

To: news@milnews.ca

Subject: FW: Afghanistan: "hard-nosed realism"

Date: Thu, 13 Dec 2007 16:25:43 -0400

From: director@cda-cdai.ca

To: ;

Subject: Afghanistan: "hard-nosed realism"

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Dear Colleagues,

As the end of the year approaches and the country 'shuts down' for the Christmas season, the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) continues to strive to promote informed and non-partisan debate about the mission in Afghanistan. We would like to bring to your attention media items on the following themes:

- Pertinent developments in Canadian policy.
- Developments on the ground in Afghanistan.
- Developments related to our NATO allies.
- The situation in Pakistan.

CANADIAN POLICY

The University of Ottawa recently held a conference/roundtable for two days on Peacebuilding in Afghanistan. Links to a report by Lee Berthiaume in Embassy magazine and the conference website itself are provided below. Some of the participants' papers can be found on the latter website.

A piece by David Pugliese in the Ottawa Citizen (see link below) reports on a new policy by the Government to have officials at the "centre" - the PMO, PCO and Minister of National Defence - approve all media requests to DND of regional and national importance. The CDA is of the firm belief that an informed debate about critical issues such as the mission in Afghanistan is in the best interest of the Government and Canadians in general. First-hand news from the ground is crucial to informing the public on the situation there. For example, a link is provided below to an account of the building of a causeway across the Arghandab River in Kandahar province by CF field engineers and Afghan workers. A good news story.

On the 50th anniversary of the receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize by Lester B. Pearson, several commentators have commented on Pearson's legacy. Olivia Ward in the Toronto Star (see link below) lists the criticisms faced by Canada in not meeting Pearson's legacies, but also notes that the international environment in which he operated was different from today's. Lee Berthiaume in Embassy magazine (see link below) reports on a meeting by Liberals in Toronto to explore Pearson's legacy. Michael Pearson in the Globe and Mail (see link below) writes that while many in Canada and abroad associate Pearson with the 'invention' of peacekeeping, Pearson was also a

"hard-nosed" supporter of collective defence through NATO and NORAD and the UN 'police action' in Korea. He writes that Pearson was "an idealist tempered by realism" and understood "the importance of a comprehensive approach to global international peace and security in the nuclear age."

In that vein, the CDA would like to remind you of a comment by Paul Martin, Sr, Minister of External Affairs, in 1964: "Many nations had an appetite for power without teeth, but Canada [during the Cold War] had developed both the appetite and the teeth for a new international role." We should remember that at the time of the Suez Crisis and in the 1960s, the total strength of the regular CF was some 120,000 (twice the size of the current force), with a reserve army of 45,000, and that 3.8% of GDP was spent on defence during the Pearson years as opposed to 1.2% in 2007.

The CDA reminds its readers that the soft power of ideas, principles and responsibilities on the international scene are for naught if they are not backed up by relevant and credible capabilities (or, "hard" power). See works (link below) by Joseph Nye for a full account of hard and soft power.

Lee Berthiaume writes in Embassy magazine (see link below) on the evolution of the "3D" concept - Development, Defence and Diplomacy - in the Canadian approach towards the mission in Afghanistan, as well as criticisms by opposition members to the government's handling of the approach.

Gilles Toupin for La Presse (see link below) reports on comments by the Russian Ambassador to Canada, who said that Canada should remain and extend its mission in Afghanistan.

Links:

University of Ottawa. Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: taking stock and looking ahead.

<http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/afghanistan2007/eng/index.asp>

Lee Berthiaume. "NATO's handling of Afghan Mission Under Fire." Embassy, 12 December 2007.

http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2007/december/12/natoafghan/

David Pugliese. "Harper muzzle will hurt DND: retired general." Ottawa Citizen, 12 December 2007.

<http://www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=33f0e510-5dd4-437b-bac7-e1fc20cee60c>

"Operation CAUSEWAY: Canada's military engineers close the gap between Zharey and Panjwayii."

http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/feature_story/2007/12/10_e.asp

Olivia Ward. "50 years after Lester Pearson's Nobel." Toronto Star, 11 December 2007.

<http://www.thestar.com/printArticle/284347>

Lee Berthiaume. "Liberals Celebrate Lester B. Pearson's Glory in the Hope Some of it Will Rub Off on Them." Embassy, 12 December 2007.

http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2007/december/12/pearson/

Michael Pearson. "Lester Pearson's four faces of peace." Globe and Mail, 11 December 2007.

<http://199.246.67.249/servlet/ArticleNews/printarticle/gam/20071211/COPEARSO>

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Joseph Nye. "The Decline of American Soft Power." Foreign Affairs, May/June 2004.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040501facomment83303/joseph-s-nye-jr/the-decline-of-america-s-soft-power.html>

Lee Berthiaume. "Death of the Three-Ds in Afghan Mission." Embassy, 12 December 2007.

http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2007/december/12/threedapproach/

Gilles Toupin. "Moscou veut que le Canada prolonge sa mission afghane." La Presse, 7 December 2007.

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20071207/CPACTUALITES/712070796/5846/CPACTUALITES>

AFGHANISTAN

In a major development, Afghan and NATO (mostly British and American) troops have re-taken the town of Musa Qala in Helmand Province, the only major town held by the Taliban. Links are provided below to reports from Taimoor Shah and Abdul Waheed Wafa in the New York Times and Amir Shah for the Associated Press. Jason Burke in the Guardian (see link below) provides useful analysis on the importance of Musa Qala, noting that while it had little strategic value in military terms, in symbolic terms it is very important.

Links:

Taimoor Shah and Abdul Waheed Wafa. "Taliban Loses Grip on Last Major Town." New York Times, 11 December 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/11/world/asia/11kabul.html>

Amir Shah. "Taliban Resistance Over in Afghan Town." Associated Press, 11 December 2007.

<http://channels.aol.ca/news/article.adp?id=20071211072609990011>

Jason Burke. "The Afghan war in microcosm." Guardian, 10 December 2007.

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foreignaffairs/story/0,,2225262,00.html>

Sebastian Junger in Vanity Fair (see link below) writes an in-depth and excellent account of the life and activities of soldiers at a US outpost in the Korengal Valley, a strategic passage wanted by the Taliban and al-Qaida. The article provides a gritty look at the dangers, harrowing experiences and sacrifices experienced there. A link is also provided to photographs by the author.

C.J. Chivers in the International Herald Tribune (see link below) reports on the encounters of an American patrol with Afghan villagers, and the latter's desperate need for medical supplies and security.

Mark Dodd for the Australian (see link below) reports on the use by Dutch forces in Afghanistan of F-16 fighter jets, Apache helicopter gunships and heavy artillery to conduct operations against the Taliban. Contrary to a comment made by an NGO participant at the recent University of Ottawa conference, we at the CDA believe that the Dutch should not be seen as unwilling to engage the Taliban with their full military capabilities.

Tobi Cohen for the Canadian Press (see link below) reports on comments by the head of UNICEF on the situation in Afghanistan, who notes that while insecurity and insurgency are major problems, he remains optimistic about humanitarian workers being able to do their jobs in southern Afghanistan. He

also warns against blowing the situation out of proportion, for example conflating criminality with insurgency.

Paul Workman for CTV News (see link below) reports on the perennial difficulties of training the Afghan police forces to be honest and able to take over security from international forces.

In a long piece for the Atlantic Monthly (see link below), Sarah Chayes provides an account of how she managed to setup a small cooperative that makes luxury soaps in Kandahar. It provides a fascinating insight into how micro development projects in Afghanistan are undertaken.

Links:

Sebastian Junger. "Into the valley of death." Vanity Fair, January 2008.
<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/01/afghanistan200801>
http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/01/afghanistan_slideshow200801

C.J. Chivers. "Hunting the Taliban, finding sick children by the score." International Herald Tribune, 10 December 2007.
<http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/12/10/news/kabul.php>

Mark Dodd. "Dutch pound Taliban positions." Australian, 11 December 2007.
<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22903147-2703,00.html>

Tobi Cohen. "UNICEF boss optimistic about development in Afghanistan." Canadian Press, 7 December 2007.
http://thechronicleherald.ca/print_article.html?story=996747

Paul Workman. "Uphill battle to train local police in Afghanistan." CTV News, 8 December 2007.
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20071207/workman_police_071208/20071208

Sarah Chayes. "Scents and Sensibility." Atlantic Monthly, December 2007.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200712/afghans>

NATO

Lord Robertson in the Globe and Mail (see link below) writes that Canada and her NATO allies must stay the course in Afghanistan, an "urgent and necessary" mission that must succeed if the Western world is to remain safe and sacrifices honoured.

With the Afghan and British push into Musa Qala (see above), some see this as heralding a new and more proactive course of action by Britain in Afghanistan. A statement in the British House of Commons by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on 7 December (see link below) promises sustained military and development commitment to Afghanistan for the next few years. Brief commentary is available from a BBC article linked below.

Ann Scott Tyson for the Washington Post (see link below) reports on the strong criticisms of top US defence officials on the lack of commitment by some NATO allies to the mission in Afghanistan.

Thom Shanker in the International Herald Tribune (see link below) writes that the US Secretary of Defence is against the shifting of Marine forces from Iraq to Afghanistan, given that the situation in the Iraqi province of Anbar remains too volatile to allow for the withdrawal of the Marines.

A report in Press Association (see link below) reports on the views of Lord

Ashdown on the Afghan mission, who is rumoured to become a "super envoy" to Afghanistan in the coming weeks.

Links:

Lord Robertson. "We need to stay in Afghanistan - and we need to win." Globe and Mail, 11 December 2007.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20071211.wcomment1211/BNStory/Afghanistan/home>

Gordon Brown. Statement on Afghanistan to the House of Commons, 7 December 2007.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0712/S00813.htm>

BBC. "Afghan battle 'being won' - Brown." BBC News, 12 December 2007.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7139736.stm

Ann Scott Tyson. "Pentagon Critical Of NATO Allies." Washington Post, 12 December 2007.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/11/AR2007121102428.html?hpid=topnews>

Thom Shanker. "Gates said to oppose force shift to Afghanistan." International Herald Tribune, 6 December 2007.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/12/06/africa/06gates.php>

Press Association. "Ashdown critical of Afghan mission." 9 December 2007.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uklatest/story/0,,-7138882,00.html>

PAKISTAN

David Rohde in the International Herald Tribune (see link below) reports briefly on bombings and the continuing military campaign against extremists in Pakistan.

Salman Masood and David Rohde in the International Herald Tribune (see link below) report on the stringent censorship of the media in Pakistan, which is stifling dissent against the imposition of emergency powers by President Musharraf.

See link below:

David Rohde. "Bombings continue in Pakistan." International Herald Tribune, 10 December 2007.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/12/10/news/bus.php>

Salman Masood and David Rohde. "Musharraf succeeds in muzzling TV news reports." International Herald Tribune, 10 December 2007.

http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/12/10/news/pakistan.php?WT.mc_id=newsalert

For your information, the CDA would like to direct you to the website of "Canadians for Afghanistan":

<http://www.supportourmission.ca/>

As well the Center for Strategic and International Studies has released Anthony H. Cordesman's briefing, "Assessing the Afghan-Pakistani Conflict" - November 30, 2007, available at

http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com_csis_pubs&task=view&id=4219

The CDA will continue to collect and disseminate relevant and useful information for our readers. Suggestions and comments are welcome.

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