



**Statement by Richard Evraire, Lieutenant General (Ret'd),
Chairman, The Conference of Defence Associations,
to The House of Commons Standing Committee
on National Defence.**

September 20, 2006.

Introduction

The Conference of Defence Associations is grateful for this opportunity to comment on the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), an international force of some 20,000 troops that assists the Afghan government in extending and exercising its authority and influence across the country in order to create the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction, and on the important role the Canadian Forces and other Canadian elements are playing in ISAF Sector South in particular.

My presentation will deal with five topics:

- Criteria for assessing the ISAF mission's effectiveness (a paper which is included in the background information we have provided your Committee);
- The ISAF Concept of Operations;
- An assessment of the success of ISAF Operations;
- Comments on the relationship between the Canadian mission's combat operations and efforts in reconstruction; and to conclude
- A comment on the state of personnel and equipment of the CF in Afghanistan.

ISAF MISSION EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

the CDA believes that the ISAF mission and Canada's considerable part in it will be considered to have been effective and successful if and when:

- The campaign of terror being waged by the Taliban and their extremist allies fails;
- Security is restored to the point that ordinary Afghans enjoy personal liberty and freedom from fear;
- The Afghan Army and Police become effective in ensuring security;
- The Country's market economy begins to flourish;
- Central Afghan Government control spreads throughout the Country;
- Human rights are respected;
- A significant infrastructure development program is underway; and
- The elements of a 'made in Afghanistan' democratic system of government spreads to all parts of the Country.

It is obvious that achieving the foregoing is a phenomenally complex and difficult undertaking. Nevertheless, the CDA believes the absence of any one of the above criteria would put the successful completion of the ISAF mission in doubt.



ISAF CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The mission of the NATO-led ISAF is to conduct military operations in order to assist the Government of Afghanistan in establishing and maintaining, with the full engagement of the Afghan National Security Forces, a safe and secure environment that will allow the government to extend its authority and influence and thereby facilitate Afghanistan's reconstruction and establish regional stability. From its inception, this mission has consisted of five (5) phases:

- Phase 1 Assessment and Preparation, including operations in Kabul (now completed);
- Phase 2 Geographic expansion;
- Phase 3 Stabilization; and
- Phase 4/5 Transition / Redeployment.

In October 2003, the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of the NATO mission beyond Kabul. In October 2004, Stage 1 of the expansion to the North was completed, with Stage 2 in the West following in September 2005.

Stage 3 of the expansion, to include the South, was completed on 31 July 2006, and Stage 4, to include the East, is scheduled for Autumn 2006 at which point the geographic expansion phase will be complete.

Currently the Canadian Forces, as part of the ISAF Regional Command South, are engaged in the early stages of the Stabilization phase; whereas ISAF Regional Commands West and North have progressed further into the Stabilization phase of the operations; reason for a certain amount of optimism.

ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF THE ISAF OPERATION

The September 12, 2006 Executive Summary of the *Afghanistan Opium Survey*, published on an annual basis by the United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is the most authoritative source in the world on the opium and heroin trade in Afghanistan, and an excellent independent and empirically verifiable source from which the progress and success of the ISAF operation can be measured.

It is also a source of robust indicators of both changes in opium production **and** the level of security, both of which are themselves useful indicators of the degree of success, on a regional basis, of the ISAF stability operations.

The Report indicates that most of the provinces and districts of the North and West (the responsibility of ISAF Regional Commands North and West where the ISAF presence has been in place the longest), are identified as "Low Risk" in security terms; whereas the South, where ISAF has only been in place since July 2006, has a much higher proportion of provinces and districts assessed as "High Risk," and "Extreme Risk."

Another measure found in the UNODC Report is the change from 2005 to 2006 in the total area under poppy cultivation. While the geographical boundaries of the various regions used in the Report do not exactly parallel the ISAF regional boundaries, they are close enough to allow for meaningful inferences to be drawn.

We find that the area under cultivation in the North declined by 20% on a year over year basis, whereas the area under cultivation in the South shot up an alarming 121% (though, interestingly, the area under cultivation in Kandahar, the province which is the responsibility of the Canadians, declined by 3%).

From these two indicators of security risk and opium poppy cultivation we conclude that there is empirical evidence of the success of the ISAF operations in the North and West. Accordingly, we predict that, as the ISAF operation continues in the South, a similar improvement on these two very important UNODC indicators will occur.

A critical problem for the Afghan government is the huge disparity between



The Conference of Defence Associations

CDA Statement to Parliamentary Committee 1-2006

governmental sources of income, and those available to the drug traffickers.

The UNODC *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005* reports that the total export value of opium to neighbouring countries amounted to \$2.7 billion dollars,.

Of that sum, the farmers received \$560 million, whereas the drug traffickers retained \$2.14 billion, or about 80% of the total export value. Since Afghanistan's GDP for that year was reported to be \$5.2 billion, opium exports stood at about 52% of GDP.

Set against that is the Afghan government's revenue base. The Asian Development Bank's *Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries* for 2004 shows the total revenue of the Afghan government in that year as \$652 million dollars, or about 5.2% of GDP.

In 2005, opium production in the Southern Region amounted to 43% of total Afghanistan production, and will have provided drug traffickers in the South with an annual income of about \$900 million.

In 2006, UNODC reports that the South will account for 61% of total production. If export prices remain similar, this would put approximately \$1.9 billion dollars in the hands of the drug traffickers.

It is, we believe, self-evident that the great disparity in financial resources between the drug traffickers and the Afghan national government would ensure the complete overthrow of Afghanistan's national government forces in the South.

If the ISAF were to withdraw, the country would quickly pitch back into civil war, with at best a decline into regional warlord control, and at worst the coming to power of a neo-Taliban structure financed by the drug traffickers.

Afghanistan would evolve from a 'Narco-Economy' to that of a 'Narco-State'.

Do those, who recommend we 'cut and run,' understand that they are favouring the return of a terrorist Taliban/al Qaeda regime over the admittedly difficult birth of a fledgling democracy?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CANADA'S COMBAT OPERATIONS AND ITS EFFORTS TO HELP RECONSTRUCT THE COUNTRY

Reconstruction in Afghanistan is simply not possible unless a relatively stable and peaceful environment exists in which the Canadian Forces, other NATO nations, and aid agencies can set about to rebuild or build anew the infrastructure necessary for a market economy and a 'built in Afghanistan' type of democracy to flourish.

Given that from the beginning of Canada's involvement the nature of military operations has constantly evolved, and the Canadian Forces have of necessity modified the nature of their contribution and their method of operating, the CDA recognizes that the Canadian commanders in the operational theatre and the leadership in Canadian Forces Headquarters have done an extremely commendable job in providing our troops with the wherewithal to accomplish their military mission; a *sine qua non* of future reconstruction and development in the Country.

CURRENT STATE OF PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT OF THE CANADIAN FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

It must be remembered, however, that the state of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and of their capacity to accomplish their assigned mission within the ISAF need to be viewed within the larger context of their ability to help meet and fulfill Canada's other international obligations as well as its domestic and continental (North American) obligations.

This is why the CDA continues to encourage all decision makers to accept that we are today living in an insecure world in which defence and security preparedness aimed at providing citizens with a safe and secure environment is the single most important responsibility of government.

It therefore is essential that the Government continue to meet its obligation



The Conference of Defence Associations

CDA Statement to Parliamentary Committee 1-2006

to the men and women of our Canadian Forces in providing them with the necessary levels of personnel and the appropriate equipment they require to pursue and successfully accomplish the missions they have been assigned.

The CDA therefore views the recently announced addition to the CF ISAF mission of a tank squadron; an infantry company; combat engineers; and other elements as a prudent and commendable response to the needs of the mission as articulated by the Commander responsible for the operations who constantly assesses the evolving situation in his area. Such decisions will provide a significant improvement to Canada's ability to meet its current mandate in Afghanistan.

In this same vein, and for similar reasons, the CDA also applauds the stated intention of the Government of Canada to take significant steps to deal with the recapitalization of the Canadian Forces' strategic and tactical lift capabilities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, may I thank the Committee for the opportunity given to the CDA to:

- Explain our choice of criteria in assessing effectiveness and success of the ISAF mission;
- Comment on the ISAF Concept of Operations;
- Give an assessment of the level of success thus far achieved by ISAF, and an opinion on the likelihood of future successes;
- Comment on the relationship between the Canadian Forces' combat operations and the efforts at reconstruction; and
- Give an appraisal of the state of personnel and equipment currently assigned to the ISAF mission

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The Conference of Defence Associations
359 Kent St., Suite 502
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K2P 0R7
Telephone : (613) 236-1252
Facsimile : (613) 236-8191
E-mail : cda@cda-cdai.ca