

**CANADA'S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN: COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES**  
**May 17, 2007            PATRICIA HARTNAGEL**

I've been asked to talk about Canada's role in Afghanistan and some of the various aspects of our participation in that conflict. Given the time constraints, I'll cover as much as I can and then we can use the discussion time for dialogue and further exchange of information.

If we think about it—a government's decision to go to war is probably one of the most important decisions that it will ever have to make. Given the effects of war on: our own troops, the combatants and non combatants in the conflict zone, the destruction of infrastructure and the impact on the environment, the costs of maintaining a war economy rather than funding human needs—and when you think about the message that waging war gives to the global community-- in terms of our country's values-- you can see that a decision to go to war is indeed, monumental.

Because of its magnitude and because it is, of course, being done in our name, it is a decision that must be subjected to the utmost scrutiny. It is not only our right to ask the hard questions, it is our responsibility as engaged citizens.

The deployment of more than 2300 Canadian soldiers to Afghanistan has deeply divided our nation—while everyone obviously respects the sacrifice of our troops and cares deeply about their well being—the most recent surveys show that more than half of the Canadians polled, are opposed to our participation in the Afghan mission.

With so much to consider in discussing various aspects of the mission-- as a way of organizing my comments tonight—I would like to use the framework of looking at the costs and the consequences of our government's decision to go to war in Afghanistan.

We will look at some of the human and financial costs and consequences—as well as some of the intangible costs and consequences as well. To finish up, I would like to look at some alternatives that should be considered regarding the Canadian mission.

To start, let's take a look at how we got into Afghanistan in the first place—

Afghanistan has been subject to ongoing war since the 1970's. The fundamentalist Taliban held power until 2001 when they were overthrown by the American military.

Later in 2001 a Canadian Special Forces unit was deployed to play a full combat role—for the first time since the Korean war-- to help the American forces. A U.S. backed

government was installed and supported by a small military presence of 15,000 troops (including the U.N. sanctioned multinational **ISAF (International Security Assistance Force)** in the area around Kabul. This same government was legitimized in an election a few years later and has ruled the country through the appointment of local governors and warlords—while the foreign troops make sure that the government isn't overthrown. In 2003 Canada joined the ISAF units operating around Kabul and then in 2006—NATO took over the operation. In the spring of 2006, Canadian soldiers who had been part of **ISAF** were re-stationed—this time to the southern province of Kandahar—once a key Taliban stronghold. **(See sources: 1)** There they began counterinsurgency actions (and our casualties started to mount). In May of 2006—the Harper government received parliamentary approval—by just **four** votes, to extend Canada's role in Afghanistan—by two years—that is until 2009. Next year, in February of 2008, Canada is scheduled to assume command of the non American NATO forces in Afghanistan.

In this brief overview of Canada's role in Afghanistan over the past 6 years—there are many “costs” and “consequences” that can be identified ---I'll just highlight a few:

First and foremost—**the human cost** has been very high—with the deaths of more than 50 Canadian soldiers as well as a Canadian diplomat serving with the U.N. in Afghanistan. We have no concrete numbers in terms of the woundings and maimings that have been sustained—let alone the psychological effects of warfare on our combatants. And what of the Afghan civilians and combatants? We know that the numbers of fatalities are in the thousands—but we do not have an accurate number. Professor Marc Herald at the University of New Hampshire has established a www site devoted to confirmed, identified Afghan deaths (<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mwhero1d/memorial.htm>); it is a moving, personalized effort to put a human face to those lost lives.

In terms of the consequences of these human costs—whether they be incurred by Canadians or Afghans-- there are now, thousands and thousands of families whose lives have changed forever because of the loss of their loved ones—and for those who have been injured--their lives, and the lives of their families, have been dramatically and drastically changed as well,

There is another human cost that has to be mentioned—and it is grave. Several international sources have stated that depleted uranium weapons are being used in Afghanistan. The Canadian government denies this—but there is a lot of circumstantial evidence pointing to their use—as well as the assertions by external sources. This is something that must be pursued. We must find out if they are being used—because the effects of the invisible, highly radioactive particles that the DU weapons release, have incalculable costs and consequences in terms of human health and the environment—particularly given that DU has a ½ life of 4.5 **billion** years.

We can talk more about this during the discussion if you wish-- it's a massive topic and we need to move on—but I did want to red flag it as it is a human cost of war that is definitely not being discussed by our politicians or in the mainstream media—and we need to be aware of it.

Let's move on then from the human costs of our mission in Afghanistan and look at some of the **financial costs** .

Just as an aside—I'm sure you have all heard and read the comments about how cash starved the Canadian military is and that we are in a race for last place with Luxembourg in terms of defence spending... before we look at the \$\$ costs of the war in Afghanistan—we need a reality check in terms of the levels of our defence spending prior to our Afghan commitment.

You can find all kinds of excellent information about Canadian defence spending at the Polaris Institute www site ([www.polarisinstitute.org](http://www.polarisinstitute.org)). In a report entitled “It's never Enough” -- we find that if you calculate the defence expenditures of the NATO countries - based on a percentage of their GDP—you will in fact find that Canada ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in terms of dollars spent--out of the 26 member nations! In fact the Canadian military budget of 2004 was larger than the military budgets of the 12 lowest spending members of NATO combined!

There are other facts and figures in the report that are quite surprising—so check it out-- because we have been sold this myth about the abysmal levels of Canadian defence spending and they need to be challenged.

So what are some of the **financial costs** of our engagement in Afghanistan?

Well, from 2001 to 2006, Canada's military operations in –or related to --Afghanistan cost Canadian taxpayers \$4.146 billion. (see source: 2) add to that the recent announcement by the federal government of a **\$15 billion** programme for the “largest defence equipment purchase in Canadian history”...a procurement that includes helicopters, ships and tactical lift planes. (see source 1)

So those are just some of the costs--what are some of the consequences of this kind of financial commitment to a war fighting agenda? I'll just raise two points--

1. After our initial combat role in Afghanistan—Canada made a commitment to what was referred to as its 3-D approach—that is defence, diplomacy and development. It sounded like the type of integrated approach to peacebuilding that would be in keeping with traditional Canadian values – however, the reality of that commitment is that-- for every 9 \$ spent on the military effort—only **one dollar** is spent on development. In February of this year, the government did announce an additional \$200 million in non military aid to Afghanistan—over 10 years (2002-2012) the Canadian government intends to spend about 1.2 billion \$ in aid—or 120 million \$ per year.. Which is about \$4 per Afghan. (see source: 1) The development assistance certainly pales in comparison to the 15 billion \$\$ that will be spent on military hardware in the next few years. We have virtually abandoned our commitment to development and diplomacy in Afghanistan.

2. We have also abandoned our historical commitment to U.N. peacekeeping operations in favour of pouring our defence expenditures into more aggressive defence alliances—like NATO. To give you some perspective --out of the approximately **68,000 Canadian military personnel** stationed at home and abroad—only 60 are attached to current U.N. peacekeeping missions. In a very short time—Canada has gone from being one of the top contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions—to sitting in 50<sup>th</sup> place out of 95 countries. (see source: 2)

So our financial costs are high—but in terms of the consequences—our government has--without any public consultation—chosen to abandon—not only our commitment to the human security agenda—designed to address the root causes of conflict—but also we have shortchanged an integrated approach to peacebuilding. As well—our huge increase in defence spending is being used to prop up a war fighting, cold war relic – namely

NATO--dominated by the United States—rather than enhancing Canadian participation in multilateral U.N. missions.

In terms of the **intangible** costs and consequences—there are so many that I will just limit myself to a few of the major ones:

**1.** Over the course of Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan, I would suggest that there has been total confusion and mixed messages in terms of who we are, why we are there, and how we are behaving. First we went into Afghanistan as war fighters—under U.S. command. We were there, as general Rick Hillier pointed out—to root out and kill the “detestable murderers and scumbags”—but then we sent 2000 troops in to rebuild Afghanistan under the so called 3 – D approach... but we saw earlier how that has played out. Minister of Defence Gordon O’Connor recently said that our mission to Afghanistan was one of “retribution for 9/11”... yet the government keeps reassuring us that we are there to bring democracy to Afghanistan and make sure that girls can attend school. So which is it? Are we there to win hearts and minds and to assist the Afghan population or are we there as an extension of the U.S. war on terror? If it’s confusing for us—how confusing is it for the Afghans who are, simultaneously on the receiving end of our “altruism” and our bullets.

**2<sup>nd</sup>** intangible cost: we have sent our soldiers to fight in a counterinsurgency war with the tools and equipment used to fight a traditional war. With their tanks—they are sitting ducks. Historically, counterinsurgency wars are equated with certain defeat. We have already talked about the human and economic costs of the mission—how long will Canadians be willing to pay the price. A \$300 IED (Improvised Explosive Device)—or a single suicide bomber—can kill countless Canadian soldiers and destroy millions of dollars worth of our military equipment. Time is on the side of the insurgent—they can continue this cheap, deadly form of warfare indefinitely. What will be the tolerance level of the Canadian public regarding the costs and the consequences of participating in an asymmetrical war. **(see source: 3)**

**3.** In terms of intangibles-- what were the costs to the credibility to our prime minister, the minister of defence and the minister for public safety after their performance the other week in the House of Commons concerning the issue of Afghan detainees. When a Globe and Mail editorial compares the behavior of our Prime Minister to a character in a

Woody Allen movie and the Minister of Defence as “befuddled and inept” and calls for his resignation.. ? What are the consequences of such farcical behavior?? Every day brought a stunning array of statements, mis-statements, contradictions and ignorance regarding the Canadian monitoring of Afghan detainees. Perhaps the most obvious observation is that, if the truth were being told, it would have been easier to keep the story straight. What are the consequences of this level of incompetence—particularly when our soldiers are placed in the position of possibly being held accountable for war crimes for turning detainees over to torture? How do Canadians feel when a grave matter such as this is not addressed in a competent and appropriate manner—but instead the questioners in the House of Commons are accused of not supporting our troops? (**see source: 4**)

There are so many tangible and intangible costs and consequences to this mission; I’ve only cited a few.

If we feel the costs and consequences are too high—or if we feel we are really following the wrong path and have abandoned our traditional, core values as Canadians, we aren’t alone -- the entrenched attitudes of our minority government and their dismissive comments about any questioning of the mission -- belie the fact that any number of individuals, groups, and media have chosen to expose the myriad pitfalls that we face in Afghanistan.

Does Minister O’Connor read the reports from the International Crisis Group—and the Council on Foreign Relations? They both paint a very bleak picture in terms of the tremendous upsurge in violence and the destabilizing effect that this violence is having. Perhaps the most damning report –in February 07—comes from the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. They list 7 major problems with the mission that must be addressed if we are to see any progress whatsoever in Afghanistan. An area of major concern is the deaths of too many civilians and innocent people in Afghanistan—the other week, even President Karzai spoke publicly about this and told the international forces that this was totally unacceptable and won’t be tolerated. And, remarkably, shortly after Karzai’s comment—the Afghan Parliament, citing the high numbers of civilian casualties, last week, called for a ceasefire and that a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops . Further they have called for negotiations with militants... e.g. the

Taliban. Why such a startling move?—The parliament believes that negotiations with the militants would be more effective than fighting. What a condemnation of our current policies. **(see source: 5)**

Another major problem that the Committee highlighted is our lack of visible development programmes. Small steps are being taken—but they are not enough. Weapons don't bring democracy—dealing with the root causes of injustice is the key—we must shift the emphasis from the war fighting model to the delivery of development and capacity building. And perhaps the most difficult aspect of all—and I alluded to this earlier—the Taliban has forever—are we really willing to commit ourselves to decades and decades of involvement in Afghanistan—and still not be assured that we will see the kind of societal progress that we are working toward? If not—why are we there for 5 years if that will accomplish virtually nothing and then—when we pull out of the region—expose the ordinary Afghans to retribution from the Taliban for cooperating with the foreign troops? We are dealing with a medieval society—the question from many is whether or not we have a constructive role to play. There are many questions being asked of our government by legitimate bodies—including their own Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. **(see source: 3)**

Of course when we question our government about the mission in Afghanistan, we are accused of being unpatriotic and not supporting our troops. Well I think it's about time that the tables are turned and we ask the Stephen Harper government about **their** support for our troops.

-does it support our troops to send them into a war without a clear, consistent mandate and strategy?

-does it support our troops to send them into an unwinnable , counterinsurgency war?

-does it support our troops to expose them to possible charges of war crimes for aiding and abetting torture?

-does it support our troops, if the international accusations are accurate, to expose them to radioactive depleted uranium?

-does it support our troops to have the Minister of Defence sit in the House of Commons during question period for one full day and refuse to answer a single question regarding the detainees?

-does it support our troops when our mission results in the Afghan parliament preferring to negotiate with the Taliban—rather than having our presence in their country?

Does it support our troops when..... Well, you fill in the blanks

So—after all the critiques of the current mission—let’s take a look at some alternative positions.

**First and foremost**--we do not have to follow the U.S. war-fighting model in Afghanistan. We have choices. We **can** make a constructive contribution to the Afghan people and their country—if—and only if—we look at alternatives that would address the root causes of the problems—and promote and implement alternatives that are in keeping with who we are—as Canadians. I want to take a look at just a few of the alternatives that, I think, must be pursued if we are going to end the death, destruction and hatred and the insecurity that our current policies are promoting.

We are constantly being told that there has to be security before development can take place--and that is why we are pursuing this war-fighting model. However the Dutch approach belies that mantra and we could well learn from their approach. The Dutch have 1400 troops that took over the Uruzgan province last August. They went in, expecting the same kind of bloody welcome that the Canadians encountered in Khandahar. Both areas are considered volatile strongholds of the Taliban insurgency—but the bloodbath never occurred.

After 400 patrols, establishing 2 forward bases and building roads, bridges, schools and clinics—they have sustained 1 death and a handful of injuries.

There have been 7 ambushes and 18 roadside bombs in 4 months—the Canadian troops have suffered worse in a single week. So what makes the Dutch approach unique—and so effective? The “Dutch Philosophy” as it is called, is a strategy focused on supporting the local government rather than killing its supposed enemies. They talk with the Taliban instead of fighting them. They tread carefully and with an understanding of how little any foreigner knows about the history, culture and traditions of this country. What do they do? Rather than sending convoys out to the farthest regions and asserting their presence (as the Canadians do—often precipitating gun battles) the Dutch move with extreme caution and set up far away from the villages. They then send in a delegation to



see if the elders are willing to negotiate. Though initially suspicious and frightened, the elders have been willing to work with them. The Dutch then spread the word, throughout the region, that they want to come in without fighting. And the strategy has worked—listening to the radio frequencies used by the insurgents, the Dutch interpreters heard locals discussing **the new type of foreigner that was replacing the U.S. troops**. The locals were heard to say **those Dutch aren't here to fight, they are here to talk**. The Dutch talk to the elders, and, using provincial governors as the intermediary, they talk to the Taliban.

The Dutch commanders say that if you are willing to talk with them—that it is surprising what results.. But they also caution that it can take months and months—and at all times—you have to show in everything that you do and say—that you are genuinely trying to understand their conflict.

The Canadian and American approach is quite different. They go into unstable areas and establish forward operating bases—often building them into fortresses with giant sandbags and razor wire. These bases are the launching point for their operations. The Dutch, on the other hand, build mud walled compounds that they call multi-functional “qalas” --which is the Pashto name for house—these qalas are designed with a traditional guest room for Afghan visitors.

The soldiers living in these dwellings—are expected to visit every household in their designated area (usually 12-30 sq kilometres) and monitor their needs.

An added feature of the Dutch approach is that not only do they help the local residents with the basics of survival—but they also try to serve as honest brokers for villagers whose relatives were captured by coalition forces. For example if a suspected Taliban fighter is arrested by U.S. soldiers, Dutch commanders will try to find out basic information about the detainee to ease his family's concerns. As well, the Dutch forces also try to protect villagers from the actions of corrupt or undisciplined Afghan soldiers and police.

Clearly, the Dutch are working on a number of levels to make the area safer—as well as to work at a very personal level—with the Afghan civilians.

What an inspirational model—particularly when it is compared with our aggressive, American-centric approach. **(see source: 6)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> alternative:** We need to engage in a new political dialogue. According to a report by the International Crisis Group—when Afghan citizens were polled, the same reasons were repeated over and over as to why they were increasingly opposing the government of Hamid Karzai (the very government that we, of course, are propping up). What are some of these factors? Corruption, abuses by the local and national security forces, the favouring of one group or tribe over another, thus disenfranchising people from decision making and power structures. And resource quarrels—particularly over land and water. What is so striking about these grievances is that they are fairly typical of grievances that you would find in any conflict—and most important of all—these grievances are amenable to negotiation. We need to redirect our emphasis to addressing these factors and working to build accommodation between the government and its people—otherwise—as the counterinsurgency war continues, many Afghans will transfer their allegiance from a government that has not lived up to their expectations—and turn instead to the very groups that we (and the other international forces) are fighting! (**see source: 7**)

You can see how the Dutch model is so well suited to addressing these needs—and, in fact, they are already working on some of these issues. How much more effective could we be if we added our energies to the Dutch efforts to address these grievances?

**3<sup>rd</sup> alternative:** Another major area that really needs a rethink --and for which a fantastic alternative is available—is what I would call the “elephant in the middle of the room”—you know that thing that dominates everything-- but we pretend it isn’t there—and that is the issue of the poppy fields.

Opium production is **the** key component of Afghanistan’s economy. In the pre-Taliban period, the power and income from the poppy fields fueled civil wars -- with the Taliban in power—in 2001—production was cut and amounted to only 74 metric tons. But then what happened in 2002—the first year of American rule-- the production jumped to 1278 metric tons—from only 74 the year before.. In 2003 –production doubled—and by 2004 Afghanistan was producing 87% of the world’s opium supply. Recent reports indicate that the 2006 crop was 60% larger than that of 2005. Hundreds of thousands of farmers

depend on poppies for their livelihood – the driving force behind the poppies is extreme poverty and opium is the surest source of income.

In 2006 an NGO policy group working in Kandahar produced a report entitled: "Canada in Kandahar: no peace to keep". It pointed out that in Khandahar province—where the Canadian military is operating—160,000 people—that is –26,000 households –relied on opium poppy cultivation in 2005. Wheat farmers, who planted 3 times the amount of land as the poppy farmers, received less than 1/3 the income. So growing poppies is 9 times more valuable to a farmer than growing wheat. Since poppies are fueling the insurgency—we have to do something—but what ?

The U.S. and Britain donate most of the money for eradication programmes. And, with the huge increases in opium poppy production these past few years, there is increasing pressure for enhanced eradication procedures—which translates into aerial spraying. Needless to say, the ever present American contractors in Afghanistan are there to meet the need—for example Dyncorp touts its previous experience in spraying herbicides on the coca fields in Columbia. However NGO reports (e.g. the Senlis Institute) suggest that it wasn't effective, damaged the environment and killed the crops that ordinary people need to survive.

Although Canadian soldiers play no role in poppy eradication, Canada supports the programme as one of the pillars of the Afghan national drug control strategy, Canada works to encourage farmers to grow different commodity crops—like wheat—but we've seen how attractive an alternative that is.

Given that the bulk of the Afghan economy is based on the cultivation of opium poppies, eradicating the fields will only fuel further violence and conflict—there must be a way of providing economic security to the Afghans.

The **Senlis Institute** is an independent think tank based in the U.K. that specializes in security and development issues. It has developed just a remarkable proposal for dealing with the opium production--a village based economic solution to the poppy crisis.

Recognizing that poppy cultivation **can** be a constructive endeavor—and building on the tradition of strong, local village control systems—they are proposing the controlled cultivation of opium poppies for the village based production of codeine and morphine. Calling it a "village based poppy for medicine model"—they have developed a highly

detailed plan to bring the illegal poppy cultivation under control—and in a sustainable manner. The key feature of their plan is to have the entire production process—from opium seed to medicinal tablets be controlled in the village—in conjunction with government and international NGOs. Further, all economic profits from the medicinal sales would remain in the village—thus providing needed dollars for economic diversification. They advocate that pilot projects be established for the next planting season, in various regions, to precisely define and refine the proposal and to measure the economic effectiveness of this imaginative initiative. **(see source: 8)**

Incredibly—the International Narcotics Control Board—whose mandate is to ensure an adequate supply of morphine and codeine for medical and scientific purposes, cites that 80% of the world’s population faces an acute shortage of these medicines. The Senlis proposal provides an extraordinary opportunity to not only diffuse the contentious poppy production dilemma—but it also provides a creative way for a post conflict society to diversify their economy, a way to constructively participate in international trade—and at the same time—meet a global need for medicines.

You can find more detailed information about this “alternative” on the Senlis Institute www site. Interestingly, representatives from the Senlis Institute were in Ottawa last year to pitch their proposal to Stephen Harper, but unfortunately he was too busy to meet with them. Speaks volumes – doesn’t it?

So—if we combine or play around with combinations of the alternatives suggested above:

- utilizing the Dutch approach
- emphasizing the negotiation process and
- implementing the Senlis Insitute’s poppies for medicine proposal--

Can you imagine the fantastic contribution that Canada could make to the betterment of the Afghan people and stabilizing the economy—and accomplish it with far, far fewer body bags and dead civilians.

It is not that we don’t have choices in terms of our mission in Afghanistan. I have highlighted only 3 outstanding, well thought out alternatives—and they are by no means the only ones.

But for those who question or oppose the mission in Afghanistan, what we find is that, rather than an openness to dialogue and a discussion of possible alternatives—we get the tired old “with us” or “against us” rhetoric. Aside from presenting us with a totally false dichotomy—it sheds no light on this urgent situation and ignores the very issues that **must** be addressed. Obviously it would come as a surprise to Stephen Harper that those of us asking the hard questions about our mission in Afghanistan—are in fact—not only “supporting our troops” but also suggesting viable alternatives that will truly support them.

So what are we to do? Obviously a comprehensive and critical discussion of the mission in Afghanistan must continue. Given the intransigence of the Harper government, the onus falls on us. Certainly we need to encourage the opposition members of parliament and offer our support for their efforts to have a meaningful discussion of our mission in Afghanistan. But most importantly, we must press the Harper government to tell us exactly how this mission truly reflects our core values and if, in fact, what concrete contributions we are making to improve the life of the Afghans. Particularly in light of the Afghan parliament motion asking international forces to leave.

Our government says that Canadian diplomacy is playing a key role in working to stabilize the country, strengthening governance and to improving the lives of ordinary Afghans. I want to know exactly how that is being done, how many personnel are being deployed to do this and how much money is being spent to accomplish these laudable goals. Also, given the denigrating comments that were made about the Department of Foreign Affairs personnel recently—I would also like to know what the role of Foreign Affairs has been in this mission—and insist that they are able to play the kind of role necessary to accomplish the diplomacy and development goals that we supposedly have for Afghanistan. I want some straight answers—and specific facts and figures—I want the government to prove to me that what we are doing in Afghanistan is congruent with Canadian values.

The military agenda has run roughshod over diplomacy and development-- and if we don't agree with that agenda—we need to hold the government accountable and demand that they get back on track.

Just to clarify—I'm not talking about sending them one email –getting the electronically generated form response back from government—and then letting the matter drop—I'm talking persistence and ongoing questioning and challenging of what the government is doing—in our name.

I urge you to question and to engage in dialogue with your Member of Parliament—and to make your opinions known to the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. If you are on line, there are a number of national organizations with which you can link up for info updates and action alerts etc. For any number of reasons—it is imperative that our government wake-up—and change its path. If the reasons that I have given you tonight aren't compelling enough--let me finish with an absolutely chilling comment that appeared in the Globe and Mail a week or so ago—and this is a direct quote from the commentary:

“Killing civilians in Afghanistan not only causes unintended deaths, it creates unintended enemies for U.S. and NATO troops.

Pastuns, the most common ethnic group in the country, live by a centuries old tribal code of honour called the pashtunwali—and one of its central tenets is "badal" or revenge. If a member of ones family is killed, the blood of the aggressor or the aggressor's family must be spilled. An unavenged death is the deepest shame a Pashtun can carry - and neither time, compensation, nor uneven odds can erase the obligation for payback.

There is a saying that goes: “ a Pashtun waited 100 years, then took his revenge. It was quick work.” Pashtun lore is filled with tales of family members devoting their entire lives to seeing retribution for a slain relative and accounts of weak individuals settling scores with much stronger opponents. In this way, civilian deaths not only create anger among members of the population, they make Afghans duty bound to take up arms against coalition force.

There is an extraordinary book by Rory Stewart—called The Places in Between. Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban and has chronicled his journey in this book.

At one point, he observes that a major problem is that--few care about the policy failures (in Afghanistan) if their effects are only felt in Afghanistan.

The Pashtun tradition of revenge obviously makes a mockery of that delusional belief that many Canadians and Westerners hold. We **have** to care about our policy failure in Afghanistan.

Canada must rethink and reconfigure it's mission—and it is up to **us**—to take responsibility for making sure it happens. **We** have to care about our ongoing policy failures in Afghanistan.

### **SOURCES:**

1. "What Are We Fighting For?" by George Melnyk, Alberta Views Magazine, April 2007.
2. "Boots on the Ground," by Bill Robinson, The Polaris Institute, Ottawa.
3. Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission; Senate Committee on National Security and Defence report; February 2007.
4. Globe and Mail, April 23-30, 2007.
5. Edmonton Journal, May 10, 2007.
6. "Doing it the Dutch Way in Afghanistan," Globe and Mail, December 2, 2006
7. "Briefing on the Situation in Afghanistan," Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade by Ernie Rehr, Project Ploughshares, Waterloo, Ontario. November 8, 2006
8. Senlis Institute: <http://www.senliscouncil.net/documents/> see: Hearts and Minds Report, 12/06.

### **BIO: 2007**

Patricia (Patti) Hartnagel  
12203 39 Avenue Edmonton AB T6J ON1 (780) 435-7051  
phartnagel@shaw.ca

#### Education:

- B.A. Sociology; Indiana University 1965.
- B.S.W. (Social Work) University of Calgary 1976

#### Activism:

For the past 30+ years, I have been actively engaged in a variety of social justice activities focusing primarily on peace issues. I have worked as a volunteer with a number of local Edmonton organizations over the years (Project Ploughshares, Edmonton Coalition to End War and Racism, founding member of Women in Black, Edm and have served on national committees of Project Ploughshares (Waterloo, Ont), Canadian Friends (Quaker) Service Committee (Toronto, Ont) and the Quaker International Affairs Programme (Ottawa, Ont). A lot of my initiatives, however, are “freelance” in terms of organizing events, giving presentations, university lectures, etc.

Awards:

The Queen’s Jubilee Medal for Service to Canada (2003)

Province of Alberta’s Centennial Medal (2005)

The Salvos Prelentzos Peace Award (as an individual) (2000)

The Salvos Prelentzos Peace Award (as a founding member of Women in Black) (2006) <http://members.shaw.ca/womeninblack>

My other life:

I am a potter specializing in Raku fired pottery, a senior artist with the Alberta Craft Council and currently serving on their board. [www.albertacraft.ab.ca/pattihartnagel](http://www.albertacraft.ab.ca/pattihartnagel)

The highlight of my life is being a grandmother – to Lauren (9) and Eric (5 ½).