so many liberal Pakistanis. But, contrary to the commentary we’ve seen . . . she was not comparable to Myanmar’s Aung San Sun Kyi. Ms. Bhutto’s governments were widely criticized by Amnesty International and other groups for their use of death squads and terrible record of deaths in police custody, abductions, and torture. As for her democratic bona fides, she had no qualms about banning rallies by opposing political parties while in power. Within her own party, she declared herself to be president for life and controlled all decisions. She rejected her brother Murtaza’s bid to challenge her for its leadership, and when he persisted, he was shot dead in highly suspicious circumstances during a police ambush outside the Bhutto family home. Benazir Bhutto was certainly a brave and secular-minded woman. But the obituaries painting her as dying to save democracy distort history. Instead, she was a natural autocrat who did little for human rights, a calculating politician who was complicit in Pakistan’s becoming the region’s principal *jihadi* paymaster, while she also ramped up an insurgency in Kashmir that has brought two nuclear powers to the brink of war.” — “Bhutto’s deadly legacy,” William Dalrymple, author and historian, *New York Times* online January 4, 2008 ([www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/opinion/04/dalrymple.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/opinion/04/dalrymple.html))

“They have killed a woman. A beautiful woman. A visible, indeed a conspicuously, spectacularly visible woman. A woman who made a point not only of holding

rallies in one of the world’s most dangerous countries, but did so with her face uncovered, unveiled—the exact opposite of the shameful, hidden women, the condemned creatures of Satan, who are the only women tolerated by these apostles of a world without women. They have killed Benazir Bhutto—killed her because she was a woman, because she had a woman’s face, unadorned yet filled with an unswerving strength, because she was living out her destiny and refusing the curse that, according to the new fascists (the *jihadis*) floats over the human face of women. They killed this woman incarnation of hope, of spirit, of the will to democracy, not only in Pakistan, but in all the lands of Islam. . . . From now on Benazir Bhutto will be much more than a chief of state. She has become a symbol. . . . All those who have not yet given up on freedom in the land of Islam must gather behind that standard. Her name must become another password, bloody but beautiful, for those who still believe that the good genius of the Enlightenment will win out over the evil genius of fanaticism and crime. It is for us, citizens of Europe and the United States, to mourn, to display the grief that our leaders have, at least for the moment, shamefully avoided.” — “Grieving for Benazir,” Bernard-Henri Levy, French philosopher, *Wall Street Journal* online, December 30, 2007 ([www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html](http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html))

“Even those of us sharply critical of Benazir Bhutto’s behaviour and policies—both while she was in office and more recently—are stunned and angered by her death. Indignation and fear stalk the country once again. . . . It is difficult to imagine any good coming out of this tragedy, but there is one possibility. Pakistan desperately needs a political party that can speak for the social needs of the bulk of the people.

The People's Party founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was built by the activists of the only popular mass movement the country has ever known, students, peasants, and workers who saw it as their party. That feeling persists in some parts of the country to this day, despite everything. Benazir's horrific death should give her colleagues pause for reflection. To depend on a person or a family may be necessary at certain times, but it is a structural weakness, not a strength for a political organization. The Pakistan People's Party needs to be refounded as a modern and democratic organization, open to honest debate and discussion, defending social and human rights, uniting the many disparate groups and individuals in Pakistan desperate for any halfway decent alternative, and coming forward with concrete proposals to stabilize occupied and war-torn Afghanistan. This can and should be done. The Bhutto family should not be asked for any more sacrifices." — "A tragedy born of military despotism and anarchy," Tariq Ali, Pakistani political journalist, *The Guardian Unlimited*, December 28, 2007 ([www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/))

"While Benazir represented modernity and a quest for gender equality, the Islamist establishment and the Army's Inter-Services Intelligence—that Islamists have so effectively penetrated—wanted to turn back the clock of history and permanently exclude women from the corridors of power. When the first suicide bombings killed more than a hundred of her followers in October 2007, on the day she returned to Pakistan after years of exile, Benazir's naysayers claimed she had staged the attack

herself. The Islamists and the left mocked her, labelling her as the poodle of George W. Bush. The cruelty of that slander was matched by her resolve. Why did they have to kill her? If she was as corrupt as her critics claim, couldn't they have bought her loyalties? Her killers, however, knew that the woman who spent years in jail, lived in exile for a decade, had one thing on her mind: the end of Islamic extremism in Pakistan. For that, and for the fact that she was a woman, she had to be eliminated." — "She died as her father did: bravely," Tarek Fatah, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, *The Globe and Mail*, December 27, 2007

"[Benazir Bhutto] was a self-proclaimed democrat who was also the chairman-for-life of the Pakistan People's Party. When she was in power, she lent support to the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, as part of Pakistan's strategic struggle with India, and, particularly in her second term, she did little to halt the rise of a nuclear Pakistan. After she fell from power the second time, in 1996, she and her husband Asif Ali Zardari, who acted as her minister of investment, were accused of taking colossal kickbacks on government contracts. Bhutto always claimed that the charges were politically motivated. Amnesty on those corruption charges was part of the deal, brokered by the U.S., that allowed her to return to Pakistan. Among American diplomats, the hope was that she would play a role in the restoration of a legitimate civilian government in Pakistan—a hope that her assassins sought to destroy. — "Bhutto and the candidates," *The New Yorker*, January 7, 2008

## Activities

1. For each of the above quotations, summarize the main points the author is making about Benazir Bhutto in your own words, and determine whether his/her evaluation of the slain Pakistani political figure is positive or negative and why.
2. State whether or not you agree with the views of the authors of these evaluations of Benazir Bhutto and why.

# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Bhutto's Successors: Her Husband and Her Son*

### Quote

"I am not letting the nation go into the hands of the people who want to break the country. We have to take it to a democracy, that's the vision she gave her life for."  
— Asif Ali Zardari  
(*Toronto Star*, January 4, 2008)

Like the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty in neighbouring India, or the Kennedys in the United States, the Bhuttos are a powerful Pakistani political family that appears to be stricken with a fatal curse. Benazir Bhutto's assassination is just the latest in a series of tragedies to strike the Bhutto clan. It began with the hanging for treason of her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the dynasty, in 1979. Six years later, Benazir Bhutto's younger brother, Shanawaz, was found dead in his apartment on the French Riviera under mysterious circumstances that have, as yet, not been explained. It was believed that he had been poisoned after attending a family reunion in Pakistan. In 1996 Benazir's other brother, Murtaza, who had played a major role in PPP political affairs, appearing to rival his better-known sister for the party leadership, was shot dead in the middle of an election campaign. There were strong allegations that Benazir's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, may have been behind Murtaza's killing, fearing a potential challenge to his wife's and his own political ambitions.

### 1. "Mr Ten Per Cent"

For most of his adult life, Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has been a very controversial figure in Pakistan. His nomination as de facto head of the Pakistan People's Party following Benazir's assassination was expected but not met with universal approval in party ranks. In fact, shortly before her death, Benazir had made it clear that, because of his questionable past, her husband would not be taking an active part in the upcoming national elections, fearing that he would be a liability to the PPP's efforts to gain power. This was because Zardari's

name has been invariably tainted with allegations of corruption, stemming from his period as a member of Bhutto's cabinet during her two terms in office in the 1990s. During that time, he was accused of accepting numerous bribes in return for the awarding of contracts to foreign firms anxious to do business in Pakistan. Because of his insistence on always receiving a "piece of the action" for such transactions, Zardari earned the nickname "Mr. Ten Per Cent."

Zardari spent eight years in prison for these crimes until he was finally released in 2004 as part of a deal between the Musharraf government and the PPP. Throughout his career, he has staunchly denied any wrongdoing, claiming that all of the accusations against him have been politically motivated by his and his wife's opponents. For her part, Bhutto remained loyal to her husband, whom she wed in an arranged marriage that united the Bhutto clan with the Zardaris, another powerful landowning family in her home province of Sindh. Growing up, Zardari gained the reputation as something of a playboy because of his love of fast cars, horses, fancy clothes, clubs, and the jet-set lifestyle. But he has also demonstrated considerable personal bravery, as he survived a long prison term in Pakistan's notoriously brutal jails and once rescued the daughter of a German diplomat who fell into a bog while riding her horse.

Zardari now suffers from diabetes and must use a walking stick to move. After years of estrangement from his children, he has worked to achieve reconciliation. He has become a close advisor to his 19-year-old son Bilawal, who has been named the official head of the PPP. Until the latter is old enough to assume a real leadership position, it is expected

**Quote**

"Although I admit that my experience to date is limited, I intend to learn."

—Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, *Los Angeles Times*, January 9, 2008

that Zardari will play a key behind-the-scenes role in the party. Whether his questionable past will continue to haunt him and influence the PPP's electoral fortunes remains to be seen.

Source: "Profile: Asif Ali Zardari," BBC News Online [www.newsvote.bbc.uk.co](http://www.newsvote.bbc.uk.co)

## 2. The Heir Apparent

Before his mother's tragic death catapulted him into the international spotlight, Bilawal Zardari was a 19-year-old expatriate Pakistani student about to begin his second term of courses at Britain's prestigious Oxford University. But when Benazir Bhutto's will named him as the next leader of the Pakistan People's Party, his life was changed forever. At 19, he is as yet too young to assume a real leadership position, since he cannot vote or run for office before he turns 21. Until then, his father, Asif Ali Zardari, will direct the affairs of the PPP from behind the scenes, employing Makhdoom Amin Fahim, a faceless party functionary, as his front man.

Bhutto's death was a personal tragedy for Bilawal, compounded by the fact that he was expected to appear before the world's media and answer complex questions about the motives behind his mother's killing and its likely consequences for Pakistan. At first, the young man appeared uncertain and hesitant as he took questions from 150 reporters at a hastily organized briefing in London just days after his mother's death. But he quickly found his stride. After reading from a prepared text, he made it clear that he intended to complete his university studies before assuming political leadership. He believed that this is what his mother would have wanted him to do so he could be thoroughly prepared for the difficult challenges that lie ahead of him. But he committed himself to

perpetuating what he called his mother's "political blood line" that has made the PPP something of a personal Bhutto fiefdom for three generations now.

Bilawal also stated that from now on, he would add Bhutto to his name, in honour of his dead mother. He paid tribute to her bravery and promised to remain true to her vision of Pakistan as a moderate, peaceful, and secular Islamic state where radical fundamentalists and terrorists would not find shelter or support. He also dedicated himself to the struggle to achieve real democracy in Pakistan after years of President Pervez Musharraf's military dictatorship, stating that in his mother's words, "democracy is the best revenge."

Of course the question of whether he himself fears assassination was asked, and Bilawal did not try to avoid it. Although he has never lived in Pakistan for any period of time, he is aware of the dangers he is facing once he returns, and the very real possibility that like his grandfather and his mother, he himself might one day fall victim to an assassin. But he defiantly ended the press conference with the following observation. "How many Bhuttos can be killed? From many houses more Bhuttos will come." Linking the fate of his party and his country to his family, in the traditional Bhutto manner, Bilawal indicated that he is a true successor to his mother and grandfather. Whether or not he will be able to gain the necessary experience to assume an effective role in his country's troubled political life in the years to come, and whether he will indeed survive the challenge, remains completely unclear at this time.

Source: "Bhutto heir takes centre stage" and "Profile: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari," BBC News Online <http://newvote.bbc.co.uk>

## Activities

1. Why is Benazir Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari such a controversial figure and a potential political liability for the PPP?

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2. What enormous challenges does the young Bilawal Bhutto Zardari face now that he has been named the official head of the PPP following his mother's assassination?

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3. Do you think that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is likely to succeed as a future leader of Pakistan? Explain.

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4. Why do the Bhuttos seem to feel that the PPP is their own personal property? Is this a good thing for a political party and the country it seeks to govern? Explain.

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5. What role might Canada and Canadians play to assist Pakistan in becoming a modern democratic state? Offer some concrete suggestions.

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# ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

## *Activity*

**Did you know . . .**  
Benazir Bhutto became leader of the PPP when she was just 22 years old.

1. Using the information contained in this resource guide and some of the resources listed below, write an obituary for the assassinated Pakistani political leader Benazir Bhutto, providing a summary of her life and political career, an assessment of her achievements, and a final evaluation of her legacy and what her departure from the scene is likely to mean for her country's future and that of the troubled region of which it is such an important part. Be prepared to read your obituary at a special memorial session in your class.

OR

2. Pakistan is sometimes referred to as "the world's most dangerous nation." Based on what you have learned about this country and its recent history from this *CBC News in Review* story and the previous one in December 2007, evaluate the validity of this statement. Explain the factors that have contributed to Pakistan's political instability in the past, and discuss what you think its possible future will be in the post-Benazir Bhutto era, and what this means for the region as a whole.

### **Useful Web Sites**

Home page of the Pakistan People's Party: [www.ppp.org.pk](http://www.ppp.org.pk)

Home page of the Muslim League-N, Nawaz Sharif's party: [www.pmln.org.pk](http://www.pmln.org.pk)

Official home page of President Pervez Musharraf: <http://presidentofpakistan.gov.pk>

Official home page of the government of Pakistan: [www.pakistan.gov.pk](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk)

Home page of the Pakistan Electoral Commission, the body responsible for administering the February 18, 2007, elections: <http://ecp.gov.pk>

# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story examines the national debate that surfaced after a Taser was used on a Polish immigrant at Vancouver airport. The man died after the incident, leaving law enforcement agencies across Canada scrambling to defend their choice to use electric stun guns as part of their crime-fighting arsenal.

### Did you know . . .

Taser International is a company that makes electric stun guns. Since the firm is so dominant in the market, people often refer to stun guns as "Tasers."

Robert Dziekanski stepped off the plane after his long journey from Poland. Soon he would see his mother. All he had to do was clear Customs, pick up his luggage, and the reunion with his mother would take place. However, instead of a reunion, Dziekanski found himself wandering in the Customs area for 10 hours. He became more anxious and agitated before being approached and Tasered by the RCMP. By the time the paramedics arrived, Dziekanski was dead.

### National Debate

The death of Robert Dziekanski set off a national debate on the use of electric stun guns, called Tasers by police. Naturally, people concluded that the Taser had contributed to Dziekanski's death. But the police and the makers of the stun gun, Taser International, claimed that the man must have been suffering from "excited delirium," a forensic term used to describe a psychological condition wherein a person demonstrates overt psychotic symptoms and behaviours. The police and Taser International contended that the stun gun only brought Dziekanski down; it was the "excited delirium" that killed him.

Within days the spotlight was placed squarely on the appropriateness of using a Taser to bring suspects under control. On the one hand, police contended that the Taser was an essential non-lethal weapon designed to bring a person under control as quickly and humanely as possible. They claimed that the stun gun's ability to briefly disable an individual—via 50 000 volts of electricity—allowed police to bring situations under control in a hurry. Other non-lethal alternatives, like wrestling,

kicking or punching, or even pepper spray or a police baton, significantly increase the risk of injury to the suspect, the officers, and witnesses.

Meanwhile, human rights advocates argued that Tasers could be clearly linked to over 200 deaths in North America alone (*The Globe and Mail*, March 5, 2007). Amnesty International ([www.amnesty.ca](http://www.amnesty.ca)) has long contended that the electric stun gun is an instrument of torture and reiterated this point after Dziekanski's death. Amnesty International found support from the United Nations, which has called for an outright ban on the use of Tasers. At least 17 Canadians have died after being Tasered since police started using the weapon in 1999 (CBC News: "Taser-related deaths in Canada," [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca)).

### Beyond the Stun Gun

While the debate over the appropriate use of Tasers gained momentum, details surrounding Dziekanski's case caused the debate to widen. According to the RCMP, Dziekanski was acting irrationally, even violently, when they arrived on the scene. They said that the four officers Tasered Dziekanski at least twice and then held him down before putting him in handcuffs. Eyewitnesses generally confirmed the RCMP's version of events (though some say the man was Tasered four times), describing an extremely agitated Dziekanski who had barricaded a door and tossed a computer before the RCMP arrived to subdue him.

In the days following Dziekanski's death, a number of new and disturbing details came to light. First, Dziekanski had arrived on time shortly before 3:30 p.m. but never cleared Customs. He wandered in the Customs area for

10 hours without anyone speaking to him or providing him with any kind of direction. Dziekanski spoke only Polish so he desperately needed a translator—in fact, a translator might have been able to defuse the entire situation. However, no one approached the distraught man and there was no translator available.

Second, Dziekanski's mother, Zofia Cisowski, waited for her son in the main terminal for over six hours. On three occasions, she asked airport staff if her son was on the other side of the Customs barrier. Eventually she was told that her son was not there and that he had probably never arrived so she should just head back to her home in Kamloops. She left around 10:00 p.m.

Third, Dziekanski's 10 hours of waiting and wandering eventually left him so agitated that he started to act out. Alone, with no one who could speak his language, he likely became overcome with fear. When the RCMP arrived, they encountered an extremely distraught man whom they thought needed to be brought under control. Within 25 seconds of confronting Dziekanski, the RCMP had Tasered him and put him in handcuffs. Moments later he was dead. The whole episode was captured on videotape and shared with the public several weeks

after the incident. The tape depicts a raw and frightening takedown of a deeply disturbed man.

The release of the amateur video of the final moments of the life of Robert Dziekanski stunned Canadians. The video showed that Dziekanski was in an extreme state of anxiety. Few questioned the fact that the RCMP needed to bring the situation to a conclusion quickly. However, the image of Dziekanski writhing in pain and screaming after being Tasered was horrifying to watch.

In the aftermath, the RCMP looked at the appropriateness of using Tasers and decided that they are an essential non-lethal weapon for their officers. Other forces reviewed their Taser policies, with several police units, like the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary ([www.justice.gov.nl.ca/rnc/index.htm](http://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/rnc/index.htm)), agreeing to suspend the use of Tasers. The Vancouver Airport Authority ([www.yvr.ca/authority](http://www.yvr.ca/authority)) reviewed its policies and agreed to bring in more translators, to improve the signage, and to provide ongoing patrols of the Customs area.

However, all the debate in the world would not comfort Zofia Cisowski, Robert Dziekanski's mother, who had come to Canada to create a new life and pave the way for her son to join her.



# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## Video Review

### Further Research

To stay informed about policing issues at the RCMP, including the use of Tasers, go to [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca). To follow the progress of this case before the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, go to [www.cpc-cpp.gc.ca](http://www.cpc-cpp.gc.ca).

Answer the following questions by placing your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Why did the police Taser Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver airport?

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2. What are Tasers designed to do to their target?

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3. How many Canadians have died after being Tasered? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do Canada's chiefs of police think that Tasers don't kill people?

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5. a) According to Paul Pritchard, what course of action did the police decide to take even before they confronted Robert Dziekanski?

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b) What did Pritchard have to do to get his videotape back from the RCMP?

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6. Describe what was shown in the video taken by Paul Pritchard.

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7. For Paul Pritchard, what was the most disturbing part of the takedown of Robert Dziekanski?

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8. What did the RCMP claim before the video became public?

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9. Describe the national and international reaction to the release of the video.

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10. What use-of-force options are presented to police officers in training at the Ontario Police College?

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11. What changes have been made to the RCMP's policy on the use of Tasers?

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# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## *The Tragedy of Robert Dziekanski*

Robert Dziekanski arrived at Vancouver airport at 3:20 p.m. on October 14. He deplaned and followed the crowd to the Customs area. What happened after that is a mystery. He wandered in and around the Customs hall for 10 hours before succumbing to the stress of being lost and alone. At that point, he started to get extremely agitated, so much so that airport staff called in the RCMP.

### **Dziekanski's Last Moments**

Dramatic video footage shows the final moments of Dziekanski's life. He is seen barricading a door with chairs and tossing a computer near the exit of the Customs hall. While he is doing this, a woman named Sima Ashrafinia, tries to calm him down. Recognizing that Dziekanski doesn't speak English, Ashrafinia uses hand gestures and a calm tone of voice to try to break through the man's anxiety. Her efforts fail and she reluctantly backs off.

Next, Dziekanski is approached by a number of airport staff and told to stop what he is doing. At this point Dziekanski appears to be in a world of his own and disregards the appeals of the staff. Frustrated by the lack of co-operation, a staff member calls the RCMP, who arrive on the scene shortly thereafter. The attending officers are told by the staff that the man only speaks "Russian."

The four officers move Dziekanski's barricade aside and enter the Customs hall. Their arms raised in an appeal to get the distraught man to co-operate, the police issue a series of verbal commands to Dziekanski. When they do not receive the co-operation they are looking for, the RCMP use their Tasers, and Dziekanski drops to the ground, writhing in pain and screaming in anguish. The Tasers

were used at least twice, with some eyewitnesses saying they heard four loud cracks, suggesting that the devices were used four times. The four officers kneel on a screaming Dziekanski until the man eventually falls silent.

### **The Story Behind the Story**

Initial news reports suggested that an unco-operative man died after being Tasered at the airport, but soon details of the case began to come to the surface. Dziekanski's mother, Zofia Cisowski, who had brought her son over from Poland, said she made repeated requests to Vancouver airport staff to speak to her son on the other side of the Customs barrier. She said her son was likely confused and disoriented, which would explain why, after several hours, he had not come through the Customs doors into the main terminal. Eventually, Cisowski was told that her son had never arrived from Poland and she should go back to her home in Kamloops. The distraught mother returned home. At around 2:00 a.m., she phoned the airport's immigration line and was told that her son was there and that he was fine. She asked the immigration staff to take care of him because he didn't speak any English and she made her way back to the Vancouver airport. Little did she know that, less than an hour earlier, her son had died after an encounter with police.

### **The Video**

The case of Robert Dziekanski really grabbed the attention of the Canadian public after the release of an amateur video showing the final moments of his life. Robert Pritchard filmed the incident upon clearing Customs after a trip to China. When he saw Dziekanski acting irrationally, he pulled out his camera and

**Did you know . . .**

On the same day of the Dziekanski incident, another man was Tasered by police forces, in Montreal. Quilem Registre died of his injuries three days later. He was the 17<sup>th</sup> person to die after being Tasered in Canada.

started filming. The RCMP officers at the scene asked for Pritchard's camera and portable memory drive so they could make a copy of his video. Pritchard consented and was told he would get his equipment back within 48 hours. Each time Pritchard called to arrange to pick up his camera, he was stonewalled by the RCMP—for three weeks—until finally, after publicly threatening a lawsuit, he was given his camera and portable memory drive back. When Pritchard turned his video over to the media, the death of Robert Dziekanski became headline news across Canada and around the world.

**Preventing Similar Tragedies**

In the wake of the death of Robert Dziekanski, the Vancouver Airport Authority agreed to spend over a million dollars on the following changes:

- hiring new public safety officers to negotiate with people in crisis situations
- 24-hour staffing of customer-care kiosks

- improved translation services for arriving and departing passengers
- improved signage using up to 20 languages along with pictographs directing passengers to Customs, baggage, and exits
- hourly patrols of the Customs area
- emergency medical response personnel available 24 hours a day

Source: CBC News, December 7, 2007

The tragic death of Robert Dziekanski set off a storm of controversy. Police across Canada were forced to defend their use of Tasers. Airports from Victoria to St. John's were forced to review their procedures to see if a similar tragedy could happen in their terminals. The Canadian public was left wondering how so much could go so wrong so fast for a person moving from the airplane to the exit doors of the Customs area at a crowded international airport.

**Questions**

1. What do you think might have been done to prevent the events leading to the death of Robert Dziekanski?

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2. What was "the story behind the story"?

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3. Why do you think the RCMP wanted to hang on to Robert Pritchard's videotape?

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4. Do you think the changes implemented by the Vancouver Airport Authority will prevent a future tragedy? Explain your answer.

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# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## *What's a Taser?*

### **Did you know . . .**

"Taser" is named after a series of children's stories written by Thomas Swift and stands for "Thomas A. Swift Electric Rifle."

### **Update**

As this story was being prepared on January 25, stock of Taser International rose eight per cent on the belief that the Metropolitan Toronto Police Service was about to announce a contract to equip more officers with Tasers. As well, on the same day, Governor General Michaëlle Jean witnessed the Tasering of a protestor at an official function in Vancouver.

"Don't tase' me, bro!" shouted the University of Florida student as campus security tried to subdue him after he caused a disturbance at a speech by U.S. presidential hopeful John Kerry in 2004. In saying "don't tase' me" he was hoping the campus cops would avoid resorting to their stun guns to bring him under their control. The word *Taser* is actually the brand name for an electric stun gun made by Taser International of Scottsdale, Arizona. However, Taser has become such a dominant force in the stun-gun industry—with a virtual monopoly on the market—that the word *Taser* has made its way into the vernacular. In other words, when people hear that someone was Tasered, they know that the person was zapped with an electric stun gun. The technical term for the Taser is conductive energy device (CED).

So what is a Taser? A Taser is a hand-held electric stun gun that delivers 50 000 volts of electricity via two probes that propel out of the gun when fired. Wires extend from the gun to the target with the two probes completing an electrical circuit that causes uncontrollable contractions of the muscles of the body of the target. In essence, the electrical system of the body is invaded by outside electricity, temporarily immobilizing (some would say paralyzing) the target. The Taser has a range of 10.5 metres and can send its charge through up to 5 cm of clothing.

According to Taser International, over 260 000 stun guns have been sold to more than 11 000 law-enforcement and military organizations. Over 3 500 police forces in 44 different countries issue Tasers to all of their officers. The most common Tasers are the M26 and the newer X26, which function in the manner described above.

In the fall of 2007, Taser International began aggressively promoting a new stun gun designed for personal use. The C2 is a one-shot unit that includes a prod that can be used to zap a person via direct contact if the initial firing of the probes misses the target. The device is designed to be used and then abandoned at the scene as the victim flees the perpetrator of an assault. Taser has targeted women in their marketing of the C2. The unit is "lipstick" shaped and includes an MP3 player. Since introducing the personal line of stun guns, Taser's stock has risen by 114 per cent (*Maclean's*, October 29, 2007). The C2, and any other stun gun for that matter, is considered an illegal weapon in Canada. Nonetheless, Taser reports that over 170 000 of the personal devices have been sold, mostly in the United States.

To say the least, Tasers are a very controversial weapon. Over 200 people in North America have died shortly after being Tasered. However, Taser maintains that the stun guns are safe, citing the fact that over 100 000 law enforcement officers have been voluntarily Tasered with no deaths following the demonstrations (CBC News In Depth: Tasers, cbc.ca). They also point out that, despite numerous attempts to link Tasers to deaths in court, Taser has successfully won 52 wrongful death suits (*The Globe and Mail*, July 20, 2007). Some members of the medical establishment support Taser's safety claims. According to some doctors, if a Taser was to directly cause a person's death, the person would die immediately after the 50 000 volts of electricity transferred through their body—and not a minute, an hour, or a few days later.

Meanwhile, opponents of the device point out that officers taking

**Further Research**

To keep informed about the products and claims of Taser International, consider a visit to the company's official Web site at [www.Tasers.com](http://www.Tasers.com).

part in demonstrations are not likely to die after being Tasered because the demonstrations lack the intensity and stress of real-life situations. In other words, the officers know the electrical jolt is coming and they do not exhibit any of the signs of “excited delirium” shown by the majority of Taser victims who have subsequently died. *Excited delirium* is a forensic term that describes an individual who shows signs of temporary psychosis,

with symptoms including combative and violent behaviour, profuse sweating, incomprehensible speech, and super-human strength.

The RCMP has issued over 2 000 Tasers to its officers. They consider the device to be a vital, non-lethal weapon used to defend public safety. Canadian police credit the Tasers with saving over 4 000 lives since being introduced in 1999.

Source: CBC News In Depth: Tasers, [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca)

**Questions**

1. What is meant by the phrase “the word *Taser* has become part of the vernacular”?

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2. How do the M26 and the X26 Tasers work?

- 
3. What is the C2 Taser? Who is Taser International’s target market for the C2?

- 
4. Why does Taser International maintain that Tasers are safe? What evidence do they cite?

- 
5. What is excited delirium? Why would police feel that the Taser is the best option for dealing with people showing signs of excited delirium?

- 
6. Why does the Taser continue to be a source of controversy?
- 

**Extension Activity**

What do you think? Are Tasers an essential non-lethal weapon that the police need as part of their crime-fighting arsenal? Explain your answer in an eight- to 10-sentence paragraph to be presented orally in an all-class discussion.

# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## *The National Use of Force Framework*

### Quote

"You don't take a Taser to a gunfight." — Tom Smith, Chair of Taser International, in *Toronto Star*, January 18, 2008

In 2000, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police ([www.cacp.ca](http://www.cacp.ca)) put together a national agenda outlining the conditions that constituted legitimate use of force by police officers. Drawing on decades of research and debate, the chiefs summarized their findings in a document called "The National Use of Force Framework." The national framework recommended that police officers follow certain procedures when determining the appropriateness of using force to subdue someone who poses a threat to public safety. While not official police policy, the framework has been endorsed by the overwhelming majority of police forces in Canada.

The national framework recognizes the difficult position that police officers find themselves in when they approach volatile individuals. Charged with the responsibility of preserving and protecting life, police officers have to determine, sometimes immediately, whether certain situations pose a significant threat to public safety. Police training is vital in providing officers with an action plan when they encounter potentially dangerous individuals. They need to know how to assess problems and implement action plans calmly and quickly, using whatever means are deemed appropriate to defuse volatile situations.

The graphic included in this section illustrates the chiefs' determination of appropriate use of force. The first two rings inside the graphic show how, when an officer encounters a situation, they must immediately use their training and reasoning skills to determine the potential dangers present. Is the subject of the situation resistant to police instructions either passively through a simple refusal to co-operate or actively

in the form of overt movements like gesturing toward the officer or fleeing the scene? Or, has the subject assumed a violent attitude, assaulting the officer, or have they resorted to using a weapon against the officer? In other words, are they using brute force that could bring harm to the police officer or people witnessing the situation? The attending officers will need to use their powers of perception to determine what tactical decisions need to be made.

Communication—both verbal and non-verbal—is vital in any situation involving a potential threat to public safety. Sometimes a situation can be resolved simply by the presence of a police officer and the subsequent cooperation from the subject. However, if the subject becomes unco-operative, the measures available for the police officer to use escalate as the threat escalates. For a subject who is verbally unco-operative, the officer may elect to use physical control to bring the conflict to an end. This could involve soft techniques like restraining moves, joint locks, or handcuffing. If deemed appropriate, the officer could use hard techniques such as punching or kicking to bring the subject under control. If the officer perceives that there is a greater risk to public safety, they may decide to use non-lethal weapons like Tasers or pepper spray to bring the subject under their control. Finally, if an officer determines that public safety—and, by extension, their own safety—is at risk, they may use lethal force to bring the conflict to a close. Lethal force is likely to result in the serious injury or the death of the subject.

What needs to be understood is that, once the police are called to the scene, their job is to resolve the conflict as quickly and reasonably as possible. By virtue of their being dispatched to the scene, they will assume the role of problem-solver and, in the event of a

potentially violent situation, will use the tools at their disposal to bring the conflict to the end.

Source: The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police ([www.cacp.ca/english/committees/details.asp?id=15](http://www.cacp.ca/english/committees/details.asp?id=15)). Click on the National Use of Force Framework link)



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## Reflection

Do you think this use of force framework is reasonable or does it give the police too much power to use force? Answer the question in a six- to 10-sentence paragraph.

# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## *Crime-fighting Technology*

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) ([www.lasd.org](http://www.lasd.org)) has long been considered a leader in the testing and acquisition of the latest crime-fighting technologies. The LASD was among the first police forces to adopt non-lethal weapons like Tasers and pepper spray. Over the years they have adopted an aggressive approach to investigating new crime-fighting technologies—so much so that many jurisdictions throughout North America keep a close eye on the devices the LASD is considering. Here are a few of the technologies the LASD has considered taking on:

- a strobe light that can be pointed at a person, causing temporary blindness
- a grill-mounted launcher that can shoot a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) tag onto a suspect's car, giving police a precise location of the vehicle
- a flashlight that can send out a steam of pepper spray at a suspect
- a non-lethal automatic machine gun that fires pepper spray pellets up to 70 metres

- an egg-shaped camera that can transmit a 360-degree video image; officers could toss the camera into a room and get an image of what is happening inside from a distance of up to 300 metres away
- a magnetic bullhorn that transmits sound with laser-like precision over a distance of up to five kilometres; the sound is so clear that the subjects think the transmission is happening right beside them; people outside the beam's transmission zone are not disturbed because they hear nothing
- a portable radar device that can see through walls

While these devices are being investigated by the LASD, only a few of them will actually be adopted by the force. According to the LASD Technology Exploration Unit, only two per cent of the devices will be brought into use.

Source: "Officer Gadget," *Popular Science*, February 2007

### Question

Which devices, if any, do you think police forces should or should not adopt? Explain your answer.

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# CRACKING DOWN ON TASERS

## ***Activity: Case Study***

Use all of the information provided in this issue of *News in Review* to complete this activity.

### **Step One: Analyzing the Case of Robert Dziekanski**

With a partner, use the National Use of Force Framework to analyze the Dziekanski case. Was the police use of a Taser to bring Dziekanski under their control warranted?

### **Step Two: Alternatives**

Using the National Use of Force Framework, determine what alternatives the RCMP could have used to bring Dziekanski under their control. Be specific.

### **Step Three: Solutions**

Review the final day of Dziekanski's life, including the activities leading up to his death. What steps could have been taken to prevent his tragic death?

### **Step Four: Conclusion**

Prepare a 300- to 500-word report outlining your conclusions in steps One to Three.

### **Step Five: Follow-up**

Research Taser use on the Internet. Find three stories where you think the police needed to use a Taser and three stories where you think the police did not need to use a Taser. Share these stories with your classmates in a class discussion.

Here's an example of a story where the police didn't need to use a Taser.

An Iranian-American student at the University of California in Los Angeles was Tasered three times in a confrontation with campus police at the school's library. The student felt he was being ethnically targeted by library staff who asked him to show his student card. He wondered why other students were not being asked to produce their cards, so he refused to comply. Library staff called the campus police to have him removed from the premises. When the police arrived and asked him to leave the library, an angry verbal exchange ensued.

The incident was captured on a cell phone video camera and posted on YouTube. While the student was verbally demonstrative in his anger, witnesses say he was preparing to leave the library and angrily told police not to touch him. When the police moved close to him, he got angrier, and then he was Tasered—three times. The university called the incident "unnecessary, avoidable, and excessive."

Source: *Library Journal*, September 1, 2007

Here's an example of a story where the police needed to use a Taser.

Police confronted a 39-year-old man at a motel in Edmonton. The man provided the police with a false name, which happened to be the subject of a number of outstanding warrants, so the police prepared to take the man into custody. Realizing his mistake, the man took off, running across a busy highway with the police in pursuit. The man was tackled by a bystander who was trying to help the police but, when he got up, he pulled out a knife. Next, he ran into a crowded Toys "R" Us store where the police cornered him, Tasered him, and arrested him.

Source: CBC News, "Edmonton police chief defends Taser use," December 28, 2007

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Introduction

### Focus

In just a few years, Alberta oil sands development has made the province the greatest economic power in Canada. As the price of oil has risen, activity in the oil fields has also increased. With this growth have come new threats to the environment and new challenges to Canada in its attempt to rein in the emissions that contribute to climate change. This *News in Review* story looks at how Alberta's north is being transformed, and what this transformation may mean for the future.

On January 26, 2008, *The Globe and Mail* began a week-long series of articles on the Alberta oil sands with this headline: "Shifting Sands: How Alberta's Oil Boom Is Changing Canada Forever." The series' thesis is that oil sands development has turned Alberta, and therefore Canada, into one of the world's major energy players. This transformation, in turn, will permanently change Canada physically, politically, and economically, touching all aspects of Canadian life.

The initial article was accompanied by stunning photographs by Edward Burtynsky, a Canadian famous for his large-scale photographs of landscapes that have been transformed by human activity. The photographs show what was an almost untouched forest turned into a lunar landscape and an industrial hell. They make it very clear that, environmentally, at least, the change that has begun is extensive.

The economic benefits of Canada's oil boom to Canada and, especially to Alberta, are inarguable. Over \$100-billion dollars has been earmarked by oil companies to be spent in Alberta over the next decade. Investment has created thousands of jobs and drawn workers to the oil fields from every Canadian province. Oil stocks have soared in value and become part of almost every Canadian investor's portfolio. Money pours into government coffers—royalties for Alberta, taxes for Ottawa.

And it looks like a boom that will last for a very long time. Investment in oil sands development is driven by one thing: the price of oil on world markets. Oil from the sands is relatively expensive to produce—in the range of \$25-\$35 per barrel. But with world prices in the \$90 range, large profits for the oil companies are a given.

Environmentalists, however, see another side to development—and it is a side that is becoming more and more apparent to many Canadians. The environmental damage is real, it is extensive, and much of it is probably irreversible. This damage includes:

- 3 000 square kilometres of pristine boreal forest dug up and destroyed, along with its wetlands and muskeg
- The reduction in the flow of the Athabasca River by the removal of over 300 cubic metres of water annually and the consequent reduction in available water for other human activities, such as agriculture
- The creation of gigantic man-made lakes of toxic sludge, the unwanted parts of the cocktail required to separate the valuable bitumen from the rest of the oil sands
- A huge increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta, much of it due to the burning of the millions of cubic feet of natural gas required to heat water for the separation process. This increase will complicate any federal plans for reductions in the overall national production of greenhouse gases and has turned Alberta industry into Canada's largest emitter

Some scientists and environmentalists have begun a campaign to slow the pace of new oil production in the oil sands. They point to statements by Alberta's own review panel that grants licenses to new producers. In early 2007, the panel, while approving new applications, spoke of "critical" environmental challenges in the region, as well as an "absence of sustainable long-term solutions" (*The Globe and Mail*, March 1, 2007). They also expressed a belief that there is only "a short window of opportunity" to solve the region's problems.

### Further Research

To learn more about the history of the oil economy in Alberta, consider a visit to the CBC Digital Archives at [www.cbc.ca/archives](http://www.cbc.ca/archives) and view the audio-visual file "Striking Oil in Alberta." You might also wish to explore the University of Calgary file "The Oil and Gas Frontier 1913 to Present," at [www.ucalgary.ca/applied\\_history/tutor/calgary/oil.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/calgary/oil.html).

Alberta's government, however, has expressed a real reluctance to do anything that might slow oil sands growth. Premier Ed Stelmach has said that he believes slowing growth could devastate both the Canadian and Alberta economies and argues: "Green politics are as much about emotion as they are about science" (*The Globe and Mail*, February 27, 2007).

Alberta released its new green plan on January 24, 2008. It called for the smallest reduction in greenhouse gases of any jurisdiction in Canada—far short of the reductions called for by the federal government's plan. Alberta industry enthusiastically backed the new plan.

### For Reflection

In a recent poll, Albertans and Canadians from across the country were asked how they felt about the pace of oil sands development. While there was a range of responses, 52 per cent of Canadians said it had been about right and 24 per cent felt it had been too fast. Albertans, however, who live with and presumably benefit from oil sands development, had a different viewpoint. Forty-eight per cent said it was about right and 43 per cent felt it was too fast.

As you watch the video, ask yourself that same pollster's question: Has oil sands development been about right, too fast, or too slow? Poll your classmates to get their opinions.

However, critics argue that this places an unfair burden on other parts of the country.

Former premier Peter Lougheed has been one Alberta voice calling for a slowdown in oil sands development. He has said that unchecked oil sands development will be a major contributing factor to a constitutional battle between the federal and provincial governments. The battle will involve the right of the federal government to protect the environment versus Alberta's right to develop its resources. One can only hope that somewhere there are policymakers willing to find a compromise where all Canadians can be winners.

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Video Review

### Further Research

The Pembina Institute of Appropriate Development can be visited at [www.pembina.org](http://www.pembina.org).

This Video Review is in two parts. Answer Part I in the spaces provided.

### Part I

1. How large is the area of northern Alberta that has been approved for oil sands development?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what year did oil sands developers meet their original target of one million barrels per day? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How much water may oil sands companies draw per year from the Athabasca River?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How many homes could be heated by the amount of natural gas burned by oil sands producers?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Greenhouse gas emissions from oil sands development are now equivalent to the gasses emitted by how many Canadian automobiles? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Tailing ponds now cover how many square kilometres of northern Alberta?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What problems has Métis trapper and fisher Ray Ladouceur identified as likely being caused by pollution from the oil sands?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What human health problems among Aboriginal populations in the Fort Chipewyan Area are suspected of being associated with oil production?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What steps has the Alberta government taken to investigate concerns expressed by the residents of the Fort Chipewyan area?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What does University of Alberta scientist David Schindler believe should happen before further oil sands development takes place?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## A Profile

### Did you know . . .

Until recently, the Alberta oil sands were often called the Alberta tar sands. A conscious effort has been made to discourage the use of that name. "Tar sands" is an inaccurate description; what is contained in the sands is an extremely heavy form of crude oil, not tar. And, of course, "oil sands" sounds much less repulsive to the average person than does the term *tar sands*.

### Further Research

An excellent introduction to oil sands and heavy oil—its production and use—is available from the Centre for Energy at [www.centreforenergy.com/generator2.asp?xml=/silos/ong/oilsands/oilsandsAndHeavyOilOverview01XML.asp&template=1,1,1](http://www.centreforenergy.com/generator2.asp?xml=/silos/ong/oilsands/oilsandsAndHeavyOilOverview01XML.asp&template=1,1,1).

The oil sands of Alberta extend over a huge portion of the northern area of the province. The size of the operation to extract the oil from these sands is equally impressive.

### Where the Sands Are

The oil sands deposits are located in northern Alberta, in an area of about 140 000 square kilometres of boreal forest. Four major deposits, covering over 77 000 square kilometres, are currently being mined: Peace River, Athabasca, Wabasca, and Cold Lake.

The centre of the region—and the centre for mining operations—is the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, which includes the town of Fort McMurray. Wood Buffalo is currently the fastest-growing municipality in Canada. Its population has doubled since 1999 and continues to grow at a rate of nine per cent per year.

Thanks to the oil sands, jobs are plentiful and salaries in Fort McMurray are high. In 2004, the median family income was \$120 000. Albertans often refer to the town as "Fort McMONEY." Rapid growth, however, has led to many civic problems (these will be discussed on page 43 of this resource guide, "Wildlife and People").

### Giant Reserves of Oil

The amount of oil held in the Alberta oil sands is staggering, even if much of it will never be removable. About 1.7 trillion barrels of oil are contained in the sands.

There are already 174 billion barrels of oil on record as being profitably recoverable using current technology. This amount of oil is exceeded only by the identified reserves under Saudi Arabia.

As techniques for extracting oil are refined, and if extraction costs drop and prices rise, more barrels should become available. The British magazine *The Economist* (May 26, 2007) estimates that rising prices and lower costs alone could result in making an additional 141 billion barrels worth extracting. New techniques could open up even more production.

Most extraction currently takes place by open-pit mining, where the sands are dug up and then separated into their various components. The process of separation is a simple one that has been known for years. The sands are mixed with hot water and shaken; the water, sand, and bitumen (the crude oil portion) then separate. The process is both water-intensive and energy-intensive. It takes two to five barrels of water to produce one barrel of oil. At current production rates, producers use 17 million cubic metres of natural gas every day—enough to heat 3.2 million Canadian homes.

Only about 10 per cent of the reserves can be extracted in open-pit mining. The remainder of the oil sands, located far below the surface in porous rock, will have to be extracted by a much more complicated process, called *in situ* extraction. The costs associated with this process will be higher. Both methods have serious environmental consequences (see "The Environmental Impact," on page 41). *In situ* extraction causes far less surface damage than open pit mining. On the other hand, it requires a much greater expenditure of energy and produces far more greenhouse gases.

### The Producers

As of May 2007, Alberta oil sands production was up to 1.2 million barrels of oil per day—an amount that, less than 10 years ago, experts predicted would

not be reached before 2020. Many now expect that Alberta oil sands production in 2020 will reach four million barrels per day—the same amount that Iran currently produces.

Today, there are 14 companies producing at least 5 000 barrels of oil per day (and many others producing smaller quantities) at 24 sites in the oil sands. Another 30 projects have been approved or are already under construction. While

there are many companies involved in extracting Alberta oil, three major companies are responsible for about two-thirds of the output. Suncor (in 1967) was the first company to become a serious investor in the oil sands. Syncrude followed in 1978. Together, these companies produce about 560 000 barrels per day. International giant Shell began working in the oil sands in 2002 and now extracts 160 000 barrels per day.

## Analysis

1. What other resources are used in great quantities in oil sands extraction?
2. Briefly note the differences between open-pit and *in situ* extraction of the oil from the oil sands.
3. What are some of the possible results of Canada being in possession of such vast oil wealth?

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## *The Economic Impact*

**Did you know . . .** Current regulations require companies to pay only one per cent in royalties until they have recovered all of the money required—billions of dollars—to set up operations. After that the royalty rises to 25 per cent of revenue. This formula was originally created to encourage oil sands development when oil was selling for considerably less per barrel and profits were much lower.

There is no question that oil sands development has—and will likely continue to have—an enormous economic impact on Alberta and the whole of Canada. Planned oil sands investment in Alberta will reach \$100-billion over the next decade. This will turn the region into one of the world's biggest suppliers of crude oil.

Investment has made Alberta very rich. Oil sands development has turned the province into Canada's economic engine. Its economy is booming at a time when Ontario, Canada's manufacturing centre, is in decline—especially hard-hit by cutbacks in the automotive industry.

With the boom has come a need for skilled and unskilled labour that is drawing workers from across Canada, but especially from the eastern provinces. Because oil production is expected to at least triple by 2020, the demand for workers is expected to continue. Meanwhile, the median income for workers in the oil sands has risen to become the highest in Canada. Companies, however, find that they are still unable to hire all the help they need at home in Canada and have begun aggressively recruiting foreign workers.

### **Alberta's Wealth**

Thanks to oil, Alberta is now Canada's only debt-free province and is posting huge annual surpluses—about \$7-billion in 2006-2007. Much of the surplus is due to royalties that companies pay for the oil they remove from the ground.

However, an Alberta government panel report recently argued that those royalties are much too low and that rates should be increased. It also claimed that companies are not even paying the full amount they are now required to by

law—falling short by almost \$2-billion in 2006 alone.

In response, the government has announced that it will be bringing in legislation to change the royalty formula, beginning in 2009. As far as the oil sands are concerned, the increases will be significant, but tied to the price a company receives for its oil. Rates will now begin rising when the price of a barrel exceeds \$55, climbing to a maximum of 40 per cent of net revenue (note that the current price is close to \$100 per barrel). The old rate was fixed at 25 per cent. This could mean an additional \$1.4-billion for the Alberta treasury in 2010. The government says it will use the extra money for infrastructure projects—desperately needed in a booming province—and for savings.

### **Federal Reaction**

The federal government has also been looking into its relationship with the companies involved in developing the oil sands. While resource development is a provincial responsibility, the federal government has assisted oil companies in past years by giving them significant tax breaks as they established themselves in the oil sands. According to the House of Commons Natural Resources Committee, these tax breaks are worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The Pembina Institute, one of Canada's leading sustainable energy research institutes, puts the value of tax breaks to oil and gas industries at \$1.4-billion per year.

The Natural Resources Committee has recommended that the tax break (called the accelerated capital cost allowance) be removed, phasing it out between

**Did you know . . .**

Many nations, including India, China, France, Abu Dhabi, and the United States, among others, have indicated a keen interest in buying into Canada's oil sands. Should Canada restrict ownership of the oils sands or should it invite foreign investment? Explain your position.

now and 2010. Environmentalists are especially keen to see this happen and hope the money gained will be redirected toward the development of clean energy resources.

This is not a move favoured by the oil companies, who have responded by threatening to reduce future investment in oil sands development. Nor is it favoured by the government of Alberta. That government believes that any slowing of oil sands development is a threat to the economies of both Canada in general and Alberta in particular. Ed Stelmach, Alberta's premier, was quick to point out that, over the next 20 years, the federal government can expect to

receive \$51-billion in taxes on Alberta oil—far more than they will gain by removing the tax break. He also points to the number of jobs for people from other provinces that will continue to be created by the industry.

Tax break or not, experts predict that the oil sands will continue to boom for years to come. The task of the governments of Canada and Alberta will continue to be a difficult one: to extract the maximum benefit for their citizens with a minimum of loss. Economy and environment both have a major role to play in determining policies and methods.

**For Discussion**

Experts agree that the high price of oil is going to continue for a long time for three main reasons: increased demand from developing countries (China and India especially), steady growth in demand from developed countries, and restricted supplies from traditional suppliers (especially in the Middle East). High prices are what make the oil sands a profitable investment. How big an effect is an increase in royalties or a decrease in tax breaks likely to have on future investment by major players in the international oil business? What government actions might make a company decline to invest in the oil sands? In your opinion, should governments be involved in oil sands issues? Explain.

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## *The Environmental Impact*

### Did you know . . .

Because natural gas is a relatively clean-burning fossil fuel, environmentalists are especially concerned to see it being used to produce one of the dirtiest fuels. And, even though it is “clean-burning,” natural gas does make a significant contribution to the increase of greenhouse gases in Canada’s atmosphere.

### Quote

“Air pollutants from tar sands processing include not just greenhouse gases, but large emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and particulates, causing smog, acid rain, and a variety of human health problems.”  
— Herizens, Fall 2007

No one can deny the enormous environmental impact of Alberta’s oil sands development. A brief description of the mining process tells a large part of the story.

### Destroying the Land

“In most cases, extracting oil involves chopping down the forest that blankets the region, draining the boggy ground, stripping off the topsoil, and literally digging up the oily sand below” (*The Economist*, May 26, 2007). The resulting open-pit mines are the current standard method and are planned for about 3 000 square kilometres of Alberta’s north. Another 35 000 square kilometres will see subterranean mines, where steam is pumped into oil sands deposits in porous underground rock, and the resulting slurry (a mix of water and fine particles) is pumped out to the surface.

The oil sands themselves are grains of sand surrounded by water and coated with bitumen, which is a complex and viscous hydrocarbon. On average, the tar sands are 85 per cent sand, five per cent water and 10 per cent bitumen. The overburden (the trees, muskeg, rock, clay, and soil) that covers the sands can be up to 75 metres thick. Once the landscape has been devastated, the task of actually extracting the bitumen from the sand begins. This requires large quantities of two other natural resources: water and natural gas.

The water is used to separate the bitumen from the sand, but first it must be heated. This is where the natural gas comes in—17 million cubic metres of gas per day. This gas is used to heat the two to 4.5 barrels of water required to produce one barrel of oil.

### Fouling the Waters

The bulk of the water used in processing is drawn from the Athabasca River. Mining operations are currently licensed to draw 349 million cubic metres of water per year from the river. Only about 10 per cent of that water makes it back into the Athabasca. The rest is so polluted by the extraction process that it needs to be stored indefinitely in tailings ponds to keep it from re-entering the environment.

In the November 2007 issue of *Alberta Views* ([www.albertaviews.ab.ca](http://www.albertaviews.ab.ca)), writer Andrew Nikiforuk took a hard look at the tailings ponds. Describing their contents as having water “the consistency of toxic ketchup,” he reported that there are now almost a dozen ponds along the Athabasca. He also found that many were “leaking and creating their own toxic wetlands.”

In 2006, the World Wildlife Federation ([www.wwf.ca](http://www.wwf.ca)) produced a report on the Athabasca River that pointed to threats from declining flows due to climate change and overuse by oil sands industries. The report found that flows, especially in the winter, will soon be insufficient to meet the needs of both oil sands production and the other “industrial, commercial, agricultural, municipal, and environmental users” (*The Globe and Mail*, November 13, 2006). The report recommends that no further projects be approved until substantial water conservation measures are introduced by the industry.

### Polluting the Air

Not to be overlooked are the greenhouse gas emissions. Environment Canada has reported a 39.4 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta

### Further Research

One of the most important critics of oil sands development projects is the Pembina Institute. Its Web site is [www.pembina.org](http://www.pembina.org). It has a site specifically devoted to oil sands matters at [www.oilsandswatch.org](http://www.oilsandswatch.org).

Another critic is the Polaris Institute, with [www.tarsandswatch.org](http://www.tarsandswatch.org) specifically devoted to oil sands matters.

The Alberta government provides oil sands information at [www.energy.gov.ab.ca/OurBusiness/oilsands.asp](http://www.energy.gov.ab.ca/OurBusiness/oilsands.asp).

between 1990 and 2004. By 2005, Alberta had seven of the 10 biggest industrial polluters in Canada, and its industries ranked first in greenhouse gas production in the country.

Oil sands development is a major reason why greenhouse gas emissions have soared and why Canada's emissions are 30 per cent above its Kyoto target. In its report on the oil sands industry, the (U.S.) Natural Resources Defense Council noted that every barrel of oil sands oil creates three times as much greenhouse gas as a barrel of conventional oil. Not only is it more difficult to extract, it is also much more complicated to refine.

### Inquiry

1. Briefly describe the general impact of oil sands development on the land, water, and air in Alberta's north.
2. In your view should oil sands development be halted or slowed until Canada has the technology to reduce its impact on the environment? Explain in detail.

Just over a year ago (January 2006), Pierre Alvarez, president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, ([www.capp.ca](http://www.capp.ca)) stated that the technology does not currently exist that would substantially reduce emissions in his industry. Both the federal and Alberta governments, however, have said that they will be setting emissions targets that will require real reductions in the amount of emissions produced per barrel of oil (intensity targets). The federal government has already given \$156-million to Alberta to study the feasibility of capturing carbon dioxide as it is emitted and storing it underground.

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## *Wildlife and People*

**Did you know . . .** Aboriginal groups living in the Northwest Territories' Mackenzie River Basin depend on inflows of water from northern Alberta. They have complained to Alberta's energy regulators that oil sands projects are causing declines in water levels in the Slave River, which feeds Great Slave Lake. The NWT government is now insisting that it should have a role in assessing any new oil sands projects.

Environmentally speaking, the oil sands are situated in one of Canada's most important ecological regions. Their exploitation threatens a large part of Canada's boreal forest, potentially causing the destruction of an area the size of the U.S. state of Florida.

### **The Forest**

In an open letter to Canadians, 1 500 scientists from 50 countries have asked the country to strengthen the protection of its northern forest. While oil sands development is not singled out as the only threat to the forest, it is seen as one of the major ones.

Why protect the forest? Scientists point to it as a home to millions of birds and to a network of predators and prey, including wolves and caribou. Further, its wetlands serve as a filter for the water that enters the area's rivers and streams.

Terry Root, a scientist at Stanford University, highlights the role the forest can play during a period of climate change (*The Globe and Mail*, May 14, 2007). Climate change may wipe out the usual habitat of many species. A protected forest, however, would provide a refuge for many plants and animals while the world reduces its greenhouse gas emissions to acceptable levels.

### **The Waters**

Environmental damage to the area's waters is a matter of heated discussion among area residents. Oil companies insist that their impact on water in the rivers, especially in the Athabasca River, is minimal when compared with other human activity in the region.

Environmentalists disagree. They point to the huge amounts of water withdrawn annually by the companies—up to 349

million cubic metres—only a small percentage of which is returned to the river. This water is pulled from a river whose flows have already declined by about 20 per cent over the last 50 years and that may lose another 10 per cent thanks to climate change. Many experts believe that oil sands water use is not sustainable if the river is to meet the other needs of area residents.

Furthermore, a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence is pointing to oil sands pollution as a source of serious environmental damage to wildlife and to humans that rely on the river. Aboriginal communities are noting high rates of thyroid problems and of rare cancers. Fishers speak of large catches of deformed fish. Nicholas Kohler, writing in *Maclean's* (October 8, 2007), claims that the Athabasca is becoming too polluted to fish. "Even now, fish pulled from the Athabasca downstream of the oil sands taste of gasoline and smell of burning galoshes in the fry pan."

Some of this pollution may well be coming from the tailings ponds lining the river used to store the water fouled by the separation process. The ponds are so toxic that companies are forced to use propane cannons and scarecrows to keep birds from landing on them. Many are leaking and creating toxic wetlands in the areas surrounding them.

### **Too Big, Too Fast?**

The rapid influx of new workers into the oil sands has created huge problems for the town at the centre of the area, Fort McMurray, part of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo ([www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca)). Melissa Blake, the municipality's mayor, has bluntly assessed the situation. "The municipality

doesn't currently have the infrastructure such as roads, sewage systems, or social, education, and health-care services to cope with the growth. Neither, she says, can the landscape" (*The Globe and Mail*, February 27, 2007).

The Alberta government would seem to agree and has promised \$386-million in emergency funding for health care, affordable housing, and other services over three years. But the mayor and others argue that this is far too little to deal with the many problems the boom has created. These include:

- Water and sewage treatment plants unable to keep up with demands
- A shortage of hospital beds and health workers, including doctors
- An inflation rate that is the highest in the country

- A lack of affordable housing, forcing many oil sands workers to live in company barracks in camps
- A soaring crime rate

Much of the crime in Fort McMurray is blamed on rowdy workers who come to town after long hours in the oil fields to blow off steam. A frequently cited statistic is that drug abuse in Fort McMurray is more than four times higher than the Canadian average. *The Economist* (June 30, 2007) noted that "40 per cent of the workers test positive for cocaine or marijuana in job screening or post-accident tests." The job accident rate in the oil sands industry has risen by 17 per cent in the two years from 2004 to 2006. Many experts believe that drug abuse is a significant cause of this jump.

## For Discussion

1. List some of the major problems associated with rapid oil sands development. Discuss which you feel is most important, and why.
2. Why do you think drug abuse might have become such a problem in Fort McMurray? What positive measures might the government and companies take to reduce the size of the problem?

# THE OIL SANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## *Activity: Making Choices*

A recent poll by *The Globe and Mail* asked Albertans about the pace of oil sands development. The results showed that 48 per cent of Albertans felt the pace had been about right; 43 per cent, however, felt it had been too fast.

The concern of that 43 per cent is shared by many environmental groups and even by the review panel that approves all oil sands development in Alberta. On the other hand, the petroleum industry and the government of Alberta would like to continue or even accelerate the pace of industrial growth in the oil sands. Should a moratorium on further development be called until some of the environmental issues can be resolved and some of the problems solved? If so, which problems are critical and should be tackled first?

### **To Do**

In small groups, discuss and answer the question: Should the Alberta government call a moratorium on future oil sands development? Compile a list of reasons why it should or should not take this action.

Whether or not your group agrees that the government should take action, it should prepare a list of those areas—social and environmental—that it feels most urgently need to be addressed by the governments and the petroleum industry.

Each group should present its results to the class and compare their decision and priorities with those of other groups.

In addition to the material presented in the video and this guide, you may wish to look at additional information before your discussion. Here are some research suggestions.

CBC: [www.cbc.ca/news/background/oil/alberta\\_oilsands.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/oil/alberta_oilsands.html)

Government of Alberta: [www.energy.gov.ab.ca/OurBusiness/oilsands.asp](http://www.energy.gov.ab.ca/OurBusiness/oilsands.asp)

Pembina Institute: [www.oilsandswatch.org](http://www.oilsandswatch.org)

Polaris Institute: [www.tarsandswatch.org](http://www.tarsandswatch.org)

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers: [www.capp.ca/default.asp?V\\_DOC\\_ID=6](http://www.capp.ca/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=6)

A CAPP publication: [www.capp.ca/raw.asp?x=1&dt=NTV&e=PDF&dn=92079](http://www.capp.ca/raw.asp?x=1&dt=NTV&e=PDF&dn=92079) (“Oil Sands Economic Impacts Across Canada”)

Athabaska Regional Issues Working Group: [www.oilsands.cc/pdfs/2007%20RIWG%20Oil%20Sands%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.oilsands.cc/pdfs/2007%20RIWG%20Oil%20Sands%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## Introduction

### Quote

This *News in Review* story focuses on Canadian soldiers returning from Afghanistan with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It examines the challenges these soldiers face in coming forward and asking for help from an institution that has traditionally looked down on mental illness as a sign of weakness.

The news was chilling. In 2002, in the United States, four military wives were shot, strangled, or burned to death by their soldier husbands at the Fort Bragg military base ([www.bragg.army.mil](http://www.bragg.army.mil)) in North Carolina. Three of the soldiers had recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan. Even before all of the details of the cases were known, the U.S. military was being criticized for not doing enough to help soldiers adjust to normal life following a tour of duty.

In Canada, military officials were quick to point out that no one knew whether or not the soldiers were suffering from a mental illness as a result of combat, or whether the deaths were tragic cases of domestic violence. As well, officials like retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie stressed that a direct comparison between U.S. and Canadian soldiers should not necessarily be made. He noted that the military base at Fort Bragg alone is about five times the size of the total Canadian army. Thus our military institutions are quite different.

Nonetheless, a few weeks later it was revealed that a former Canadian soldier had been charged with plotting the death of his wife after he attacked her with an axe. The soldier's lawyer confirmed that the man had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a serious mental illness that affects soldiers more often than people in the general population. The symptoms of PTSD are frightening and disabling; they include nightmares, panic attacks, paranoia, and violent outbursts.

News about PTSD continued. In July 2003, a U.S. marine, Jeffrey Lucey, returned from a tour of duty in Iraq and sank into a deep depression. He began drinking heavily and isolating himself

from family and friends. By the spring of 2004 he had dropped out of college and was barely eating or sleeping. He talked constantly about the terrible things he'd seen and done. His family had him committed to a psychiatric hospital, but he was released a short time later. He crashed the family car, and a month later a neighbour found him wandering the neighbourhood in full camouflage, carrying two battle knives he'd been issued in Iraq. In June 2004, Lucey hanged himself in the basement of his family home.

Then, in 2006, a report was released about the mental health of Indian soldiers fighting in the Kashmir region. The Kashmir region—situated on the northern border between India and Pakistan—has been in dispute since 1947, but the latest fighting broke out in 1989. Since then, 44 000 lives have been lost in the region. The mental stress on soldiers has been acute, mostly because they never know when they will be attacked and because Kashmiri rebels will use suicide bombers to carry out their mission. The report concluded that the Indian soldiers are on high-alert for most of their duty, and that this hyper-vigilance was having negative health effects on them.

Alarming, the report noted increasing numbers of "fragging" incidents.

*Fragging* is the term used to describe acts where one soldier deliberately kills a colleague. In one incident, Santosh Kumar, a soldier who occupied the lowest rank in the army, shot three of his officers before killing himself. Thirty incidents of fragging have been reported to officers, but soldiers say the numbers are actually much higher. Most fragging incidents are covered up for insurance

### Further Research

The Web site of Veterans Affairs Canada has an excellent overview on PTSD and war-related stress. Check it out at [www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub\\_fm?source=mhealth/ptsd\\_warstress#Item3-1](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub_fm?source=mhealth/ptsd_warstress#Item3-1).

reasons and out of respect for the dead soldiers' families.

Also of concern is the rising number of military suicides. In 2005, 106 Kashmiri-based soldiers killed themselves, compared with 96 in 2003. The stress that leads to such deaths is evident in the following soldier's letters home to his family.

"I no longer want to continue the service. I am getting tired. We are trained in conventional war to guard our country against a foreign army. But here we are forced to fight an unconventional war against the insurgents who are sneaking in quietly and can strike at any place, any moment. Courage does not work here and it is heavily stressful. My tension is getting unbearable. For weeks I go without sleep . . ." ("What to do when stress really is a killer: How well will Canadian soldiers bear up in Afghanistan? Ask India's troops fighting the rebels in Kashmir," *Newsweek*, August 29, 2005).

By 2006, an alarming number of Canadian soldiers who had returned from Afghanistan were suffering from PTSD. Some of these soldiers, like Travis Scouten—featured in this *News in Review* story—told of the challenges they faced while trying to get treatment for their mental-health problems. In Scouten's case, shortly after he returned from Afghanistan he started

having nightmares and flashbacks. He was drinking heavily and engaging in dangerous activities. As he got sicker and sicker, Scouten's family grew desperate. At one point, Scouten's parents marched into an office at the Petawawa military base and demanded treatment for their son. According to the Scoutens, the officer there looked directly at Travis and said: "I was in Afghanistan too. Suck it up."

In some ways, the officer's attitude is not surprising. The military prides itself on toughness. Mental illness has always been seen as a sign of weakness. But knowledge and attitudes toward mental illness have changed. We know that mental illness is not the result of weakness, but rather stress, trauma, heredity, and chemical imbalances in the brain. We also know that mental illnesses improve with treatment. Without treatment people often get sicker and sicker.

The military has started to change its attitude toward mental illness and now acknowledges that about 20 per cent of troops fighting in Afghanistan will suffer from some type of stress-related mental illness. The military is hiring more psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists, and is trying to change the negative stereotypes associated with mental illness that may prevent some soldiers from coming forward for help.

### To Consider

1. Why is it not surprising that a certain number of soldiers suffer from PTSD after serving in combat missions?
2. Why might returning soldiers feel reluctant to talk about their mental-health problems?
3. In your opinion, does Canada have any duty to these soldiers? Explain.

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *Video Review*

Respond to the following questions as you view the video.

1. Describe how Corporal Travis Scouten felt when he returned from Afghanistan.

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2. What percentage of soldiers are believed to have a mental-health problem? \_\_\_\_\_%

3. What percentage of soldiers engage in heavy drinking? \_\_\_\_\_%

4. What incident made Scouten realize he was in trouble?

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5. What is PTSD and what are some of its symptoms?

6. In the past, how has the military tended to view PTSD and other mental illnesses?

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7. What steps did Scouten's family have to take to get Travis help?

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8. What steps has the military taken to help soldiers deal with mental-health issues?

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## **Post-Viewing Activity**

In small groups, discuss and share your opinions on the following statements:

1. Because PTSD is so devastating, all families should be trained to spot the signs of this disorder before soldiers return from active duty.
2. Since the military is aware that 15 per cent of soldiers will experience mental-health problems, all returning soldiers should be monitored by psychiatrists or psychologists for a period of two years.
3. Soldiers are adults so they should be left alone when they return from duty. We should assume that they would come forward for help if they need it.

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *What is PTSD?*

### Further Research

The Web site of the Canadian Mental Health Association contains excellent material about PTSD, including information on the mental health of children and youth. Visit the site at [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca).

PTSD stands for post-traumatic stress disorder. It is a serious mental illness that can make it difficult for sufferers to cope with daily life. Anyone who has experienced a serious traumatic event can suffer from PTSD. The rate of PTSD among soldiers is higher than the general population, possibly because they are more likely to witness death or experience threats to their own lives while in combat.

### What causes it?

PTSD is caused by a psychologically traumatic event. Seeing another person harmed or killed, suffering a violent personal assault—such as rape—or being involved in a serious accident are types of stressors that can trigger PTSD. Less frequently, learning that a close friend or family member is in serious danger can trigger the disorder.

PTSD appears to be the result of biological changes that occur in the brain in response to extreme stress. These changes alter the way memory is stored. It works like this: During a period of extreme stress the body produces massive levels of adrenaline. This adrenaline speeds up the heart, quickens reflexes, and burns vivid memories that are capable of activating the amygdala, or fear centre, in the brain. Instead of creating protective memories, the rush of adrenaline creates memories that intrude on everyday life. Without treatment, these negative memories can actually pose a threat to a person's life.

### What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of PTSD often begin within three months of the traumatic event. Sometimes, however, the symptoms may appear years later. There are three categories of symptoms.

### 1. Re-experiencing the event

This is the main characteristic of PTSD, and it can happen in different ways. Most commonly, the person has powerful, recurrent memories, nightmares, or flashbacks where they relive the traumatic event. The anniversary of the traumatic event, or situations that remind them of the event, can unleash dreadful symptoms.

### 2. Avoidance and emotional numbing

People with PTSD may avoid encountering scenarios that remind them of the trauma. The person may withdraw from friends and family, may lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed, and have difficulty feeling emotions. Feelings of extreme guilt are also common. In rare cases, a person may enter a dissociative state (breakdown of memory, consciousness, or identity), lasting anywhere from a few minutes to several days, during which they believe they are reliving the episode and behave as if it is happening all over again.

### 3. Changes in sleeping patterns and hyper-vigilance

Insomnia is common among PTSD sufferers, as is hyper-vigilance. Hyper-vigilance can be described as never feeling at peace or safe—even in one's own home. Someone who is hyper-vigilant may have to check the locks on the door over and over, or may not be able to sit in a room that has windows without blinds or curtains. Insomnia and hyper-vigilance often result in difficulty concentrating and finishing tasks, and in increased aggression.

**Did you know . . .**

In the general population, women are more likely than men to develop PTSD. Why do you think that this may be true?

**Other problems associated with PTSD**

Many people who suffer from PTSD also develop other anxiety disorders. They may suffer from panic attacks, where they begin to sweat and develop a very rapid heartbeat and feel as though they are going to die. They may suffer from agoraphobia, which is a fear of being out in public.

PTSD sufferers also have higher than normal rates of drug or alcohol use.

Drug and alcohol use can make the PTSD symptoms more intense and may increase the chance that the sufferer will become aggressive or violent.

People with PTSD also may struggle with depression. Feelings of guilt or self-loathing are not uncommon, and these depressed feelings further complicate the treatment of PTSD. Depression may also increase the risk of suicide.

**Apply What You Have Learned**

Watch this *News in Review* story again and record the symptoms of PTSD experienced by Travis Scouten. Alternatively, locate an article about someone suffering from PTSD and analyze those symptoms. It may be helpful to create a checklist of symptoms before you begin.

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *Mental Illness and the Military*

**Did you know . . .**  
Canadian military doctors were the leaders in recognizing shell shock as a legitimate health issue and not an example of cowardice.

We all know that war is horrible. Those who fight in wars have to live that horror. In some ways, it is remarkable that any soldier can return from battle and resume his or her former life without disruption. Understandably, some cannot. The extreme levels of stress during battle, the loss of friends, and the witnessing of death and destruction have a significant psychological impact on many soldiers. These are not new problems for soldiers, and the army has never made it easy for soldiers to talk about their psychological problems and seek help. But you will see in the following information that attitudes are beginning to change for the better.

### **Shell Shock in the First World War**

During the First World War, the term *shell shock* was used to describe various mental problems experienced by soldiers. Following time in the trenches, some soldiers became paralyzed or panicky. At the time, the military believed that the soldiers' problems were caused by the sound waves of exploding shells. But the military also believed that soldiers who were paralyzed by those sounds were "cowards." Consequently, they were forced back into action. Soldiers who refused to carry out their duties could be imprisoned or face death by firing squad.

By the end of the war, the large number of soldiers suffering from psychiatric problems, and the lack of available soldiers to replace them, resulted in the military developing an efficient and effective treatment protocol. The soldiers were treated as close to the front lines as possible and as quickly as possible so they could return to active duty in the shortest time possible.

### **Combat Fatigue in the Second World War**

Soldiers who "lost their nerve" and didn't want to continue fighting in the Second World War were said to have "combat fatigue." These soldiers shared an overpowering desire to escape from combat and showed signs of anxiety and memory loss. Unfortunately, the lessons learned about psychiatric disorders in the First World War were not initially part of standard operating procedure in the Second World War. As a result, many soldiers suffered as these lessons were relearned.

In the article "Wounds without scars: Treatment of battle fatigue in the U.S. armed forces in the Second World War," published in *Military Affairs* in 1985, Brian Chermol uses the U.S. campaign in North Africa to describe the huge strain that combat fatigue placed on the military's medical departments. In November 1942, three U.S. divisions were deployed in North Africa to assist British troops in driving German forces out of the region. Within months, the number of soldiers being evacuated for battle fatigue exceeded the number of soldiers available to replace them. As a result, cooks, mechanics, and other support personnel had to be pressed into service as infantrymen. Within the original infantry units, every soldier involved in the initial landings who was not killed, injured, or diseased eventually became unable to fight because of combat fatigue. This pattern continued until a neuropsychiatrist (a physician capable of understanding brain-behaviour relationships) was placed at the front and began to apply the principles and techniques developed during the First World War.

**Did you know . . .**

Some military units in the Second World War kept reported cases of combat fatigue artificially low by not counting soldiers sent to rest homes for short periods of time or discharged from service.

**From PTSD to Personality Disorder**

Although we are learning more about mental illness all the time, it seems that in some ways the military has been slow to respond to this new information. Or perhaps, it is just harder to change the attitudes that exist within a traditionally male-dominated institution like the military. Regardless of the reasons, it appears that the military is still not doing enough.

In an August 20, 2006, article entitled “Treating the trauma of war—fairly,” Judith Schwartz wrote that the United States military had started to give thousands of enlisted men and women a new diagnosis: “personality disorder” (*The Christian Science Monitor*). By changing the label from PTSD to personality disorder for a soldier suffering from the psychological effects of war, the government would not be held responsible for treating the ill soldier. That is because a personality disorder—defined as an ingrained, maladaptive way of orienting oneself to the world—would be considered a

pre-existing condition that predates a soldier’s tour of duty. And this would save the military the cost of medical treatment.

Schwartz believes that the new label of personality disorder is also terrible because it sends the message that the suffering is the soldier’s fault, not the fault of the war. It implies that a healthy person would be able to resist the psychological trauma of war.

“Someone who succumbs to the flashbacks, panic, and anger that haunt many former soldiers must have something inherently wrong with them. It’s the psychological side of warrior macho: If you’re tough, you can take it. Of course, we know this is not true” (Judith Schwartz, in *Christian Science Monitor*, August 20, 2006).

It will be necessary for the military to reconsider and stop imposing this label on recruits if there is ever to be the cultural shift required that both recognizes and destigmatizes the need for psychiatric care.

**To Consider**

Reflect on what you have learned about how the military has traditionally seen and treated mental illness. Based on that information, provide a response to the two men who made the following quotations:

1. A commanding officer, consulted about the suicidal behaviour of Travis Scouten: “I was in Afghanistan too. Suck it up.” — *News in Review*, February 2008
2. Alberta paratrooper and D-Day veteran: “We didn’t have a problem. We saw it all. The graves. We not only had to shoot [enemy soldiers in battle], we had to bury them afterward. We had to put the ropes on them. Arms came off. Legs came off. We saw it all. But after, we were all right.” — “Great stress upon stress: The Defence Department begins a proactive approach to combat post-traumatic stress disorder,” *The Report Newsmagazine*, March 18, 2002

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *Helping Soldiers*

Coming back from war is a very difficult transition. After all, a soldier goes from being involved in a dangerous mission one day to paying bills and taking out the trash the next. It is also a challenge for the families of returning soldiers. Spouses who have adjusted to being single parents in their partner's absence have to readjust to shared parenting and a modified routine around the house. Children who have adjusted to living without their mother or father now have a new parent back on the scene.

The Canadian military tries to make the adjustment back to civilian life an easier one for soldiers and their families. They do this through a program of decompression, reintegration, and post-deployment monitoring and treatment.

### **Decompression**

When soldiers finish their tour of duty in Afghanistan their first stop is a decompression stay in Guam, an island in the Pacific Ocean. They are reintroduced to comfortable bedding and fast food—a big change after sleeping in tents or dormitories and eating army food. They also receive instruction on managing the stress, depression, burnout, and suicidal feelings that can result from time spent in a combat zone.

### **Reintegration**

When soldiers first return to their own country, they get a two-day leave with their families. This family visit occurs outside the military base. After that, they return to the base for a one-week work

integration program. Then they get a 55-day leave. During the fourth week of that leave, the military checks in with the soldiers and gives them a complete medical examination. At the end of the leave, the soldiers return to duty. This program is designed to gradually reintegrate them into civilian life and to catch any problems they may be experiencing as quickly as possible.

### **Post-deployment monitoring and treatment**

The transition process continues for a few months after the return to Canada. Medical and mental-health follow-up measures such as questionnaires and medical examinations continue for about six months after a deployment. These measures help to identify psychological and other types of injuries that were not immediately evident upon their return. Veterans and peer co-ordinators are available to provide social support during this time.

Dr. Mark Zamorski of the Canadian Forces Health Services ([www.forces.gc.ca/health/engraph/home\\_e.asp](http://www.forces.gc.ca/health/engraph/home_e.asp)) notes that while the majority of soldiers who return from a deployment will adjust well following the reintegration process, some soldiers requiring assistance will be missed. This is because post-deployment monitoring cannot identify every single soldier with mental-health issues. As well, some soldiers may be reluctant to admit having any symptoms for fear that they may be stigmatized within their families or among their colleagues.

### **Reflection**

Based on what you have learned about PTSD in this *News in Review* story, are there any additional measures that you believe the Canadian Forces should take to assist returning soldiers?

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *Treatment for PTSD*

Obtaining appropriate treatment for PTSD is not always easy, particularly in the military. That is because negative attitudes and stereotypes about mental illness prevent some sufferers from coming forward, and because there are not enough psychologists and trained therapists to deal with the number of people suffering from the disorder. However, PTSD sufferers can be helped and can live a normal life again.

Treatment for PTSD often involves a number of stages. The most common include the following:

### **A) Crisis Stabilization and Engagement**

- PTSD symptoms can flare up and plunge a sufferer into a crisis. If this happens, the person needs to access a 24-hour counselling service or be taken to a hospital emergency ward. During the time in hospital, medication will be administered to deal with the most severe symptoms, and a cooling-off period will occur for the patient and the family.
- Once referred to a psychologist or therapist the person will need to take some time to establish faith and trust in the counsellor. This can be very difficult for those who have suffered trauma, as it may have been a long time since they were able to trust anyone.

### **B) Education and Information**

- Becoming informed about the disorder can help sufferers to understand that they aren't "crazy" and that they aren't alone.
- With greater information, sufferers can come to realize that the symptoms they have are the normal result of the trauma they suffered or witnessed. This is often

very reassuring for the person with frightening and disturbing symptoms.

- People who have been through a traumatic event often have trouble understanding what happened and why it happened. Therapists often help the sufferers to find out more about what happened during the event. A good understanding of exactly what happened and why it happened often facilitates recovery.

### **C) Symptom Management**

The symptoms of PTSD often interfere with daily functioning, so it is very important to develop effective strategies to cope with the symptoms. Once people can recognize and cope better with the symptoms, they are able to function more effectively in their lives. Symptom management includes:

- Learning techniques to reduce levels of anxiety and arousal.
- Reducing levels of anger and irritability by learning how to identify early warning signs of stress, learning how to re-evaluate a situation to keep it in perspective, learning how to stay calm in difficult situations, and learning problem-solving strategies to deal with disagreements.
- Reducing and managing depression by identifying patterns of depressive thoughts and realistically evaluating and challenging negative beliefs and thoughts.
- Helping patients to reduce sleep disturbances.

### **D) Exposure Therapy – Confronting Feared Situations or Memories**

- Anxiety causes people to want to escape or avoid situations, thoughts, memories, or feelings that are painful

**Did you know. . .**

In January 2008, a report noted that Toronto Transit Commission drivers suffered from a high incidence of PTSD. The drivers appear to be dealing with high levels of abuse and even violence from riders. What other non-military groups in Canada might you expect to suffer from PTSD? Why?

or distressing. However, this avoidance is one of the major impediments to recovery.

- Exposure therapy helps people to confront the feared situation in a very controlled and gradual fashion.
- By building upon repeated successes in facing these feared situations, people are eventually able to confront them without anxiety.

**E) Cognitive Restructuring**

- Cognitive restructuring is an important part of treatment because it helps to identify maladaptive (negative) thoughts and replace them with more realistic thoughts.
- This is particularly important for people who may feel they are bad or evil for acting the way they did during a crisis. Cognitive restructuring can relieve feelings of guilt, anger, or shame.

**F) Psychodynamic Psychotherapy**

- Some therapists use a psychodynamic approach to help patients with PTSD. This approach attempts to make connections between the traumatic experience and vulnerabilities in their

earlier life. In other words, they try to understand how current situations evoke traumatic responses even though the original trauma is past.

- For some people, disruptive and traumatic experiences early in life can make them more likely to respond negatively to trauma later in life. Therapists look for connections between such negative experiences to free individuals from excessive or unreasonable guilt.

**G) Relapse Prevention**

- For many people, PTSD is a chronic disorder that flares up from time to time even following treatment. Preventing or reducing the number of recurrences is important.
- Patients are taught how to recognize that times of stress may lead to flare-ups and but that the recurrence does not mean they are going to become extremely ill again. At the time of a flare up, patients need to practise the techniques they learned to help them manage their symptoms. They may also need to contact their doctor or therapist.

**Activity**

Based on what you have learned about the treatment for PTSD, work with a partner to draft a treatment plan for Travis Scouten. When you are finished, exchange your plan with another pair of students and compare the two documents.

# THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

## *Letter-writing Activity*

### The Facts

- About 15 per cent of Canadian soldiers returning from Afghanistan will have mental-health problems.
- Their mental-health problems may include post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal tendencies, or problem drinking.
- Mentally ill soldiers may suffer from night terrors, anxiety, and intrusive thoughts.
- The families of these soldiers suffer; some of them experience domestic violence.
- There are not enough trained mental-health practitioners within the Forces.
- Many soldiers are reluctant to admit they are having problems or come forward for help because of the negative stigma associated with mental illness within the military.

Frederic Couture was 21 when he stepped on a landmine while on patrol in the Panjwai district of Kandahar in December 2006. He lost part of his left leg and returned home to Quebec. He received a lot of media attention because of his positive attitude and determination. In an interview with CBC News in January 2007, Couture appeared unconcerned about his future:

"My life is not finished. I'm going to have a prosthesis (artificial substitute for a part of the body). And all the things that I was doing, I'm going to do it in the future. It's not because I lost a foot that I can't do anything" ("Coroner probing suicide of Quebec soldier wounded in Afghanistan." CBC broadcast transcript, November 16, 2007).

Couture's neighbours and family were shocked when he shot and killed himself in November 2007. Forces personnel were also upset and stated that they believed he had been recovering well, both mentally and physically.

### Your Task

Write a letter to your local MP or the Minister of National Defence outlining the steps you feel the Canadian Forces should take to assist soldiers with mental-health problems. Remember mail may be sent postage-free to any member at the following address:

House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0A6

Include the following elements:

- Date and return mailing address
- A formal greeting (Dear Mr. or Ms., Dear Minister)
- A short body paragraph outlining what you believe needs to be done
- A respectful salutation (Respectfully, Yours truly, Yours sincerely) followed by your name

You can send your letter to the Minister of National Defence electronically through the following Web site: [www.dnd.ca/site/contact\\_e.asp](http://www.dnd.ca/site/contact_e.asp)

Or you can send the letter through the mail to:

Minister of National Defence  
National Defence Headquarters  
Major-General George R. Pearkes Building  
101 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0K2

# News in Review Index

A list of the stories covered last season and to date in the current season is provided below.

The complete chronological index for all 17 seasons of *News in Review*, and a subject-oriented index listing *News in Review* stories appropriate for various subject areas can be accessed through our Web site at [www.cbc.ca/newsinreview](http://www.cbc.ca/newsinreview). Hard copies of these indexes can also be obtained by contacting CBC Learning.

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Lebanon War: Israel Battles Hezbollah  
Toronto Arrests: 18 Face Terror Charges  
London Bombers: Alienation and Terror  
The Big Melt: Canada's Changing Arctic

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A Canadian Rides the Shuttle into Space  
Canada Hosts World AIDS Conference  
9/11: The Day that Changed the World

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Canada's Famous Dinosaur Hunter

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Restoring the Parliamentary Library

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Visiting Second Life's Virtual World

## MARCH 2007

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Iran Seizes British Sailors  
The Dangers of Global Warming  
Living as a Homeless Person

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The Seven Wonders of Canada  
Tony Blair's Ten Years in Power  
Omar Khadr: Canadian in Guantanamo

## OCTOBER 2007

The Van Doos Head for Afghanistan  
The Trials of Stephen Truscott  
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Going Green to Fight Global Warming

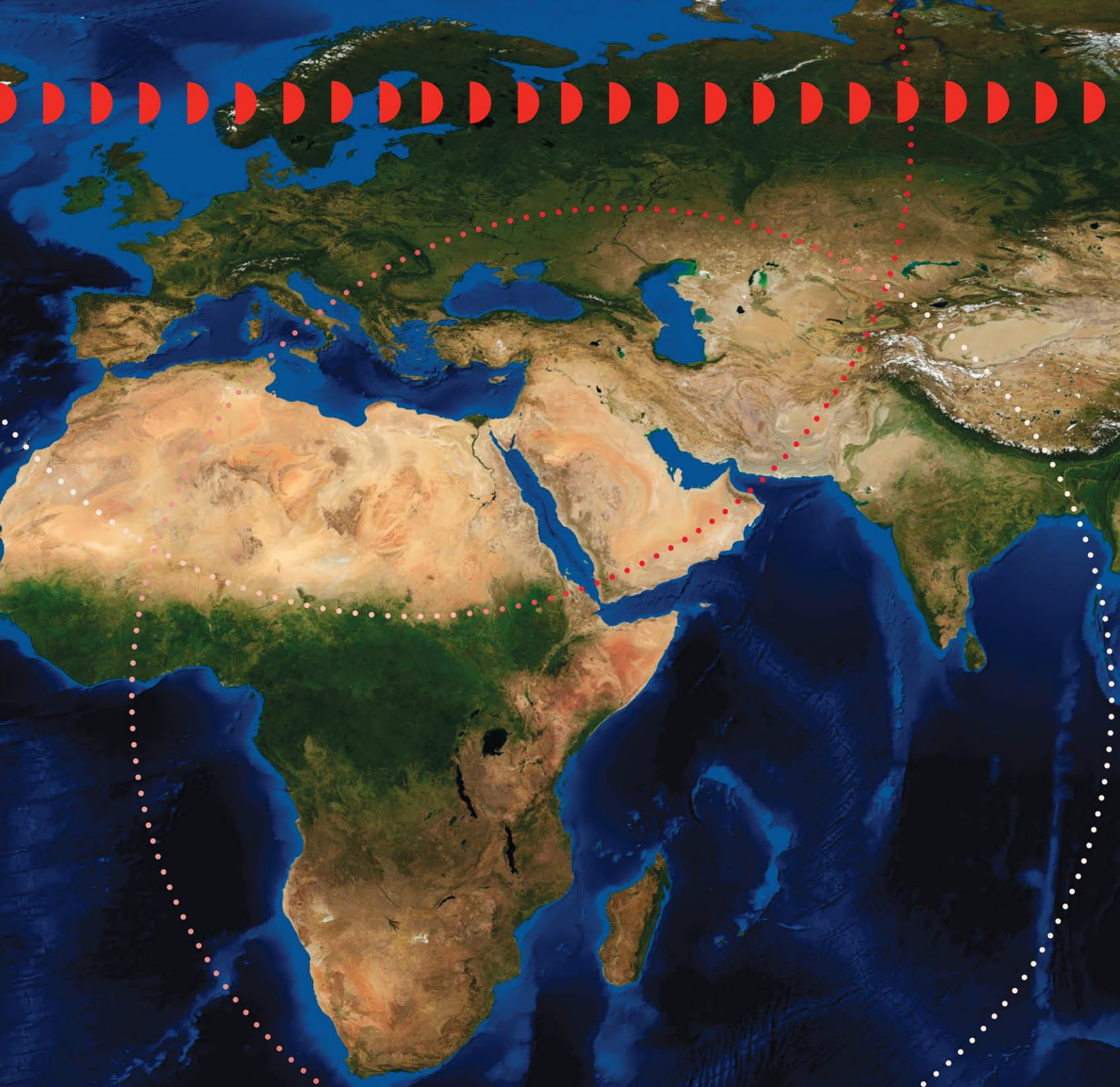
## NOVEMBER 2007

Taking Off: Canada's Soaring Dollar  
Defending Our Sovereignty in the Arctic  
Selling Canada's Military to Canadians  
Helping The Mentally Ill Homeless

## DECEMBER 2007

Harper's Throne Speech Challenge  
State of Emergency in Pakistan  
Quebec's Big Accommodation Debate  
Lake Superior: Where Did the Water Go?

CBC Learning  
P.O. Box 500, Station A  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5W 1E6  
Tel: (416) 205-6384  
Fax: (416) 205-2376  
E-mail: [cbclearning@cbc.ca](mailto:cbclearning@cbc.ca)



**CBC Learning  
Box 500 Station A  
Toronto, ON  
M5W 1E6**

**Toll free: 1-866-999-3072  
Phone: (416) 205-6384  
Fax: (416) 205-2376  
cbclearning@cbc.ca**



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