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President's Message

REFLECTIONS ON REMEMBRANCE DAY, 2009



As the clock on Toronto's Old City Hall boomed out the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 2009, a much larger crowd than in previous years gathered in front of the cenotaph to watch the parade, listen to speeches, join in singing, and observe the laying of many wreaths.

Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, The Right Honourable David Onley remarked on the fact that the number of people coming to observe Remembrance Day ceremonies had increased steadily in recent years, as Canada's involvement in Afghanistan has made people much more aware of the significance of the ceremonies in which the country honours those who have fought to defend its values.

The awareness of the sacrifices made by those men and women who are now serving in Afghanistan has also cast our thoughts back to those who served long before in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, Bosnia, and other places. Their contributions have become much more real.



A number of young people have told me that they have suddenly realized that the elderly veterans who march in Remembrance Day Parades and all the people whose names are engraved on cenotaphs and memorials all around the country, were mostly young men and women when they served in the wars, just like the young men

and women whose photos we see in the media today when there has been another death or severe injury in Afghanistan. It has made them see their grandparents and their elderly neighbours in a very different light.

Even the discussion on why international forces are in Afghanistan has made people more aware of the values and the lives that Canadian troops have defended through the years. It has made them more appreciative of the sacrifices made by so many in the past. It has ignited in many a conscious wish to pay tribute to those who have made the sacrifices. We see this in the people who line the overpasses on the Highway of Heroes to honour our fallen soldiers, and in the increased attendance at Remembrance Day ceremonies.



FAREWELLS

The one down-side of working with interns is that we keep having to say good-bye. They become an integral part of our team, and then their time comes to an end. And so we have said good-bye to our summer interns **Tanya Branitska**, **Christopher Birks**, and **Kyla Cham**. All three have returned to their respective schools. Chris returned to St. Andrews in Scotland, but expects to drop in when he is home in Toronto for Christmas and New Year. We were happy to see **Kyla** again at the Gala and at the Fall Conference in Ottawa, where she provided her usual capable assistance. Those of us who attended the ATA Assembly in Kyiv also had the pleasure of meeting **Tanya** again. She took great pride in welcoming us to her country and enjoyed being with ACC members again.

In Kyiv, we also had the opportunity to meet **Guillaume Couture** again. He spent a week in the ACC office in July before going to Kyiv to assist the Atlantic Council of Ukraine with the organization of the ATA Assembly. He is now back in Montreal preparing to continue with graduate studies. Look for his report on his experiences in our next issue.

Abdiasis Mohamed finished his term as an intern, and is now preparing to go to the UK to work there with his brother. We wish him a good trip and much success.

Saying good-bye to **Elaine Kanasewich** was a mixed pleasure. We were sorry to see her go, and we miss her presence in the office very much, but we are all pleased that she obtained the position as Strategic Analyst, Director of Defence Force Planning she was hoping for and has started her career with the Department of National Defence. Congratulations, Elaine! She is still helping us in her spare time. You will be able to read her continuing contributions to In Focus, and she provided a lot of practical assistance with the preparations for the Fall Conference in Ottawa.

Comings and Goings in the Office

Clara Wong recently graduated with a Honours bilingual (English, French) B.A., in International Studies and Communications from Glendon College, York University. She joined the ACC as an intern this October after participating in the ACC 2009 NATO Study Tour. Clara looks forward to further developing her organizational skills by assisting with the upcoming events, conferences and roundtables as well as contributing to ACC publications. Her interests in political affairs stems from both her experience moving between Hong Kong, Toronto and Beijing and her active involvement in Model United Nations. Born in Hong Kong, P.R.C., Clara is proficient in English, Cantonese, Mandarin and French.

She can be reached at Clara.HK.Wong@gmail.com.





Tetiana Branitska is a Bachelor of Arts student at the University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Kyiv, Ukraine where she is majoring in Sociology (with a focus in social movements and political sociology) and a minor in Public Relations (with a specific focus on special event organizing and media relations). She joined the ACC as an international intern, and was with us for the month of August. In the past, Tetiana led extensive research projects concerning the adaptation of people of different religious confessions in her native Ukraine; the current political situation in Ukraine and the perspectives of further development; focus group research for a publication house; and various marketing studies for the Ukraine division of Belgium-based beer producer Sun InBev. In her minor thesis Tetiana investigated the development of the twentieth century social movements that redrew the political map of the world. She was also involved in a number of event-planning and image-making projects as well as an internship in a PR agency specializing in connections with the media. She started her fourth year of University this fall and also worked on the organizing committee for the ATA General Assembly in October.

Jonathan Preece graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University before going on to complete his M.A. at Queen's University with a focus in international relations and Canadian foreign policy. He joined the ACC as an intern this September after first being introduced to the business of Atlantic Treaty Association through his participation in the 2008 Transatlantic Crisis Simulation held in Otzenhausen, Germany. Jonathan is looking forward to gaining valuable work experience with the ACC by continuing to contribute to ACC publications and assisting with the organization of upcoming events. In October he also got the chance to go to Kyiv and represent the ACC at the 55th General Assembly. Jonathan sees the ACC internship program as offering a privileged opportunity to build on past research interests while exploring future career and educational options. What is more, this position provides valuable insight into the workings of a NGO at the forefront of a number of pressing issues facing Canada as well as the international community as a whole.



Tahera Qurban Ali graduated from York University with a B.A. Honors (Political Science). She completed courses in International Law, Public Law, Diplomacy, Canadian Public policy, Canadian and U.S Foreign and Defense Policy, Canada and World Affairs, also studied Canadian Government and Politics and U.S Government and Politics. She is fluent in 3 languages- oral and written expression in Dari, Farsi and English, has travelled to more than 20 countries, thus became familiar to the customary and cultural practices of all these nations. she contributed as a speaker and observer to the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association Conference and to the Atlantic Treaty Association Conference in Kyiv, Ukraine. Please Google her name to read the ATA/YATA comments about her contribution to the conference. She has contributed to many conferences such as The Public Affairs of Canada in November 2009 and Doctors Against Anti-Semitic Racism at the University of Toronto on October 18th. Her interests are volunteer activities in the areas of democratic development and human rights/law; education and health care (most specifically women); third world issues and global issues and encouraging diversity and multiculturalism. Tahera enjoys working with the positive and diversified environment that the Atlantic Council of Canada offers. She hopes to contribute to this amazing team and organization by sharing her experience and insight with the ACC.

Aida Abdurahman graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in Sociology. Her academic interests at York University were human rights and race relations encouraging her to be a human rights activist. Aida joined the Atlantic Council of Canada as an Intern Administrative Assistant as part of a six month internship program supported by Toronto Community Housing Corporation. She hopes to gain a better understanding of the ACC and NATO during her time spent here. Aida appreciates this opportunity and will use this intern as a learning experience where she can gain new skills. Upon completing this intern, she plans to pursue her Master's Degree in Social Work. Aida looks forward to working with the council and contributing to the activities presented.



ACC Annual General Meeting

Author: Elaine Kanasewich

On Monday August 31, 2009, The Atlantic Council of Canada held its annual general meeting (AGM). The evening gave ACC member's a chance to hear all about the events put on by the ACC in the year prior, as well as to participate in the financial transparency and accountability process befitting all organizations devoted to good governance and economic responsibility. Consequently, Julie Lindhout, ACC President, delivered an in-depth report of all ACC events and happenings throughout the 2008 season, including impressively naming off all of the interns who passed through the offices in 2008, early 2009.

ACC treasurer Jeff Young followed with his own formal dissections of the ACC's financials, giving members a sound accounting of where ACC funds flow from and how they are spent. In all, the formal presentations depicted an ACC which continues to grow with each year, with the prospect of only further growth in the years to come. Three new directors; Mr. James Baillie, Mr. Patrick Curtis and Mr. Robert Zeidler were also elected.

The evenings formalities were then broken with the vivid and captivating presentation by the evenings guest speaker, LCol. John Conrad, a Canadian Forces Combat Logistics Officer and author of *What the Thunder Said*. Col. Conrad took ACC members on a journey with words, reading from his book which retraced his experience in Afghanistan as a logistician struggling

to re-supply his soldiers through personnel shortages, brazen Taliban attacks and war-weary soldiers. His presentation helped re-enforce Canada's pride in its armed forces and its personnel, but also gave us a chance to reflect on our current and future role in Afghanistan.

The evening ended with a lively reception in the ACC's new office on the seventh floor. Although small, the office proved the perfect venue for members, directors, interns and ACC followers to mingle and chat over wine and cheese, putting a final stamp on another successful year at the Atlantic Council of Canada.

A Tour of Afghanistan: Looking Through the Eyes of NATO Opinion Leaders

ACC Roundtable with Col (Ret'd) Brian S. MacDonald

Author: Jonathan Preece

On October 15 the Atlantic Council of Canada held a public roundtable in which Col. (Ret'd) Brian S. MacDonald spoke on his experience during a recent tour of Afghanistan. Col. MacDonald had the opportunity to travel to Kabul as well as two regional commands in the South and West of Afghanistan as part of a group of opinion leaders organized by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division. During this roundtable discussion Col. MacDonald shared some of his first hand insight on the progress being made in Afghanistan and the challenges facing ISAF forces moving forward.

To begin, Col. MacDonald posited 4 basic observations from his experience in Afghanistan as well as his discussions with ISAF forces and local Afghans. First, he stressed the point that the Afghan population as a whole is weary from years of war and oppression, and desperately wants an end to the current conflict. Second, despite public skepticism, the overwhelming majority of the Afghan population does not want a return to Taliban rule. Related to this point, Col. MacDonald also found that there is widespread support for a continued ISAF presence in Afghanistan until the point when a stable and legitimate Afghan government will emerge. Finally, with all these points taken

together, our speaker expressed that there is a genuine fear among Afghans that ISAF forces will withdraw before the necessary conditions for peace and stability have been created. From this juncture, the media's role in influencing public opinion was touched upon, and it was argued that while there have been setbacks and tribulations surrounding development, security and governance in Afghanistan, there are also notable areas displaying signs of progress.

To be fair, there are legitimate challenges that have hampered efforts in Afghanistan: the existence of government fraud as highlighted by the national elections held in August, the over tasked and under trained Afghan



National Police Force (ANP), and the inconsistent and disjointed efforts of aid agencies working in Afghanistan. However what is often lost in the shuffle of daily headlines is the real and measured progress that is taking place on the ground.

For example, in regards to Afghan development, Col. MacDonald emphasized the success that provincial reconstruction teams are having in initiating a number of short-term development projects that not only provide a source of local employment but also effectively drain local insurgent recruitment pools. On the security front, Col. MacDonald observed that while there are serious deficiencies in the ANP, there is much to be learned from the success that the Afghan National Army has had in recruitment and training as well as gaining legitimacy in the eyes of Afghan citizens. In assessing the emergence of a stable and legitimate Afghan government, MacDonald argued that despite the highly publicized controversy surrounding the recent elections, not all trends are negative. For example, some areas of the Afghan government such as the Department of Rural Development have made great strides toward transparent and democratic governance thus serving as a model for the rest of the Afghan civil service.

As Canada's role in Afghanistan continues to gain attention as a national policy issue and the topic of withdrawal edges onto the agendas of other NATO states, Col. MacDonald stressed the importance of balancing the negative with the positive. As is the case in other NATO countries, the dominant discourse within Canadian media is one of skepticism and negativity. However, it is critically important to recognize positive trends in development, security

and governance, and to be cognizant of the vital contributions made by ISAF forces towards lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. Canada has played an essential role in the ISAF mission thus far. In order to appropriately determine Canada's role moving forward, there must be an awareness not only of the challenges and obstacles that lie ahead, but also the success and progress that is being made on the ground.

2009 Danish Atlantic Youth Seminar

Author: Elaine Kanasewich



Hello from DAYS

From July 6 to 11th, I traveled to Aalborg, Denmark to participate in the 2009 Danish Atlantic Youth Seminar, more cheerfully referred to as DAYS. The week long affair has been hosted by the Danish Atlantic Treaty Association for more than 20 years, and it showed no signs of running out of relevance. The first thing that struck me was the brilliance of bringing together young delegates from all over Europe, North America and the Caucasus to discuss often controversial and contentious issues related to NATO, its missions and expansion. Who would have thought that mixing such a diverse group of people, some from rival countries, would lead to fruitful discussions and positive confidence building? This was indeed what came out of this conference, and it was

not only the by-product of being on a secure military base where there was no escaping from. Instead, this constructive dialogue and budding friendships grew out of a well-crafted conference which began with 4 days of presentations given by top-level diplomats, scholars and representatives from NATO.

Professor Christopher Coker from the London School of Economics and Political Science gave a frank presentation on the future challenges facing the North Atlantic region. His main argument was that globalization created a diffuse risk environment, which in turn, has forced NATO to multitask, operate "out of area", and now soul search for a new direction. Mr. Mark Draper, political affairs officer in the American Embassy in Copenhagen followed with his own discussion on the new Obama administration's approach to NATO. He spoke of a sequence where the new president would first evaluate the situation, both at home and abroad, and then take appropriate actions given the circumstances. Mr. James Sherr, Head of the Russia and Eurasia programme at Chatham House spoke of his observations regarding Russia. In principle, he spoke of a Russia which once again feels strong and is hence using rhetoric which demands for it to be taken seriously. H.E. Per Carlson, the Danish Ambassador to Russia, appropriately followed-suit, providing us with an insiders perspective on Russia. He discussed how democracy is beginning to sprout throughout Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, but that it remains fragile. This presentation was fittingly followed by Mr. William Boe from the European Commission. Drawing from his own personnel experience in Kosovo, he too cautioned that progress is being made in the Balkans, but whenever ethnic tensions are involved, the



situation requires persistent and dedicated diplomacy.

The second to last speaker was Mr. Thierry Legendre, Policy Officer in the Office of the NATO Secretary General. Mr. Legendre engaged us with a timely discussion on how the events of the past 10 years shaped NATO and its current drive towards crafting a new Strategic Concept. Mr. Selim Percinel, a consultant and writer, concluded the first four days of presentations. He spoke of the current situation in the Caucasus. He enlightened us on how years of ethnic, cultural and historical tensions left the region in constant limbo between war and peace and hence, ripe for new and innovative diplomacy. Mr. Percinel's presentation not only shed light on a region which is often overlooked, but most importantly, provided the perfect introduction to the week's second "raison d'être" – the crisis simulation.



Us at the northern most point of Denmark

Indeed, none of these presentations were done in vain, for now it was our turn to take what we learned and to put it to practice. We were each assigned a country or organization. The scenario was a crisis in the Caucasus and now, playing our assigned roles, we were to avert war and even attempt to make peace. As the American Ambassador to NATO, I had mostly a reactive role, which enabled me to observe the game more closely. My conclusion was that in the heat of crisis, it is critical for cool heads

to prevail. Despite merely acting in a simulation exercise, tensions quickly arose between candidates, which often hindered critical discussion and objective analysis. But in the end, it was perhaps the best lesson we all learned, as passion can never really be extracted from a situation. So experiencing it first hand and then learning how to use it constructively was, for me, the greatest lesson I took from this exercise.



Dinning amongst the Viking Gravestones

Last but not least, I must mention some of the wonderful social activities we got to experience, starting with the "skydiving simulation." Although we did not jump from a plane, we prepared for it by taking advantage of the air bases 20 metre training tower. Next stop, 15,000 feet! There were also numerous cultural excursions which began with us sculling a pint of Danish beer in the tombs of the secret society of the Guild of Christian IV. We then dined amongst the burial grounds of Vikings, and dipped our toes in the Northern most part of Denmark where the Baltic and the North Sea meet. This, of course, in between bouts of signing and dancing, which often took place for better or worse. In all, I came away from this experience with a greater insight into global diplomacy, a new appreciation for the Caucasus and their potential for pitfalls or growth, as well as a new love for the country of hogs and wind turbines – Denmark.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Julie Lindhout and the executive

committee for financing my trip, as well as the organizers of DAYS who made it a trip to remember.



Participants from the Simulation Exercise. Iran and USA getting along!

Ukraine-NATO, when will the door finally open?

Author: Tetiana Branitska

From the moment it gained independence, Ukraine has proclaimed its intention to establish close cooperation with NATO. This attitude soon led to another milestone in the Ukraine-NATO relationship - Ukraine declaring its desire to join the Alliance. Between 1991-2009 Ukrainian diplomats attended a number of NATO meetings, summits and conferences, while Ukrainian soldiers and doctors have been engaged in NATO operations as peacekeepers. Over the last decade, Ukraine's economic, judicial, military and political systems have gone through a series of reforms. Some of these changes were made with the purpose of preparing Ukraine for NATO membership. However, Ukraine's membership appears to remain a long-term goal which will take years to attain. What are the problems that keep Ukraine from joining the Alliance and what are the perspectives of Ukraine-NATO relations?



There are several matters to look into. On the dawn of its sovereignty, Ukraine had to face a heavy economic downturn. For more than 75 years, Ukraine's economy was tightly bound to the economies of other Soviet republics while being further controlled by the state, based on regulations coming from Moscow. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the newly independent former Soviet Republics had to create new regulations to support their economies. Some spheres of production became incongruous with the needs of the state whilst others needed state financial aid because of low market compatibility. However, Ukrainian authorities failed to react to the circumstances with proper speed and firmness: this caused Ukraine to suffer a long-term period of economic transformation before it finally began recovering.

Before you start playing any kind of game, you must take care to learn the rules. When Ukraine was established as a sovereign state, it was still using the old Soviet legislative base. The old Union laws did not fit the new unitary system of the state, hence allowing for a number of gaps in the legislature. How can you play the game without the rules? Well, you can make your own rules. Who is to control you? No one, because no one knows what is right and what is wrong. This is exactly what happened in Ukraine. While most of the population was overcoming a state of total confusion using the old legitimized ways of interaction, some people used such circumstance to build their way to money and power. More importantly, most Ukrainian's had no care for the police or the army, since both institutions were unaware of whom they should obey and how they should act.

Legislative gaps allowed corruption to flourish on every level of the social system. At the same time, corruption was also prevalent in many spheres of the Soviet Union, but the difference was that in the Soviet era, corruption was not as obvious and striking. Though ever since 2005, the word "corruption" became one of the most widely used in the Ukrainian media. Following President Viktor Yushchenko's appointment of a new government, its Ministers proclaimed a war on corruption. It can be said that a lot has changed since then, including an on-going battle to eliminate the immunity clause which allows deputies to avoid prosecution. Nevertheless, large-scale organized crime in Ukraine has yet to be addressed.

There has been no other political power in Ukraine other than the Communist Party for more than half a century. An entire generation was raised knowing nothing but the "holy" Manifest of the Communist Party. Following the collapse of the totalitarian Communist rule, Communists remained the most influential in the political stream. Some politicians claimed to be non-party deputies, but they were unable to create any significant political group that would influence state policies and compete with the Communists; there was only a very small opposition to communists, consisting mostly of national-democratic parties. Therefore, when quick and crucial decisions needed to be made, Ukraine's old political structure was willing to preserve the former state of things. In time, new parties were formed, however they did not follow any ideological base with great vigor. Most of these parties consisted of groups headed by opinion leaders, not professionals, who were incapable of implementing any large-scale decisions or changes.

Another prominent characteristic shared by many Ukrainian authorities was an apparent lack of real concern or interest for the States' actual well-being compared to the interest of their own private affairs. By having immunity from prosecution, deputies frequently conducted business which violated other people's rights, knowing that the law and the mandate of a Supreme Council deputy will protect them from any kind of responsibility. As a result, Ukrainian authorities became increasingly corrupt.



Left to right: ex-Speaker of the Supreme Council of Ukraine AYatsenyuk, the President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko, the Prime-minister of Ukraine Y. Tymoshenko

Since the 1990's, Ukraine has recovered a lot. Although the economic downturn, which hit the world in 2008, did significantly affect Ukraine's economy, it is still not as bad as it was in the 1990's. Ukrainian politics have gone through a number of rotations, unions and dissidences. The continued infusion of fresh blood among the authorities made the implementation of reforms and transformations increasingly impossible. Ukrainian legislature has been changed, and continues to undergo further transformations. The same concerns affect the Ukrainian army, which has altered both its size and qualitative contents. Ukraine meets the basic requirements for NATO membership. So, why is Ukraine not given NATO membership? It seems, Ukraine still has some problems, other than those in economy and legislature, to deal with before becoming a member of an international organization;



a demand that its members settle all disputes and shortcomings in every one of its political, economic, social and defense spheres prior to accession.

One of the reasons for this is quite obvious: between 1991 and 2009, Ukraine has had 17 Prime Ministers, which means having a new PM almost annually. In addition, clashes between political opponents and fights in the Supreme Council, resulting in an emotional rather than rational decision-making process. Hence, making Ukraine a state of questionable political stability. On January 11, 2008, President Viktor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and the Speaker of the Supreme Council Arsenij Yatsenyuk signed a letter addressed to the then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer proclaiming Ukraine's strong will to join NATO and asking for the Membership Action Plan. On November 12, the Supreme Council voted for Yatsenyuk's dismissal from the post of Speaker. The dismissal was initiated and supported by the Head of the Secretariat of the President and pro-Presidential deputies. Later, Yushchenko claimed that he was not aware of the decision made by his inferiors. However, the President was strongly criticized by Tymoshenko. This incident is a vivid example of the confusion which remains rampant in Ukrainian politics. Thus, it can be understood why any prospective partner with Ukraine, including NATO but also others such as the European Union, expect Ukrainian authorities to find a common language amongst themselves before entering into any kind of cooperation with it.

Another problem with Ukraine's NATO membership bid was

highlighted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel when she stated that the Ukrainian people themselves do not show much enthusiasm towards joining NATO. This is a fact which has been supported by a number of social surveys. Why is public opinion of NATO so low in Ukraine?



Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel

First of all, good old Soviet propaganda, which even today still forms the basis of the worldviews of many Ukrainians. You can still hear melancholic-nostalgic phrases about the unity of the Slavic sibling states of Russia –“the oldest sister” – and its two younger sisters – Ukraine and Belarus. Sometimes, people even interpret Ukraine-NATO relations as NATO's will to weaken Russia. The real question, however, is: why do Ukrainians appear to put Russia's interests above their own? A survey carried out by the Razumkov centre in December 2008 showed that 48.2% of people surveyed of the Ukrainian population considered NATO to be an aggressive military block. Another survey showed that 30.9% of respondents believed that NATO was a threat to Ukraine's safety. Presumably, these views originated from the hostile Soviet attitude towards NATO which depicted it as an aggressive block which threatened the Soviet Union. Another 27.7% of those who opposed the perspective of Ukraine's joining NATO said they would support this decision if Russia was to join the block as well. Clearly, many Ukrainians retain the old ideological settings even after 20 years of state sovereignty.

The situation is not entirely hopeless, much of the Ukrainian population believe that Ukraine-Russia military cooperation is much stronger than that of Ukraine-NATO. In 2001, for example, there were over 600 Ukraine-NATO events as opposed to only 52 Ukraine-Russia ones. This example presents a clear depiction of how the population remains unaware of what is really going on and what NATO is all about. In a survey carried out in 2008, only 5.4% of respondents stated that they had a high level of awareness on NATO; 33.6% considered their level to be medium and 46.8% said their level was low. This raises two questions: How can one expect people to support the decision of Ukraine joining NATO if most Ukrainians do not even know what NATO is? Moreover, how can Ukraine hold a national referendum on the question of joining NATO if most people do not even know what NATO membership means?

What is necessary is a major informational campaign which will give the population an objective and an unbiased view of NATO. 49.9% of people surveyed said they were interested in getting information about NATO and its projects. However, there are 38.6%, who said they still do not care about any information. It can be presumed that these people oppose joining NATO and react negatively to any way the topic in broached. How can unbiased information be passed on to this segment of the population? The same way as it will be given to those people who are willing to receive it; only with a more delicate approach which will not make them think that the information they are receiving is aimed at making them “like” NATO.



The informational campaign launched by Viktor Yushchenko was not effective because it was strongly aimed at the “necessity” to join NATO, rather than giving simple and clear information about NATO and its benefits. The results of the campaign were also affected by different negative economic and political processes that took place at the same time as the campaign. The population expected that the President would first of all concern himself with the economy and the material well-being of the people, and then turn to NATO issues. Instead, there was a campaign praising NATO and EU, without any significant improvements in the economic situation. In principle, this situation created a negative image for the President and, consequently, the topic of NATO membership shared this negative brand. We can assume that after the upcoming presidential elections in January 2010 and the rotations in the government that will follow, the ice of public attitude towards NATO may thaw.



Another critical point in this debate is Russia’s own policies towards NATO and Ukraine. Russia still has influence over the decisions of both Ukraine and NATO. Ukraine tries to save its neighborliness with Russia and as a result, has to pay attention to how Russia reacts to different turns in Ukrainian foreign affairs. Additionally, Russian media channels drastically influence Ukrainian media to this day. Strong criticisms of Ukrainian authorities by Russian politics can make

pro-Russian Ukrainians (mostly representatives of the Russian national minority) protest against government policies. The point is that Russia influences Ukrainian policies and politicians both directly (through building foreign policy) and indirectly (by influencing people through media channels), which doubles the importance of Ukraine-Russia relations. It can be said that Russia’s strong opposition to Ukraine joining NATO is the chief reason why Ukrainians resist NATO membership. However, Russia’s hostile attitude can also help promote NATO in Ukraine.

In February 2008 Putin claimed that if Ukraine joined NATO and placed anti-missile systems on its territory (even though this would contradict the Ukrainian Constitution), Russia would aim its nuclear missiles at Ukraine. This threat drew the attention of even the most indifferent Ukrainians. By proclaiming the use of its military power against Ukraine, Russia risks losing the image of Ukraine’s “big sister” and close partner, this could lead many to believe that Ukraine needs NATO support against an aggressive Russia. Thus while becoming slowly estranged from Russia, Ukrainians continue the search for a reliable partner which could guarantee their security. At this point, Russia’s extreme anti-NATO position makes Ukrainians pro-NATO.

The final part of this story began in 2001. Three major events occurred in this year: first, the tragedy of September 11; second, the beginning of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan; third, the foundation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Regarding the latter, the SCO united China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as members of a cooperative body

while further engaging such states as India, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Belarus as observers and dialogue partners. This union makes an impressive ring on the world map, while further drawing on a large monopoly of the world’s energy resources. However, the picture is not complete without Afghanistan, which is standing geographically in the middle. For this reason, the SCO members would be glad to have Afghanistan as either a partner or a member. Still, there’s one small “but” in this situation the current situation in Afghanistan. The ISAF mission members are equal competitors for the investigation and development of Afghani oil fields, which does not suit SCO. This means that SCO members are prepared to fight for their dominance in the region. The Afghan President Hamid Karzai has already visited SCO meetings and Moscow on a number of occasions, even speaking about partnership and mutual benefits of SCO membership.

However, apart from a political level, Russia has another powerful influence in Afghanistan. In order to provide resource delivery to the soldiers in Afghanistan, ISAF needs Russian airspace and military bases on the territories of the former Soviet republics which are still notably influenced by Russia. This means that if NATO-Russia relations become sour, ISAF might fail militarily, politically and economically (since its member countries would lose the privilege of investing in the Afghan economy). This therefore requires NATO to be very careful on the topics which concern relations with Russia, including Ukraine’s membership.

Ukraine will probably have to wait for the Membership Action Plan until the situations in Afghanistan and the public perception of NATO inside Ukraine improves. But there is also another question to be answered: can Ukraine join NATO by itself? All the previous



enlargements involved at least 2 countries. Until now, Ukraine also had a partner – Georgia. However, the Russia-Georgia conflict of 2008 put Georgia in quite a difficult situation. Today, a considerable number of Georgia's population mostly of Russian and Ossetian ethnic origin claim to have an autonomous state within Georgia's territory. This presents Georgia with a number of obstacles in its search for Alliance membership.



First, this means that Georgia has interior problems concerning territorial divisions and minority rights. Second, the conflict begged the question of Georgia's ability to use diplomatic versus military means for conflict prevention. On the other hand, there is a question of why the conflict occurred in the first place. One widely acceptable explanation is that if Ukraine and Georgia were both to join NATO at once, Russia would lose a significant share of its influence on the former Union territories, which might force it to take action to preserve its authority by exercising certain means of influence preservation in both regions. Ukraine, for instance, has a greater capacity for public discussion, thus media channels are said to be used in order to draw the anti-NATO messages into Ukrainian media space resulting in negative public opinion. In Georgia's case, because it had several minor economic disagreements with Russia, Georgian media was largely isolating Russian channels, getting in the way of Russia's potential influence. In addition, with Georgia's unstable social situation,

many argue that Russia was able to provoke the conflict in aims of preventing Georgia's progress towards NATO.

Today, the main influence which may alter the future of Ukraine-NATO relations are the presidential elections in Ukraine in January 2010. No matter who gets elected, Ukraine is most likely to continue its rapprochement to NATO, but the President might either accelerate or slow down the potential accession process. NATO is also not expected to be inviting any new states for memberships until the mission in Afghanistan is complete. Either way, Ukraine and NATO will continue its close relationship through joint military exercises and events. The story of Ukraine-NATO relations is extensive and complicated, but hopefully it is destined to have a happy ending... or rather a happy start.

Crash Course in Negotiation: Afghanistan and Crisis Management.

Report from the 3rd International Crisis Management Simulation at Queens

Author: Robert Baines

“Such exercises are invaluable, not necessarily for gaining a better understanding of a given situation, but rather for develop-

ing Afghanistan should be divided into at least two separate states based on ethnic composition and the southern most state should be allowed to revert to a strict Taliban-style government. That is, apparently, one of the conclusions to be drawn from the 3rd *International Crisis Management Simulation: Stabilizing Afghanistan.*

From the 12th to the 17th of July, I participated in the Crisis Management Simulation at Queen's University in Kingston. It was designed for Canadian and European MA students interested in international relations. The program was a result of collaboration between the Queen's Centre for International Relations and Heidelberg University in Germany with funding from the Canadian Department of National Defence, NATO, the Atlantic Treaty Association and the Atlantic Council of Canada. Before this summer, I had never been to a model NATO or model UN simulation and in the past I always associated them with high school International Relations clubs or small groups of over-stimulated students 'playing grown-ups'. After experiencing a simulation first hand, I now think that such exercises are invaluable, not necessarily for gaining a better understanding of a given situation, but rather for developing negotiation skills.

Before the simulation commenced, participants were given extensive briefings from experts on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and visited the Peace Support Training Centre at CFB Kingston. We also had a chance to hear from Troels Frøling, Secretary General of the Atlantic Treaty Association as well as H.E. Jawad Ludin, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Canada, and H.E. Mathias Hopfner, Ambassador of Germany to Canada.

As mentioned above, an interesting result of our simulation was that Afghanistan ended up being split down ethnic lines where Pashtun and Tajik divided the country. Similar echos of this divide have been playing themselves out between President Karzai and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, the recent challenger to the President in the Afghan election. The result of



this divide essentially left the Taliban in control of a legitimate government in the south that requested the maintenance of ISAF and operation Enduring Freedom with an understanding that both operations would eventually be withdrawn from the new state. When the simulation was terminated, ISAF was in the midst of setting up a military free zone in northeast Afghanistan to separate the undisciplined forces of the two new states.

The level of play was quite complex and as the occurrences of the simulation were rather far-fetched I imagine that the organizers, Professors Peter Schmidt and Peter Trummer got less out of it than they had hoped. Despite this, the student participants, informally polled over pints, decided that the experience was invaluable in developing interpersonal and negotiation skills. These are not always easy to hone in an atmosphere such as that in Canada where confrontation is not a very prominent part of our university system. I am convinced that this kind of simulation is one of the only arenas where participants can practice how to reconcile various opposing views with tact and consultation under a relatively high level of stress.

I would like to thank Julie Lindhout and the Atlantic Council of Canada for enabling me to join this simulation and meet so many interesting and engaging students while honing my own skills.

Atlantic Council of Canada Presents: A Roundtable with Dr. Brooke Smith-Windsor, Senior Canadian Representative, NATO Defense College, Rome

Author: Lucy Leiderman

On Tuesday, June 2nd, the Atlantic Council of Canada was proud to welcome Dr. Brooke Smith-Windsor to talk to our members and guests about the NATO Defense College based in Rome, Italy.

Dr. Smith-Windsor highlighted the college's history, from its conception in Paris to the move to Italy and the attainment of its current location in Rome, through the donation of the Italian government. The NATO defense college is the flagship academic institution of the allies, and allows for the training of senior officials for larger roles within NATO and the vast spectrum of security issues in the 21st century. In 2001, the College celebrated its 25th anniversary.

At the NATO Defence College, numerous departments interact to form one of the foremost academic resources on policy and research for NATO and member countries. Areas such as Academic Planning and Policy, Academic Operations, and Research all come together to form the inner workings of the College.

Today, as Dr. Smith-Windsor noted, the goals of the College are mainly to develop its role as a major epicentre of education, study and research on transatlantic security issues. The College also seeks to develop liaisons with external institutions in a bid to enhance its educational function, and diversify

the target audience in order to reach more civilian officials.

During his talk, Dr. Smith-Windsor outlined the Defense College's work, which includes bringing together diplomats and officers from various ally and candidate states to work together during short-term courses within the college. Other work includes various educational programs, and research on security issues as well as policy. The College also hosts seminars and produces numerous publications that include research papers, monographs, essays and seminar reports

*"I hope I've planted some seeds
of interest today."*

Though the Canadian presence at the NATO Defense College may be sparse, Dr. Smith-Windsor outlined optimism and opportunities for greater Canadian participation in the future. Outlining such programs as the internships available at the College for all nationals of member states (more information listed on the website below), he stated, "I hope I've planted some seeds of interest today."

The Atlantic Council of Canada would like to thank all those who attended the round table and a special thanks to Dr. Brooke Smith-Windsor for his enthusiastic portrayal of the NATO Defense College.

He encourages all those who have any questions about the college to contact him at:

E-mail: b.smith-windsor@ndc.nato.int

Tel: +39 06 505 25 218

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More information about the NATO Defense College or Career Opportunities/Internships may be found at:

www.nce.nato.int



European Union energy dependency

Author: Yigit Ozdemir

ABSTRACT: Une des grandes faiblesses de l'Europe est sa dépendance croissante en matière énergétique, faiblesse que l'on a pu mesurer à l'occasion du renchérissement des hydrocarbures provoqué à partir de 2004 par la conjonction de la crise au Moyen-Orient et de la demande croissante en Chine. La question des choix énergétiques à faire pour l'avenir devient une question importante pour tous les États-membres de l'Union européenne.

The first energy importer in the world

The EU, as the largest energy importer in the world, consumes around 16% of total world energy production. Between 1994 and 2005, European energy dependency rate increased from 43% to 50.5% (Eurostat 2007).

Hydrocarbons such as oil and gas, representing 61% of European total energy consumption, must for the most part be imported.

The only European oil and gas fields in the North Sea region provide a quarter of all oil and half of all gas in Europe. But these energy reserves are limited with estimates indicating a depletion of North Sea hydrocarbons by 2025. At that point, European countries will be forced to import all oil and gas from further and more geopolitically sensitive regions like Russia, and Middle Eastern or Central Asian states. As European countries import more and more coal, the European energy dependency rate could reach 80% in 2030.

European energy consumption continues to increase in spite of measures to save energy. Between 1990 and 2005, energy consumption rose 10 % for all EU 27 countries. In the post-Soviet bloc period, energy consumption fell 20% for the post Soviet European member countries, but increased 15% for EU 15 countries. In the Southern European countries, energy consumption rose more rapidly, reaching 67 % in Spain and 79% in Portugal; the consequence of economic progress and modernization. For new EU members, energy consumption will inevitably rise rapidly as a result of economic progress. The transport sector has become the primary energy consumption sector in the EU countries, while between 1994 and 2005, demand for oil in Europe increased 900 millions tons. This growth was spectacular for Central and South European countries: +50% in Spain, +55% in Portugal and +90% in Czech Republic (between 1994 and 2005).

However, for all EU countries, natural gas consumption has been increasing more rapidly and represents around a quarter of total energy consumption in Europe. The import of gas for domestic use and electricity production doubled between 1994 and 2005. This evolution has contributed to a marked increase in European energy dependence. Facing this evolution, Europe's priority is to develop a common policy concerning energy supplies like Russia. Because of energy production and consumption inequalities inside EU and diversity of political choices influenced by economic, geopolitical or environmental sensibilities it seems difficult to implement this common policy in the EU.

Different policies according to countries

In the majority of EU countries, fossil fuels (coal, lignite and hydrocarbons) are supplying three quarters of European energy. But in Europe, only 6 countries possess coal and lignite fields. Converted into electricity, these energy resources allow for a reduction in energy imports. Poland is an important coal producer in Europe whereas Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece are lignite producers. Lastly, Estonia is the only big oil shale producer in Europe. In Germany, coal and oil shale constitute half of that state's energy production. But after German reunification, coal has become less and less viable as a source of energy. More than half of Europe's coal energy—consumed by thermal power stations—must be imported from Poland. Hydrocarbons are arguably the most important source of energy for the EU: for half of the 27 EU states, it represents more than 50% of total energy consumption.

Disturbingly, only four European countries (UK, Netherland, Denmark and Norway) are self-sufficient or exporting an important part of their production. In all other European states, domestic production provides only a small part of nation consumption. Thus, Southern European states (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece), Ireland, Belgium and Luxembourg have to import more than three quarters of their energy needs.

The contrast between West and East European countries must be emphasized. Contrary to ex-communist states, in almost all West European states (excluding France, Norway and Sweden) oil is the primary source of energy. In Western Europe, the trend is to reduce oil's role in total consumption, in favour of natural gas.



Fossil fuels play a less significant role in Northern European states (Norway, Finland and Sweden), as well as France and Lithuania. This is due to the fact that nearly all electricity is generated from nuclear or other some other form of renewable energy (essentially hydroelectricity). In France and Lithuania, nuclear energy plays a predominant role, while in the Scandinavian states, the partition between nuclear and renewable energy is more balanced.

For the past 90 years, in most countries, economic objectives and environmental considerations have prevailed over the exploitation of traditional domestic resources. This evolution explains the increase in energy spending, particularly in Central and Eastern ex-communist European states, in which oil and lignite national production are falling very quickly. The desire to reduce the environmental impact of energy exploitation influenced European countries' refusal to use atomic power to produce electricity. Thus, after respective referendums Italy and Austria ruled out atomic energy as a source of electricity production. From 1980 onwards, Sweden has been in the process of eliminating its nuclear capabilities by 2010, while in Germany, the red-green coalition passed a law on April 2002 to halt the activity of 19 nuclear reactors between 2003 and 2020. Germany has been on track for the abandonment of nuclear power, implementing a voluntary policy of renewable energy development— particularly wind power. But since 1993, renewable energy production has been three times lower than electricity consumption. Thus, renewable energy doesn't compensate for nuclear energy decreasing that lead to increase European energy dependency rate. In Germany the supplanting of nuclear power is being driven by fossil energy and half of closed

nuclear power plan must be compensate for doubling energy produced from natural gas. Russia is profiting of German's natural gas needs. In fact, Germany is the biggest importer of Russian gas. In 2005, 42% of German gas consumed was imported from Russia which is also the biggest Germany's oil supplier. In 2006, Germany imported a total of 110 millions tons of crude oil, of which Russia supplied 36.9% while ex soviet-ruled countries supplied another 9.7% (mainly Kazakhstan and mainly via Russia).

Geopolitical risk: natural gas example

In the future, because of nuclear abandonment, gas consumption will increase, the North Sea energies will be selling out and Germany will be depending more depending on Russian energy-in particular gas production. Today, Russia holds the world's largest natural gas reserves, this being around 27% of the world reserve. Most of German economic and political actors consider Russia to be a more reliable partner than Middle Eastern states. With this mind, the German government has been favoring Russian gas imports and also involved itself with Moscow on a partnership agreement in the energy field. In Berlin, on September 2005, Chancellor Shroder, President Vladimir Putin, OAO Gazprom, BASF AG, E.ON AG company representatives, all signed an agreement on the construction of the North European Gas Pipeline (NEGP) through the Baltic Sea. This pipeline will transport 60 billions m3 of gas yearly directly to Germany.

Other states view the pipeline as a move by Russia to bypass traditional transit countries (currently Ukraine, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Belarus and Poland). Some transit countries are concerned that Kremlin's

long-term plan is to attempt to exert political influence on them by threatening their gas supply without affecting supplies to Western Europe. The fears are strengthened by the fact that Russia has so far refused to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty. Critics of pipeline say that Europe could become dangerously dependent on Russian natural gas, particularly since Russia could face problems meeting a surge in domestic as well as foreign demand. Following several cuts to supplies to Ukraine, and further on to Europe on the 1 January 2006 and 1 January 2009, as well as foreign policy towards Eastern Europe, it has been noted that the distribution of gas can be used as a political tool from the Russian state through Gazprom, which it owns. The Russian response has been that the pipeline will increase Europe's energy security, and that the criticism is caused by bitterness about the loss of significant transit revenues, as well as the loss of political influence that stems from the transit countries' ability to hold Russian gas supplies to Western Europe hostage to their local political agendas. It would reduce Russia's dependence on the transit countries as for the first time it would link Russia directly to Western Europe. According to Gazprom, the direct connection to Germany would decrease risks in the gas transit zones, including the political risk of cutting off Russian gas exports to Western Europe.



How to Win the War Against Extremists

Author: Tahera Qurban Ali

Afghanistan is a country with a high illiteracy rate, where 100 year old Al-Jahiliyyah practices are still alive, such as child bride, polygamy, tribal laws and old traditions which are passed from generations to generations. Afghanistan has a diverse population divided among Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen and Baloch. With the Taliban resurgent, reconstruction has slowed down significantly, aid workers and translators and journalists are threatened and killed, opium poppy cultivation and traffic, and corruption are at an all time high. Violence, brutality and roadside bombings of the extremists have increased. Afghanistan is at risk of collapsing into chaos again.

Afghanistan is faced with additional serious challenges and problems such as; warlords, lack of the rule of law, traditional and post conflict justice, child abduction, child labor, human rights abuse and over-crowded prisons which are below the standards of the Geneva Conventions. Hardcore insurgent prisoners are sharing cells with the petty criminals and converting them into hardcore insurgents. All these challenges have created frustrations and disappointments among the Afghan people and among the international community. These issues need to be addressed in order to secure Afghanistan. Currently in Afghanistan, there is no effective internal control over illegal, corrupt, or un-authorized practices. The absence of effective army

and police forces, the weakness of the judiciary and the mostly dysfunctional and corrupt administrations are the root causes of the failure of Afghanistan to move forward and they are the main obstacles to enforcing the rule of the law.

To successfully reverse the psychological and propaganda war games of the extremists, it is crucial to increase the number of international troops in Afghanistan with a clear goal and a firm plan, while firmly holding the Afghan government and all national and international key players accountable to deliver results for their assigned responsibilities. Afghans are killed and intimidated daily by the extremists and reminded by the Taliban that the Allied Forces will abandon them again and as a consequence they will be punished for not cooperating with their networks now. Troops on the ground will help to reassure Afghans that the international community will not abandon them and it will hurt the morale and the capability of the insurgents. Most Afghans live in villages and the villagers know who belongs to that region and who does not. As a result once the troops are on the ground enabling economic, educational and health aid to be provided to the people, the people will turn in those insurgents.

However, increasing troops will only stabilize Afghanistan temporarily. To free Afghanistan from insurgents entirely, long term commitments of resources are needed to train personnel to increase the size and capacity of the Afghan National Army so that it can defend Afghanistan on its own, and to provide educational, health and economic opportunities for the people of Afghanistan. A clean, credible and capable Afghan government is the most important key to securing Afghanistan and establishing a system that upholds the rule of law above all.

Most importantly the judicial and executive branches must be impartial at all times. Since insurgents have managed to penetrate into all levels of Afghan society and government, Afghans are viewed as untrustworthy and it has made it difficult for the troops to co-operate with the Afghan people on the basis of mutual trust. However, we must not let this fear and complication overshadow the good intentions and the sincere efforts of many Afghans who are fighting and struggling daily against the extremists. We must make a sincere effort to distinguish between the allies and the enemies. Most Afghans prefer the Allied Forces over the extremists.

Afghanistan is geopolitically a strategic region. Many nations, especially Afghanistan's neighbours desire poverty, destruction and instability in Afghanistan, for achieving and securing their own national interests. For example, Pakistan's recent attack on insurgents in Waziristan is viewed by the Afghan intelligence as only attacking insurgents who are attacking Pakistan. Afghan intelligence argues that most of the insurgents who attack the Allied Forces are trained in Pakistan, and live in different regions of Pakistan. It is also argued that the insurgents treat their wounded in Pakistan and then return to Afghanistan. Many intelligence sources suggest that the insurgents are funded by sympathizers globally and one third of their funding comes from nations who want the Allied Forces to fail to secure Afghanistan for their own national interests. Another third of their funding comes from drug trafficking and the remainder comes from kidnapping, extortion and robbery. The extremists also desire poverty, illiteracy and instability in Afghanistan for their own strategic interests and to prove that the Afghan government



and the international community have failed to provide justice and prosperity to the people of Afghanistan. To defeat the extremists entirely, their sources of training and indoctrination, and their ideological, financial and logistic support globally and especially in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan must be eliminated.

The Taliban originated from a group of students in Kandahar and they joined the Al-Qaeda network. Extremists come from different backgrounds and religions and it is pivotal that the world should realize this. My view of the extremists is that they are people who have lost touch with their senses, people who are motivated to transform the world into their own personal or religious convictions. They have lost touch with the principles of loving and co-existing with different people and different cultures peacefully. People and regions with high rates of poverty and illiteracy are the most vulnerable to the propaganda of the extremists, since they recruit the most desperate or mentally challenged individuals to do their dirty work. A failed state like Afghanistan or Somalia is the perfect haven for terrorist networking and terrorist training, since there are no central authorities to challenge the extremists or to offer aid or protection to the people.

The goals of the extremists are global; they will not just stop at Afghanistan. They want to convert the world to their own oppressive ideology through fear and suicide bombings and cowardly attacks on innocent civilians. In theory, they pose as saviours and defenders of the oppressed or poor. Sadly, in reality, they are the very source of the fear, oppression, and destruction of many innocent people. They are brutal, heartless and cruel individuals, who control and manipulate through fear

and execution, any one who challenges them. They fear and kill educated people, preferring to keep people illiterate, for the illiterate are easily brain washed and controlled. For instance, in Bamian the Taliban skinned 50 men alive and denied their families the right to bury them. Their bodies were left out in public to rot as a warning to the people that anyone who dared to challenge them would face the same fate. Taliban fighters kidnapped and raped many of the daughters and the wives of their victims, many young and beautiful girls went missing during their regime in Afghanistan. In Afghan culture it is a shame to admit that their daughters or wives are raped or kidnapped, so the people of Afghanistan normally do not talk about it. It is important for the world, and especially for Muslim people to realize that the extremists are not Islamic, they are Islamists. Everything they do is contrary to the Islamic principles. Islam never allowed the mass killings of innocent civilians.

To deny the people of Afghanistan an opportunity to re-establish their country with a fair and democratic government is unfair. To hear people saying who cares about Afghanistan, let them deal with their own mess is heart-breaking. Many Afghans have deep gratitude for the assistance of the international community, and look to the international community for moral support and economic assistance. Afghans want to be part of this very complicated world and Afghans want modernity, peace and love among all humanities. Every soldier that stands in Afghanistan today symbolizes a tree of hope, a tree of freedom and a tree of life to the Afghan society. When a soldier is dead, that source of hope and life is dead for the Afghans. I can understand the pain and frustrations that the families of these heroes feel. I offer my sincere condolences

and the condolences of millions of Afghans who, I know, are grateful and appreciate their effort to stabilize Afghanistan. Your loss is our loss and Afghans share your pain. Let's not forget that Afghans are killed daily by these suicide attackers. On average, seven Afghan police officers are killed by suicide bombs or by Taliban ambush. Every time there is an explosion, large numbers of innocent Afghan civilians who go to work to feed their families are killed. Afghans live and breathe in fear because of these cruel and inhumane acts by the Taliban, who have only killed Afghans, destroyed infrastructure, looted the country and turned it into one of the world's largest opium producers. It is important that the world realize that these terrorist organizations have no good intentions for the Afghan people. They are fighting the International Forces for their own economic and political agendas, and will again turn Afghanistan into a terrorist training ground, if the international community leaves.

Facing all these challenges and adversaries, the Afghan people and the international community need to be united to defeat these extremists. The international community must not lose confidence in helping Afghans. It is the strategy of the extremists to kill more soldiers and aid workers, because they know that killing more troops and aid workers will hurt their morale and courage, and the public support from back home will drop for the War on Terror. The public will pressure the politicians to cave in and withdraw the troops from Afghanistan. It would be tragic and a big mistake if the public falls for these psychological war games. If the Taliban win, there will be massive human rights violations in Afghanistan. Many civilians will be persecuted for working with the



Allied Forces. There will be no mercy from the extremists. The public must support the brave men and women who have left their comfort zone, their families and loved ones in order to defend the principles of freedom and democracy for the benefit of global stability and global security. Securing Afghanistan and other failed states like Afghanistan is the only option for global security.

“Afghanistan needs to have a strong democratic ally to counterbalance the threats from regional power players”

It would be reasonable to say that Afghanistan became a victim of the Cold War. It was destroyed because it became the battle ground for the war between the two Super Powers. Because of its location, many countries interfered both politically and ideologically in order to secure their own strategic positions. Afghanistan needs to have a strong democratic ally to counterbalance the threats from regional power players. It is not a job for one nation, since there are many factors and different forces are at play; therefore, NATO is the perfect solution for the security and stability of Afghanistan. The international communities need to work together with the Afghan people to come to a common ground to secure economic, personal, educational, and health security for the people of Afghanistan. Democracy and security can only be established and continue to flourish in Afghanistan, if the government of Afghanistan with the help of the international community succeeds in providing the basic needs of the Afghan people. Winning the hearts and the minds of the Afghan people is another key to defeating the extremists.

It is important to mobilize the mass media to expose the ugly face of the

insurgents to the world and reveal them as a global threat. The world needs to realize the truth that the Taliban has only destroyed, not constructed, and has only killed, not nurtured Afghan civilians. The people of Afghanistan are sick and tired of the oppressive, un-Islamic and 100 years backward views of the Taliban. To the Afghans today, the foreigners are the Taliban and the extremists, not the Allied Forces. It is also important to mobilize the media to educate the world about the progress and the positive changes that are being made in Afghanistan. The people in Afghanistan are daily exposed to the propaganda of the insurgents and the extremists and there are no institutions or media channels that demonstrate the good intentions and the great efforts of our troops. We must not forget that societies form their opinion based on what they are exposed to. We must find a way to publicize the positive changes to gain more support from the Afghan public and globally for our troops and for their noble cause of bringing security and stability to the people of Afghanistan and to the world.

It is also important to recognize and credit the Allied Forces and the Afghan government for these accomplishments. Since the fall of the Taliban, over 7 million children have returned to schools, and 36 percent of these students are girls. Many refugees have returned home. Schools, roads and health clinics are being built, but there is still much to do to provide education at all levels, health services, clean water, and other services for economic and personal security. There is a particular need for the training of professionals to provide the services. It is easy for the extremists to plant a bomb to destroy schools and hospitals. It takes much more time, resources and effort to rebuild a failed state like Afghanistan after

three decades of war. A long term commitment and hard work and patience are needed in order to secure Afghanistan.

According to a recent survey The Asian Foundation in 2009 (<http://asiafoundation.org/country/afghanistan/2008-poll.php>)

- 42% Afghans feel country going in right direction (higher than 2008 - 38%),
- 29% Afghans feel country going in wrong direction
- Main reason for optimism 44% Good Security; 36% Reconstruction; 21% girl's schools
- Main reason for pessimism 42% Security (in 2008 same question was 50%); 51% fear for their personal safety in their local area.
- In 2009, Afghans give a more positive assessment of their economic situation than in previous years, although this prosperity is not evenly shared. Considerably more urban respondents (63%) than rural residents (52%) say they are more prosperous today than they were under the Taliban.

Based on my five summers of extensive involvement with the people of Afghanistan and travelling to different regions of Afghanistan, I am convinced that the morale and the values of the Afghan people are contrary to the Taliban. Afghans love music. Afghans want freedom and education for their boys and girls. I meet many Afghans who tell me “ Please ! We have lost the chance and the opportunity to be educated, but please help our children to be educated!” I have visited schools and met students who walked on foot daily for 45 minutes to two hours to come to the closest school in their area. Once I was visiting a school in Kabul, and the principal had some parents to



come in because their children had problems with not doing their homework.

I was just sitting there as a guest and observer. Everybody thought that I was a local, and I saw and heard the stories of many students. One young 13 year-old girl with her parents came into the office. She could not do her home work because her parents did not have the money to buy her a text book. She travelled for one hour every morning and one hour to go back home with an empty stomach and no textbooks. I saw how pale and malnourished her face and body was; yet, she was determined to come in and learn as much as she could. I was moved by such determined students like her, and deeply saddened by her unfortunate situation. I met so many young boys and girls and adults too who are eager to learn and are determined to be educated; however they lack teachers, books, schools. Modernity and inclusion into the world is what all Afghans dream. They definitely do not want the oppressive regime of the Taliban back. For more first hand and true stories about Afghanistan go to www.afghanistancharity.org and click on the messages.

“The extremists do not need to prove themselves. All they have to prove is that the international community failed to secure Afghanistan.”

It is the goal of the extremists to prove that the international community has failed to establish a strong and fair government and to provide economic, social, health and educational security. To do this, they try to create disunity, fear, mistrust and corruption within the Afghan government ministries, the Afghan National Army and among the Afghan and Allied Forces. The extremists do

not need to prove themselves. All they have to prove is that the international community failed to secure Afghanistan. That will encourage the increase of brutality by extremists everywhere in the world, since it will appear that violence is the way for them to succeed. Many young and uneducated people will be influenced by the brutal tactics of the extremists, and that will lead to a vicious cycle of fear and oppression.

The key to winning against the extremists is for Afghans and NATO must not lose confidence! Once we lose confidence, we will lose to the terrorists. The people of the nations which have committed troops and resources to secure Afghanistan must support their troops and their missions. Lack of support can only encourage and benefit the extremist fighters. The positive opinion of the general public can give confidence and courage to the brave men and women who are in Afghanistan, while a negative opinion can encourage the extremists to continue attacking civilians, troops and aid workers and lead to even more violence to discourage public support for the ISAF mission and the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Leaving Afghanistan does not guarantee the international community any better security. It will only make matters worse! Securing Afghanistan is the only option for securing the international community.

Most Recent ACC Events



Gala Dinner Celebrating 100 years of Canadian Diplomacy and the 60th Anniversary of North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Held November 19, 2009 at 6:30pm
at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel



**Fall Conference, Ottawa
November 24**

Please look for more info on these events in the next newsletter!

We wish you a Happy Holiday Season and New Year!



Please note that our office will be closed from Noon December 24, 2009 to January 4, 2010.

