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New RoCK Moves into Golberg's Spot

by Jeff Davis



Sam Garcia
CIDA Minister Bev Oda.

Canadian staff in Kandahar are bidding farewell to a familiar and much-liked face this week as **Elissa Golberg** exits the sandbox.

Ms. Golberg has spent the past 11 months as the Representative of Canada in Kandahar, the most important Canadian civilian position in Southern Afghanistan.

Ms. Golberg, who went mostly by her pseudonym "The RoCK," has been replaced by longtime DFAITer **Ken Lewis**.

As the RoCK, Ms. Golberg was Canada's chief representative to the Kandahar provincial government and managed the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team and its 75 Canadian civilian staff.

Like most top returnees from Afghanistan, Ms. Golberg will take a vacation then hit the speaking circuit, talking to Canadians about the mission. After that, word is she will be heading up START, Canada's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force.

After working in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Lebanon and on the 2004 Tsunami response, Ms. Golberg was ready for the dangerous posting in Kandahar.

The new RoCK appears a good deal more mild-mannered. Mr. Lewis has spent most of his 20-year career on commercial

issues, serving in trade outposts across East and Southeast Asia.

He arrived in Kandahar after a posting as minister at the Embassy in Beijing, heading up Canada's commercial and economic program in China.

Oda's OPSEC Blues...

Once again, the national media has rained on CIDA Minister **Bev Oda's** parade.

Last week, CIDA was preparing to deliver the news that **SNC-Lavalin** had been awarded the **Dahla Dam** refurbishment contract with a little pizzazz.

As went the plan, Ms. Oda would make the announcement in grand fashion, from the site of the towering dam itself. Joining her would be new Kandahar Governor **Tooryalai Wesa** and some SNC-Lavalin execs.

The plan went off the rails when **Steve Rennie**, a reporter with the Canadian Press, prematurely printed the details of the press conference in a newswire story.

Ms. Oda's cover was blown, and with it the announcement's magnificent visual backdrop.

Scared of techno-savvy Taliban CP readers planning a nefarious party crash, the plan was scrapped and the announcement was made from the safety of nearby Forward Operating Base Frontenac.

Mr. Rennie was not summarily ejected from Afghanistan for this breach of operational security, but was told he was "under review."

Kenney, Kent to Rep Canada

When **Barack Obama** is sworn in as president of the United States on Jan. 20, Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** will not be in the crowd.

Instead, Canada will be represented by Immigration Minister **Jason Kenney** and Minister of State for the Americas **Peter Kent**.

Despite Mr. Harper's decision not to attend the inauguration, the president-to-be appears to be reaching out to Canada and following in the footsteps of most of his presidential predecessors.

"The president-elect has accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to visit Canada soon," said a PMO memo. "This will be President Obama's first foreign visit."

Deepak Honoured in India

Kicking off what looks to be a watershed month in Canada-India relations, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs **Deepak Obhrai** has received an award from the Indian government.

Mr. Obhrai received the award last week at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Chennai, India. The conference, which brought together persons of Indian origin and non-resident Indians from around the world, attracted a crowd of 1,500, including more than 20 Canadians.

Among them were Sikh-Canadian Liberal MP **Ruby Dhalla** and Conservative Senator **Consiglio di Nino**, an active member of Canada-India Inter-Parliamentary Association.

Each year, one Indo-Canadian is chosen to receive the award for leadership in the Indian diaspora. Before Mr. Obhrai, Liberal MP **Ujjal Dosanjh** and B.C. MLA **Dave Hayer** have received the honour.

Later this month, a trio of top ministers will also pay visits to the Indian subcontinent.

Immigration Minister **Jason Kenney**, Trade Minister **Stockwell Day** and Agriculture Minsiter **Gerry Ritz** are all

heading to India. Mr. Day will be opening trade offices in Hyderabad and Kolkata, and Mr. Ritz will be helping sell pulses, pork and agricultural equipment to the hungry, and growing, nation.

Mr. Kenney, meanwhile, kicked off his trip a bit early with a visit to Pakistan, where he appears to have attracted quite a bit of attention.

During his two-day visit over the weekend, Mr. Kenney held official bilateral meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister **Yousaf Raza Gilani**, Foreign Minister **Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi** and attended a luncheon held in his honour by a dozen other ministers.

Seems the only power player he failed to meet was president and **Benazir Bhutto** widower **Asif Ali Zadari**.

Mr. Kenney is now in India, where he will be visiting immigration posts and offering Canada's condolences to the citizens of Mumbai.

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