



MORE BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN AFGHANISTAN

by

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Introduction

I am concerned about the adequacy of NATO's planned future strength in Afghanistan and the manpower sufficiency of the Canadian Forces overall. My worry is that in spite of the Conservative government's wise decision to increase its numbers, there will not likely be enough trained combat personnel to enable the Armed Forces to satisfactorily defend and advance Canada's interests in the uncertain future that lies ahead.

It is my opinion that the recently authorized manpower increases will fall short of that which will ultimately prove to be required and that, government should take action now to generate a capability to enable our military commanders to put more boots on the ground than current plans allow.

To validate the notion that an increase in overall combat troop strength is indeed warranted I asked: What do numbers and history say that might influence our thinking about our largest, and for the foreseeable future, ongoing troop commitment in Afghanistan? What was confirmed is that NATO overall, and

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Canada in particular, urgently need to expand their manpower base.

This imperative is underscored by the speech that was delivered by the Secretary General of NATO, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, during his visit to Riga, Latvia on July 14 to discuss preparations for November's planned Alliance summit. He said: "Our top operational priority is Afghanistan. NATO and the international community cannot fail their mission there."

Australian and Other Views

Later, on July 24, another indication was provided by columnist Brendan Nicholson, reporting in Melbourne Australia's leading newspaper, *The Age*, who wrote that rising violence in Afghanistan has forced the Australian Government to increase the size of the Australian Army reconstruction team bound for the war-torn country, so troops can better protect themselves.

He also pointed out that the Australian government viewed "Fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, and fighting al-Qaeda and others through other parts of the world, as being extremely important to the next generation of Australians, to see that they are not left hostage to a force of ideological insanity that they may never control."

The result was Canberra's confirmation that it was "finalising a strategic policy for the next 10 years and would take to cabinet a proposal for a significant increase in the size of the Australian Defence Forces - with the army likely to get the biggest boost.

Australia's decision to boost its troop-levels followed on the heels of a Reuters news report that the British commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Lieutenant-



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General David Richards, had earlier warned in London on July 21 that shortages of aircraft and easily deployable reserves were a problem.

In turn, Michael Williams, a reputable analyst at the London-based think-tank, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), remarked "For me, NATO is not properly prepared. It has a confused and vague mandate and is short on both manpower and equipment."

Finally, Sean Kay, an international security specialist at Ohio Wesleyan University, noted that NATO deployed 60,000 troops to keep the peace in tiny Bosnia after the 1990s Balkans wars, and said: "In Afghanistan we are going in with a smaller presence and should be bringing it up. There are not nearly enough troops to get it right".

Counter-Insurgency Doctrine

Practitioners of counterinsurgency operations have long been clear in stating that the number of soldiers required to counter guerrillas has had very little to do with the number of guerrillas. They have also cold-shouldered traditional military doctrine, which holds that a conventional army requires roughly a 10-to-1 size advantage if it is to defeat a well-equipped, well-executed, persistent insurgency.

As the distinguished British defence writer, the late Major-General Richard Clutterbuck, wrote of Malaya in 1966, the latter is a dangerous illusion, arising from a disregard of the facts.

So, how might NATO, and Canada, go about tackling the problem of determining the number of security forces needed in Afghanistan today?

In the 2003 summer edition of *The Rand Review*, respected military analyst and senior mathematician, James T. Quinlivan, wrote that ". . . when external powers such as the United States act as "the world's policeman" to stabilize countries such as Iraq, a good way to think about the force

requirement is roughly similar to the way that one would think about policing a civil society. The objective is not to destroy an enemy, but to provide security for residents so that they have enough confidence to manage their daily affairs and to support a government authority of their own."

This notion echoed his earlier writings, suggesting that these force requirements should be based on the need for population control (to cut off support to the insurgents) and local security - that is, the need to "win hearts and minds," needs, therefore, which require a force proportional to the population.

Historical Force Ratios

Quinlivan describes three historical force ratio levels.

The first, one to four security personnel per 1,000 population, is essentially the ratio for ordinary policing. At the low end of the scale is the proportion of police officers required for day-to-day law enforcement duties among generally peaceful populations, such as those in Canada where there are 1.8 police officers per thousand residents. Large cities tend to have higher ratios of police to population.

For cases such as Afghanistan, however, which are drastic enough to warrant outside intervention, the required force ratio is much higher. Quinlivan posits that although numbers alone do not constitute a security strategy, successful strategies for population security and control have required force ratios as large as or larger than 20 security personnel (troops and police combined) per thousand inhabitants. This figure is roughly 10 times the ratio required for simple policing of a tranquil population. (See Table 1)

In a military setting, the US Constabulary force in post-World War II Germany was staffed at 2.2 per thousand for "enforcing public order, controlling black market transactions, and related police functions."



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The same ratio existed in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (1992-1993), whose duties included "supervision of the cease-fire and voluntary disarmament of combatants, supervision of about 60,000 indigenous police to provide law and order, and administration of a free and fair election."

The second force ratio level is from four to ten security personnel per 1,000 population. India's campaign against militants in Punjab was implemented at a ratio of almost 6 per 1,000 population. At the high point of the 1965 US intervention in the Dominican Republic, whose purpose was preventing civil war and restoring "stability," Army and Marine personnel operated at a ratio of 6.6 per 1,000 population.

Quinlivan's third ratio level is above ten per 1,000 population. Military examples of this level are the Malayan Emergency of the 1950s, when foreign and full-time indigenous security forces operated at a ratio of 20 per 1,000 population.

The same ratio pertained to the combination of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and British troops in Northern Ireland for much of the period 1969-1994.

And higher still was the NATO deployment in Kosovo where KFOR operated at a ratio as high as 25 per thousand.

Setting Force Ratios for Afghanistan

Afghanistan today is a fledgling democracy struggling to survive. It is not either at peace or at semi-peace, where the main task is maintaining public order. Afghanistan is a broken, devastated country that is still at war, saturated with weapons, and daily becoming more and more violent.

In a country that is one third smaller than Ontario, the currently deployed 109,000 Afghanistan National Security Forces composed of the Afghan army and police forces, NATO troops and US forces,

together representing a force ratio of 3.5 per thousand, have been unable thus far to isolate the warlords, Taliban, narco-traffickers, and other militants and common criminals who continue to provide both the perception and the reality of public safety, as they work to retain their influence and power and strive to undermine the legitimate authority of President Hamid Karzai's government.

Perhaps even more important in such circumstances is the need to avoid any hint of punitive measures that inevitably would lead to a precipitous decline in general Afghan tolerance of foreign forces.

The troop strength that the Afghan government, NATO, and the US are targeting, to enable the democratically elected Kabul government to govern, to allow the US Operation Enduring Freedom to achieve its counter-terrorism mission, and to maintain NATO's International Security Assistance Force's focus on its stabilisation and security role, equates to a level two ratio of 5.44, and will yield 168,000 troops.

It is important to recall that NATO's mission includes assisting the Afghan government in extending its authority across the country; conducting stability and security operations in co-ordination with the Afghan national security forces; assisting the Afghan government with the security sector reform process; mentoring and supporting the Afghan national army; and supporting Afghan government programmes to disarm illegally armed groups.

At 10 per 1,000 population, the mid point between levels two and three, the number of troops required in Afghanistan skyrocket to 310,570.

(Interestingly, in late July in Baghdad, Iraq, where the population is roughly five million, US General George Casey, the top US commander, met with Iraqi officials to discuss increasing the numbers of US and Iraqi forces inside the capital, though the exact numbers involved were not stated. More United States troops have already been sent, however, to reinforce the 51,000



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troops that were taking part in the current crackdown, mostly Iraqis, with about 7,200 US forces, producing a ratio of 10 per 1,000).

Matching the British experience in Malaysia and Northern Ireland, at 20 per 1,000, would double this total to 621,140. Clearly, this number - which is more than three and one-half times the combined number of Afghan Army, Police and NATO/US troops now envisaged (see Table 1) - would be impossible for NATO to sustain, given the growing pressures for its individual member nations' armed forces to participate in other out-of-region Alliance missions, and their government's evident reluctance, thus far, to further increase the present national troop levels.

In Afghanistan even the planned level two ratios of 5.44 per thousand will probably prove to be impossible to attain, let alone maintain, without a radical change in the current thinking of the Alliance's political leaders. Although such numbers are clearly not feasible at this time, they do add emphasis to the need for the rapid creation of indigenous security forces, even while NATO troops continue to be deployed. Meanwhile, the prevailing extremely low force ratio for Afghanistan, a country with a population even larger than that of Iraq, calls into question the plausibility of the overall current stabilization efforts.

Although the historical record repeatedly confirms that only large numbers of boots on the ground can secure a population and control territory, NATO's member countries collectively, and individually, continue to ignore the evidence and to whistle past the graveyard.

Nothing illustrates this better than the prevailing situation in the southern Afghanistan provinces of Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan where, for example, there is a population of about 2,524,000. NATO's combined force of British, Canadian, Australian and Dutch troops number only about 8,320, and yield only

about 3.29 troops per thousand. Clearly, this situation, when viewed against the historical record, should provide a clear signal to the Alliance's political and military leadership that more boots on the ground are urgently needed.

Conclusion

I believe, in light of the exceedingly low troop to population ratios in Afghanistan, that Canada should take the lead and do two things.

First, the Prime Minister should carry an urgent message to the November summit meeting in Riga to encourage NATO and its twenty-six member nations to acknowledge the requirement to increase their respective troop levels without delay. Otherwise they risk an Alliance failure in Afghanistan.

Further, as an unequivocal declaration of Canada's intention to continue to play a meaningful international role, and at the same time to defend and advance our national interests at home and abroad, our government should put its money where its mouth is. It should take prompt action to field additional army combat forces, over and above the currently planned modest manpower increases, to generate those numbers, that our nation's top military planners determine will be necessary to accomplish and sustain that intention in the decades ahead.

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Table 1 - SELECTED SECURITY FORCES TO POPULATION RATIOS⁸

(As at 08/08/06)

COUNTRY	POPULATION	SECURITY FORCES (MILITARY & POLICE)	SECURITY FORCES PER 1,000 POPULATION	REMARKS
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SECURITY FORCES IN NORTH AMERICA

Canada	33,098,932 ⁹		Police: 1.84 ¹⁰	
United States	298,444,214 ¹¹		Police: 2.3	

SECURITY FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan ANSF	31,056,997 ¹²	ANSF CURRENT ANA 40,000 ¹³ ANP 37,000 ¹⁴ Total 77,000 ANSF PLANNED ANA 70,000 ¹⁵ ANP 62,000 Total 132,000	ANSF CURRENT ANA 1.3 ANP 1.2 Total 2.49 ANSF PLANNED ANA 2.27 ANP 2.0 Total 4.27	Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF). There are already 62000 Afghans in the police force but they are without the necessary equipment such as weapons and uniforms. ¹⁶
Canada TFA in Afghanistan ¹⁷	31,056,997	CF CURRENT & PLANNED 2,300 ¹⁸	0.07	Task Force Afghanistan (TFA) Included in NATO ISAF totals
US CFC-A in Afghanistan	31,056,997	CURRENT 20,000 PLANNED 16,000	CURRENT 0.65 PLANNED 0.52	Combined Forces Command (CFC-A) ¹⁹
NATO ISAF in Afghanistan	31,056,997	CURRENT 12,000 ²⁰ PLANNED 20,000 ²¹	CURRENT 0.39 PLANNED 0.65	International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Currently 37 NATO, and non-NATO countries contribute to the operation ²²
TOTAL NATO/ISAF, US/CFC(A), ANSF	31,056,997	CURRENT 109,000 PLANNED 168,000	CURRENT 3.5 PLANNED 5.44	



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**NATO/ISAF FORCES IN SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN
(REGIONAL COMMAND SOUTH) AREA OF OPERATIONS (-)**

Southern Afghanistan area of operations includes six provinces - Day, Kundi, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan, and Zabul

Canada	Kandahar Province 886,000	CF 1,820 ²³ ANA 0 ANP 0 Total 1,820	2.04	Canada's contingent includes: Regional Command South, Headquarters Battle Group, Combat Support, Combat Service Support, PRT. This number is included in Canadian TF-A total.
United Kingdom	Helmand Province 1,011,000 ²⁴	UK 3,400 ²⁵ ANA 1,100 ²⁶ ANP 0 Total 4,500	UK 3.4 ANA 1.1 ANP 0 Total 4.5	
Netherlands	Uruzgan Province 627,000 ²⁷	NL 1,500 ²⁸ ANA 0 ANP 0 Total 1,500	2.4	
Australia	Uruzgan Province 627,000	ADF/PRT ²⁹ 200 STG/SAS 300 Total 500	0.8	ADF - Australian Defence Forces PRT - Provincial Reconstruction Team. SFTG—(Special Forces Task Group) SAS - Australian Special Air Service Regiment
TOTAL NATO ISAF (CDA, UK, NL, AUS), ANSF in Southern Afghanistan (-)	Kandahar Helmand Uruzgan Provinces 2,524,000	NATO 7,220 ANA 1,100 ANP 0 Total 8,320	2.86 0.43 0 3.29	The actual deployed strength of the ANSF (Army & Police) could not be determined from available open sources)



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(As at 08/08/06)

COUNTRY	POPULATION	SECURITY FORCES (MILITARY & POLICE)	SECURITY FORCES PER 1,000 POPULATION	REMARKS
EXAMPLES OF OTHER SECURITY FORCES TO POPULATION RATIOS				
Germany: American Zone Oct 1945 ³⁰		United States Constabulary (organized as a single large division).	2.2	The constabulary was created on the basis of one constable for every 450 German civilians. The force was entirely adequate to its limited objectives of enforcing public order controlling black market transactions and related police functions.
UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)	9,000,000	Troops 16,000 Police 3,600	2.2	By itself the UN did not have a presence outside of large population centres nor a plausible capability for coercion control or protection of either the combatant factions or the civilian population.
India's Punjab — ongoing operations in state against Sikh militants ³¹	20,200,000	115,000 Regular troops paramilitary security formations and police	5.7	
United States intervention in the Dominican Republic 1965 ³²	3,600,000	24,000	6.6	
British forces in the Malayan Emergency - 1952 ³³	5,506,000	Total more than 111,000 British Malay & Commonwealth troops, 40,000 Police, 29,800 Special constables	20	If the Home Guard force of 210,000 (1953 strength not all of whom were either armed or active at any given time) were added to the previous figure the force ratio would be even higher.
Northern Ireland	1,600,000	32,000 British military forces and Royal Ulster Constabulary	20	
Kosovo	2,000,000	NATO (KFOR) Kosovo Force High 50,000 ³⁴ Current 17,000 ³⁵	High: 25 Current: 8.5	



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