

Chapter 2

Afghanistan as a Failed State?

“Failed states are increasingly trapped in a cycle of poverty and violence. The solution is for the United States and its allies to learn to love imperialism — again.”

—*Sebastian Mallaby, US Council on Foreign Relations, 2002*

“Failed state more often than not require military intervention in order to ensure stability.”

—*Paul Martin, Canadian Prime Minister, May 10, 2004*

“You cannot hide the sun with two fingers. You cannot hide the truth. Everyone knows who destroyed the country.”

—*Common Afghan saying, cited by Hamida Ghafour*

The political leaders of the United States, Great Britain and Canada have all referred to Afghanistan as a failed state. Once a state has been classified this way, the dominant Western powers then proceed on the assumption that they have the right to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of such countries either unilaterally, through regional organizations like NATO or through the United Nations, as sanctioned by resolutions in the Security Council.

After 9/11 the Canadian government immediately gave full support to the US government. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien pledged political, military and economic assistance in the effort to find and bring to trial those responsible for the terrorist attacks. On September 20, 2001, George W. Bush proclaimed the war on terrorism, and the Canadian government chose to be on the side of the United States and not the terrorists. Military support was pledged for the assault on Afghanistan, a regime change unilaterally dictated by the US government.

But with the escalating involvement of the United States in the Iraq war, Canada has been called on to make an increasing commitment to the counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan. This military role is now consuming 90 percent of Canada’s financial allotments to the project. However, the Canadian government has also made major financial pledges for economic development, training the new military and police and providing practical support to the present Afghan government.

In the last few years the general public has become increasingly critical of this policy. As a response Canada’s political leaders, government officials,

Crossing the Border

Never have I seen a border like this one. It isn't so much a geographic boundary as a border in time, a line between two social and economic systems, between two philosophies, between war and peace. The division is ever more striking when you consider that people of the same nationality — the Tajik — live on either side of the border. On one side they live in the late 1980s under the socialist system, and on the other side they live in 1366 (by the Moslem calendar) under a feudal system with tribal vestiges. You don't need a time machine to experience the difference. Simply get into an Mi-8 helicopter and ask the pilot for a lift from Kunduz, Afghanistan, to Pyandzh, USSR. That's all you need to do.

—Artyom Borovik, *The Hidden War: A Russian Journalist's Account of the Soviet War in Afghanistan (1990)*

military officers, the organizations representing big business and the mass media have undertaken a major public relations campaign in support of the mission. It is now argued that to cut back on Canada's commitment would lead to further disintegration of Afghanistan, the return of the Taliban, a tremendous loss of face for NATO, and a humanitarian catastrophe.

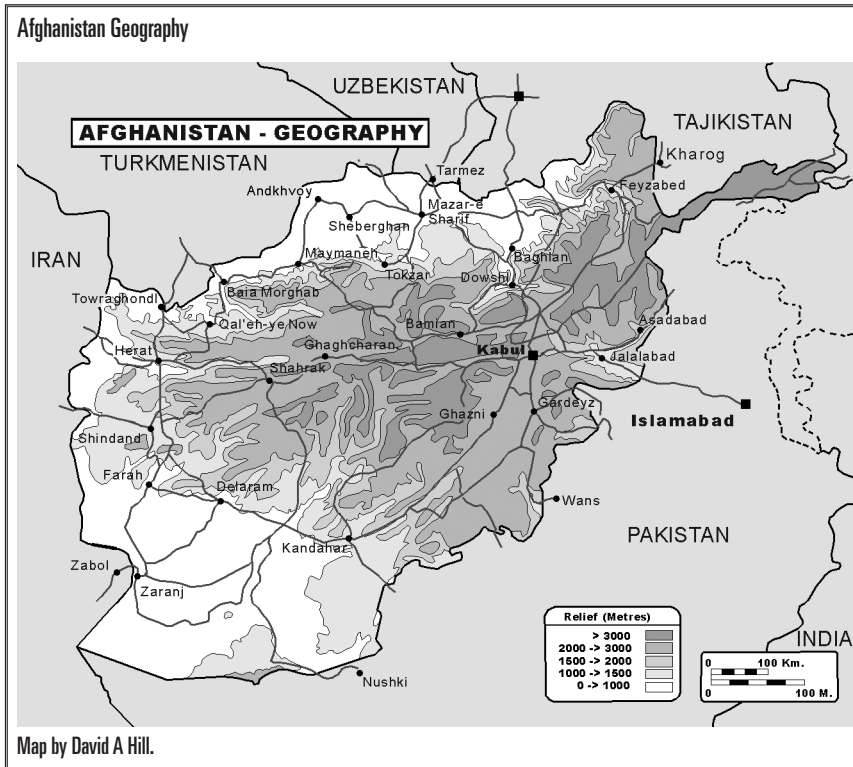
The message we are receiving is clear and consistent. Canada is fighting a war against terrorists in Afghanistan. We cannot abandon our neighbour, the United States, in its hour of need. We cannot do anything that might endanger our trade and investment relations with the United States. Our role in

Afghanistan is seen by the US government as compensation for our failure to offer political support for the war in Iraq. We cannot go back on our 2005 international policy statement that made a commitment to support failed states. Afghanistan is an ideal example of the goals of this policy. In these terms, Canada is engaged in “humanitarian intervention,” preventative military and economic action.

What Is a Failed State?

Noam Chomsky, the American political critic, has pointed out that US presidents have created a number of concepts over the years that have been used to justify intervention in other countries. There was the “communist menace,” used as a rationale to overthrow a variety of governments in weaker countries. When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 he declared war on “terrorist states.” In 1994 President Bill Clinton created the concept of the “rogue state,” defining it as one which poses a threat to the United States and its NATO allies. The problem with this category was that by 2005 public-opinion polls showed that majorities around the world considered the United States to be the number one “rogue state,” the country that was the biggest threat to world peace.

The concept of the “failed state” was promoted by both Tony Blair's New Labour government in Great Britain and the administration of George W. Bush. The failed states were those like Iraq which threatened Western



access to oil in the Middle East. Another widely cited example is Haiti, where the US, French and Canadian governments intervened to try to save the country from status as a failed state. In their pursuit of this noble goal, they were forced to overthrow a popular democratically elected government.

A number of people, including academics, have tried to define the term “failed state” more precisely. The minimum definition was described some time ago by the sociologist Max Weber: a state existed when there was a political authority within defined territorial boundaries that had a monopoly on the use of physical force. Thus, when a territorial state has within its borders armed groups that cannot be subjugated by the central government, then this country could be considered a failed state. The fact is, however, that many countries have such groups operating within their borders. A few years ago, following the terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, it was recognized that many private militias operate in the United States.

The Crisis States Research Centre at the London School of Economics defines the existence of a failed state as a condition where the central government, or state, can no longer perform the usual basic security functions,

may not be capable of implementing national development programs and has no “effective control” over its borders or territory.

A more precise analysis is provided by the US Fund for Peace, which produces an annual Failed States Index which is published in *Foreign Policy Magazine* and on their website. They utilize twelve social, economic and political indicators to rank 177 countries. In their 2007 index Afghanistan is number eight, ranked behind Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Haiti is ranked number eleven and Pakistan number twelve.

According to those who are promoting the use of the category “failed state,” a successful state is one with a liberal democratic government, a high standard of living and a free-market economy, and is more or less politically aligned with the United States. Certain dictatorships and feudal states are nevertheless judged to be successful, as, for example, most of the allies of the United States in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

The debate around this classification, which is used by the US government and its allies, avoids a key question: why are these states a failure? A glance down the list of the top ten or twenty states shows that they all have a lot in common. They are poor, less-developed states. They all have a long history of being colonies of European countries, or like Afghanistan, were dominated by imperial powers. They are not nation-states in the context of that term used by US President Woodrow Wilson; their territorial boundaries do not contain homogeneous populations. Nor are they more or less uniformly developed.

The borders of these countries have often been drawn by the Western imperial powers. This is true of all the countries in Africa. It is also true of all the Muslim states in the Middle East and North Africa. They have all risen from colonialism and imperialism. While the European countries developed modern, advanced capitalist societies, these former colonies, now defined by their former colonial rulers as failed states, were lagging far behind, with their economic and political development blocked and basic liberties and human rights absent. The African countries ranked highest among the twenty failed states suffered for a period of 400 years during which the dominant sector of their economy was the slave trade! Should we be surprised that their social, economic and political development lags behind that of the former European imperial powers?

Afghanistan's Political Economy

Afghanistan is an unlikely territorial state. It is a landlocked country, measuring 647,000 square kilometres, slightly smaller than the state of Texas, approximately the size of the province of Saskatchewan. It is dominated by high mountain ranges that divide the country in two, the Hindu Kush and

its connecting ranges, which run from Herat in the west to the Pamir ranges in the Wakhan Corridor which links to China. The country has three basic geographical areas: the Northern Plains, the Hindu Kush and its mountain ranges, and the Southwest Plateau.

Four major river systems flow from the mountains. The Amu Darya (Oxus) runs from the northern slopes across the plains and forms the border with Uzbekistan. The central rivers and streams form the Helmand-Arghandab River which runs southwest across the desert into the Seistan marshes at the Afghan-Iranian border. The Hari Rud River flows west into the desert in Turkmenistan. The smaller rivers in the east flow into the Kabul River, which enters the Indus River in Pakistan. The mountains are considered “young mountains” and are mostly barren, constituting 37 percent of the land base. The climate is arid to semiarid, with cold winters and hot summers.

Much of the population has been based in the river areas where agriculture is concentrated. The country has 4.5 million hectares of land devoted to rain-fed agriculture, with 3.3 million hectares under irrigation. Only around 12 percent of the land is arable; 45 percent of the land is devoted to the free-range grazing of animals. Generally speaking, the rural economy is threatened by a shortage of fresh water, lack of potable water, soil degradation, overgrazing, desertification and deforestation. With the population rapidly growing and measuring 31 million in 2007, there is a shortage of arable land.

The harsh geographical realities have certainly contributed to the limited economic development of the country. In addition, there are no coastal ports, no railway systems and only poorly developed roads. There are only two ways to travel year-round by vehicle from the south to the north, through the Salang Pass over the Hindu Kush and by the “Ring Road” which goes from Kabul, to Kandahar, up to Herat, encircling the mountains. On top of these handicaps the country has experienced more than twenty-five years of warfare during which 6 million Afghans were forced to emigrate to Pakistan and Iran as refugees. Several million others undertook internal migrations. There are about 3.5 million refugees in bordering countries today.

Socio-economic Profile

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2006 the World Bank estimated that the per capita gross domestic product was only \$964 and the average annual per capita income \$335. Furthermore, 50 percent of the population lived below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate was 40 percent. The vast majority of the households earn their living from near subsistence farming, casual labour and working in the informal economy. Among those with regular jobs that pay a wage or a salary, the average pay

is less than fifty dollars per month, an amount that is inadequate to support a family.

Life expectancy is only forty-four for men and women. Infant mortality rate is high, and the maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world, 1,600 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births. The World Health Organization has concluded that more than half of the children under the age of five are stunted and 7 percent are wasted. The total fertility rate, which measures the number of births per woman, was 7.8 children in 2004.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 6.5 million people suffer “chronic food insecurity” and 57 percent of households have “insufficient food diversity.” The World Food Program provides assistance to 1.7 million Afghan families each month. School enrolment is rising again, with the Afghan government now claiming that two-thirds of children are in primary schools, but only 30 percent of girls are attending. The overall enrolment rate in secondary schools is around 16 percent and much lower for girls. Adult literacy is 43 percent for men and only 14 percent for women.

Today there is a serious housing shortage in Afghanistan. Many residences were destroyed or badly damaged in the years of war. In Kabul most of the buildings are unrepaired, and hundreds of thousands of people are living in what can only be termed rubble. Refugees who have returned have been forced to live in abandoned buildings, temporary shacks and tent cities.

The United Nations Development Programme has constructed a human assets index (HAI) as a guide for determining a country’s eligibility for less-developed country status. The HAI measures nutrition by basic caloric consumption rates, health by the under-five mortality rate and education by the adult literacy level and the gross secondary school enrolment level. Of the fourteen less-developed countries in the Asian and Pacific regions, Afghanistan has by far the lowest HAI rating.

In July 2007 the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that humanitarian needs have grown significantly in recent years, contrary to the expectation for a post-conflict recovery. Much of this is attributed to the rise of the insurgency and the expanded conflict involving the US and NATO military forces.

Afghanistan Six Years after the US Invasion

For many years Afghanistan has been receiving economic assistance from international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations. In 1998 the United Nations formed the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, which had as a goal coordination of economic and political assistance. The strategic framework made a commitment to the general principles of the UN

Charter. At the time the aid organizations were working with the Taliban government, and they were being urged to combine economic assistance with political development and the promotion of basic human rights.

Development assistance has significantly increased since the United States overthrew the Taliban government. A donor conference was held in Tokyo in January 2002 where \$5.2 billion in non-military assistance was pledged over five years. At the Berlin conference in April 2004 donors pledged \$8.2 billion. The Afghan government under Hamid Karzai presented this conference with a seven-year plan entitled “Securing Afghanistan’s Future” which projected that the country required grants of \$27.5 billion to meet its needs. There is also a gap between the pledges made and the actual assistance that has been delivered. Between 2002 and 2005, only \$3.3 billion was spent, and less than \$1 billion worth of projects were actually completed.

At another conference was in London in January 2006 donors pledged an additional \$10.4 billion. External aid is now running at around \$3 billion per year. But the scope of the international assistance reveals the weakness of the Afghan economy. Over the 2004–05 period, foreign aid was the equivalent of 40 percent of the licit gross domestic product. There are a number of key problems.

1. Weakness of the Economy

The basis for the economy has been agriculture, which provides much of the livelihood for 80 percent of the population. Recovery from the period of war has been very slow and has been made worse by droughts. Afghanistan is almost self-sufficient in wheat production, the staple food. But the diversified agriculture that existed prior to the wars has not recovered. As elsewhere in less-developed countries, the majority of those who are in the workforce are in the informal economy.

The Senlis Council has repeatedly warned that over 50 percent of the population in the southern provinces lacks sufficient food. It should be remembered that the population of Afghanistan doubled between 1980 and 2005, much of the land previously under cultivation has not been reclaimed, herds of animals have not been completely replenished, fruit and orchard production has not recovered and the irrigation systems remain in disrepair.

The growing of poppies for the international trade in opium and heroin is by far the most important part of the economy. Some economists estimate that it is now as much as 50 percent of the gross domestic product. The World Bank set the figure at 35 percent. Farmers can earn five times the amount of income from growing poppies as they can from grains and legumes. The UN secretary general reported in September 2007 that access to food is actually decreasing owing to the increasing problem of security and the continued existence of poor infrastructure.

Part of the problem of economic development is the persistence of

corruption. At the local level assistance is often controlled by provincial governors, militia commanders and village elders. There is also widespread corruption in the central government in Kabul. In 2007 military officers in the US and British armed forces estimated that 50 percent of the aid did not reach the targeted population.

There are potential areas that could be exploited for purposes of economic development in Afghanistan. The country has large natural gas reserves, estimated at 15.7 trillion cubic feet. New geological surveys have revealed that there is a significant amount of oil, perhaps as much as 1.6 billion barrels. The necessary oil and gas pipelines have not been built, however, as potential investors are still waiting for the government to create political stability and security. In addition, there is potential for the development of a major mining industry. But all this awaits the creation of a stable government that enjoys a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

The current government is completely dependent on foreign aid to provide its very limited services. The budget for 2006–07 totals \$3.631 billion, including both funds channeled through the government and those spent on projects outside the government structure. Of this total only \$542 million comes from domestic revenues.

The country is experiencing a serious imbalance in trade. In 2005, for example, exports totaled \$755 million while imports were \$3.280 billion. With the military and foreign economic presence in the country, imports are surging. The enormous Westernized enclave also creates a major demand for goods that are not produced in Afghanistan, which itself has a very small manufacturing sector.

2. The Narco-state

The production of opium and heroin has increased dramatically under the administration of President Hamid Karzai. Between 2005 and 2006 production increased from 3,800 to 6,600 tonnes. In 2007 the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that poppy cultivation increased by 17 percent to 193,000 hectares. Opium production itself increased by 34 percent to 8,200 tonnes. UNODC argues that Afghanistan now accounts for 92 percent of the world's opium production. There has also been an increase in the processing of opium within Afghanistan, with 90 percent now being transformed into heroin and morphine before being smuggled abroad. The value of this production for Afghanistan in 2006 was estimated to be \$3.1 billion.

Poppy production is the most important source of livelihood for as many as 1.7 million Afghans. While the major area of production is in Helmand province, production is spreading across the country. Cultivation of poppies is a labour-intensive process and provides income for many landless farm workers. In 2005 the price of a kilogram of opium at the farm gate

was \$102, and production averaged around 32 kg per hectare. Most of the income from this crop goes to the processors and the traders. In 2007 the return from opium per hectare was \$5,200; for an acre of wheat, the return was \$546.

During the civil war against the communist government and its Soviet allies, and during the Rabbani government from 1992 to 1996, a number of key mujahideen warlords were major processors and traders of opium and heroin; a number of these war lords and commanders are still in the business today. It is widely known in Afghanistan that President Karzai's younger brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, is one of the country's major drug traffickers. The central government is often unable to deal with the problem because of its weak position outside Kabul. A number a members of the legislature are also known to be in the trafficking business, and they have considerable local power.

Today the Taliban and their supporters protect the farmers growing poppies in the areas where they have influence. The US and NATO forces have come under criticism for trying to deal with the problem by the eradication of the crop. In other areas of the country where the Taliban are not a major factor, it is common practice for poppy growers to pay bribes to government officials and local commanders in order to protect their crops. According to a study by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), the eradication of poppy production in poorer areas of the country leads only to worsening economic conditions. With a very poor infrastructure, and minimal government support, the production and marketing of alternative crops is restricted.

3. Impact of Non-government Organizations (NGOs) and Contract Workers

The development of the economy and the government of Afghanistan has been hindered by the structure of the external assistance system. First of all, the nature of the assistance is determined by the donor countries, not the government of Afghanistan. The second major problem is that much of the economic assistance provided by the UN organizations and the donor countries is not channeled through the Afghan government. All of this undermines the attempt to create a viable Afghan government.

The USAID program, for example, requires that 70 percent of aid be spent on US goods and services. Grants and salaries are often placed directly in bank accounts in the United States. Contracts for development projects are given to Western rather than Afghan companies. For example, the contract for the rebuilding of the Kabul-Kandahar highway went to the Louis Berger Group, which was paid \$700,000 per kilometre. Other companies, including local companies, bid to build it for \$250,000 per kilometre.

In a 2006 study of Afghanistan, CorpWatch found that "massive open-ended contracts have been granted without competitive bidding or with

limited competition.” These are the same politically connected corporations that are doing similar work in Iraq under the US occupation: Kellogg, Brown and Root of Halliburton, DynCorp, Blackwater, the Louis Berger Group, the Rendon Group and hundreds more. Many of the consultants and mercenaries are paid as much as \$1,000 per day.

In early 2007 British military officials operating in Afghanistan complained to the press that around 50 percent of all the external aid provided was siphoned off before it reached the intended project. They also recounted that much of the local aid was kept by village elders and khans for their own use and not passed off to the people as a whole.

Ann Marlowe of the *Wall Street Journal* advised investors not to overlook Afghanistan, where “there’s no shortage of profit to be made.” Cars and taxis are selling in Kabul. Telecom is doing a booming business. There is a “wide-open banking market.” The interest-rate spread is fat and “loans yield 10.4%.” Mortgages, car loans, credit bureaus, private insurance and credit cards “are all still nonexistent.” Foreign aid is a gold mine.

In 2004 Ramazan Bashardost, the Afghan government’s minister of planning, denounced NGOs and the United Nations for “wasting billions” by allocating spending through Western organizations, paying very high salaries, high rents in expensive buildings, overpricing and providing big cars and trucks to employees. About 20 percent of all aid expenditures, he charged, were used to bribe government officials to get contracts. He called for 1,935 NGOs to be expelled from Afghanistan. Bashardost was subsequently removed from office by President Karzai.

Jean Mazurelle, the World Bank’s director in Afghanistan, made similar charges in January 2006. He argued that “35–40 percent of the aid is badly spent,” much of it going to pay consultants and provide elaborate security for expatriates. He charged that highly paid aid consultants from the United States and NATO countries, “who come from behind their walled compounds,” are involved at all levels of governance. In 2006 75 percent of all external aid was outside the administrative control of the Afghan government.

A very visible part of this problem is the US private security industry. In 2006 there were fifty-nine such companies registered with the Afghan government. Their heavily armed men are seen everywhere in the cities, driving large vehicles, guarding buildings and neighbourhood security barriers. There are widespread complaints by Afghan government officials that they drive unlicensed vehicles, import and export weapons, maintain close relationships with local warlords as well as drug traffickers and do not comply with domestic laws.

There is growing resentment over the difference between the standard of living of the foreign aid workers and that of the local population. Foreign workers earn the same high salaries they receive in their own countries. They

have used their superior earning to buy or rent most of the good housing, driving up prices and rents in the process. They drive new cars. They have their own stores, restaurants and entertainment outlets. They have their own generators for electricity and sources of heat in the winter. While Afghan civil servants make around fifty dollars per month, Afghans who are lucky enough to get jobs with the foreign NGOs earn around \$1,000 per month.

Ann Jones, an American author and journalist who recently spent four years doing humanitarian work in Afghanistan, makes the following comment:

Most remarkable to me is the bloom of rose-coloured nostalgia for the Soviet Occupation. I hear Afghans say that the Soviet Soldiers didn't swagger about or push them around. Soviets didn't raid their houses or hold them in secret prisons or beat them to death. Soviets gave them good jobs. Soviets gave them tons of free food. Soviets provided medical care. The teachers in my class tell me the Soviets greatly improved the schools, and they put girls in school all over the country, and they invited many students and teachers to study in the Soviet Union. One says, "The Soviets took a whole bus full of teachers to their country." Another says, "Yes. It is true. It is a good idea. America can send a bus to take us to America." The whole of Kabul, probably the whole of Afghanistan, has been waiting and waiting for the American bus.

4. The Lack of Security and the Rule of Law

As UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in his September 2007 report on Afghanistan, "public confidence in the Government and its leaders is wavering owing to increasing corruption and weak governance, particularly at the subnational level." In addition, Hamid Karzai's highly centralized government, carefully constructed by the US government, is now under increased political threat. President Karzai does not head a political party. He does not have a regional tribal or ethnic base. His position of power and authority rests almost exclusively on support from the US government.

However, President Karzai now faces a challenge to his authority from the National Front, a new political alliance based in the legislature. They are calling for major changes in the constitution. Karzai's first vice president and a number of members of his cabinet have joined the new political alliance.

The security situation in the country has not improved, despite what we hear from our governments and read in the corporate-dominated media. The rate of violence has increased steadily since 2001. In 2007 more than 6,500 Afghans were officially reported killed in the counterinsurgency war,

the highest level ever, up from 4,000 in 2006.

Unable to confront the military power of the US and NATO forces, the Taliban and its allies have turned to a waging a guerrilla war, one that emphasizes ambushes, the use of road side bombs and increasingly suicide attacks. These have led to more civilian deaths. The US and NATO forces are stepping up the use of air strikes against the insurgents, also resulting in more death and destruction among the civilian population. In July 2007 the UN mission in Afghanistan reported that more civilians were killed as a result of the air strikes than from insurgent attacks. The Senlis Council has reported that air strikes by NATO forces are steadily increasing, and large 2,000 lb bombs are being used to attack relatively small groups of insurgents.

The Afghan National Army consists of 40,000 troops, of which only one-half are considered to have combat capability. The army suffers from a very high desertion rate. In the Kandahar area, where they have been involved in combat, it was over 50 percent in 2006 and 2007. The pay is very low, seventy dollars per month, and the Afghan government cannot fund the program. Afghan citizens have accused them of looting and rough behaviour. Both the army and the national police are paid for by the US government.

It was anticipated that the Afghan police would rise to 80,000 in 2007. But pay has also been very low, between sixteen and seventy dollars per month. In Kandahar, one-half of the recruits to the Afghan National Police (ANP) have deserted. For the most part, the ANP has been used in the counterinsurgency war. The insurgent groups have made a special target of the Afghan police in military assaults, roadside bombs and suicide attacks. Over 950 members of the ANP were killed in 2007.

The ANP has been widely condemned by Afghans for corruption, including involvement in the narcotics trade, extracting bribes for releasing prisoners, looting, extracting “taxes” at roadside checkpoints, brutality and carrying out extrajudicial executions.

In 2007 counterinsurgency forces in Afghanistan totaled 39,400, with one-half from the United States. This is a substantial increase over the previous year. But to put this in perspective, during the war against the mujahideen insurgency the Afghan armed forces (including the regular army, the Sarandoy paramilitary and the KHAD-WAD security service) increased from 125,000 in 1978 to 400,000 in 1990. The Soviet armed forces ranged between 80,000 and 120,000. The military opposition from the mujahideen was much more extensive than the Taliban today and were heavily financed and armed by the United States, Saudi Arabia and Osama bin Laden.

Faith in the government is also undermined by the fact that there is no legal system that operates in rural areas of the country. Prosecutors are paid only sixty dollars per month and judges one hundred dollars. The system is widely known for its corruption. Officials regularly accept bribes. If there is a

conviction, provincial governors and local officials can be bribed to get them to issue pardons. Ill treatment of those arrested and torture is widespread. Ordinary Afghans have no recourse to a functioning system of justice.

The Afghan public has made it clear that they want the old mujahideen warlords and commanders to be disarmed. While they have surrendered their tanks and aircraft, they have kept and are now increasing the number of small arms. Afghanistan is often called “the Kalishnakoff country” because of the unparalleled ratio of military arms to civilians. Afghans hoped that those who engaged in murder, rape and other crimes during the war years would be brought to trial for their offenses, but this has not happened.

Almost all of the state-owned land has been taken by the warlords and commanders. In Kabul they simply seized privately owned land, which was often property with buildings heavily damaged by the war. Along with the drug lords they cleared land and built huge “narco palaces,” as the locals call them. In March 2007 war criminals, now sitting in the country’s legislature, passed an Amnesty Law, signed by President Karzai, which exempts those who carried out crimes in the period of war between 1987 and 2001 from government prosecution.

Planning Economic Development: Afghanistan as a New Colony

At the Bonn conference in 2001 the United States and its allies established a framework for the economic development of Afghanistan. This temporary plan was later replaced by the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (IANDS), which was adopted in 2005. The Afghanistan Compact agreement was reached at the London conference in 2006. The thrust of all these development plans has been determined by the US government and the major international financial organizations, with support from the other donor governments. The Afghan government has had little influence over the development of economic strategy. Because the Karzai government is the creation of the US government and is totally dependent on foreign aid, the adoption of the goals for the country’s development involved no participation by the people of Afghanistan.

The development plans set forth for Afghanistan by the US government and the international agencies are based on the neo-liberal agenda for less-developed countries, commonly referred to as the “Washington Consensus.” The private sector is expected to be the driving force of the economy. The function of the state is to promote the interests of the private sector. Free trade is endorsed, and trade barriers — including social regulations created by previous governments — are being removed. There are to be no barriers to foreign investment. State-owned enterprises are to be privatized. The two state-owned banks are to be privatized. The economy is to be deregulated with the goal of attracting foreign investment. Natural resources will be

developed by the private sector, not state-owned enterprises. Taxes on businesses are being lowered. The role of the state in the social sector will also be strictly limited, as even services like health are being contracted out to non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund was established by donor countries and international financial organizations. It is to coordinate economic assistance from abroad and ensure that funds are directed to the approved programs of the development plan. This central economic organization is outside the control of the Afghan government, managed by representatives from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the UN Development Programme, the Islamic Development Bank and the US Assistance Mission to Afghanistan.

Under this anti-democratic neoliberal development strategy, the Afghan state has little hope for achieving fiscal independence. Its main source of revenues will continue to be customs taxes. The Afghan government is now putting in place minimal corporation taxes, but the tax base is very limited. Little revenue can be raised from the new income tax as the large majority of the population is very poor and government enforcement power is very limited. The other potential source of state revenue would be the collection of economic rent from the development of natural resources, an important option in other central Asian countries. But in Afghanistan under the present political regime and constitution, this will not be the case.

In the past Afghan governments recognized that the absence of a capitalist class resulted in there being a tiny pool of capital for investment. Like the people of many less-developed countries, Afghans turned to the state for development aid. From 1953 to 1963 the government began to introduce state planning and created a number of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) with foreign aid and technical assistance. These included enterprises in textiles, cement, sugar and wheat products. The country's banks were nationalized in 1975. During the period of the communist government (1978–92), assistance from the USSR helped develop 170 projects, including natural gas. By 1992 the cooperative arrangements between the USSR and the Afghan state accounted for 75 percent of state industry and 60 percent of the country's energy production. But this approach to development has been completely rejected by the US government and the international financial organizations it dominates.

In November 2005 the Afghan cabinet approved amendments to the State-Owned Enterprise Law permitting the privatization of fifty-four of the SOEs that were still in existence. Completion of the privatization project is planned by the end of 2009. The privatization push is being directed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and a team of advisers under contract from USAID.

There are around 25,000 employees in the state-owned industrial sector that is scheduled for privatization. The team of consultants planning the privatization have forecast that in this process 14,550 employees will be made “redundant.”

The US government has had another major goal in Afghanistan. The exploitation of government-owned oil and gas reserves must be opened to US and other Western oil corporations. The Hydrocarbons Law of December 2005 and the Minerals Law of July 2005 provide for the development of natural resources in Afghanistan by private corporations, domestic and foreign. These resources will not be developed by state-owned enterprises as is the case in the other central Asian republics. The Aynak copper deposit is expected to be the first major new natural resource development. Tender documents are now being created.

As in other less-developed countries, the privatization process has been forced on the local government by the structural adjustment programs implemented by representatives of the US government, the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization. This is an externally driven process, the new form of colonialism created by governments of the advanced capitalist states. It is completely a top-down process, a total negation of democracy. The neoliberal agenda is being implemented by the Joint Co-ordination and Monitoring Board of the 2006 Afghanistan Compact. While the board is co-chaired by the UNAMA and the government of Afghanistan, the agenda is set by the representatives of the foreign institutions mentioned above. In June 2007 the government of Afghanistan, together with representatives from the private sector, Afghan society and the donor countries agreed on a series of actions “designed to create a favourable climate for the country’s struggling private sector.”

In July 2007 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund announced that because the government of Afghanistan had taken sufficient steps on the road towards the “structural reform agenda” it now qualifies for admission to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative which makes the country eligible for debt relief. Afghanistan will also be eligible for assistance under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative when they have completed the HIPC program. To be eligible for debt relief, the Afghan government has to complete an additional set of structural reforms, including those dealing with public financial management, public expenditure policy, external debt management and other social measures.

Failed States and “Humanitarian Intervention”

Since the intervention in Kosovo in 1999, the United States and its NATO allies have been promoting the argument that military intervention in the internal affairs of independent states can be justified for humanitarian rea-

sons. They insist that military intervention is required when there are gross violations of human rights that are not prevented by the government of the country in question. Indeed, in this context, the government itself may be deemed responsible for the violations. The government of George W. Bush justified the military attack on Iraq in March 2003 by arguing the need to replace a repressive dictator and impose a democratic regime. Iraq was a “failed state,” part of Bush’s “Axis of Evil.”

In October 2001 the US government justified its military assault on Afghanistan on the basis of self-defence. This was part of the reaction to the 9/11 attack on the United States. But the invasion of Afghanistan was not limited to bringing Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda to justice; a key aim was to replace the Taliban government, which was described as a “failed state,” an oppressive dictatorship that was vicious towards women in particular. The continuing occupation and counterinsurgency war there is still being justified as a humanitarian intervention.

In Canada our governments have followed the lead of the United States. At first Canada supported the US military effort to close al Qaeda’s bases and capture Osama bin Laden for trial in an international court. As the US government changed its justification for the war, however, so did the Canadian government. Our elected government, officials, military officers and mass media now all argue that Canada is in Afghanistan fighting a counterinsurgency war as part of a general NATO humanitarian intervention. We are told that Canada is helping support the democratic government of Hamid Karzai, in opposition to the fundamentalist religious dictatorship represented by the Taliban. If we fail in our task, it is argued, Afghanistan will revert to a failed state.

But there is no consensus on this issue. In April 2000 the meeting of the 133 non-aligned countries — known as the Group of 77 — issued a declaration in support of the principles of the UN Charter and international law. They argued that breaches of the peace should be settled by the United Nations by peaceful means, that countries should refrain from the threat or use of force and that all nations must respect the sovereign rights of people working through their own governments. There must be respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination for all people. The Group of 77, almost all of whom are former colonies, strongly supported humanitarian assistance but rejected the so-called “right” of humanitarian intervention.

Why have the less-developed countries taken this position? In the case of Kosovo in 1999, the United States pushed NATO to intervene with military force. The Clinton administration had its own reasons for doing so, one being the need to maintain NATO in its role as the dominant military alliance in Europe. There was no attempt by the United States and its NATO allies

to get approval from the UN Security Council for the intervention. Yet the Canadian government supported the US position.

In the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, the US government took action on its own, for its own reasons, and then asked for other countries to come to their aid. In these three cases, humanitarian intervention involved massive bombing that terrorized and killed significant numbers of civilians.

There is a major gap between political opinion in the industrialized northern countries and the less-developed South on the “right” of the powerful countries to undertake humanitarian interventions against powerless ones. Latin American states worked hard to get the principle of non-intervention included in international law and the Charter of the United Nations. This was a direct result of the historical fact of regular interventions in their affairs by the United States. The South African government and the Organization of African Unity took a stand against unilateral intervention in Kosovo, arguing that no matter what the stated motives, such action was unacceptable. This position reflected the historical legacy of western European imperial and colonial interventions throughout Africa. These countries resisted the doctrine of humanitarian intervention because they wanted to protect the principles of the UN Charter.

The reality of the world system is that only a few powers have the means, motive and opportunity to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries. In the first Gulf War in 1991, the US government used all kinds of threats and bribes to get the UN Security Council to give its consent for the American-led military intervention. Only Cuba and Yemen said no. US Ambassador Thomas Pickering responded by stating “that was the most expensive ‘no’ vote you ever cast,” and three days later the US aid program to Yemen was cancelled. Ironically, as Noam Chomsky has pointed out, under the principles of self-defence included in the UN Charter, Nicaragua, Panama and Grenada had the right to launch a military attack on the United States.

The failure of the UN Security Council in Somalia in 1992 and Rwanda in 1994 illustrates the inability of the organization to effectively act in cases where the US government does not give full support. The major powers insist on retaining their veto rights in the Security Council. They also oppose shifting decision-making responsibility to the UN General Assembly where they have no veto and the non-aligned less-developed countries are strongly represented.

What has been missing is any real discussion of the causes of human-rights calamities that might actually justify humanitarian intervention. For example, the public discussion of problems in Africa always seems to focus on dictators, military forces that are out of control, corruption, tribal and ethnic rivalries, the existence of warlords, a failing economy and famine.

There is no discussion of *why* any of these conditions exists. To what extent is this situation due to hundreds of years of colonial domination and oppression? A good case can be made that the continuation of poverty and despair that exists in Africa today is to a large degree the outcome of the neoliberal economic programs imposed on them by international financial organizations dominated by the United States and its NATO allies.

What are the rich countries of the North doing to *prevent* the development of such calamities? Very little. As we can see in Afghanistan, the non-governmental organizations, which are seen by most people as charity organizations, are in fact helping to implement the neoliberal agenda. Given the existing examples, humanitarian intervention appears only to mean support for US policy at the time. The logical alternative is to support the right of countries to self-determination and democracy.

Canada and Humanitarian Intervention

In 1999 the government of Canada followed US policy in Yugoslavia and participated in the NATO bombing of Kosovo. This air assault focused on destroying the economy and infrastructure of Serbia. Lloyd Axworthy, the minister of external affairs, established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. The goal of the commission, which had a strong Western bias, was to try to find a way to reconcile the non-intervention principles of the United Nations and international law with the desire of the US and its NATO allies to promote humanitarian intervention.

The final report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, concluded that “the Charter’s strong bias against military intervention is not to be regarded as absolute when decisive action is required on human protection grounds.” According to the drafters of the report, when a state is unable or unwilling to prevent a humanitarian crisis, “the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.” This amounted to an endorsement of the US-NATO position. At the same time, however, the commission also took the position that the “responsibility to prevent” was the first responsibility of the United Nations and its member states.

The defenders of Canada’s participation in the war in Afghanistan have always cited the preamble to the resolutions that the United Nations adopted in September 2001. Here we find reference to Article 51 of the Charter which affirms the right of all member states to self-defence. But the substance of the resolutions gives no authorization for a military attack on Afghanistan. The specific resolution only sets a goal of finding those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and bringing them to justice.

The United Nations did not become involved in the Afghan war until after the US military had defeated the Taliban government and, working with their allies in the Northern Alliance, had completed the regime change.

It was only at this point that the United Nations agreed to sanction a US-NATO military force which would attempt to create security in the country. In no way can the US-NATO mission in Afghanistan be considered a United Nations operation. This intervention by the United States, NATO and Canada is consistent with the patterns of intervention set first in Yugoslavia and later in Iraq.

The attack on Afghanistan, and the subsequent military support by Canada and the other NATO countries, is a perfect example of the serious problems generated by attempts to apply the theories of the “failed state” and “humanitarian intervention.” These situations have resulted in undermining the basic principles of the UN Charter and international law.

In January 1980 US President Jimmy Carter issued what is now known as the Carter Doctrine: the declaration that the United States views its access to oil in the Persian Gulf area to be a “vital interest” and that it will use all means at its disposal, including military force, to protect those interests. Since then the US government has been pushing to undermine the principles of the UN Charter governing the use of military force. The goal of Carter and subsequent presidents has been to establish the right of the United States to decide where and when to launch military attacks and at the same time to bypass the United Nations. NATO, the military alliance that is completely dominated by the US government, has given support to this effort.

The United States has also been doing whatever it can to undermine the principles of international law. The US government does not recognize the International Criminal Court and supports others and their decisions only when they follow US interests. It has declared that no US citizens will ever appear before international courts. It insists that it is not bound by the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners. It is now using secret prisons, shipping prisoners of war to other countries to be tortured and is applying methods of interrogation that are widely recognized to be torture. It has flaunted international law on the rules of war, especially those that require states to avoid civilian targets and to refrain from destroying infrastructure like public utilities required by civilians for their very existence.

What Canada did in Kosovo is referred to as “humanitarian bombing.” Some would consider that to be an oxymoron. In Afghanistan the Canadian government has done whatever the US government has asked. As the safely predictable ally, the Canadian government remains the key advocate of US policy within NATO. In playing this role it is moving away from an alternate role that has broad public support: providing humanitarian assistance, supporting international law, backing the principles of the United Nations, preventing war and promoting peacekeeping.

Chapter 8

Canada's Role in Afghanistan

“Canada is making an important contribution in the global struggle against extremists. We are in an ideological struggle against peoples who use murder and death to achieve political objectives.”

—*President George W. Bush, Montebello, Quebec, August 21, 2007*

“Happiness is Kandahar from my rear-view mirror.”

—*Canadian Forces coffee mugs, noted by Hamida Ghafour*

“The Coalition of the Willing is winning hearts and minds one dead body at a time.”

—*Current Afghan saying, cited by Hamida Ghafour.*

“Being a soldier means you go out and bayonet somebody. We are not the Public Service of Canada. We are not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people.”

—*General Rick Hillier, Chief of Defence Staff,
Canadian Forces, July 16, 2005.*

Why are Canadian armed forces fighting a war in Afghanistan? The official position of the Canadian government is that we are there to prevent the relapse of that country into a failed state where the Taliban regains political control. Canadian forces support the democratically elected government headed by Hamid Karzai, which includes training the new national armed forces and police. We are helping to extend the central government's control over the large areas of the country that have traditionally been controlled by local ethnic groups, their militias and their warlords. While the preponderance of Canada's spending has gone to support our military forces in Afghanistan, our Liberal and Conservative governments have emphasized that we are also there to implement humanitarian assistance programs. This view is strongly supported by the mass media and Canada's “embedded” reporters in Afghanistan. But is this the real story?

The Response to 9/11

The flight of the airliners into the World Trade Center towers was seen around the world. Television stations ran the films over and over again. They

even showed people jumping from the upper floors. Then the unusual collapse of the two towers was also shown endlessly. Everywhere, but especially in the First World, people were appalled. The victims were ordinary citizens just doing their work. There was an outpouring of sympathy and support for the United States and its government. How would the administration of George W. Bush respond?

As reported above, almost immediately the US government reported that there were nineteen hijackers. They were from Saudi Arabia, a few from Yemen. None of them were Muslim fundamentalists or Islamists. The blame for the attack was immediately placed on Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda. The Bush administration had already demonstrated that it was not at all interested in capturing the leaders of al Qaeda and bringing them to justice in court. There was a popular consensus in the United States understood not only by the key decision makers in the Bush administration but also the Democrats in Congress: the response had to be a war of revenge. It would serve as a warm-up to the more important war against Iraq.

The attack of 9/11 revealed the huge gap between the industrialized First World and the Third World. In the First World, no concern had been expressed over the deaths of civilians when the US and its allies extensively bombed Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. There was no concern whatsoever when the United States and the United Kingdom carried out bombing over Iraq year after year following the 1991 Gulf War, often with civilian casualties. There was little concern for civilian deaths when NATO carried out the massive bombing of Serbia in 1998. The US government had engineered a system of economic sanctions against Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War. UNICEF and others reported that the shortages of food and medicines from this embargo had resulted in the premature death of 400,000 Iraqi children. When Lesley Stahl of *60 Minutes* asked US Ambassador Madeleine Albright whether this was too high a price to pay, she responded, "I think that is a very hard choice, but the price, we think, the price is worth it."

This seems to reflect a major change in public opinion in the industrialized world. At the end of World War II there was widespread support for the creation of the United Nations, the formation of the Geneva Convention and the commitment to the expansion of international law. The goal of everyone was to prevent war if at all possible and to avoid its death and destruction.

We now have a return to the morality of imperialism. Death and destruction are to be condemned when the targets are people in the imperial centres. Death and destruction are normal, and to be accepted, when the victims live in the colonized Third World. This is certainly the message of the political elite in the First World and the mass-media coverage of the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Only Al Jazeera television reports what happens

to Third World victims, and in both the Iraq and Afghan wars, their offices were targets of US smart bombs.

The Canadian Government and the Afghan War

Following the disaster of 9/11 in New York and Washington, Art Eggleton, the minister of national defence, immediately announced that Canadian forces operating within US military units would participate in any US operations in Afghanistan designed to eliminate the al Qaeda organization and even to replace the Taliban regime which protected them. John Manley, the minister of foreign affairs, announced that Canada stood “shoulder to shoulder” with the US government.

On the day of the attack the US government ordered all aircraft to land, and 142 flights were diverted to six airports in Canada. Canadian Forces aircraft were immediately put under the authority of the North American Aerospace Defense Command. Canadian support for the United States was immediate.

The US government took its case to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which on September 12 initially agreed to invoke Article 5 of the treaty, provided it was demonstrated that the attack on the United States was organized from abroad. On October 2 NATO gave its full support to a US-UK military attack on Afghanistan. We have been told that enough evidence was presented to convince the European governments that Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda were behind the 9/11 attack. This was the first time NATO had invoked Article 5, the joint-defence clause, that holds that an attack upon one member is an attack against all. The Chrétien government strongly supported this decision.

Tony Blair spoke to a convention of the Labour Party, describing and promoting the forthcoming attack on Afghanistan. President George W. Bush declared that no negotiations were being made and again rejected offers by the Taliban government to close al Qaeda bases and extradite bin Laden for trial in a third country or an international court. On October 7, 2001 the United States, with some support from the United Kingdom, launched a massive bombing attack on Afghanistan. There was no attempt to get advance approval from the UN Security Council. The Bush administration also determined that they would not utilize NATO in the actual war. The goal was to overthrow the Taliban government and put a new government in place: regime change, as the US government calls it.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien immediately announced that Canada would contribute a military force to support the US-UK war on terrorism, and Operation Apollo was formed. HMCS *Halifax* was ordered to leave the NATO naval forces in the Atlantic and sail to the Arabian Sea to become part of the US military plan known as Operation Enduring Freedom, the

campaign to overthrow the government of Afghanistan.

On October 14 the prime minister announced that Canada was offering “unqualified support” for the US war effort in Afghanistan. “We did not pick this fight but we will finish it,” he said, “because on the side of justice, in a just cause, there can be only one outcome: victory.” Three days later the Chrétien government ordered HMCS *Iroquois*, *Preserver* and *Charlottetown* to depart Halifax to join the US fleet in the Persian Gulf. HMCS *Vancouver* left the west coast to become part of the US Naval Task Force in the Arabian Sea.

The Chrétien government had also committed 2,000 Canadian troops to Afghanistan as part of US Operation Enduring Freedom. By December 20 there were members of Canada's Joint Task Force 2 special forces near Kandahar as part of the US military effort to mop up the Taliban and al Qaeda forces. Under Canada's Operation Apollo, armed forces were deployed to Kandahar in February 2002 to defend the airport and engage in combat activities with the Taliban forces.

Operation Enduring Freedom, which launched the war, is completely under the control of the United States; it includes some military support from a few European countries and Australia. This force, created to overthrow the Taliban government, is now completely engaged in counterinsurgency warfare against the various resistance forces identified as the Taliban.

The US government selected the Afghan representatives to the meeting in Bonn in 2001. The resulting Bonn Agreement of December 5, 2001, asked the United Nations to establish a military force to provide security around Kabul and to help train a new Afghan National Army and a national police force. In response to this request, the International Security Assistance Force was sanctioned by a UN Security Council resolution on December 20, 2001. This *followed* the defeat of the Taliban government and the installation of the new interim Afghan government by the United States. This action was taken under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, an enforcement mandate. The ISAF is not a peacekeeping force. It is not a force in any way under UN control. All financing comes from the participating governments, the coalition of the willing, and none from the United Nations. At the beginning the ISAF was under the command of the British government. It should be remembered that the ISAF was operating in Afghanistan before there was any elected Afghan government.

Secretary of Defence Art Eggleton announced as early as November 12 that Canada would be providing armed forces for deployment in Afghanistan. This would consist of 750 members from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. They would be part of the US Operation Enduring Freedom, seeking to find and destroy the remaining forces from the Taliban and al Qaeda. They carried out this operation between January and July 2002.

As well, they provided security in Kandahar and around its airfield. Some Canadian forces continue to be part of Operation Enduring Freedom, which remains under US command. The US government from the beginning insisted that US forces in Afghanistan would always be directly under US command.

The United Nations was asked to create a military force for Afghanistan, a “stabilization mission” which would provide a form of military-police security for the UN humanitarian assistance program. It was to be a form of peacekeeping, not a direct military mission. It would not be under the United Nations but part of the operation of the US-directed coalition of the willing. This was the kind of mission that was preferred by the Canadian government. Public opinion widely supported a peacekeeping role for Canada; there was no indication that the public was willing to support a Canadian role in a long counterinsurgency war.

The British government under Tony Blair volunteered to establish the initial International Security Assistance Force. Canada had agreed at Bonn and the United Nations to participate in this operation. In January 2002 it became known that the proposed 4,500-member force would have contributions from Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Romania. Canada, which had already committed armed forces to Operation Enduring Freedom, was not expected to be part of the new ISAF operation. After repeated offers from the Canadian government, the British finally agreed to accept two hundred engineers and 300 infantry troops.

For the first two years the ISAF force was confined to Kabul. This allowed US forces to operate throughout the country with very little outside observation. The armed resistance to the US-led occupation began to expand over the summer of 2003. NATO formally took over the command of the ISAF in August 2003. The largest contingent of Canadian forces served in Kabul between October 2003 and November 2005. As part of the ISAF command, they were to provide security and support for the new Afghan government.

The bulk of the Canadian forces in Afghanistan were then shifted to Kandahar where they were at first part of Operation Enduring Freedom, working with forces from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in military actions against insurgents. In July 2006 these Canadian forces came under ISAF authority. In September the US government agreed that all of their ground forces in the eastern region of Afghanistan would be put under the direction of NATO and the ISAF Command. However, the US government also announced that both US forces and NATO forces in Afghanistan would be jointly under the command of US General Dan McNeil.

Canada and the US War on Iraq

While the United States was involved in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, we all know now that the primary goal of the Bush administration was regime change in Iraq. As we have seen, from the very first meeting of the US war cabinet on September 12, 2001, the question was only when was the right time to attack Iraq.

During the planning for the ISAF, the real war, the Iraq war, was the primary issue for US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. First, he wanted NATO to move into Afghanistan so that the US government would be able to shift military forces to Iraq. Second, he wanted Canada to be in charge of the NATO-ISAF force in Afghanistan. Rumsfeld said he and the US government felt closer to Canada than to the “Old Europe” that was setting up the ISAF mission.

As Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang point out, the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces in Ottawa wanted a combat role with the US forces, whether it was in Afghanistan or Iraq. They did not want to be integrated into a force with the Germans, the French and the Italians. They also wanted an active military role, not a peacekeeping role. If they weren't going to be part of the invasion of Iraq by the coalition of the willing, they wanted to continue as part of Operation Enduring Freedom under US command rather than be put in Kabul under European command.

John McCallum was appointed the new minister of national defence in May 2002. He flew to Washington in January 2003 to meet with Donald Rumsfeld. The US secretary of defense made it clear that he wanted NATO to be in charge of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and that he wanted Canada to take on the responsibility of leading the mission. McCallum told Rumsfeld that if Canada took on this role, they would have no forces available for the invasion of Iraq. Rumsfeld replied: “Yeah, I know that.” Other official exchanges confirmed that the Bush administration was not asking Canada to be part of the US invasion force.

For the Canadian government the major involvement in the ISAF-NATO operation provided an excuse for not being directly involved in the invasion of Iraq. Around the world public opinion was mobilizing against the expected US attack on Iraq. Polls in Canada reported strong majorities against the war, especially in Quebec. The Liberal government and the generals in the Canadian Forces also agreed that by having Canada as part of the NATO-ISAF operation it would be easier to exit Afghanistan.

While the Canadian government did not officially and publicly support the US war on Iraq, it has made a large contribution. There were 1,300 Canadians on the warships helping to protect US aircraft carriers. Canadian E-3 AWAC aircraft assisted in weapons control and communications. Canadian Forces officers were participating in planning at the US Central Command in

Florida. Three Canadian CC-130 military transport planes supplied US and British forces during the war. Canadian defence industries provided a range of military hardware used in the war. The RCMP has trained over 35,000 police for the Iraq government. Canada's contribution was higher than that of most countries who were officially members of the coalition of the willing. In January 2008 Brigadier-General Nicolas Matern from the Canadian special forces was assigned to be the deputy to the new US commander of the 170,000 soldiers that made up Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was to be the third Canadian general to serve in this role.

The Political Response to 9/11

For most Canadians the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the deaths of over 3,000 civilians, brought a sense of outrage and horror. Sympathy was widely expressed for the families of the victims. But for Canada's corporate leaders, the immediate response was fear that this would lead to problems at the Canada-US border that might hinder trade and business. If the US government feared that terrorists were coming across the border from Canada, the result might be a militarization of the border, as exists between the United States and Mexico.

The Coalition for Secure and Trade-Efficient Borders was quickly formed and began promoting political agreements that supported a common security perimeter for North America, as proposed by the Bush administration. The Canada-US Partnership Forum, created in 1999, was pushing for similar agreements. The Canadian Conference of Chief Executives, representing the 150 largest corporations in Canada, was advocating deep integration with the United States, sometimes called the "Big Idea." They had been calling for a North American "zone of cooperation" which would harmonize policies and regulations between all three countries. This would include creating common immigration policies.

The US and Canadian governments were quick to act. On December 3, 2001, they issued a Joint Statement of Cooperation on Border Security and a few days later signed an agreement for "a Smart Border for the 21st Century." Government spending on the military and national security was to increase.

The 9/11 crisis was a window of opportunity for big business interests in Canada who wished to expand on the continental free trade agreements. Proposals called for common North American identity documents, increased harmonization of regulations and standards, guaranteed US access to Canadian resources and greater defence spending.

John Manley, the minister of foreign affairs, chaired the cabinet committee on public security and anti-terrorism, created in October 2001. The government rushed to produce a Canadian equivalent of the US *Patriot Act*:

Bill C-36, the *Anti-Terrorism Act*, introduced on October 15. Under this legislation governments can never be accused of using terrorist policies, only groups and individuals who oppose existing governments. Groups and individuals may not engage in political activities that are designed to “intimidate” governments or try to compel them “to do or refrain from doing any act.” Many observers believe that the very broad definition of terrorism was included to cover the type of political demonstrations that were held in Seattle in December 1999 to oppose the policies of the World Trade Organization. A person can be charged if he or she belongs to an organization that gives any kind of support to people carrying out such acts.

The political thrust of the governments and big-business organizations was to significantly reduce basic human rights and liberal freedoms, beginning with the suspension of the right of habeas corpus. Security certificates are now used to hold suspects in detention for long periods of time.

The United States uses rendition, capturing “suspects” and moving them to other countries while bypassing legal systems. In other countries and at secret bases they are subject to aggressive interrogation. We know that the Canadian government has cooperated in renditions, and Amnesty International Canada argues that it practices “rendition on the cheap,” supplying the foreign countries doing the interrogation with questions and information. Both countries now endorse and use special detention centres, like the one at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, which regularly engage in interrogation techniques that most would agree are torture.

Both the United States and Canada have now adopted surveillance policies that involve the monitoring of all citizens. These include the steady move to adopt national identification cards, biometric standards for passports, extensive electronic monitoring of all communications and Internet use and massive databases linked between countries. Non-citizens are now being required to register with governments. For those who do not have passports, drivers' licenses are now being introduced that will have mandatory biometric identification.

In the United States Donald Rumsfeld reorganized the US Armed Forces and in April 2002 announced the existence of Northern Command (NORTHCOM). US forces were now integrated for the defence of North America, including Mexico and Canada. NORTHCOM also includes extensive plans for using the military to assume civilian roles in cases of crisis, including the need for “domestic civil support.”

There has been strong public opposition to this strategy of increased continental integration and the reduction of historic civil liberties. Public pressure had already forced the Liberal government to decline to participate in the US National Missile Defense program, which many Canadians knew was part of the US strategy to weaponize space. While the Department of

National Defence supported Canada's participation, the government declined. But in December 2002 the US and Canadian governments agreed to participate in the binational planning group at the NORAD/NORTHCOM headquarters in Colorado Springs.

Stephen Staples, a military expert at the Polaris Institute, has shown how the Canadian defence industries and their lobby groups mobilized and pressured the government to accept the new deep integration. These groups include the Conference of Defence Associations, the Security and Defence Forum, the Canadian Defence Industry Association and the Aerospace Industries Association. Some of the most important industry lobby groups receive funding from the Canadian government. They have all pushed hard for closer Canada-US military ties.

The arms industry is very important to the Canadian economy. In 2006 exports were over \$600 million, and Canada ranked sixth in the world, just behind China and ahead of France. Between 2000 and 2006 Canadian industries exported \$2.7 billion worth of tanks and other armoured vehicles and parts. Around 60 percent of these exports go to the United States, which reflects the level of cooperation promoted by the Canada-US Defence Production Sharing Agreement.

Post Cold War Foreign Policy Direction

Canada's foreign and defence policy did not really change with the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the disappearance of the Cold War. The new world order was now the unipolar world, with the United States as the unchallenged military and economic power. Canada remained as the closest US friend, a role that it had developed during the Cold War. Under the troika principles of peacekeeping and other international arrangements, Canada had been the front man for the United States and Poland had been the front man for the USSR. Within the United Nations, when the European countries of NATO hesitated, the US government could always count on the support of Canada and Israel, referred to as the "safely predictable allies."

The 1994 Canadian Defence White Paper concluded that the core position of the Canadian government was to support the United States through the continuation of NATO, participation in the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), the continuation of the Canada-US Defence Production Sharing Agreement and other special agreements. Canada would also participate in UN peacekeeping operations. A very low priority was placed on protecting and supporting the sovereignty of Canada and its borders, especially in the Arctic.

This basic orientation was reflected in the 1995 Canadian foreign policy review. The government argued that Canada viewed the United Nations as the "key vehicle" for resolving international problems. But there was no

indication that the end of the Cold War against communism would in any way bring a change from the historic role of chief defender of US policy. This was demonstrated in a number of important policy areas. Canada supported the decision of the United States to go to war with Iraq in 1991. Canada supported the US intervention in Somalia in 1992. Canada did not press the US government to help the UN resolve the Rwanda disaster in 1994. Canada supported US policy in Bosnia, including the decision to force the United Nations to accept a NATO military role.

Most important, Canadian governments have strongly insisted that NATO should continue to exist even though the Cold War is over and Europe is fully capable of settling its own problems. NATO serves as a tool of US foreign policy. Our governments have strongly supported the US decision to expand NATO to include the former Soviet countries in eastern Europe. Canadian governments remain silent on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty when the US government violates the treaty by constantly replacing its arsenal with new weapons systems. For the various Canadian governments in office since 1989, nothing has changed under the new world order, US unipolar world domination.

The war against Yugoslavia in 1998 demonstrated the extent to which the Canadian government was willing to back the US government and undermine the United Nations. All of Canada's political parties, including the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party, supported the US government's determination to have NATO serve as the UN's military force. The shift would be from peacekeeping to "peace building," which included massive bombing by NATO. For US President Bill Clinton this was a test for NATO, to see if it could still play the role of deputy sheriff in the post-Cold War era. The Kosovo war is always cited as the first example of the new policy of humanitarian intervention.

US domination of the United Nations was now clear and blatant. This was seen in the choice of the new secretary-general. The other members of the Security Council all agreed that Boutros Boutros-Ghali should be appointed for another term. But the Clinton administration felt he had not been strong enough in support of the US position in Yugoslavia. US Ambassador Madeline Albright threatened a veto. Instead, the United States put forth its own candidate, Kofi Annan. It was widely recognized that part of this US-dictated arrangement was that the United Nations was now to focus on humanitarian relief, and NATO, supported by the G7, would deal with general security matters. The Canadian government agreed.

The Three D Approach to Canadian Policy

Paul Martin became the new Canadian prime minister on November 14, 2003. He launched a major review of Canadian foreign policy, released in

2005. It called for the integration of defence, diplomacy and development, the “Three-D” approach. There were three priorities listed as policy objectives. The first was countering global terrorism, the second was stabilizing failed and fragile states, and the third was combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To no one’s surprise, these are also the major policy goals set forth by the US government.

The report argued that the experience of Canada in Bosnia and Haiti demonstrated that the three Ds would work. In both these cases Canada followed the leadership of the US government. In 1984 Ronald Reagan’s administration issued a national security policy paper calling for the break-up of the government of Yugoslavia into smaller ethnic statelets. This was part of his administration’s overall strategy of “rolling back” the governments in those countries that were either part of the Soviet bloc or were independent countries (like Nicaragua) that accepted significant financial assistance from the Soviet Union.

In Haiti, Canada and France worked with the US government to help overthrow the democratically elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 and impose a right-wing alternative. Two years later a new government was chosen through a flawed electoral process. The United Nations peacekeeping force remains, primarily carrying out a policy of repression of the poor, who are strong supporters of Aristide.

The new foreign-policy paper concluded that there were around fifty states that “are dangerously weak or failing, leading to more frequent humanitarian disasters.” Under the principle of the “responsibility to protect,” Canada would support the stabilization of these countries and provide economic assistance. In some cases Canada would support direct outside “humanitarian intervention.” While in the past direct intervention was done via the United Nations, under the new world order this is not really necessary, the policy paper argued, given the experience of NATO as “an excellent model in this respect.” NATO has been “transformed” to meet the task of combating terrorism, with the assistance of the G8.

The first test of the new Three-D approach to failed states has been Afghanistan. Canada’s military contribution (called defence) has been through NATO but also through the US-controlled Operation Enduring Freedom. The Canadian International Development Agency has provided extensive economic assistance. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has provided diplomacy and direct political support in the transition from the defeated Taliban government to the new Karzai government.

The End of Peacekeeping?

The shift from peacekeeping to fighting a war of counterinsurgency has been welcomed by the Canadian Armed Forces. As Walter Dorn of the

Royal Military College has argued, the military never really liked the role of peacekeeper. The assignments were often boring. Their budgets were cut, and their military hardware became out of date. They fell behind the military in other NATO countries. They had fewer engagements with their NATO allies. There was a feeling that they were no longer an armed force but more of a “constabulary force, doing charitable and police-like work.” They missed out on “high-intensity combat.”

There is no question that the role of Canada's military forces has been changing over the past ten years. Since the Suez crisis in 1956, Canadian forces served around the world in UN peacekeeping operations. There was hardly a single mission that did not include Canadian military personnel. Over 125,000 Canadians have served in UN peacekeeping operations. Everyone got used to seeing the Canadian Armed Forces wearing the blue helmets. The Canadian public strongly supported this role.

Walter Dorn has shown that the number of Canadians assigned to UN peacekeeping roles has been drastically reduced. At the end of 2005 there were only 325 Canadians serving in UN peacekeeping roles: 207 troops, ten military observers and 108 civilian police. In contrast, Canada played a major combat role in the first Gulf War and the war in Yugoslavia, and now again in Afghanistan. As Dorn argues, Canada is “rapidly becoming a single-mission military and the UN is being dropped by the wayside.”

In February 2007 Michael Volpe wrote a major article for the *Globe and Mail*, “The Myth of Canada as Global Peacekeeper.” It caused quite a stir in the general public, as the shift in policy was not widely known. He pointed out that recent public opinion polls showed that “70 percent of Canadians consider military peacekeeping a defining characteristic of their country.” But in recent years Canada has turned down so many requests from the United Nations to serve in peacekeeping operations that we are no longer being asked. In 1991 Canada was supplying 10 percent of all the personnel used in UN peacekeeping operations, but by 2007 that had fallen to 0.1 percent. As of January 31, 2007, Canada had only fifty-six military personnel assigned to nine UN peacekeeping operations. Yet all the public-opinion polls show that the Canadian public wants the government to choose peacekeeping over combat.

In August 2007 the UN Security Council authorized the creation of a 26,000 member peacekeeping force to be sent to the Darfur area of Sudan to try to solve the internal war which was devastating civilians. Canada and others agreed to increase their financial commitments to the effort. But there will be no significant Canadian military contribution, if any, due to the commitments to the counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan. Public-opinion polls show that a majority of Canadians want their country to participate in this peacekeeping project.

Canada is now operating under the new general military strategy of the war on terrorism. This means that Canadian forces will follow where the US government leads. The change of direction has been justified in high office in Ottawa as meeting our commitments under the principle of responsibility to protect. The international community has an obligation to intervene in the internal affairs of a country when there is a humanitarian crisis. The traditional UN and international law principle of national sovereignty can no longer stand in the way. That is the justification for Canada's military role in Afghanistan. The Bush administration used the same responsibility to protect principle as a rationale for the invasion of Iraq. In the unipolar world of today, the US government decides which crisis requires intervention by the international community.

The post-9/11 policy of the never-ending war on terrorism has resulted in a major shift in the allocation of government resources. Steven Staples and Bill Robinson of the Polaris Institute have pointed out that between the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and the end of the fiscal year in March 2008, the Canadian government will have spent \$7.2 billion "on the full cost of military missions in or related to Afghanistan." Total spending on the military will increase to over \$18 billion in the 2007–08 budget, which is 27 percent higher than it was in 2001. Canada has jumped from the sixteenth to the thirteenth largest military spender in the world. Large sums of money are being allocated to military hardware, which are seen as needed to fight counterinsurgency wars but have little use for peacekeeping operations.

Three-D Policy: Canada's Political Role in Afghanistan

From the beginning of the war on terrorism the Canadian government has played a major diplomatic and political role in Afghanistan. At every stage of the US plan for the creation of the new government, the formation of the constitution and the demonstration elections the Canadian government was right there giving full support to the plan being imposed. At no time did the Canadian government question any of the policy goals or tactics set forth by the government of occupation. In addition, these policy goals for Afghanistan were never part of a broad, democratic debate within Canada.

In 2007 there were forty-seven Canadian government civilians working in Afghanistan. They were assigned to the embassy in Kabul and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, with a few working at the Kandahar air base. The support given to the diplomatic bloc in the Three-D policy format is not limited to Canadian civilian government personnel and non-governmental organizations. The Strategic Advisory Team, perhaps the key component of this strategy today, consists of sixteen members of the Canadian Forces. They work directly as personal advisers to the chief cabinet ministers of the Karzai government, a policy developed by Canada's Chief

of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier. They do not wear military uniforms but try to pass themselves off as civilian advisers. But Operation Argus, as it is officially called, reflects the militarist orientation of the entire Canadian and US operation in Afghanistan. Many of the ministers being supported by the Canadian personnel have long histories of human-rights abuses, but this has apparently not been a problem.

Canada is following another practice developed by the United States for the war on Iraq: large-scale hiring of private armies to support the regular forces. The Canadians who make up the Strategic Advisory Team are protected by a private British firm, Hart Security, a controversial organization that worked for the apartheid government in South Africa.

A number of surveys and polls taken in Afghanistan show that a large majority of the general population wants to see all war criminals and military commanders banned from holding public office. The US government has opposed such a policy from the beginning. The Canadian diplomatic and political thrust in Afghanistan is to support the US government position, and this often means opposing the wishes of the Afghan people.

There is widespread support in Afghanistan for bringing war criminals before the courts to be tried. This was revealed by a survey conducted in 2004 by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The recommendations set forth in the group's *Call for Justice* were opposed by the US government. Again, the Canadian government and their representatives in Afghanistan have supported the US position and opposed the wishes of the majority of the Afghan people.

The Afghan Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, which is a coalition of human-rights organizations, conducted a separate survey in 2004. They found that 65 percent of Afghans wanted the government to put a high priority on disarming the private militias. The Afghan people believe that there can be no security in Afghanistan as long as the warlords and local commanders are armed to the teeth. While the US and Canadian governments have been working on gaining control over large armaments like tanks and artillery, they have allowed the commanders to keep and increase all their small arms. These small arms are also widely used by drug dealers.

The issue of women's rights was posed by the Consortium's survey. It found strong public support for expanding women's rights, including education, the right to work and the right to full participation in government and politics. These results were corroborated in an opinion poll released by American and European media outlets (ABC, BBC and ARD) on December 3, 2007. The poll revealed that 68 percent of all Afghans support women working outside the home and 60 percent support women holding government office. Only 28 percent of urban women surveyed support wearing the burqa.

Manufacturing Consent

Despite the chorus of support in the Canadian mass media, the political establishment in Ottawa has been concerned with the strong public opposition to the mission in Afghanistan. The CBC, the *Globe and Mail* and *La Presse* came to the rescue. They hired Environics Research Group to conduct a poll in Afghanistan. In turn, Environics hired the US firm D3 Systems to conduct the poll, using their subsidiary, the Afghan Centre for Social and Opinion Research. This polling organization is used widely by the US military, the State Department, the US Embassy in Afghanistan, the Rand Corporation, the Voice of America, NATO and other such institutions. They are known for having produced the only polls in Iraq where a majority of Iraqis report that their lives have improved after the US invasion.

The Afghan poll, released on October 25, 2007, found that 60 percent supported the foreign presence and wanted US and NATO forces to remain until the job of defeating the Taliban was completed. A slim majority of 51 percent felt the Karzai government was “going in the right direction.” To everyone’s surprise, it found that 84 percent had “a degree of confidence in the Afghan National Army” and 76 percent had “a degree of confidence in the Afghan National Police.”

But the new constitution, imposed by the US government, and supported by the Canadian government, established Afghanistan as an Islamic country with Shariah law forming the basic law. This new constitution is a formidable barrier to the advancement of women’s rights.

These three policies show the extent to which the Liberal and Conservative governments in Ottawa have been willing to surrender basic liberal and human-rights ideals in order to support US foreign policy. It is not surprising that Canada allocates almost none of its economic assistance funding to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.

There is widespread criticism of the Afghan government and the regional governments for corruption. The Afghan military is also accused. The Afghan public has been particularly critical of the national Afghan police. They are being trained by the Canadian government. But with their salaries at only seventy dollars per month, it is not surprising that the police have

engaged in corrupt practices. The ABC/BBC/ARD poll taken in Afghanistan found that 25 percent of the population had experienced a demand for bribes from either the police or a provincial government official. Overall, 72 percent of those surveyed said government corruption is a serious problem. By passively supporting the Afghan government and the national police, the Canadian government is contributing to the problem.

Finally, the Canadian government is doing nothing to support a negotiated settlement to the war. Indeed, the new Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Bernier declared that Canada “does not negotiate with terrorists, for any reason.” In a bizarre statement, Bernier later added that negotiations should only be with groups “that will respect human rights and

renounce violence.” This pronouncement came after the Afghan House of Elders passed a resolution asking the Karzai government to negotiate with the insurgent groups to find an end to the war. Stephen Harper’s government seemed unaware of the fact that a major Afghan-Pakistan Loya Jirga had been held in Kabul from August 9–12, 2007, backed by the US government, to begin to establish a process for a negotiated settlement involving the Taliban and its allies. A Pushtun Council with twenty-five members from Afghanistan and twenty-five members from Pakistan was created to pursue this process.

The Harper government’s policy position does not have the support of the Canadian people. A Strategic Counsel poll in October 2006 found that 62 percent of Canadians and 70 percent of Quebecers supported a negotiated settlement with the Taliban.

Three-D Policy: Canada’s Military Role in Afghanistan

The primary commitment of Canada has been the military support for the US war effort. Since 2001 Canada has been spending around \$1 billion per year on the war in Afghanistan. Between 2001 and 2007 this has totalled \$6.1 billion. The Canadian International Development Agency has pledged \$100 million per year over a ten-year period. The ratio is ten to one in favour of military spending. The decision of the Harper government to spend \$1.3 billion to purchase one hundred used Leopard 2 tanks from the Netherlands exceeded the ten-year aid commitment to Afghanistan. The Three-D policy is obviously strongly weighted to the military contribution.

The public concern in Canada has focused on the number of Canadians killed in the war, totaling seventy-four by the end of 2007. It was widely reported in the press that a Canadian in Afghanistan is more likely to be killed than a soldier in the other ISAF forces and has a greater chance of being killed than a US soldier in Iraq.

The mass media has given almost no coverage to the number of wounded. Under a Freedom of Information request, *Esprit de Corps* magazine managed to find out that over 600 Canadians had been wounded or injured since 2001 while serving in Afghanistan. Even less concern has been expressed for the number of Canadian troops who have returned home from this mission with mental-health problems. In October 2007 the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command admitted that of the 2,700 soldiers who had served in Kandahar, around 400 had returned to Canada with mental-health problems, many with post-traumatic stress disorder.

There is also a problem of adequate recruits for the Canadian Forces. Since the beginning of the Kandahar mission, the number of personnel leaving the Canadian Armed Forces has increased from 8 percent to 12 percent. To make up for the shortage, the army has increased the campaign to create more reservists. The Canadian government also announced that

it was trying to convince members of the Canadian Navy to transfer to the Armed Forces operating in Afghanistan.

Canadian politicians have focused their criticism on the treatment of prisoners taken in the Afghan war. These prisoners were not held by the Canadian Forces but either passed on to the US military or Afghan authorities. Canadians have been concerned because of the widespread reports of the US government's sanction of the torture of prisoners. In response, Canadian policy shifted to handing over their captives to Afghan authorities. However, the Afghan government has had a history of torturing and killing prisoners. Several captives turned over to Afghan authorities disappeared. At Afghanistan's Sarpoza prison, captives had been given electric shocks, beaten with bricks, had their fingernails ripped out and were often forced to stand up for days without sleep. Reports of these practices, revealed by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, caused a political storm in the Canadian Parliament. But the Harper government did not end the practice. The alternative would have been for the NATO forces to establish their own facilities for captives, a policy rejected by the other NATO allies with forces in Afghanistan.

The position of the Canadian Armed Forces was made clear by Lieutenant-General Michel Gauthier, commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command. Prisoners are not entitled to prisoner-of-war status, he argued, because the counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan is not an international war and the Geneva Convention does not apply. However, he added that these prisoners "are entitled to prisoner-of-war treatment." In November 2007 Madam Justice Anne Mactavish of the federal court ruled in favour of Amnesty International and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association who asked for an injunction to prevent Canadian prisoners from being transferred to Afghan authorities. The ruling is being appealed. In late 2007 the Canadian military changed its policy; it no longer passes captives off to Afghan forces.

The other major criticism of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan concerns the killing of Afghan civilians. Nearly every report by the Senlis Council notes that the killing of civilians is the issue which most undermines the US and NATO goals in Afghanistan. The Senlis Council is a non-governmental organization founded by Canadian lawyer Norine MacDonald; it has extensive operations in Afghanistan. Canadian Forces in their counterinsurgency warfare campaigns come into contact with resistance and reply by artillery, shelling from tanks, firing heavy machine guns from armoured vehicles and launching mortars and missiles. In many cases they call in air support from the US, Dutch and now French aircraft serving in southern Afghanistan. As a result, many civilians are killed and homes and villages destroyed.

For example, in their October 2006 Report, *Losing Hearts and Minds in*

Musa Qala — Again

Musa Qala is a town in the desert area of Helmand province. During the mujahideen rebellion it was taken twice by the forces led by Mullah Nasim. In 1980 the US-backed rebels killed everyone who had any links to the Afghan Communist Party, the PDPA, including government workers, party members, supporters and family members. Two thousand were massacred. Mullah Nasim's forces systematically burned down schools and any hospitals in the area where they operated.

The town was back in the news in 2006. The British forces under NATO were in charge of counterinsurgency against the Taliban in Helmand province. The Taliban became popular in the area because of the corruption of the provincial governor, Sher Mohammed Akhundzada, appointed by President Hamid Karzai, and the looting done by the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

Stretched too thin in the summer of 2006, the British forces sought another solution. The village elders arranged a truce with the Taliban and, supported by a local police militia, took control. This was welcomed by the local population as the conflict and destruction was virtually eliminated.

This arrangement seemed to be going well until January 2007 when the US launched an air strike that killed the brother of the local Taliban commander and eight of his supporters. In February 2007, the Taliban took control of Musa Qala and put the elders who had supported the agreement in jail.

President Karzai then removed the new governor, Eng. Daoud, who had facilitated the truce. US General Dan McNeill, head of the NATO-ISAF forces, also spoke out against any truces with the Taliban.

In December 2007 NATO and Afghan National Army forces launched a new assault on Musa Qala. It was alleged that the Taliban and the town's elders were protecting local farmers who were growing poppies. Despite the early withdrawal of the Taliban forces, the NATO forces employed air strikes and artillery. Many buildings were destroyed, and the population fled the town. Afghan journalists who went to Musa Qala reported that forty civilians were killed. Local citizens accused Afghan soldiers of deliberately firing on civilians and looting the local stores. Brigadier-General Carlos Branco of NATO insisted that no civilians were killed and there was no looting.

While the Canadian media proclaimed this a major victory, the *Asia Times* reported that "the killing and looting that accompanied the NATO operation left a trail of bitterness that the Taliban will easily exploit. All reports indicate that NATO troops resorted to indiscriminate use of artillery and air strikes against civilians."

Afghanistan, the Senlis Council concludes that Canada's "dominantly military intervention has resulted in significant civilian deaths and local discontent." They note that "the Afghan population generally does not distinguish between Canadian and American soldiers." Nor do they distinguish between Operation Enduring Freedom, under sole US control, and the NATO operations under ISAF.

The violence that is being imposed on the people of Afghanistan is rarely

mentioned by our political leaders and it is routinely ignored in the Canadian mass media. The violence has been steadily increasing since 2001. In 2006 attacks by the Taliban insurgents averaged 400 per month; they rose to 500 a month in 2007. A survey by the Associated Press concluded that in 2007 6,500 people were killed in the Afghan war. More than 950 members of the Afghan National Police were killed. The coalition of the willing lost 221 soldiers: 110 US, 41 UK, 30 Canada, and 40 from other forces. Numbers from the Afghan National Army were unavailable. In the first three weeks of 2008 there were 389 violent conflicts, up 15 percent from 2007.

This reality was reflected in the widely publicized poll done by Environics for the CBC and the *Globe and Mail* and released in October 2007. Only 2 percent of Afghans surveyed knew that Canada was engaged in any military activity against the Taliban. Of those in the Kandahar area who had a “negative opinion” of Canadian troops, 45 percent said it was because they were killing innocent people. Another 24 percent complained that Canadian Forces were searching houses without permission.

The poll done for ABC News in October 2007 found that across Afghanistan 57 percent of those surveyed had a “negative opinion” of the US role in Afghanistan. Only 45 percent of those surveyed in the Kandahar area, where the Canadian Forces operate, supported the presence of NATO forces. The main concern cited for the “dramatic decrease” in support of the NATO mission was the high rate of civilian casualties in the counterinsurgency war. Sixty percent of those surveyed in the Kandahar area criticized the bombing and shelling by NATO forces.

The Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan, led by John Manley, reported in January 2008. They recommended that the Canadian government increase its commitment to training the Afghan National Army. But there was no mention of the fact that 50 percent of those recruited desert every year and that the Afghan government does not have the funds to pay for a military force.

Three-D Policy: Canada’s Economic and Humanitarian Assistance

Development assistance is the third part of the Three-D policy. We do know that most of the economic assistance that the Canadian government is providing for Afghanistan is channelled through international aid agencies like the World Bank and the UN Development Programme. There is less chance of monitoring and evaluating this assistance as it becomes part of an overall agency budget.

It should be remembered that the Canadian government has endorsed the general economic development program for Afghanistan that has been set out by the US government, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and international development agencies. The programs are designed to im-

plement what is known as the Washington Consensus: the free market, free trade, deregulation of the economy, privatization of state-owned enterprises, regressive tax reforms and the reduction and privatization of public services. Emphasis is on private investment, foreign investment and the opening up of natural resources to private development.

As noted in Chapter 2, much of the aid going to Afghanistan is channelled through an enormous number of non-governmental organizations. A general concern of critics is that the Afghan government is unable to design an overall development program for the country because of the reality of the myriad of independent development projects outside its control. The US government, for example, directs almost all of its aid through private contracts.

In December 2007 Daan Everts, who was leaving as the representative of NATO in Kabul, complained that 40 percent of the aid officially given to Afghanistan flows out of the country. He bitterly commented that “there is this aid industry that descends on a poor nation and runs away with part of the loot.”

Much of the aid that Canada gives is directed through the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The model was developed by the US government under Operation Enduring Freedom. As a part of NATO's counterinsurgency warfare effort, aid is now coordinated locally by twenty-five PRT teams. PRTs are military units, usually with around 250 personnel, with a small number of political and aid representatives attached.

The Canadian PRT team in Kandahar is dominated by the military but includes representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, CIDA and the RCMP. They are also supposed to coordinate projects by non-governmental agencies. InterAction, a coalition of around 160 independent aid organizations, has protested that the links between their organizations and the ISAF military organizations have undermined their efforts and made them vulnerable to violent attacks. This leads Afghans to believe that humanitarian and economic assistance is just part of the US military policy and increases the danger for those delivering the programs.

In November 2007 Oxfam International, in a report to the British government, called for the separation of all aid programs from the military. The report concluded that “the development process needs to be owned and led by Afghan communities, which is essential for sustainability.” It pointed out that schools built under PRTs, with military involvement, were twice as likely to be attacked by the insurgents. Furthermore, the report called for the elimination of the PRTs and the direction of international aid to the Afghan government.

The Senlis Council has been very critical of the Canadian aid program, particularly that under the Canadian PRT at Kandahar. Its August 2007 report

pointed out that there is a very serious food shortage and famine situation in the area. Unemployment is very high. The majority of people say that they have no way to provide heat through the winter. Clean water and adequate sanitation is not available. Few have electricity. Hospitals in the south are in “a state of complete decay.” Mobile field hospitals are badly needed. Poverty has reached a crisis stage in the refugee camps around Kandahar. The organization argues that the government of Canada could do a great deal more for the people of the region if they helped them construct traditional mud brick houses so they would not have to spend the winter in tents.

Over 2006 and 2007 the reports by the Senlis Council called on the government of Canada to provide immediate food assistance and medical aid. Canada was also implored to provide assistance to local farmers to allow them to make the transformation to crop production and away from their dependence on poppies. It called on the Canadian government to change its priorities — to make a major shift from military spending to humanitarian assistance. It concluded that “the failure to improve the lives of the Afghan people in the south” was the main reason for the increase in support for the Taliban. While the Senlis Council has presented its reports to the Canadian Parliament, no one in the two major parties seems to be listening.

The Complete Loss of National Sovereignty

During the Cold War Canada’s basic foreign policy was to defend the policy position of the US government. As a special ally Canada would support the aim of the United States in NATO, the United Nations and in peacekeeping operations. But on occasion Canada was able to take a few stands that were different from the United States, as in its policy towards Cuba and China.

Michael Byers, who teaches global politics and international law at the University of British Columbia, points out that Canada took a few independent stands after the collapse of the Soviet system. The government supported the creation of the International Criminal Court and played a key role in adopting the convention opposing landmines. On the other hand, Lloyd Axworthy, as Canada’s foreign minister, established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which produced the principle of the responsibility to protect. The US government has seized on this new principle and is using it to justify intervention in so-called failed states.

In the post-9/11 world it seems like the Canadian government has concluded that it can no longer take any position that is different from that of the US government. Stephen Clarkson and Maria Banda argue that the major difference between the Vietnam War era and today is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which acts as a common external constitution. Clarkson and Banda write, “NAFTA ties the two countries into

a formalized interdependent relationship that places definite limits on the weaker player's ability to define its politics independently as well as definite constraints on the hegemon's freedom to punish what it considers deviant behaviour with economy sanctions." This is certainly the case with regard to the war in Afghanistan. The Canadian government has yet to take a stand on any issue with regard to the war that challenges a US government policy position. This is not true of the British or the Dutch.

Since 9/11 we have seen an even greater integration of Canada and the United States in the military and security area. Michael Byers has reminded us that the final report of the Binational Planning Group, released in March 2006, sought "nothing less than the complete integration of Canada's military, security and foreign policy into the decision-making and operating systems of the United States." In all the cooperative arrangements between the two countries, the United States is in full control.

What is the overall impact of this integration and subordination? The Canadian government has agreed to promote the interests of NATO ahead of any commitment to the United Nations. Canada can no longer play a major role in UN peacekeeping operations.

Finally, there is the question of the defence of Canada. We do not have the capacity to advance and protect our claim to the Arctic. With our military budget devoted to counterinsurgency warfare, we cannot defend the Canadian North. We do not have enough modern icebreakers. We do not have a coast guard that can effectively operate in the Arctic. We can't control the Northwest Passage, which will soon be open to international shipping. We do not have adequate airports and landing strips in the North. We don't have good surveillance aircraft, nor do we have an adequate supply of search-and-rescue helicopters. We can't adequately support our fishing and maritime fleet. We cannot control foreign submarines travelling under ice in our territory. We don't even seem to be able to do our own mapping of the seabed in the North. How can we monitor and protect the North in the era of climate change?

Where Do We Go from Here?

There is a broad consensus outside Canada that the present counterinsurgency war cannot be won. The British commanders who have served in Helmand province have argued this position to their government. Ex-Soviet officers who served in Afghanistan agree. US Lieutenant-General David W. Barno, head of US Armed Forces in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005, recently argued that the policy of building blast-walled compounds and using heavy armoured vehicles is a doomed strategy. A surge in manpower will solve nothing, he says. "Heavy firepower is counterproductive, and winning battles guarantees nothing." There are other major problems. 80 percent of all aid

is going to the military. There is lack of support for the Karzai government because of corruption, crime, persistent deep poverty, the influence of the warlords and the burgeoning narcotics trade. All this has led to the “mounting disaffection” for NATO by the Afghan people.

What is the response of the Canadian government to these realities? On October 12, 2007, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed a panel of experts to review Canada’s policy in Afghanistan. The five members were all on record as supporting the war in Afghanistan. The panel was chaired by John Manley, who had been minister of foreign affairs in the Liberal government of Paul Martin. He has been one of the most forceful advocates in Ottawa for deep integration with the United States.

What was the purpose of this panel? Their views on Afghanistan were the same as the Harper government. One goal was partisan. By appointing John Manley as the chair, Harper was putting pressure on the Liberal Party, which at the time had taken the position that Canada’s counterinsurgency commitment in Kandahar province should end as originally agreed in 2009.

The second was more important. It was an attempt to try to influence public opinion, which has been very skeptical of the war. For example, in early January 2008 an Angus Reid Strategies poll found that 61 percent of Canadians did not want to extend Canada’s military commitment beyond the February 2009 deadline. Harper has scheduled a debate in Parliament on the extension of the mission for Parliament for April 2008. The minority government hopes to convince enough Liberals to cross the floor and vote with the Conservatives. The vote to extend the mission to 2009 only passed by 149–145.

The general public, of course, has been left out of this debate. Furthermore, the entire political, military and economic establishment in Canada, and the mass media, insist that there are only two options. Canada can stay and fight the US war or Canada can withdraw and by doing so help the Taliban take control of Afghanistan once again. Is there no other alternative? Of course there is.