

CDA SPEECH - GEN HENault – CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

A Chairman's Perspective on Afghanistan – and Beyond

[SLIDE 1]

Good morning. It is always a pleasure to exchange thoughts and views with the CDA and CDAI. The work you have done – and continue to do – to explain and promote broader understanding of defence and security issues to Canadians has been tremendously beneficial to the country. I think your impact is reflected in part in the quality of speakers you have attracted to this year's conference and to the turn out: we are certainly richer and more informed for having heard General Hillier and Admiral Fallon's perspectives this morning. Thank you, CDA and CDAI members for your continued dedication to this profession, and thank you for inviting me to share some thoughts on the matter at hand. This is the last time I will speak to this group as a serving officer in the Canadian Forces, but hopefully not the last time I will attend this august gathering: I am already relishing the thought of attending future meetings in a much different capacity, and to continue contributing to your debate on national and international security issues.

As Chairman of the NATO Military Committee I speak from a NATO perspective, but I cannot completely separate my national identity from my views and thinking about Afghanistan, a country whose problems and challenges have steered much Canadian Forces and NATO work – and much of our transformation – for more than a half a decade now. After all, you will recall that, about six years ago when I was the CDS, I recommended to the Government of the day to send CF members to Kandahar in a counter-terrorism role, and later to dispatch soldiers – including General Hillier – to Afghanistan in a variety of roles and command relationships,

some NATO, some not. And I assure you that notwithstanding this week's historical developments in Kosovo, our other major operational theatre, that Afghanistan remains our number one operational priority and focus.

You have certainly selected a relevant theme and a timely one at that. Let me first take this opportunity to step back a bit and look at the work of NATO through the lens of the Military Committee, as tangible evidence of how NATO is, with surprising speed, becoming an expeditionary body, a transformational entity and a multinational & multicultural force.

A former Secretary General was fond of saying, "this ain't your daddy's NATO anymore". That thought really struck home with me last summer, standing in Red Square with the Russian Chief of Defence as parade units marched past in perfect formation to their national anthem, saluting the NATO flag. I have experienced many such moments as Chairman. Recently, in Vilnius, I met Portuguese pilots flying modern fighters in support of NATO's air policing mission in the Baltic States: of note, the personnel controlling, conducting and directing the activities whom I also met, were Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian staff, operating proudly, jointly and seamlessly to accomplish the mission.

In Afghanistan's Sangin Valley, I met with soldiers from several nations – including the nascent but increasingly effective Afghan National Army, mentored by NATO soldiers – working in lockstep to free the area from Taliban influence. I have watched proud Iraqi officers graduate from NATO training courses in Baghdad and met Japanese students studying in NATO education facilities. I have marvelled at an

institution that integrates Mongolian infantry into its Kosovo operation; Australians into Afghanistan; Ukrainians and Russians into its Article 5 “defence of NATO” mission in the Mediterranean Sea; and deployed hundreds to Pakistan to help them recover from a devastating earthquake.

This is evidence of an adaptive organisation, one whose 64 members and partners represent nearly one-third of all countries on the planet.

This evidence of reform and change doesn’t mean the Afghanistan operation is easy and problem-free: far from it. But, let me provide some additional perspective on three areas of regular contention I know are of interest to you: and those are, that somehow Canada is alone in the South, that the insurgency is growing, and that progress in the country isn’t taking hold.

[SLIDE 2]

First, let me say up front that I am encouraged by much of what was written in the Manley Panel Report, and by the subsequent political and public discussion in Canada. The Panel was eloquent about the rationale for being in Afghanistan, the challenges, the economic and social progress, and also, clear about the reasons to stay until the job is finished. It was also fair in its criticism of current Alliance shortcomings.

FORCE GENERATION

Since Germany and the Netherlands assumed command of ISAF III in February of 2003, ISAF’s forces, which numbered a few hundred primarily headquarters staff

based for the most part in Kabul, have grown almost 10-fold to some 42,000 troops under NATO command throughout the entire country.

[SLIDE 3] This slide shows the current breakdown. This figure continues to grow, in terms of numbers, in terms of capabilities, in terms of nations committing to this fight. Last year, NATO deployed more than 8,000 more troops to the theatre including hundreds more in the South. Admittedly, a substantial number were from two Allies, but the trend line is clear – and that trend line is up, not levelling off, and certainly not heading down.

You will quickly see that more than three dozen nations see it in their national interest to engage in military operations under NATO command. Some contributions are not large, but each one counts. Nine nations have more than 1000 troops in theatre, and more than a dozen non-NATO nations have committed forces or money. And Japan, after considerable domestic debate, has resumed refuelling operations in the Indian Ocean, which helps our partners in OEF and by extension, helps us.

Poland has recently announced an additional 2 helicopters, Belgium the deployment of an OMLT and four F16 to southern Afghanistan, the Germans – already the third largest contributor – are adding additional troops, as are several other nations. Of course, the additional U.S. contribution of more than 3,000 Marines and its capacity to move its manoeuvre elements quickly around the theatre, will give COMISAF added lift and combat capability this year, wherever he deems it is needed most. And it is expected that this will be primarily in the South, except for those elements dedicated to training with CSTC-A. The NATO-contracted helicopter and fixed wing

support based in the South has already started flying on limited operations and will come fully on line soon.

That's not to paint a too-rosy picture. Force generation has been, and remains, a continuing challenge and a key topic of discussion for the Secretary General and myself during our meetings and discussions with political and military leaders across the Alliance. Rotary wing shortfalls are a real concern, and NATO HQ is working on initiatives to improve this in the medium and long term. It is clear that more helicopters, more surveillance assets, and more troops would let us do the jobs we need to do better, and allow us to achieve the effects we want faster. This is particularly true in the case of OMLTs, which is SACEUR's key force generation priority at the moment. But, the good news is that there is movement, there is momentum, and there continues to be traction on force generation.

And I can I tell you here today that I am very confident that NATO nations will source the additional personnel requirements that Canada has called for in the South as a benchmark for continuing its operations there beyond February 2009.

And you would be pleased to know that your partners in the South, nearing a dozen strong, are doing stalwart work alongside Canada in arguably the most difficult and demanding part of the country.

[SLIDE 4]

Of course, the counter-terrorist operation called Operation Enduring Freedom, based on a coalition led by the United States, is making a big difference. In particular, its 16,000 troops have been broadly successful at denying the terrorists their former

training ground, at eliminating many of their senior and mid-level commanders and in sowing division and discord amongst their leadership.

THERE IS PROGRESS

[**SLIDE 5**] You will see that enabling the Afghan government to function across the entire territory of Afghanistan is first on the list of Military Strategic Campaign Objectives being pursued by SACEUR and ISAF. We are only just out of the dark-red here – we are moving to the right, but slowly.

Focussed operations, aimed at denying the OMF influence and freedom in specific areas, has produced results. We continue to build on our successes and take the fight to the OMF in those very areas where they still have some influence. Afghan National Security Forces, with ISAF help, plan and direct operations wherever possible. Once a solid foothold has been established in a particular region and governance at district and provincial levels has improved, we will be in a much better position to facilitate coordinated, focussed reconstruction and development into this summer and beyond.

[**SLIDE 6**]

Military operations in the difficult area in the South are having a positive impact there, and this has also allowed progress to take hold elsewhere. Of particular note, as shown on this slide, Taliban and criminal elements are being confined geographically, and we assess that 70% of the significant incidents originate in 10% of the country, directly affecting about 6% of the population.

The results of the training and mentoring efforts of the Afghan National Army are also increasingly evident on the ground. **[SLIDE 7]** The ANA, numbering nearly 50,000, is becoming more and more confident, capable and self-sufficient. They are now leading some operations, with ISAF support, as evidenced recently in the retaking of Musa Qala.

[SLIDE 8] This was an ANA initiated, ANA executed and ISAF supported operation, and this is increasingly the case. ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan have quickly followed up the operational success achieved with reconstruction of the Musa Qala district, including the development of institutions, governance, and physical infrastructure. Nine projects have been initiated to develop the area, including a high school, a health clinic, a police station, road upgrades and repairs to the electrical infrastructure. This week, the NAC visited the region to see progress taking hold. .

[SLIDE 9] You will also be interested to know that last week, the ANA Air Corps conducted their first medevac mission, using donated Czech helicopters.

Now, much more needs to be done on the training front, and the Operational Mentor And Liaison Teams (or OMLTs) are key here. **[SLIDE 10]** 22 nations have pledged them. NATO has now deployed 27 OMLTs but we are still short about two dozen, for which the need grows as ANA units start to come on line. NATO is working hard to redress that gap through force generation, and is assessing the ways and means to make it easier for nations to contribute. But as I mentioned previously, these teams are considered crucial to the success of the overall objectives in Afghanistan, and we have placed a significant weight of effort on filling this requirement.

The equipment donation programmes to help rebuild the Afghan National Security Forces are starting to have traction. There are currently almost €256 Million in equipment donations currently offered by nations, and more to come. A transportation and installation Trust Fund stands at almost €1 million but more is needed; a further Trust Fund, to cover protection of ammunition depots will come on line in the first quarter of 2008 and is already pledged to a level of €4 Million against a total estimate of just over €6 million.

On a less positive note, the development of the Afghan National Police is proceeding more slowly. By COMISAF's assessment, they lag as much as 18 months behind, but efforts in this regard are being stepped up. With additional OMLT fills, we can move even more of the U.S. Embedded Training Teams over to the ANP to expedite their development, which is key to municipal and local security. We are also counting on the European Union's police mission to help monitor, mentor, advise and train forces of the Afghan Ministry of the Interior.

[SLIDE 11]

The people of Afghanistan continue to be generally optimistic. The most respected polling data [Asia Foundation, 2007] tell us that 42% of them believe that the country is headed in the right direction, with only 24% believing the opposite. Reconstruction is cited as the single biggest reason for the country going in the right direction (36%) and security follows at 34%, showing that the Afghan people do not differentiate significantly between the work being undertaken to improve their economic and social wellbeing and their safety. On a local basis, 66% of Afghans believe that security in their area was good or quite good. On balance, then, the international

community contribution is delivering results that are being recognized throughout the country, but those results are unevenly spread.

[SLIDE 12]

You may be familiar with some of the more tangible elements of progress. Access to healthcare has been increased from 8% under the Taleban to more than 80% now. There are now almost 700 basic health centres, more than 400 community medical centres, 66 district hospitals and 33 provincial hospitals.

Between 43,000 and 45,000 trained teachers are working in nearly 700 schools built since 2001. There are now several universities where, under the Taliban, there were none. 5.5 million children are now in school, 2 million of which are girls. More than 11,500 km of highways have been built or asphalted since 2001. Most tellingly, nearly 5 million refugees and internally displaced persons have returned home.

[SLIDE 13] The work of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, fusing civilian and military efforts are very important in this regard. It would be a great help if more civilian officials could be made available, to help redress the real imbalance of presence that exists in most of the PRTs.

Humanitarian challenges abound as well. This cruel winter has claimed the lives of many Afghan citizens and displaced countless others. ISAF has been working hard with the Afghan authorities and the international humanitarian community to alleviate the suffering. We have moved more than a hundred tonnes of humanitarian aid to

remote areas, and have provided medical support to help Afghan authorities reach thousands of people in need.

[SLIDE 14] STRAT COMMS

The evidence of where we are succeeding is less obvious to us than where progress is lagging. In my meetings and discussions with military and political leaders throughout the Alliance, and with our Partners, the issue of doing a better job at communicating with our publics about the Afghanistan mission is almost always mentioned. Admittedly, providing an overall context and perspective can be difficult in the face of the tragic attacks that have occurred this week near Kandahar, killing and wounding scores of innocent civilians, including several children.

I can tell you that NATO Headquarters is working hard to improve its strategic communications capabilities. Significant resources, including money and people, have been reprioritised to this end. A media operations centre has been established to more quickly coordinate responses amongst all our national and Partner capitals. The Military Committee has identified the improvement of strategic communications one as of its 12 main lines of effort, and has recently approved a new, progressive military public affairs policy, amongst other initiatives.

The Alliance is also moving ahead quickly to improve the quality and quantity of information it makes available on its Internet site, including a major equipment and production initiative sponsored by Denmark that will be coming on line soon. We are making inroads at being able to **show** what is happening in Afghanistan, in order to give more context to how NATO conducts its operations. In that respect, I would

now like to show you a short video clip, which you may be familiar with as it aired widely on Canadian and international TV. Most graphically, it demonstrates how the extremists use burkas to blatantly disguise themselves as women, or use children as human shields. This video was taken by Dutch fighter pilots operating in the Southern area of Afghanistan. **[SLIDE 15 - VIDEO CLIP]**

So, "stay tuned", as they say, for further developments on this front.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

[SLIDE 16]

Finally, let me say a few words about the comprehensive nature of this mission and our need to more fully engage other key actors in the international community. The meetings of the International Community in London in January 2006, which produced the Afghanistan Compact, defined the international approach to Afghanistan. It laid responsibility on the international community to act in the three critical and interdependent pillars of activity, namely the establishment and maintenance of national security; the development and support of Governance, the Rule of Law and Human Rights; and the Economic and Social Development of the nation.

NATO, in the form of ISAF, continues to do its part in its area of responsibility, and in so doing will facilitate work in the other pillars. We look to the UN to provide greater coordination in Afghanistan, and we look to the European Union for a greater effort on police training. The casual reader of news might sometimes conclude that NATO is the only international organisation at work in Afghanistan. Of course it is not, so the Secretary General, supported by NATO military authorities, is working on a comprehensive strategic political-military plan for Afghanistan that will focus our

efforts and engagement over the next several years. This will be a major topic of discussion amongst Heads of State and Government at the Bucharest Summit this April, and it was identified by the Manley Panel as a key requirement to complete.

And, we are also encouraging the Afghan Government to take concrete steps to fight corruption and to promote good governance. Simply put - better governance will lead to better security and stability, and less support for the insurgency. That is in our shared interest.

SUMMARY

[SLIDE 17]

In summary, let me reinforce that NATO remains fully committed to success in Afghanistan. Recent public discussions between the NATO Allies should not be confused for a lack of will or staying power. Afghanistan is a long-term commitment and a strategic necessity, not an operation of choice. NATO is there to help bring security and stability to the country, to combat terrorism that can strike anywhere, and to preserve our fundamental values.

The Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF are making progress on the ground. The Taliban and others do not and cannot hold ground where they are challenged by ANSF and ISAF. The Afghan National Army is on track to grow to 70,000 in 2008. Though their “effective” strength is certainly less than that, they are now playing an increasingly prominent role in the lead of difficult operations, including in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces and throughout Eastern Afghanistan.

Progress in security needs to be matched by progress in the other fields of the Afghan National Development Strategy. We will continue to press our international community partners to make Afghanistan as much a priority as it is for NATO. The comprehensive strategic-political military plan for Afghanistan will help to focus our work, and theirs, in this regard.

Canada's contributions and leadership are highly regarded in the Alliance, and a source of inspiration for all contributors. Your work in Afghanistan has brought great credit to the nation for its effectiveness, perseverance and courage. I am incredibly proud of what Canada represents to the mission. In the last four months of my tenure and my career, I look forward to continuing to advocate on your behalf and on behalf of the entire Alliance, for the means and resources to allow this great nation to continue its support to this mission, and to all NATO's missions and operations.

As a large international organisation that bases its decision-making on consensus, NATO can make for an easy target for critics. I am the first to admit that it can sometimes take a while to agree a policy, and transformation often occurs more slowly than we would like. There are financial limitations and political realities deeply rooted in historical experience that do not always easily lend themselves to a perfect match between stated political commitments and deployed military capabilities. But I have seen that commitment-capability gap starting to close. At almost 60 years young, the NATO Alliance has shown a remarkable resilience that belies its age.

Let's also not forget that NATO has expanded 5 times since its creation, and further growth looks probable, if not inevitable. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, two NATO

members have changed their borders significantly (Germany, Czech Republic), two others didn't exist at the time (Slovakia, Slovenia), and amazingly, 16 of the 23 countries in the Partnership for Peace program didn't even exist as an independent nation or were occupied in 1989. Many have had to build their defence structures and organisations from scratch. And, ten states of the former Warsaw Pact have successfully integrated into NATO.

As an Alliance, and with our partners, we are well on the way to increasing the deployability of our forces; significantly upgrading equipment; closing scores of bases; destroying thousands of pieces of material; shedding hundreds of thousands of military personnel, with many countries having made the move from conscription to a professional military force – all these things happening simultaneously. In a few short years, NATO has conducted 9 operations on 4 continents. And, we should not forget that many NATO allies also support military operations under other banners, including under the auspices of the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, in coalitions or bilaterally. Their willingness to contribute to these other operations is worthy of note by Canada, as their commitments help reduce the demand on Canada (and others) to substantively contribute to these other missions.

I think that is a remarkable transformation record by any standard.

And finally, NATO is not resting on its laurels. It is actively engaged in the debate about broader security related issues, including what role it should play in energy security, cyber defence, and how to facilitate a more comprehensive approach with the international community involved in major operations. It is working hard to re-

adjust and retool its mechanisms and processes to more effectively deal with the growth in the number and complexity of issues and initiatives, including pressure to find further savings in headquarters overheads and concurrently to be more deployable. State-level Summits in 2006, 2008, and a major anniversary Summit next year, marking the 60th anniversary of the Alliance, are major features of an agenda that demonstrates a progressive and evolutionary international organisation.

I am proud to be serving in NATO as the Chairman of the Military Committee, representing the 26 Chiefs of Defence of the Alliance, and proud to have helped in a small way **[to shape and guide this transformation.]** [to promote transformation and shape the future of the organization, and to enhance partnerships and cooperation vital to success].

I have spent much of my time talking about Afghanistan today, as you would expect. I would be happy to take any questions that you may have on the subject, on Kosovo, or any other elements of the Military Committee agenda.

[SLIDE 18]