

# NATO'S CHOICE IN AFGHANISTAN: GO BIG OR GO HOME

Roland Paris

Recent trends in Afghanistan are discouraging. The neo-Taliban insurgency is growing in size and sophistication, and ordinary Afghans are becoming disaffected with their government's inability to provide security and basic public services. If these trends continue, NATO's efforts to stabilize the country will fail. A new strategy is needed to reverse the slow slide. First, additional NATO troops are required to provide security for reconstruction. Second, efforts to build an Afghan army should be accelerated and expanded. Third, the problem of corruption in the Afghan government, especially in the police, needs to be tackled. Fourth, Afghan and international officials should stop destroying opium crops, a policy that plays into the hands of the insurgents. Fifth, more reconstruction aid is needed. Sixth, the flow of insurgent fighters from Pakistan must be contained. If NATO is unwilling to commit the necessary resources for the mission to succeed, the alliance should withdraw.

La situation en Afghanistan est désespérante. Tandis que l'insurrection talibane gagne en ampleur et en sophistication, la population s'impatiente de l'incapacité du gouvernement d'assurer la sécurité et les services publics de base. Si cette tendance se maintient, l'OTAN échouera à stabiliser le pays. Pour renverser le courant, il faut, selon l'auteur, une stratégie en six points : envoi de troupes supplémentaires de l'OTAN pour sécuriser la reconstruction ; accélération et intensification des efforts pour créer une armée afghane ; lutte contre la corruption au sein du gouvernement afghan et de la police en particulier ; arrêt de la destruction des récoltes d'opium décidée par les fonctionnaires afghans et internationaux, qui font ainsi le jeu des talibans ; accroissement de l'aide à la reconstruction ; refoulement des combattants pakistanais venus se joindre aux talibans. Si l'OTAN refuse d'engager toutes les ressources nécessaires au succès de la mission, les forces de l'alliance devront se retirer.



**I**t is time for an honest reckoning of NATO's progress in Afghanistan. There is a widening gap between the Harper government's relentlessly upbeat descriptions of the NATO mission and the disquieting reality of a growing insurgency and mounting disenchantment among Afghans with their own government's failure to provide basic security and public services, five years after the fall of the Taliban.

While Canadian troops are performing with bravery and effectiveness on the battlefield, tactical victories are not the same as strategic success, and it is becoming clear that the West's strategy in Afghanistan is not working. The Pakistan-based coalition of old and new Taliban and their radical Islamist allies are operating more widely and openly in Afghanistan than they were even a year ago, and in closer association with local drug barons and warlords. The international

community's vaunted anti-narcotics campaign is a bust: opium cultivation rose 59 percent in the past year, fuelling an illicit industry that pays no taxes but accounts for nearly a third of the country's gross domestic product. Corruption and incompetence are rife in the police and the judicial system. A full third of the country is now unsafe for United Nations and civilian development personnel, according to the UN. Regional powers, sensing that NATO may be wavering in its commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction, are quietly hedging their bets and lining up behind different Afghan groups.

If these trends continue, we and our NATO allies will be defeated in Afghanistan. The defeat will come slowly, not on the battlefield but in the minds of ordinary Afghans, most of whom simply want security and opportunity for themselves and their families. If the legitimately elected government of

Afghanistan and its foreign backers cannot provide such essentials, Afghans will look elsewhere. That is exactly what the Taliban and their allies are counting on.

They are pursuing a sophisticated political-military strategy aimed at undermining confidence in the Karzai government through guerrilla attacks on military and civilian targets, while at the same time offering ordinary Afghans an alternative government in the form of religious justice, protection

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and paid employment for those willing to join the cause. It is a strategy not unlike Hezbollah's in southern Lebanon — and it appears to be working.

But Afghanistan is not lost — yet. Most Afghans say that they do not want the Taliban back in power and that they want the internationally sponsored state-building effort to succeed. In the past five years, presidential and parliamentary elections have been held, some 1,000 schools, clinics and government buildings have been built, and the economy has grown strongly. And unlike Iraq, Afghanistan is not teetering on the edge of civil war.

However, conditions are worsening. Schools are closing or going underground due to attacks and threats, development projects have been suspended in much of the southern and eastern portions of the country, and both public opinion surveys and anecdotal evidence indicate that Afghans are beginning to lose hope. Even the British general who commands NATO forces in Afghanistan, David Richards, acknowledged in October that the mission has reached a "tipping point" and that continued insecurity and lack of development could drive Afghans to support the insurgency in large numbers.

NATO countries will need to commit major new diplomatic, military and development resources to reverse this slow slide and get Afghanistan back on track to stability. With the onset of winter, there may be a lull in the fighting as insurgents hunker down and plan next spring's campaign. The international community should use this period to organize a more effective international operation that focuses on accelerating Afghan army and police training, expanding

NATO forces in the country, inducing Pakistan to control the flow of insurgents over its border into Afghanistan, turning the anti-narcotics strategy upside-down by regulating (instead of prohibiting) poppy production, cracking down on official corruption and increasing the level of international development aid to the country. If such a commitment is unachievable, NATO should plan a phased withdrawal from Afghanistan. These are the only two serious choices — go big or go home. The current strategy is a recipe for NATO's defeat in slow motion.

The United States and its allies should have made a serious commitment to Afghan security and reconstruction in late 2001 and early 2002, when the Taliban and al-Qaeda were on the run. But they did not, and we are dealing with the consequences today. One of the lessons of the 1990s was that deploying a massive international security presence, combined with constructing effective domestic governmental institutions and providing relief to local populations, is an essential ingredient for post-conflict peace-building. In Afghanistan, however, the international peace-building mission was premised on

the continued cooperation of local warlords who had helped the United States defeat the Taliban regime and were now counted on to help build the peace.

Colin Powell, then US secretary of state, recommended deploying a major peacekeeping presence throughout the country in early 2002. But former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld believed that advanced technology and mobile forces could substitute for massive deployments of infantry troops, which he viewed as passé, and rejected Powell's suggestion. A small, 4,000-member multinational security force was deployed to Kabul and environs, serving as a kind of praetorian guard for the Karzai regime, whose authority similarly extended little beyond the capital. In the absence of a country-wide international

security force to back up his government, President Karzai had little choice but to subcontract regional security and governance to local strongmen, whose power he could not directly challenge. Although an additional 8,000 US troops were based in the countryside, they were not to perform peacekeeping tasks. Their job was to hunt down remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

With reckless haste, the US then invaded Iraq. Afghanistan became a sideshow, trotted out in speeches as an example of progress in the war on terror. In fact, the mission chalked up important successes. A democratically elected president and parliament took office, schools reopened and new ones were constructed, and a many more Afghans gained access to basic health care including vaccines. But these accomplishments were built on flimsy foundations. Much of the country remained the private fiefdoms of warlords, whose primary interest was their own power and enrichment, and across the border in Pakistan the Taliban were regrouping.

As early as March 2003, the US military commander in Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Dan McNeill, expressed his frustration that the



Canadian Forces, Cpl David McCord

**Mounting casualties:** A “ramp ceremony” honouring a dead Canadian soldier in mid-October, when Canadian deaths in Afghanistan had risen to 42. The television footage of departure ceremonies, arrivals and funerals back home in Canada have cut into public support for the mission. Roland Paris examines conditions on the ground and suggests that unless NATO steps up with larger deployments, the effort to stabilize Afghanistan will be lost.

international community had “not made a more bold step” in helping the Kabul-based government to establish its authority throughout the country. Many experts on postwar peace-building were making similar arguments, pointing out that the Afghanistan operation was significantly underresourced — in terms of both international forces per capita and development assistance per capita — relative to other peace-building operations. But these calls made little impact. The US was preoccupied with a rapidly deteriorating situation in Iraq, and even UN officials seemed to convince themselves that limiting the international presence to a “light footprint” in Afghanistan was the most effective stabilization strategy. To some observers, this sounded like a rationalization for peace-building on the cheap.

Canada sent ground troops to Afghanistan in January 2002 on a six-month tour of duty to help the US and other allied forces hunt down and destroy the last pockets of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan. From 2003 to 2005, the bulk of Canada’s military contribution served in the Kabul-based International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which for six months in 2004 was commanded by the current chief of defence staff, General Rick Hillier.

ISAF was and remains a NATO-run operation. Its activities were initially limited to the capital city and surrounding area, but from 2004 onward ISAF began to assume command of allied forces in other parts of the country, including the Provincial

Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) located in several regional centres. PRTs are small groups of military and civilian specialists, ranging from 60 to a few hundred personnel, whose job is to provide security and reconstruction assistance in the surrounding area. In May 2005, the Paul Martin government agreed to take responsibility for the PRT in Kandahar, capital of the eponymous province of southern Afghanistan. As the 250-member team of Canadian soldiers, diplomats, development officials and civilian police officers arrived that summer, roughly 700 Canadian troops who were still serving in Kabul moved south and were reinforced with another 1,000 troops from Canada. With further additions in 2006, Canada now has approximately 2,500 troops in the country,

who represent just over 5 percent of the 41,000-member allied force (of whom some 21,000 are Americans).

Canadian troops were, in effect, moving into a no man's land that had been largely abandoned to tribal groups, local warlords and drug traffickers since 2001. Importantly, it was a no man's land with a history. Kandahar was the centre of the Taliban movement that swept across the country in the 1990s. And it is located next to border provinces of Pakistan, where the Taliban were established with help from the Pakistani intelligence service. Many Taliban commanders reportedly escaped to these borderlands during the 2001 war and were welcomed by local mullahs and fellow Pashtuns. According to Robert Grenier, the CIA's former top counter-terrorism official and Islamabad station chief, Pakistani officials largely turned a blind eye to the arrival of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, in spite of the Pakistani government's claims to the contrary.

In these sanctuaries, the Taliban began to regroup, recruiting new members from local madrassas and strengthening their links to local jihadist militants and foreign fighters including Arabs, Uzbeks and Chechens associated with al-Qaeda. They also reconnected with religious conservatives, criminal gangs and opium traffickers back in Afghanistan. Together, these disparate and loosely affiliated groups constitute what some now call the "neo-Taliban."

The neo-Taliban have emerged as a formidable adversary. The number of attacks in Afghanistan and casualties caused by these attacks climbed steadily from 2001 to 2005 but shot up in 2006 (figure 1). As NATO belatedly moved troops into lawless areas of the country, particularly in the south, they found not a vacuum but a seemingly well-organized insurgency that made it difficult to differentiate farmers from fighters. Over the past year, the neo-Taliban have expanded their area of operations, attacking targets in Kabul and other parts of the country previously secured. Insurgents have been

operating in larger numbers and more openly than at any time since 2001. According to Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani political reporter and author of the definitive book on the Taliban movement before 2001, the neo-Taliban have learned to avoid NATO surveillance satel-

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lites and drones in order to gather hundreds of guerrillas at a time to launch attacks, and they have also learned to disperse before US airpower is unleashed on them, to hide their weapons and merge into the local population.

These militants have also adopted techniques that were previously unknown in Afghanistan, including suicide bombing and killing women civilians. In 2006, there have been more suicide bombings in Afghanistan than in the entire previous history of the country. Whereas the region was once an exporter of terrorist tactics, jihadists in Afghanistan and Pakistan are now importing expertise from the insurgency in Iraq.

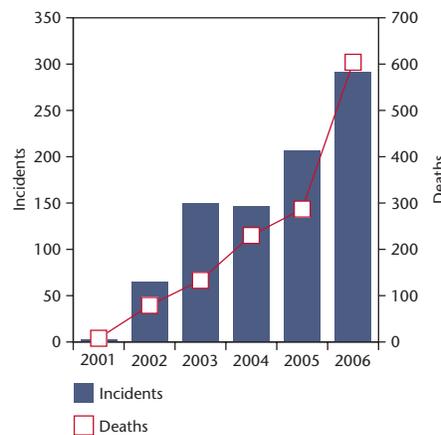
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Eight days after Operation Medusa ended, Safia Amajan, a well known and much liked senior Afghan official who advocated women's rights and education and vocational training, was shot dead as she walked to work in Kandahar city. Hundreds of kilometres to the east and two weeks later, the district administrator, police chief and intelligence chief for the Khogyani district of Nangarhar province were driving to a village to investigate the burning of a school the previous night — one of more than 50 schools burned in the first nine months of 2006 alone, according to UNICEF. All three officials and their two travelling companions were killed by a roadside bomb before they reached the burned-out building. Six days later, back in Kandahar city, unidentified gunmen killed a member of the Kandahar provincial council as he walked out the front door of his house. And during this period, more Canadian soldiers were killed by ambushes and hidden bombs on a four-kilometre stretch of dirt highway in rural Kandahar province than died in Operation Medusa.

By all appearances, the neo-Taliban's strategy is not to fight large, static battles against NATO. It is, rather, to create zones of instability in which the Afghan government and international

FIGURE 1. TERRORIST INCIDENTS AND DEATHS IN AFGHANISTAN, 2001-06<sup>1</sup>



Source: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, <http://www.tkb.org>  
<sup>1</sup> Figures for 2006 are for January through September.

aid officials cannot safely work; to undermine public confidence in the Afghan government's ability to provide security, justice and basic public services; to target Afghan civilians and facilities connected to the reconstruction effort, including schools and local officials, so that Afghans will be too fearful to cooperate in the rebuilding process; and to wear down the resolve of the NATO armies and their home governments. It is a strategy to win the hearts and minds of ordinary Afghans by leaving them with no choice but to turn to their attackers for security and sustenance.

The vast majority of Afghans do not want the Taliban to return to power — at least, that is what they say in public opinion polls. General Richards, the NATO commander, is right to point out that the insurgency “is not a huge uprising” of the populace. Afghanistan is not Iraq — or Vietnam. But there are growing signs that the Taliban's destabilization and demoralization strategy is working. The Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, recently completed a second round of more than 1,000 interviews with Afghans throughout the country. Initial findings show that Afghans are consider-

attacks. There is also mounting frustration at widespread corruption in the justice sector and in the national and local governments, and at the continuing lack of basic services. These results corroborate the informal comments of officials and observers in Afghanistan: ordinary Afghans are becoming disaffected with the Karzai regime, its weakness and its corruption. “No dispute is settled without bribery,” complained one interviewee. We “trust the law but do not trust those who implement the law,” said another.

Even the joint international-Afghan board responsible for overseeing the country's reconstruction efforts has acknowledged the depth of the corruption problem. Last month it reported, with surprising candour, that “negative public perceptions of widespread corruption at all levels of Government have increased and threaten to undermine or even reverse the Government's and international community's efforts to build a functioning state apparatus that is able to ensure security as well as deliver basic public services.”

Karzai himself is partly to blame for this. Although circumstances forced him to adopt a strategy of working with

At their worst, says one American consultant who ran a development program in Helmand province, the local cops are “bandits, pederasts and hash addicts.”

In 2002, Germany promised to retrain the country's police, but German officials deployed only 40 police trainers, leaving it to the US to provide additional resources. Today, police can go months without pay and cannot be relied upon by the local population or international forces. And in the absence of a fair and effective courts system, most Afghans still turn to informal community courts, creating an opening for the neo-Taliban to sell their brand of definitive, if brutal, justice.

At the nexus of these problems — weak institutions, corruption, warlordism and the insurgency — is the illegal opium trade. Reports suggest that corrupt officials in the Ministry of the Interior provide protection to drug traffickers, police jobs are sold to the highest bidder in some opium poppy-producing districts, and drug smugglers are increasingly forming alliances with neo-Taliban fighters in opposition to the government. The UN anti-drug office says that the neo-Taliban use drug revenues to recruit fighters and pay them \$8-\$10 a day, which is much more than they could earn in the legitimate economy or by joining the Afghan army or police. And the international strategy for dealing with the narcotics, which has focused largely on eradicating poppy crops, has failed in grand style: this year, opium cultivation in Afghanistan rose by 59 percent over 2005 (see figure 2).

The estimated revenue from opium production in the past year alone was over \$3 billion, more than double the amount of money that donor governments have contributed to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund since 2002. Worse, by threatening the livelihoods of poor farmers, poppy eradication efforts have resulted in foreign

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The most dramatic change was in perceptions of insecurity. Today, Afghans feel considerably less secure than they did a year ago, including in parts of the country that have not been subject to the most frequent or violent

regional warlords, he has resisted efforts to purge the most corrupt officials from his administration. At the local level, police are largely in the hands of local strongmen. Most are poorly equipped and organized, operate on the basis of personal loyalty to a commander, and in most districts are viewed by Afghans as a threat rather than a source of security.

troops and the central government being seen as aggressors in some parts of the country — a perception that the neo-Taliban are strategically exploiting.

Perhaps the neo-Taliban’s greatest advantage, however, is their refuge in the border territories of Pakistan. Studies have shown that insurgencies with protected foreign bases are rarely defeated, and there seems to be no shortage of new recruits for the neo-Taliban on the Pakistani side of the border. Ahmed Rashid reports the borderlands are now “a fully operational al-Qaeda base area offering a wide range of services, facilities, and military and explosives training for extremists from around the world planning attacks.”

The Pakistani government’s efforts to counter these groups have always been half-hearted, due in part to Pakistan’s complex domestic politics. Islamist lawmakers play a prominent role in the country’s National Assembly and there is a broad streak of anti-Western sentiment in the population. In a poll conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in 2006, 38 percent of Pakistanis expressed “a lot” or “some” confidence in Osama bin Laden. There are persistent and credible reports that Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate (ISI) continues to provide the neo-Taliban with support, as

it did throughout the 1990s. According to Seth Jones of the Rand Corporation, Pakistani intelligence agents have supplied weapons and ammunition to the neo-Taliban, along with information about coalition plans and tactical operations, tipping off neo-Taliban forces and allowing them to flee.

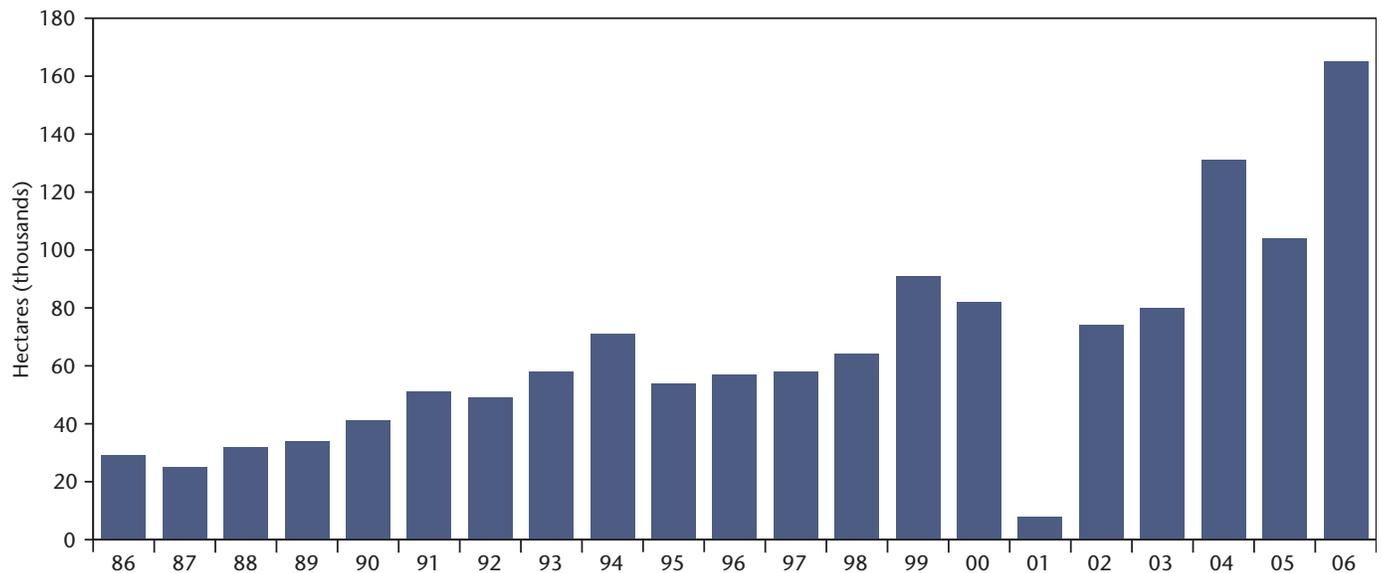
President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan denies this, but in October 2006 he acknowledged on US television that “some dissidents, some people, retired people who were in the forefront, in ISI, during a period of 1979 to 1989 may be assisting with the leaks somewhere here and there.” More darkly, some speculate that Pakistan has a considerable amount to gain from continued instability in Afghanistan. It keeps Pakistan on the front lines of the war on terror, which has netted the country billions of dollars in military and economic aid since 2001, including a US offer to sell Pakistan advanced F-16 fighter aircraft — greatly strengthening Pakistan’s position relative to its main rival, India. Pakistan also perceives India’s growing aid program and diplomatic presence in Afghanistan as a threat to Pakistani security, and some elements in Musharraf’s government may view the neo-Taliban as a counterweight to Indian influence.

Earlier this year, Musharraf suspended military operations against Islamist militants in a rugged and remote district of Pakistan bordering on Afghanistan. The district, one of several “tribal agencies” on the northern frontier, is called Waziristan. Few Westerners know what is going on in these tribal agencies, because foreigners are barred from entering. But it is one of the areas to which Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters escaped (reportedly with the complicity of the ISI) when the US invaded Afghanistan in 2001.

At the urging of the US government, Musharraf sent regular army troops into Waziristan and other northern districts to confront Islamist militants. Facing stiff resistance, Musharraf agreed to a ceasefire in North Waziristan in June 2006. The agreement, signed in September, committed Pakistan to stop air and ground operations against militants and to remove all military checkpoints in exchange for local leaders agreeing to prevent cross-border attacks into Afghanistan from North Waziristan and not to give sanctuary to foreign terrorists.

Musharraf apparently hopes that if he permits local Islamist groups and their allies to operate openly, they will clamp down on the elements within their community that are fighting in Afghanistan. But critics of the deal are justifiably dubi-

FIGURE 2. OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 1986-2006



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006*, p. 2.

ous. A similar agreement negotiated between the Pakistani government and local leaders in South Waziristan in 2004 created a vacuum that the neo-Taliban quickly filled. Within a year, according to Maulana Abdul Malick, a member of the Pakistan National Assembly from South Waziristan, the area was “virtually under the control of people who were once on

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the government's wanted list and foreign militants were roaming around freely.”

In the three months after the June 2006 ceasefire in North Waziristan, the number of cross-border attacks in nearby provinces of Afghanistan tripled, one unnamed US official told Associated Press. Musharraf insists that these attacks came from within Afghanistan. Only those with access to classified intelligence are in a position to judge these claims. Nevertheless, it is clear that the border remains largely open and the neo-Taliban continue to strengthen. Under these circumstances — unless Pakistan takes stronger measures to contain the threat building on its own territory — the insurgency in Afghanistan will be very difficult to defeat.

**T**hese trends are not encouraging: a growing insurgency with a foreign base and ties to local criminal networks in Afghanistan; a third of the country now too insecure for UN and civilian aid workers; an increasingly futile and counterproductive anti-narcotics campaign; endemic corruption and warlordism fuelled by drug money and made possible by the limited presence of international and Afghan security forces; and growing disaffection among Afghans with their own government. The international community's strate-

gy for peace-building in Afghanistan is not working. It is a formula for further backsliding and creeping defeat.

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body politic. To acknowledge the shortcomings of the current strategy is not a sign of weakness, nor would it necessitate the withdrawal of the Canadian Forces from Afghanistan or undermine their mission. On the contrary, we would do our soldiers a disservice by not reconsidering the strategic context in which they are operating.

**T**he first step in this analysis should be to recognize that the mission is far from a lost cause. Most Afghans want the reconstruction and the Karzai government to succeed; the neo-Taliban still have only a limited infrastructure and presence in Afghanistan; in real terms the non-drug economy has grown by an average of 15 percent per year; the country has a functioning parliament; an Afghan army is slowly being built; and NATO has shown that it can overpower any opponent in a stand-up fight. The problem is not that the mission is lost. Rather, it is that our current strategy is not a winning one.

The second step is to be clear and modest about our goals in Afghanistan. Bringing freedom, development and democracy to Afghans is a noble objective, but it is too ambitious. We will never succeed in transforming the country into another Sweden. Even the talk about improving “human security” in

Afghanistan is too vague and expansive. Canada's and NATO's interest is to prevent the country from becoming, once again, a headquarters for transnational terrorism. Everything else is secondary.

Nor do we have much time. Most international peace-building missions, even in friendlier environments than Afghanistan, face the problem of an obsolescing welcome: they come to be resented by their hosts over time. NATO and the international community have at best a few years to complete their work. The permanent deployment of Western forces in a conservative Muslim land would only lead to bigger problems down the road.

It follows that the third step is to rethink the international community's strategy in Afghanistan, focusing on turning the mission around quickly. Canada cannot do this alone, but it can contribute to a reformulation of the strategy in discussions with its NATO partners and in international forums. The anticipated lull in fighting over the winter offers a window for strategic revision that should be grasped now.

**A** new strategy could be built on the following six principles. First, the number of NATO forces in Afghanistan should be increased by at least 20,000. This may be a tall order, given the reluctance of NATO countries to respond positively even to the recent call for an additional 2,500 troops. But appeals for more troops will only work if contributing governments are convinced that further sacrifices will make a difference. NATO is having trouble finding more soldiers, in part because its appeals are not accompanied by a new strategy or renewed commitment to the operation — and the status quo is not inspiring confidence.

From the beginning, the mission has been hampered by a lack of international forces to help the Kabul government establish its presence around the country and to provide security against

insurgents. For the size of the country, the number of troops in Afghanistan is lower than for almost any other stability operation since the end of the Second World War. James Dobbins of the Rand Corporation has calculated that there were about 20.5 international peacekeepers per 1,000 inhabitants in Kosovo, 19 in Bosnia, 10 in Sierra Leone, 3.5 in Haiti and 3 in Namibia. In Germany after the Second World War there were 101 Allied troops per 1,000 people. In Afghanistan, the ratio is a paltry 1.4 per 1,000. That is not enough, as events have amply demonstrated. Adding 20,000 more troops in Afghanistan would raise the ratio to about 2 per 1,000 inhabitants.

Second, training of Afghan army and police forces should be expanded and accelerated. The Afghan National Army (ANA) is now about 30,000 strong, nearly halfway to its target of 70,000 by 2009. The training of this army has been one of the bright spots of the operation: reports indicate that some ANA units have performed well in the field. But even a well-trained army of 70,000 Afghans will likely be too small to stand on its own and protect a nation of 30 million by 2009. Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations recommends dramatically increasing this target, perhaps to 150,000. Afghanistan's defence minister agrees that 150,000 soldiers are the minimum needed to secure the country without foreign forces.

It is difficult to judge how many troops would be needed, but 70,000 seems a low figure. Even with the 41,000 international forces and 30,000 Afghan troops on the ground today — totalling about 70,000 — the security situation in the country has been deteriorating. Why would we expect the situation to be any better if the 41,000 highly trained and superbly equipped international troops were to be replaced by less effective Afghan recruits? Almost certainly, something more than a 70,000-member ANA

will be required and training programs will need to be expanded. The police force is a different story. It is critically weak and is delegitimizing the Karzai government in its daily dealings with Afghans. An overhaul of police training and oversight is urgently needed, which leads to the next point.

**NATO should apply greater pressure on Pakistan to do more to contain Islamist militants in the borderlands. President Musharraf has been walking a tightrope, as he puts it, between supporting NATO's anti-terrorist campaign and not appearing to his people to be an American stooge. Western governments are wary of applying too much pressure for fear of undermining his regime. It is very useful to have an ally next door to Afghanistan, and the prospect of chaos in a nuclear-armed Pakistan is alarming. But Pakistan's relatively hands-off approach to the management of its own borderlands poses a serious problem for NATO in Afghanistan — one that cannot be brushed aside.**

Third, a renewed focus on purging corruption from the police, judiciary and Ministry of the Interior will be needed to build confidence in the state and establish the foundations of the rule of law. As Canadian scholar Mark Sedra points out, the Interior Ministry "is rife with corruption and cronyism and lacks a rational well-defined structure and chain of command." Although a new process was created to vet high-level police appointees, Karzai himself sidestepped the process, appointing a regional strongman with links to organized crime as the police chief of Kabul. In the judiciary, too, unqualified people have been installed as court officials because they are loyal to various factions. Karzai states that he wants to deal with the corruption problem, but his remarks are tinged with fatalism. "There is corruption in the whole system," he says. That response is not good enough, particularly in the security and justice sector. Establishing the rudiments of effective local policing and the rule of law is crucial to the international mission.

Fourth, the international community should explore ways of regulating (and perhaps even taxing) rather than prohibiting the production and trade in opium poppies in Afghanistan. There is

currently a world shortage of opium-based pain medicines, and Afghanistan's production might help to reduce that shortage. While there may come a day when the Afghan state will have the capacity to restrict opium production, that day is still far off. At the very least, Afghan and international officials should

immediately suspend the eradication program. It is better to have no policy than one that is self-defeating.

Fifth, as an enhanced security presence restores safe conditions in more parts of the country, additional aid money will be required for local reconstruction, including improvements to the country's infrastructure. On a per capita basis, Afghanistan receives less international aid than many other post-war countries in recent years, including East Timor, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Solomon Islands. And the London-based Senlis Council reports that only \$7.3 billion of the more than \$20 billion pledged for Afghanistan by the international community has actually been disbursed in development aid to Afghanistan. Back in 2001, shortly after he left public office, former foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy warned of the dangers of underfunding aid to Afghanistan, and his warnings have proven foresighted. This is now acknowledged, not only by aid workers, but by top NATO officials in the country. "We need more in terms of investment in Afghan infrastructure," said Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry in September. "We need more resources, for road building, counter-narcotics, good governance, a justice system."

Sixth, NATO should apply greater pressure on Pakistan to do more to contain Islamist militants in the borderlands. President Musharraf has been walking a tightrope, as he puts it, between supporting NATO's anti-terrorist campaign and not appearing to his people to be an American stooge. Western governments are wary of applying too much pressure for fear of undermining his regime. It is very useful to have an ally next door to Afghanistan, and the prospect of chaos in a nuclear-armed Pakistan is alarming. But Pakistan's relatively hands-off approach to the management of its own borderlands poses a serious problem for NATO in Afghanistan — one that cannot be brushed aside.

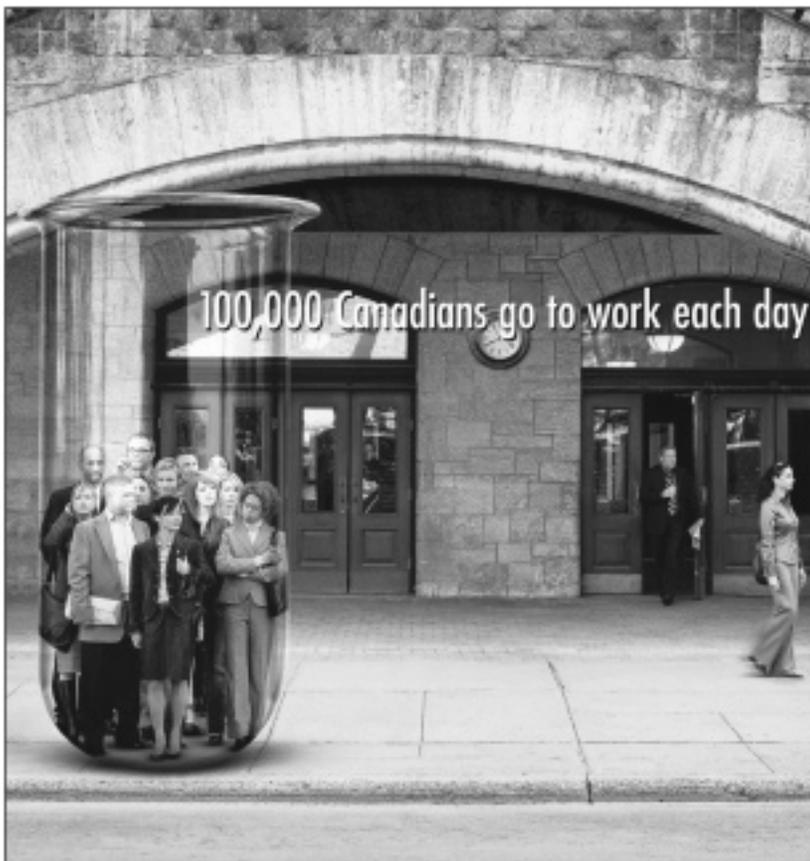
There is little to be gained by publicly criticizing Musharraf, but in private the NATO countries could collectively underline how seriously they view this issue. In September, Canadian Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor

proposed joint patrols of Canadian and Pakistani troops on both sides of the border, a proposal that Musharraf summarily dismissed. The Pakistani president is unlikely to rebalance his policy unless there are compelling reasons to do so. NATO must therefore speak with a single voice and privately make it clear to Musharraf that Pakistan's lucrative position as a close ally will be in jeopardy unless he does more to address Pakistan-based threats to Afghanistan.

NATO will need to refocus its efforts on all six elements of this strategy and make a major new commitment of diplomatic, military and development resources if it is to be successful in Afghanistan. The mission cannot be accomplished on the cheap. If NATO chooses not to make this commitment, it should not wait around for conditions to worsen. It should withdraw, because the current course is leading us toward a defeat in slow motion, which would do

untold damage to the alliance. This puts Canada in a difficult spot. Our troops are in the most strategically important and dangerous part of Afghanistan, committed until 2009. Yet many NATO members are reluctant to contribute further to the mission. Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he wants to restore Canada's position of leadership in world affairs. Now he has a chance to do so. His difficult task is to convince his fellow NATO leaders that the alliance needs to make a tough choice in Afghanistan: go big, or go home.

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\*Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, R&D Companies: Driving a Better, Stronger Canadian Economy, 2005.