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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / John Manley and Prime Minister Stephen Harper step before the cameras yesterday for the official delivery of the Manley panel's proposals for the role of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: BRUCE CHEADLE
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
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Manley report will test Liberals' resolve

It was supposed to bridge partisan divides in a fractious minority Parliament.

But the panel report on the future of the Afghanistan military mission, commissioned last October by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and delivered yesterday, looks more like a 90-page rolled up newspaper with which to smack the Liberals on the nose.

Led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, the five-member panel issued a clarion call for Canada to continue its combat mission indefinitely in the war-racked country -- albeit on condition that NATO provides Canada more robust support.

At its core, the panel's central recommendation couldn't be more in tune with Harper's Conservative government: the Afghan military mission embodies Canada's renewed commitment to robust internationalism and cannot be abandoned. Full stop.

Manley, the blue-chip Grit who served as Jean Chr tian's foreign affairs minister, did nothing to soften the message at a news conference.

After invoking the name of Liberal icon Lester Pearson, Manley ripped into the left flank of his own party brethren.

"The world isn't a pretty place," Manley boomed.

"But I happen to believe that the people that came before me in the Liberal party, that believed in a strong role for Canada on the international stage, would say: there are times when we have to count. There are times when it matters. We're not prepared to retreat under the U.S. missile shield and live in Fortress North America. We're prepared to be out there and we're prepared to pay the price, because that's what you expect of a country like Canada."

For a Liberal party that only recently achieved a fragile internal consensus on the Afghan question, the report is highly problematic and Manley's bombast is incendiary.

"Our current position, as you know, is that the combat mission end in February 2009," Liberal Leader Stephane Dion emerged to say at a Liberal caucus meeting in Kitchener.

His foreign affairs critic, Bob Rae, was more equivocal: "I think we're in for a period of intense discussion and consideration."

Conservative government insiders immediately leapt on the perceived divergence to e-mail reporters off-the-record jibes alleging Liberal inconsistency.

But Liberals quietly conceded they need to keep their powder dry. Some noted that if NATO fails to meet the conditions set by the Manley panel during a summit in early April, the combat recommendation becomes moot and the Conservative government will be back under the gun.

Harper himself refused to comment on the report yesterday, instead leaving his PMO underlings to snipe from the bushes.

But reaction from the political left was loud, swift and predictable.

"At a time when Canada should be drastically changing course to help the Afghan people build a lasting peace in the region, this report is recommending more of the same," said NDP Leader Jack Layton.

Elizabeth May of the Green party likened the report to pouring fuel on a fire.

The Canadian Peace Alliance said the five panelists, "which represent a very small sector of pro-George Bush Canadians, have delivered a preordained document designed to support the Conservative government's position."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations lauded the report as sensible and achievable.

None of the opinions will matter a whit when the House of Commons resumes after a six-week break on Jan. 28.

It is the Liberals, the party that first sent Canadian troops into Afghanistan in 2002, who will determine whether the Manley report serves as a blueprint or triggers a spring election.

Ernie Regehr, a former founder of Project Ploughshares who's now with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Waterloo, said the report failed to meet its mandate.

"When the prime minister appointed the panel, he said the idea here is to take the complications of a minority Parliament out of it," said Regehr.

"Well, the implication is you're trying to find a majority viewpoint here and not press ahead with a minority government's point of view. I think they produced a report that pretty much stays with the minority Parliament problem."

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Manley recommendations hinge on NATO willingness

John Manley has handed Prime Minister Stephen Harper a Rubik's cube that he cannot solve without Liberal Leader St phane Dion.

Unless Harper convinces NATO to move 1,000 additional troops into Kandahar over the next 12 months, he need not even bother to ask the House of Commons for a mandate to pursue the Canadian deployment in the troubled Afghan province beyond next year.

In their report, Manley and his group argue that without more support from NATO allies, Canada does not stand a chance to fulfil its objectives in Kandahar. A prime minister would have to be politically suicidal to ignore that kind of advice.

But there is little point in Harper showing up at the NATO summit in Bucharest in April to make demands unless there is a relative certainty that he can leverage more allied soldiers in Kandahar into parliamentary support for extending Canada's security mission in the province.

With the NDP and the Bloc Qu b cois set to vote against any extension of the combat mission, the government needs Liberal support to implement the Manley plan and Dion would have to reverse himself to extend it.

On that score, his former cabinet colleague has left Dion with little save-face room. The report bluntly dismisses the Liberal prescription for a 2009 end to Canada's combat role, calling it an option that it not "viable." It offers the prospect of an eventual phasing-out of Canada's fighting role in favour of training at some unspecified point in the future as a fallback bridge between the Liberal position and its main recommendation.

That is not to say that the group has totally shut out the views of the opposition. While its heart is forcefully behind a continued Canadian combat

presence in Kandahar, its head is somewhat less sanguine. And even as it rejects calls to end the mission next year, the report endorses the bulk of the opposition critique of Harper's management of it.

It states that Canada's casualties are inexplicably high by comparison to its allies, even in light of the particular risks of the mission and requires that new helicopters and drones be deployed if it is to continue beyond next year.

It notes the large discrepancy between the resources expended on military and civilian efforts and describes CIDA's development initiatives as held back by bureaucracy at home and lack of co-ordination and focus on the ground.

It takes sharp digs at the government's opaque communications strategy.

And it suggests that the prime minister will have to invest more political energy on the file at home and abroad if the mission is to achieve measurable goals.

Yesterday Harper and Dion both reserved comments until they had studied the report further.

But the Liberal leader reiterated his call for Canada to trade its combat role for other Afghan duties next year, a statement that prompted a volley from the prime minister's spin doctors.

Under the timetable put forward by Manley, the Commons might not vote on the issue until after the April NATO summit.

And, the debate could be overtaken by a spring election.

Under that scenario, voters would have to choose between a prime minister whose management of a defining foreign policy file has been found wanting and a leader of the opposition whose plan for its future has been dismissed as half-baked by one of his own elder statesmen.

Chantal Hebert covers national affairs.

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Keep our troops in Afghanistan

Canada should hold fast in Afghanistan. Bloodied by enemy insurgents in the field, besieged by critics of the war at home, the country's commitment to this six-year-old military intervention is wavering and near collapse. But this is no time for retreat. And now a panel led by former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley has fired a verbal salvo that should silence the opposition at home and dishearten our foes halfway around the world.

After an exhaustive, 3 1/2-month investigation that involved consulting Canadians, their allies and the people of Afghanistan, Manley's non-partisan panel recommends a conditional, but indefinite, extension of Canada's military mission in Kandahar, one of the most dangerous but strategically vital regions in Afghanistan.

The reasons are clear, powerful and persuasive. At considerable personal risk, and frequently personal cost, the 2,500 brave Canadian men and women fighting in Kandahar are making a huge difference over there, and making life better for countless Afghans. Even more to the point, we can win this war.

Such a victory would serve Canada's interests, Manley's report concludes, by offering us a greater shield from terrorists. The world would be a safer place, too, and recent history supports such conclusions. For those who doubt the reality of the threat or its connection to Kandahar, the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States bear remembering. Those atrocities, which claimed 3,000 innocent civilian lives, were planned and directed by al-Qaida leaders based in Afghanistan and operating there with the full blessing of the country's odious Taliban dictatorship.

With full approval from the United Nations, an international force comprised mainly of American and British troops deposed the Taliban and destroyed, captured or drove into hiding the al- Qaida terrorists. In 2002, the first Canadian troops were sent over to help in the arduous task of rebuilding Afghanistan. Sadly, the Taliban and al-Qaida were bloodied but unbeaten.

Unable to confront the 54,000 North Atlantic Treaty Organization troops in full and open battle, these insurgents rely on ambushes, brief firefights and roadside bombs to wear down their opponents and, even more to the point, convince civilian populations back home that saving Afghanistan is not worth the effort.

But it is. Contrary to what the defeatist critics of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan say, real progress is being made thanks to the presence of the NATO troops, and Manley's panel extolled this success. While the Afghan economy remains one of the world's poorest, it has grown by 10 per cent a year in each of the past five years. Per capita income has doubled in that time.

More than five million refugees have returned to the country since 2003. In the past six years, school enrolment has tripled and six million Afghan children are now getting an education, including two million girls. Child mortality rates are dropping, too. New roads are being built and electrical power restored. The country is now a democracy, having elected its president in 2004 and a national assembly the following year. This is what we are fighting for.

All this could be lost if the NATO intervention, of which Canada is a crucial part, fails. This option should be as unthinkable as it is unacceptable. We should refuse to surrender Afghanistan to thugs who would drag the country back into the dark ages and put it in the hands of extreme, fundamentalist theocrats who would -- and do -- kill girls rather than educate them. We should refuse to make the sacrifice of 77 Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan worthless by prematurely ending the military intervention they gave their lives for. We should refuse to let the will of the international community, expressed repeatedly by the UN, be thwarted by terrorists who represent only a warped, hate-filled ideology.

What should hearten Canadians is knowing the Afghan mission can succeed. The Afghan army now numbers 47,000 troops. By 2012, it should grow to 70,000 troops. This means that with each passing week, the Afghans should, with our guidance, be better able to protect their emerging democracy from the insurgents.

So Canada should stay. In return NATO should satisfy one of the conditions set by the Manley panel and commit at least 1,000 new combat troops to reinforce the Canadians in Kandahar. Considering that the U.S. last week committed 3,200 U.S. Marines to a seven-month deployment in the region beginning in April, Manley has not demanded the impossible. For its part, the Canadian government should bolster its troops with better equipment.

Of course, it will soon be the task of Canada's members of Parliament to decide this country's future in Afghanistan after February 2009. But the excellent report from the Manley panel should convince them of the need to set aside, for once, petty party politics and find a way for Canada to stand strong and get the job done.

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Families of Canada's war dead praise findings

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report yesterday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies -- contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper didn't comment on the report yesterday, saying he needed more time to review it.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / John Manley, chair of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference in Ottawa yesterday after recommending Canada stay on after 2009, but only if NATO allies provides more troops for the war effort. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
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Aid group urges higher visibility projects

A leading international aid group says the Manley panel's call for a new development strategy in Afghanistan smacks of desperation.

Much to the dismay of World Vision Canada and other international aid groups, the panel says Canada's development contribution needs to be revamped with a higher priority given to visible projects that address immediate needs in Kandahar.

World Vision says that represents a departure from the low-key, long-term approach -- aimed at making lasting change -- that has characterized the mission's reconstruction efforts thus far.

The Christian aid group's president is disappointed the with direction and the findings of the blue-ribbon panel that was assembled to recommend the country's future course in Afghanistan.

"There's a certain amount of desperation in this; you can feel it in the report," said Dave Toycen.

World Vision Canada operates out of Herat in the quieter, more stable western portion of the country.

The escalation of violence in southern Afghanistan and the extent of suffering among the people also makes international aid groups desperate, Toycen said, but they haven't abandoned their well-established techniques.

"We're frustrated, but we're still really cautious," he said. "You have to do this right -- or it's going to make things worse."

Ottawa expects to spend as much as \$1.2 billion in reconstruction and aid by 2011 in Afghanistan. The Canadian International Development Agency has been criticized publicly by some international organizations and privately by the military, which has accused the department of not concentrating on the basic needs of Afghans.

The fundamental premise of most international development can be boiled down to the adage: Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.

Over the last two years, the federal government's approach to development in Kandahar has focused on initiatives that show a benefit in the long-term, such as justice reform, encouraging entrepreneurs through micro-credit programs, and cleaning irrigation canals.

In delivering reconstruction, Canadians have preferred to hire local Afghan contractors, a slow and sometimes frustrating process that is rarely visible and definitely goes unnoticed by the Canadian public.

But the panel, headed by former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley, says the federal government "should concentrate more on aid that will directly benefit the Afghan people."

It should include so-called "signature projects" such as a hospital or some other major infrastructure need that is "identified with Canada and led by Canadians."

Such short-term, visible development could run in tandem with long-term projects, the report suggested.

But Toyce is skeptical, partly because such a conspicuous presence has political overtones. Canadian politicians can point to Afghan projects for their own ends.

"I think pasting a Canadian flag on something -- or saying this is a great thing for Canada -- is still far secondary to (the question) is it really going to make a difference for local people," Toyce said. "We're very cautious about quick projects because our experience says, if the local people don't own it, if it isn't something they believe is a priority for them, it usually doesn't work in the long-run."

The Manley report did point out that the signature projects should still be "defined by Afghan community leaders, generating local employment and other benefits."

Other organizations expressed concern that the report paid too much attention to military matters.

There is a deep concern among international aid groups that the Conservative government will hand over responsibility for the delivery of reconstruction entirely to the army.

"Canadian (non-governmental organizations) on the ground in Afghanistan have emphasized, again and again, that this practice turns both aid workers and Afghans into war targets and often has no long term security or development benefit," said Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian

Council for International Co-operation.

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Manley calls for NATO backup; Panel headed by former cabinet minister recommends Canada pull its troops out of Afghanistan if allies don't add support

The United States may be called on to help meet conditions set down by a blue-ribbon panel for Canada's continued involvement in the Afghan war, but international observers say the government shouldn't let European allies off the hook.

"It's not very hard for NATO to come up with another 1,000 (troops) -- it's always been a question of political will, not capacity," said Paul Heinbecker, a former diplomat who represented Canada at the United Nations.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended the Conservative government give its military partners until February next year to come up with another battle group -- roughly 1,000 soldiers -- to reinforce hard-pressed Kandahar province.

If such an assurance isn't forthcoming, then the federal government should issue notice that Canada's troops will be withdrawn.

"We need to be very direct with NATO," said Manley, who once served as foreign affairs minister.

"Either they mean it, that this is the most important mission, or they don't. And if they don't, well then we need to look at the well-being of our young people."

Heinbecker says when he was Canada's ambassador to Germany that country had an army of 280,000 soldiers, but the government in Berlin has steadfastly refused to let its nearly 3,000 soldiers in northern Afghanistan participate in combat.

"There has to be more boots on the ground for the mission to succeed and it has to play chicken to some extent with its NATO partners to get them to take their responsibility," Heinbecker said in an interview.

"To my mind, this is not a bad way of doing it."

Fulfilling the panel's key conditions of more troops, helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft will likely depend on the willingness of the United States to lend a hand, say defence observers.

In releasing his report, Manley made clear he hopes the preconditions will not end up driving Canada out of the war.

"We hope this is not a poison pill because we believe the mission is an important one," he said.

In addition, the panel says the federal government must secure battlefield helicopters and sophisticated unmanned surveillance drones within a year to ensure troop safety. Both projects have been stalled within the National Defence bureaucracy.

Canada has 2,500 troops on the ground in Kandahar, whose current mandate expires in February 2009.

The appeal for NATO and the international community will probably fall on deaf ears in Europe.

The major countries already in Afghanistan -- France, Germany, Italy and Spain -- have refused to commit more troops or lift combat restrictions on the soldiers already there.

Britain has twice increased its troop strength to fight insurgents in Helmand province, next to Kandahar.

That pretty much leaves the United States, which last week grudgingly committed 3,200 U.S. marines to a brief deployment beginning in April.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF / Liberal Leader StephaneDion speaks yesterday to members of the Liberal national caucus of MPs and senators to wrap up a two-day meeting in Kitchener. ;
DATELINE: KITCHENER
BYLINE: PHILIP JALSEVAC
SOURCE: RECORD STAFF
NOTE: INSIDE: LIBERAL LEADER VOWS TO BE FRIEND TO CITIES - B1
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
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Dion refuses to budge on end to combat role

Federal Liberals are sticking to their position that Canada end its combat role in Afghanistan in February 2009, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said yesterday.

Dion was emphatic about the party's stance and declined to comment on a report earlier in the day that recommended Canada's military mission be extended if certain conditions are met.

Dion told reporters at the end of a caucus retreat in Kitchener that he had not read the report by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, and it would not be "responsible" to comment. Nevertheless, when pressed, Dion stuck to the party's position that the combat mission in Afghanistan come to an end next year.

"We have strong reasons for that," Dion said.

"It's by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission during three years, and it's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan, to help the people of Afghanistan."

That would entail Canadian assistance in such areas as reconstruction, training of Afghan security forces and humanitarian aid.

Dion's refusal to budge may not be shared by all caucus members.

Foreign affairs critic Bob Rae told The Canadian Press there's no need to immediately take a hard position on Manley's report until the Conservative government and NATO allies respond to the recommendations.

"I think we're in for a period of intense discussion and consideration," he said yesterday.

At the same time, Rae hedged when asked if the Liberals might support an extension of the combat mission, provided soldiers get more equipment and NATO allies step in with more troops.

"I don't think we can answer an iffy question," he said. "Let's see what the government puts forward and whether it's compatible with our position."

At the two-day caucus retreat, he made scant mention of the prospect of a federal election.

However, in the scrum with reporters, the Liberal leader repeated his remarks of last month and said his message to party members still is: "Be ready at any time. 2008 is a new ball game."

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A retooled Afghan mission; Stay past 2009 deadline; Get 1,000-troop partner in Kandahar; Acquire new helicopters

A clarion call for an open-ended extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan fell on stony ground yesterday among the majority opposition in Parliament.

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper follows the advice of his blue-ribbon panel, the immediate reaction suggests his Conservatives could lose a vote on extending the Afghan mission.

The leaders of all three opposition parties reaffirmed their long-stated view that Canada should scale back or retool when the current military commitment runs out in 13 months.

Their leeriness of an extended mission flies in the face of a multi-year extension recommended by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

The panel suggested Canada's Kandahar mission should continue indefinitely on two conditions: that our soldiers get 1,000 more foreign troops to help them, and better equipment to protect them.

Manley declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden. He delivered his 90-page report to the prime minister yesterday and Harper said he would need a few days to digest it.

Even as Manley endorsed an extension, he admitted the mission has gone badly. Insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress -- with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example. But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghan approach and show leadership in non-military areas. It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan -- a minuscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base. That cautious stance might reduce verbal gaffes by diplomats and protect aid workers, the panel said, but it doesn't help win hearts and minds either in Afghanistan or in Canada.

Instead, an acceleration of aid projects -- especially highly visible ones such as new hospitals or irrigation systems -- would be an effective way of gaining local support, the panel said.

The panel also asked Ottawa to stop sugar-coating the difficult realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

Despite its challenges, Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause.

He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.

The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

"(Give) NATO 'til February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require -- or we pull out," Manley said.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.'"

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament about how to proceed.

The report was the result of three months' work in which the panel toured four Afghan provinces and spoke with hundreds of experts.

The Bloc and NDP were quick to condemn the report while the Liberals said they wanted to examine it more closely.

The two smaller opposition parties mused privately that they could still table a non-confidence motion on Afghanistan and risk taking down the minority government over the issue.

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Extend Afghan mission: report; PM's panel lists two conditions for longer military mission in war-torn country

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"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

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The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress -- with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example.

But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghanistan approach and show leadership in non- military areas.

It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned, for instance, why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan -- a miniscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers stationed there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base.

That cautious stance might reduce verbal gaffes by diplomats and protect aid workers, the panel said, but it doesn't help win hearts and minds either in Afghanistan or in Canada.

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Slain soldiers' families praise report; Families back call for increased NATO support

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report yesterday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies -- contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results -- that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was "smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

"Manley's reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora, Ont.

"But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley said the mission in Afghanistan is "in jeopardy" if NATO allies don't commit to a bigger role in the south, which has been hit by increased insurgent attacks.

The former Liberal foreign affairs minister urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

Julie Mason, whose husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh was killed in 2006, said she watched the release of the report closely to see what it would recommend for a mission she feels has become deeply politicized over the last few years.

"They need better equipment and they need more equipment and (the Conservatives) have never been a really big party for getting that for them," she said from her home in Shilo, Man.

"They definitely need to focus on getting what these soldiers need to do their job properly."

The father of Canada's only female combat soldier to die in battle supports the Manley report's main recommendations to extend the mission.

Capt. Nicola Goddard died May 17, 2006, in a grenade attack in Panjwahi district. Tim Goddard said extending the mission to achieve the goal is "an appropriate way to go" and he believes his daughter would agree. He said she had expressed concerns about the poverty and lack of schooling for children in the country.

"It was abhorrent to her and she felt it was important we contribute to correcting that," he said from Calgary.

It makes sense, said Goddard, to bolster the number of troops policing Kandahar province, which is roughly the size of Nova Scotia.

"We've got 2,500 troops and 750 maybe go outside the wire? How would we possibly control Nova Scotia with 750 troops?" he said. "There needs to be a bigger, more physical presence outside the wire, and if takes 1000 troops, another battle group coming in from another country, so be it."

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DATE: 2008.01.23
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COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Times & Transcript (Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 487

Aid groups criticize development plan; Relief organizations disappointed with recommendations for Cdn. participation in Afghanistan

A leading international aid group says the Manley panel's call for a new development strategy in Afghanistan smacks of desperation.

Much to the dismay of World Vision Canada and other international aid groups, the panel says Canada's development contribution needs to be revamped with a higher priority given to visible projects that address immediate needs in Kandahar.

World Vision says that represents a departure from the low-key, long-term approach -- aimed at making lasting change -- that has characterized the mission's reconstruction efforts thus far.

The Christian aid group's president is disappointed the with direction and the findings of the blue-ribbon panel that was assembled to recommend the country's future course in Afghanistan.

"There's a certain amount of desperation in this; you can feel it in the report," said Dave Toycen.

World Vision Canada operates out of Herat in the quieter, more stable western portion of the country.

The escalation of violence in southern Afghanistan and the extent of suffering among the people also makes international aid groups desperate, Toycen said, but they haven't abandoned their well-established techniques.

"We're frustrated, but we're still really cautious," he said. "You have to do this right -- or it's going to make things worse."

Ottawa expects to spend as much as \$1.2 billion in reconstruction and aid by 2011 in Afghanistan. The Canadian International Development Agency

has been criticized publicly by some international organizations and privately by the military, which has accused the department of not concentrating on the basic needs of Afghans.

The fundamental premise of most international development can be boiled down to the old adage: Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.

Over the last two years, the federal government's approach to development in Kandahar has focused on initiatives that show a benefit in the long-term, such as justice reform, encouraging entrepreneurs through micro-credit programs, and cleaning irrigation canals.

In delivering reconstruction, Canadians have preferred to hire local Afghan contractors, a slow and sometimes frustrating process that is rarely visible and definitely goes unnoticed by the Canadian public.

But the panel, headed by former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley, says the federal government "should concentrate more on aid that will directly benefit the Afghan people."

It should include so-called "signature projects" such as a hospital or some other major infrastructure need that is "identified with Canada and led by Canadians."

Such short-term, visible development could run in tandem with long-term projects, the report suggested.

But Toyce is skeptical, partly because such a conspicuous presence has political overtones. Canadian politicians can point to Afghan projects for their own ends.

"I think pasting a Canadian flag on something -- or saying this is a great thing for Canada -- is still far secondary to (the question) is it really going to make a difference for local people," Toyce said.

"We're very cautious about quick projects because our experience says, if the local people don't own it, if it isn't something they believe is a priority for them, it usually doesn't work in the long-run."

The Manley report did point out that the signature projects should still be "defined by Afghan community leaders, generating local employment and other benefits."

Other organizations expressed concern that the report paid too much attention to military matters.

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DATE: 2008.01.23
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: MICHAEL STAPLES staples.michael@dailygleaner.com
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 398

Military expert says Canada has made gains in Afghanistan

The findings of an independent panel examining the future of Canada's military mission in Afghanistan confirms what's already happening in that country, says the deputy director of the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick.

Lee Windsor, who spent three weeks in the troubled country with Canadian troops last year, said many of the areas recommended in the final report, such as the training of the Afghan army and police, are already being addressed.

The independent panel, led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, released its report Tuesday.

It said Canada must place greater emphasis on diplomacy and reconstruction and that military focus must shift gradually from combat to training Afghan national security forces if the mission is to continue.

"That process is further along than most people realize," Windsor said.

"A tremendous amount of progress has already been made with the Afghan army by Canadians."

The panel said the Afghanistan mission should only be extended beyond February 2009, if two key conditions are met:

- (1) That a new battle group be deployed by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners to Kandahar province, thus enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.
- (2) And that the latest new, medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial vehicles be secured for use by February 2009.

If these conditions are not met, the panel urged the government to notify Afghan and allied governments that Canada intends to transfer

responsibility for security in Kandahar.

Windsor said the deployment of another battle group to Kandahar province is essential to the success of the mission.

"The Canadians who are there right now with one battle group in Kandahar know they are doing good things," he said.

"But with just one more battle group they could really put an end to the Taliban ability to interfere with rebuilding the Afghan government."

Windsor said if the mission is abandoned, history will not look well on Canada or the international community.

Ryan Jestin, the former commander of Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, said if the report is accepted by the federal government, it will almost certainly mean more deployments to Afghanistan by soldiers from Gagetown.

"There's no doubt in my mind that 2RCR is going to be back in the hopper within the next year or two," he said.

Jestin said the army has the capability of sustaining a mission to Afghanistan over the long term but that will hinge on ongoing recruiting efforts and the ability to train.

If the mission is abandoned by the government, it will mean soldiers would have lost their lives in vain, he said.

"I think a lot of the guys from Gagetown would feel bad -- having gone and done the work for seven months and left their families at home only to find out that next year we are going to pull out of there and leave someone else to do the tough work."

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DATE: 2008.01.23
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: ALEXANDER PANETTA The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 524

Panel backs extending Afghan mission

The call for a long-term extension of Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan appeared to win no plaudits from federal opposition parties -- all of whom favour an end to Canada's current military role next year.

The minority Conservative government has been isolated against all three opposition parties, who say Canada should scale back its fighting efforts when its commitment expires in 13 months.

None showed any signs of relenting Tuesday after a federal panel proposed an open-ended commitment.

The Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois leaders reiterated their earlier preference for a February 2009 overhaul of the mission that would reduce Canada's combat role in Kandahar province.

This after a panel headed by John Manley -- a former Liberal cabinet minister -- said Canadian soldiers should remain indefinitely, on two conditions.

The blue-ribbon panel said Canadians should keep fighting in Kandahar as long as they get more foreign troops to help them and better equipment to protect them.

The panel declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

Manley delivered his 90-page report Tuesday to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who said he would need a few days to digest it.

The NDP and Bloc suggested the prime minister got the political fig leaf he wanted when he appointed a group of pro-military panelists -- including Manley - - three months ago.

Given Manley's prominent status within the Liberal party, leader Stephane Dion was careful to avoid criticizing the report. He promised to examine it but quickly added that his party has "good reasons" for wanting a pullout next February.

The panel chair himself admitted that the mission has not gone well. Even as he endorsed an extension, Manley noted insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile in Afghanistan.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded Afghanistan has made economic and social progress in spite of its deteriorating security situation.

It urged the Canadian government to play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan.

The panel noted that only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan -- compared with 2,500 soldiers.

Ottawa needs to show greater diplomatic leadership, the report says, and also needs to stop sugarcoating the realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

The panel questioned why Canadian diplomats appear to be muzzled and why aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar are then prevented from leaving the base to work on reconstruction projects.

But Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause.

He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

-- The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.

-- The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

"(Give) NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require - - or we pull out," Manley said.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.'"

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament about how to proceed.

The report was the result of three months' work in which the panel toured four Afghan provinces and spoke with hundreds of experts.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said he hadn't yet read the report and declined to offer detailed comment.

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PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B6

BYLINE: Alison Auld /The Canadian Press

PHOTO: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: Halifax

ILLUSTRATION: John Manley (left), chairman of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, spoke to the media about the report yesterday, along with panel members Derek Burney and Pamela Wallin.

WORD COUNT: 695

'We can't just pack up, change our role'; Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan pleased with Manley's findings

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report yesterday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies - contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results - that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was "smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

"Manley's reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora, Ont.

"But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley said the mission in Afghanistan is "in jeopardy" if NATO allies don't commit to a bigger role in the south, which has been hit by increased insurgent attacks.

The former Liberal foreign affairs minister urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

Julie Mason, whose husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh was killed in 2006, said she watched the release of the report closely to see what it would recommend for a mission she feels has become deeply politicized over the last few years.

"They need better equipment and they need more equipment and [the Conservatives] have never been a really big party for getting that for them," she said from her home in Shilo, Man.

"They definitely need to focus on getting what these soldiers need to do their job properly."

The father of Canada's only female combat soldier to die in battle supports the Manley report's main recommendations to extend the mission.

Capt. Nichola Goddard died May 17, 2006, in a grenade attack in Panjwaii district. Tim Goddard said extending the mission to achieve the goal is "an appropriate way to go" and he believes his daughter would agree.

He said she had expressed concerns about the poverty and lack of schooling for children in the country.

"It was abhorrent to her and she felt it was important we contribute to correcting that," he said from Calgary.

It makes sense, said Goddard, to bolster the number of troops policing Kandahar province, which is roughly the size of Nova Scotia.

"We've got 2,500 troops and 750 maybe go outside the wire? How would we possibly control Nova Scotia with 750 troops?" he said. "There needs to be a bigger, more physical presence outside the wire, and if takes 1000 troops, another battle group coming in from another country, so be it."

But changing the mission to being only mentors and teachers could prove difficult, said Goddard.

"You can't just say, 'OK, we're going to just stay in the classrooms now and just teach the [Afghan army] how to do it while not going out and engaging insurgents," he added.

"I think there's not one counter insurgency that's been defeated by an imported army. The Afghans have to win this. All we're doing is helping and providing the human support in terms of training."

Manley suggested Ottawa take the two demands to NATO with the understanding that if it hasn't committed troops by February 2009, Canada will pull out.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: we cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar," he said. "We are gone."

All of the family members said they would be satisfied if Canadian troops stayed beyond 2009 if it meant the military could increase security, destabilize the Taliban and help in the reconstruction effort.

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SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B6

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 176

U.S. may be asked to lend a hand

The United States may be called on to help meet conditions set down by a blue-ribbon panel for Canada's continued involvement in the Afghan war, but international observers say the government shouldn't let European allies off the hook.

"It's not very hard for NATO to come up with another 1,000 [troops] - it's always been a question of political will, not capacity," said Paul Heinbecker, a former diplomat who represented Canada at the United Nations.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended the Conservative government give its military partners until February next year to come up with another battle group - roughly 1,000 soldiers - to reinforce hard-pressed Kandahar province.

If such an assurance isn't forthcoming, then the federal government should issue notice that Canada's troops will be withdrawn.

Fulfilling the panel's key conditions of more troops, helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft will likely depend on the willingness of the United States to lend a hand, say defence observers.

In releasing his report, Manley made clear he hopes the preconditions will not end up driving Canada out of the war.

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DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B1

WORD COUNT: 176

Report highlights

Highlights of the report issued yesterday by a special advisory panel on Afghanistan led by John Manley

Canada should remain in Afghanistan past February 2009 if NATO or other countries can provide 1,000 reinforcements and the government can obtain some medium-lift helicopter capacity and high-tech surveillance drones.

If Canada stays, it should continue its combat role, but should also emphasize training the Afghan national army to take over the security role.

Canada should push in diplomatic councils for a comprehensive NATO plan for Afghanistan and should press Pakistan to do more to promote regional security.

Canada should revamp its development efforts to deal with Afghanistan's immediate needs.

The government should do a better job of informing Canadians about the situation in Afghanistan and promote "a continuous, frank and constructive dialogue."

Afghanistan mission facts

Some facts about Canada's mission in Afghanistan

Began - January 2002, with the deployment of an infantry battle group.

Numbers - There are about 2,500 Canadian troops deployed.

Cost - The military mission will have cost about \$6.3 billion by the time the current commitment ends in February 2009. Over \$750 million more has been earmarked for development aid.

Casualties - Canada has lost 77 soldiers and a diplomat was also killed.

Quote - "Canada's presence in Afghanistan matters."

- Former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, head of a special panel that says Canada should stay in Afghanistan past 2009 if certain conditions are met.

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DATE: 2008.01.23
SECTION: National/World
PAGE: B1
BYLINE: Alexander Panetta /The Canadian Press
PHOTO: Fred Chartrand/The Canadian Press
DATELINE: Ottawa
ILLUSTRATION: John Manley, chairman of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference in Ottawa yesterday.
WORD COUNT: 831

Panel recommends long-term extension of Afghanistan mission

A clarion call for an open-ended extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan fell on stoney ground yesterday among the majority opposition in Parliament.

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper follows the advice of his blue-ribbon panel, the immediate reaction suggests his Conservatives could lose a vote on extending the Afghan mission.

The leaders of all three opposition parties reaffirmed their long-stated view that Canada should scale back or retool when the current military commitment runs out in 13 months.

Their leeringness of an extended mission flies in the face of a multi-year extension recommended by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

The panel suggested Canada's Kandahar mission should continue indefinitely on two conditions: that our soldiers get 1,000 more foreign troops to help them, and better equipment to protect them.

Manley declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

He delivered his 90-page report to the prime minister yesterday and Harper said he would need a few days to digest it.

Even as Manley endorsed an extension, he admitted the mission has gone badly. Insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress - with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example.

But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghanistan approach and show leadership in non-military areas.

It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned, for instance, why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan - a miniscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers stationed there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base.

That cautious stance might reduce verbal gaffes by diplomats and protect aid workers, the panel said, but it doesn't help win hearts and minds either in Afghanistan or in Canada.

Instead, an acceleration of aid projects - especially highly visible ones such as new hospitals or irrigation systems - would be an effective way of gaining local support, the panel said.

The panel also asked Ottawa to stop sugarcoating the difficult realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

Despite its challenges, Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause.

He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.

The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

"[Give] NATO 'til February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require - or we pull out," Manley said.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.' "

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament about how to proceed.

The report was the result of three months' work in which the panel toured four Afghan provinces and spoke with hundreds of experts.

"Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations with cabinet and our caucus before coming forward with our response," Harper said.

The Bloc and NDP were quick to condemn the report while the Liberals said they wanted to examine it more closely.

The two smaller opposition parties mused privately that they could still table a non-confidence motion on Afghanistan and risk taking down the minority government over the issue.

They also suggested that Harper himself may choose to force the issue onto the Commons floor in order to split the Liberal party, which is divided between hawks and doves.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion repeated his party's long-held position: Canada should end its combat mission as scheduled in February 2009, but continue to help with construction, training and humanitarian aid.

"We have carried this mission during three years and it's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan," he said.

Other opposition parties were far more emphatic in rejecting the Manley panel's central conclusion.

"It's recommending the status quo," said NDP defence critic Dawn Black.

"The counterinsurgency has been going on since 2001 ... and the situation has only got worse. Poppy production's up. Corruption's up. Drug-trafficking's up. IED deaths, up.

"It's not working and it's time for a rethink."

She noted that some aid groups have stated publicly that they prefer working far away from the military - because being near soldiers makes them an insurgency target.

If the military provides a lightning rod to the insurgency, she suggested perhaps the flow of aid could actually increase if the military presence was reduced.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe said Manley's report appeared designed as a political fig leaf for Harper.

When the panel was convened three months ago, the prime minister's critics noted that he had stacked it with prominent pro-military figures likely to be sympathetic to the Conservative view.

Some Liberals were privately livid at Manley for participating in what they suspected was a partisan strategic move by Harper.

Duceppe said yesterday that Manley gave the prime minister an even more hawkish report than he had asked for.

"Canadian and Quebec troops have done their part," the Bloc leader said.

The blue-ribbon report is sure to reignite debate over one of the thorniest issues facing Parliament and the Conservatives.

Polls suggest most Canadians would like to see Canadian troops come home as scheduled next year.

Harper has promised a vote on the mission's future, and Canada's NATO allies need to be informed by May or June at the latest.

Manley emphasized that Canada's mission in Afghanistan simply cannot be wound down in a year.

He said it makes no sense to set an end date on the mission at this point when so much work remains to be done.

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PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: Front

PAGE: 1

BYLINE: Ian Elliot

WORD COUNT: 559

Local experts hail Manley report; Panel recommends extending mission in Afghanistan, as long as allies provide more troops

Local experts applauded a report calling on Canada to continue its mission in Afghanistan provided other NATO countries do more to assist there.

An independent panel headed by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley recommended yesterday that Canada extend its combat mission in the country past the 2009 expiry date - but only if its allies agree to post at least 1,000 additional combat troops in the dangerous southern province of Kandahar.

Although the report could cause the opposition to bring down the minority Conservative government, its findings were hailed locally as nuanced and a way Canada could best help the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

"I think the report recognizes the situation on the ground very well," said Grant Kippen of Queen's University's Centre for the Study of Democracy, who is a former senior resident director for Afghanistan with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

"It says quite clearly that the status quo is not an option and we need to do more there."

Joel Sokolsky, a political science professor at Royal Military College, noted the military provides security so relief groups and non-government agencies can assist in reconstructing the devastated country, but it could be difficult to persuade other countries to send more combat troops there.

"In terms of the allies, that is an uphill battle," he acknowledged. Canada has supplied 2,500 troops of the 42,000 NATO personnel now serving in Afghanistan. A third of the contingent is American, with another 12,000 U.S. troops operating there who are not under NATO command.

Unlike many countries, Canada committed fully to the NATO mission and did not limit how its troops can be used.

Military contingents from Germany, France, Italy and Spain, for example, are constrained by so-called national caveats, which restrict where their forces can be stationed and whether they are allowed to fight.

Manley was blunt in his assessment of the situation yesterday, saying more combat troops are needed in the volatile Khandahar province, which would allow Canadian forces to move more toward training of the Afghan National Army.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley said yesterday.

"There are simply not enough troops to ensure the job will be done in Kandahar province. We believe that Canadian casualties are greater than would otherwise be the case if additional troops were there."

He said if other countries were not forthcoming with additional troops, then Canada should indicate to NATO that it would be withdrawing from the the joint force.

"[Give] NATO until February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require - or we pull out," Manley said.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.' "

Manley also recommended the government acquire medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs and improvised explosive devices.

"I think what the panel has said is right on," Kippen said.

"I think they did a very good job, and the government will be well served by taking the advice in the report."

The opposition parties seemed unlikely to do that, though, with, the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois repeating their calls to pull out the troops by the 2009 deadline and the Liberals suggesting that was their favoured resolution.

It isn't just domestic politics at play - Sokolsky noted that this year's presidential election in the United States might change the face of the military coalition if a Democrat is elected.

While the war in Iraq is one of the main issues in the American campaign, Sokolsky feels the Afghanistan mission is seen as more justified, and that other nations would be more willing to co-operate with a Democrat than they are to ally themselves with George W. Bush.

"If the Democrats take office, you might well see them advancing the cause of Afghanistan," he said.

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DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHANE DION Training focus
BYLINE: CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: KITCHENER
WORD COUNT: 291

Liberals stand by deadline to abandon combat role

The federal Liberals, who want Canada to end its combat role in Kandahar, Afghanistan, just over a year from now, were ducking for cover yesterday after John Manley's assertion that there is "no operational logic" to setting such a firm deadline.

The report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, chaired by the former Liberal foreign affairs minister, suggested Canada "conditionally" extend its combat role, provided it could procure much-needed equipment and troop reinforcements from its NATO allies. The report also rejected for the peacekeeping role the Liberals favour.

Meeting with his MPs and senators in Kitchener, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said the party was still studying Manley's recommendations. However, he repeated the Liberals' official position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009.

The party would prefer Canada to continue in a training role, he said. "We want to be very active on training the Afghan forces, training the police and we want to focus on development."

Dion said Canada's role in Kandahar "is by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission three years. It's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan to help the people of Afghanistan."

Dion would not say if the party was prepared to force a confidence vote over the issue. "I need to read the report."

Deputy Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who recently visited Afghanistan with Dion, was not available for comment yesterday.

But Ignatieff told reporters before the report's release, "You can't go to Kandahar and not feel a tremendous sense of pride in what we are trying to do. The question is whether we have a strategy with NATO that allows us to succeed, and the caucus has to make a judgment about whether we've got a strategy going forward that can give the Canadian public a sense we're achieving something." KEYWORDS=CANADA

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SOURCETAG 0801230845

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ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, CP John Manley, chairman of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference yesterday in Ottawa, where he said the mission should be extended but only if much-needed equipment and NATO troop reinforcements are provided.

BYLINE: PETER ZIMONJIC, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 310

Mission at risk: Manley Inadequate NATO help cited

Canada should extend its mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 but only if NATO provides more manpower and equipment to bolster coalition forces, a government-appointed panel recommended yesterday.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, calls for urgent action to salvage Canada's operation against the Taliban.

"The mission is in jeopardy. There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province," Manley said.

"We are giving NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops that we require or we pull out."

The reports calls for NATO to find a partner country with a battle group of at least 1,000 troops to join Canada in the dangerous Kandahar region.

HELICOPTERS, DRONES

It also asks Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to secure more medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial drones.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan was appointed by Harper last October and given the task of advising government on possible options once Canada's current mission there ends.

The prime minister did not address reporters yesterday but issued a statement saying: "Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations ... before coming forward with our response."

The report criticized NATO's efforts in co-ordinating the 39 countries who have forces in Afghanistan and called on Harper to take charge of Canada's domestic and diplomatic efforts on the mission.

"The prime minister must step up and make this mission a priority with a cabinet committee and ... he must personally lead Canada's diplomatic effort," Manley said. "He must make (Canada's) voice heard."

Canada's commitment in Afghanistan was to end in February 2009. Harper considered extending the mission until 2011 but the Manley report went further by not tying Canada's mission to a specific end date.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion declined to comment yesterday but Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae described its recommendations as hawkish.

"To talk of a military victory I think is not what we should be aiming for. We should be aiming for political stability and a political solution."

NDP defence critic Dawn Black reiterated her party's stance on Afghanistan, saying: "I think that the troops need to come home. I think that we have to remove ourselves from a combat role."

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe seized on the lack of an end date to the mission calling the report "an open book for Stephen Harper."
KEYWORDS=CANADA

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BYLINE: GREG WESTON
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Next move NATO's Canadian troops in Afghanistan need more help from allies

In the days of fear and uncertainty that followed 9/11, it was then foreign affairs minister John Manley who finally raised a nation's battle cry, promising Canadians would stand "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the U.S. in a war on terrorism.

Back then, there was no talk of battleground Afghanistan, and even when our troops were eventually deployed, there wasn't supposed to be much of a war left to fight.

Now more than six years after Manley's first stand, he is again trying to steel the national resolve, imploring Canadians to stay the course in Afghanistan, a conflict that has already killed 78 of our soldiers.

The only difference is this time, it may be the Americans who come to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's hand-picked "panel of experts" headed by Manley released its report and recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan.

With Canada's current duties in Kandahar set to officially expire in February, 2009, the PM created the Manley group last fall in the obvious hope it would tell him what he needed to hear to extend the mission.

Harper cannot be disappointed by the Manley report.

Far from calling on a Canadian withdrawal or even reducing Canadian forces in Afghanistan next year, Manley's group recommends remaining at full strength in the dangerous Kandahar region indefinitely.

The one major condition for Canada's continuing role would be getting reinforcements of 1,000 combat troops from another NATO country,

roughly doubling Canada's current battle group deployment.

TOO FEW TROOPS

"What we are saying is the mission is in jeopardy," Manley said yesterday. "There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province."

If none of the other NATO countries agrees to come to the aid of our troops, Manley said, then Canada should pack up and get out of Afghanistan.

Manley's report also recommends that the Canadian forces urgently acquire helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft to reduce the amount of troop travel on roads littered with deadly enemy landmines.

All of which sounds logical enough in theory.

The problem is Canada doesn't have helicopters or unmanned drones to send to Afghanistan, and the choppers now on order from the U.S. aren't likely to be delivered for at least another three years.

But by far the biggest glitch in the Manley commission's otherwise laudable report is that the Harper government has already spent the past two years trying to convince NATO and its member countries to augment our forces in Kandahar or, better still, take over from Canada when our mission hits its best-before date a year from now. So far, no luck. And no wonder.

Most of the Manley report describes the situation in Afghanistan as dire, if not something just short of a losing battle.

The report begins: "We are trying to help a country whose recent history has been one long, unending tragedy, and whose prospects still appear bleak."

The panel's assessment of the situation "recognizes the enormity of the challenge: Regional instability; slow progress on reconstruction and development; mounting insecurity and violence; corruption, criminality and increasing poppy production."

DETERIORATING

But worst of all from a Canadian perspective, Manley admitted at a press conference yesterday that after six years of war, after billions of dollars and 78 Canadian lives lost, "the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving."

In the end, Canada's future in Afghanistan may well turn on the one NATO country that does have an abundance of helicopters, unmanned surveillance aircraft, and combat units that will go anywhere: The United States.

Shoulder to shoulder.

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SOURCETAG 0801230841
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
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SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 261

Filling Manley's prescription

Along with the economy, the federal election campaign expected this year will be dominated by a debate over Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

It's sure to be divisive. The federal opposition parties and most Canadians have said they want our troops out of the war zone as scheduled next year.

But a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley yesterday recommended otherwise.

"If we're not willing to lend our military resources when asked to do so by the United Nations, in a mission co-ordinated by NATO, in a country whose democratically elected government wants us and whose citizens desperately need us, then we wonder where and when Canada would do so," Manley said.

Manley wants more help from NATO, as well he should. And he wants more equipment, a reasonable request.

But otherwise he says we should stick it out in Kandahar province beyond 2009. In doing so, he is simply stating for the record what so many of us know in our hearts: Can we leave before the job is done?

To which others, quite reasonably, will ask: Will it ever be finished?

The only sure result of the report is a more heated debate -- not such a bad thing -- and more questions. Can we leave a war zone simply because it is dangerous?

Which countries should ante up? Germany? The United States? Have the British and Dutch, like Canada, already made enough of a contribution? Or are white, Western soldiers even the best ones suited for such a mission? And what role -- if any -- can Afghanistan's closer neighbours play in ensuring security and stability in the region?

Most important, is "peacebuilding" even possible in Afghanistan without more "peace enforcement?"

Manley's prescriptions for a successful Canadian mission are sensible: More diplomatic leadership; more effective humanitarian work by aid workers; more honest assessments of the mission.

We all know such measures are key to lasting peace and stability, but it's much easier said than done, especially without soldiers to pave the way.

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SOURCETAG 0801230838

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

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EDITION: Final

SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 10

ILLUSTRATION: drawing by Sue Dewar "MANLEY REPORT CANADA IN AFGHANISTAN" John Manley looks over his report and says:
"WE FEEL THAT CANADA SHOULD BE COMMITTED!"

WORD COUNT: 0

Editorial Cartoon

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PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 18
BYLINE: SEAN CHASE, SUN MEDIA
DATELINE: CFB PETAWAWA
WORD COUNT: 391

Report hits close to home For Petawawa, outcome of Afghan debate more than just words

Petawawa's next rotation of troops to Afghanistan after 2009 will depend on how the Manley panel's recommendations are received by Parliament.

The 90-page report released yesterday favours extending Canada's military assignment in Afghanistan indefinitely, with a renewed emphasis on training, reconstruction and diplomacy.

Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke Conservative MP Cheryl Gallant expects the panel's findings will encourage healthy debate among Canadians, who polls show are divided in support for the mission.

The Conservative caucus will be meeting later this week to review the recommendations. Gallant knows the subsequent debate will determine how many area soldiers could be deploying to Afghanistan over the next few years.

"Depending on how the debate goes, certainly one way or another there will be an impact," she said. "In Petawawa, we do one out of every three rotations."

Last fall, Prime Minister Stephen Harper assigned former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley to head a blue ribbon panel to consider four options for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

More than 2,000 soldiers from Base Petawawa, including the 1,000-man Third Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group, are scheduled to deploy overseas later this year. They will leave Kandahar in February, 2009, the current end date for the Canadian mission.

The panel concluded Canada's combat role should end when the Afghan National Army is prepared to provide security throughout Kandahar province. Extending the mission would be dependent on NATO sending in a fresh 1,000-man battle group and medium-lift helicopters.

NATO HAS ROLE TO PLAY

Petawawa Mayor Bob Sweet knows the report could mean more deployments for the soldiers of 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group and the base's other lodger units. He echoed the sentiment that NATO must relieve the Canadian, U.S., British and Dutch forces struggling to fight the Taliban in southern Afghanistan.

"The Canadian soldier has been on the sharp end of this," said Sweet. "They've been doing the heavy lifting on the front lines in a difficult and dangerous part of the world."

He also expressed concern more deployments will have an adverse effect on the town's economy. "Businesses suffer, there's no question about it. We feel the pain when they go overseas," he said.

Afghanistan has also been costly in lives. Since the base began deploying there in 2003, Petawawa has lost 22 soldiers.

The next major deployment from Petawawa comes in May when the 272 personnel from the Joint Task Force Headquarters leave for Kandahar. Then, the 2,000 plus Task Force 3-08, including the 3RCR battle group, the Provincial Reconstruction Team, the National Support Element and the Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams, head out this summer. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

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PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
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SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 486

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SOURCETAG 0801230766
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 261

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The only sure result of the report is a more heated debate -- not such a bad thing -- and more questions. Can we leave a war zone simply because it is dangerous?

Which countries should ante up? Germany? The United States? Have the British and Dutch, like Canada, already made enough of a contribution? Or are white, Western soldiers even the best ones suited for such a mission? And what role -- if any -- can Afghanistan's closer neighbours play in ensuring security and stability in the region?

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SOURCETAG 0801230765

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2008.01.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Editorial/Opinion

PAGE: 14

ILLUSTRATION: colour drawing by Sue Dewar "MANLEY REPORT CANADA IN AFGHANISTAN" John Manley looks over his report and says: "WE FEEL THAT CANADA SHOULD BE COMMITTED!"

WORD COUNT: 0

Editorial Cartoon

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SOURCETAG 0801230755
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 5
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHANE DION Training focus
BYLINE: CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: KITCHENER
WORD COUNT: 291

Liberals stand by deadline to abandon combat role

The federal Liberals, who want Canada to end its combat role in Kandahar, Afghanistan, just over a year from now, were ducking for cover yesterday after John Manley's assertion that there is "no operational logic" to setting such a firm deadline.

The report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, chaired by the former Liberal foreign affairs minister, suggested Canada "conditionally" extend its combat role, provided it could procure much-needed equipment and troop reinforcements from its NATO allies. The report also rejected for the peacekeeping role the Liberals favour.

Meeting with his MPs and senators in Kitchener, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said the party was still studying Manley's recommendations. However, he repeated the Liberals' official position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009.

The party would prefer Canada to continue in a training role, he said. "We want to be very active on training the Afghan forces, training the police and we want to focus on development."

Dion said Canada's role in Kandahar "is by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission three years. It's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan to help the people of Afghanistan."

Dion would not say if the party was prepared to force a confidence vote over the issue. "I need to read the report."

Deputy Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who recently visited Afghanistan with Dion, was not available for comment yesterday.

But Ignatieff told reporters before the report's release, "You can't go to Kandahar and not feel a tremendous sense of pride in what we are trying to do. The question is whether we have a strategy with NATO that allows us to succeed, and the caucus has to make a judgment about whether we've got a strategy going forward that can give the Canadian public a sense we're achieving something." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

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SOURCETAG 0801230754

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 5

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press John Manley, chairman of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference yesterday in Ottawa, where he said the mission should be extended but only if much-needed equipment and NATO troop reinforcements are provided.

BYLINE: PETER ZIMONJIC, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 310

Mission at risk: Manley Inadequate NATO help cited

Canada should extend its mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 but only if NATO provides more manpower and equipment to bolster coalition forces, a government-appointed panel recommended yesterday.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, calls for urgent action to salvage Canada's operation against the Taliban.

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"We are giving NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops that we require or we pull out."

The reports calls for NATO to find a partner country with a battle group of at least 1,000 troops to join Canada in the dangerous Kandahar region.

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It also asks Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to secure more medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial drones.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan was appointed by Harper last October and given the task of advising government on possible options once Canada's current mission there ends.

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Canada's commitment in Afghanistan was to end in February 2009. Harper considered extending the mission until 2011 but the Manley report went further by not tying Canada's mission to a specific end date.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion declined to comment yesterday but Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae described its recommendations as hawkish.

"To talk of a military victory I think is not what we should be aiming for. We should be aiming for political stability and a political solution."

NDP defence critic Dawn Black reiterated her party's stance on Afghanistan, saying: "I think that the troops need to come home. I think that we have to remove ourselves from a combat role."

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KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

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PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: Editorial

PAGE: A6

WORD COUNT: 361

Manley offers wise course

CANADA'S role in Afghanistan is important, this newspaper has long argued - to both nations, to the NATO alliance to which we belong, and to the broader global battle against terrorism. An independent panel headed by former Liberal cabinet heavyweight John Manley, struck last October by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to look at options for Canada's future in Afghanistan, agrees.

But its final report, released on Tuesday, also wisely insists that Canada's commitment to the mission cannot be "open-ended or faint-hearted," meaning that we need help from our allies and courage to stick with what has tragically been shown to be a dangerous assignment.

To all the opposition parties, which have demanded Canada end its military mission in February 2009, the panel's message is logical and clear: If the mission is important now, it will be important in a year, when the job almost certainly still won't be done.

But Mr. Manley also put the onus for staying squarely where it belongs, calling on NATO to provide more military support from other alliance members for the mission in the dangerous Kandahar region.

Otherwise, the report recommends, and we strongly agree, Canada should tell NATO and Afghanistan that when the current deployment ends next February, this country will be leaving Kandahar.

The United States, Great Britain and Holland have also put their troops in the toughest, southern areas of Afghanistan; but other NATO allies, notably Germany, Italy and Spain, have resisted allowing their soldiers to leave zones in the relatively much safer north. Canada has called on those reluctant NATO allies to do more, to little avail. Mr. Manley is right.

Unless others are willing to shoulder a fairer load, Canada should fulfil its tour and depart.

That's not to say the issue isn't important to this country. But Canada cannot win this fight on its own.

Mr. Manley's panel also, in setting conditions for extending our stay, rightly says Ottawa must provide more helicopters - lift capacity - to our troops, so that improvised explosive devices on roads can more frequently be avoided.

The panel wisely advises that if Canadian troops stay, they should transition to an increased training role, teaching the Afghan army how to defend the country effectively.

Ottawa should endorse this report and put it to our reluctant NATO allies: Either pitch in or we're done.

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PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A3

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Alison Auld

ILLUSTRATION: John Manley, chairman of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, sits with panel members Derek Burney and Pamela Wallin. (FRED CHARTRAND / CP)

WORD COUNT: 702

Dad: 'I like what I see'; Nova Scotian among relatives of slain Canadian soldiers who praise Manley report

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report Tuesday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies - contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis said in an interview from Halifax. Davis's son, Bridgewater native Cpl. Paul Davis, was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results - that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was "smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

"Manley's reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora, Ont.

"But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley said the mission in Afghanistan is "in jeopardy" if NATO allies don't commit to a bigger role in the south, which has been hit by increased insurgent attacks.

The former Liberal foreign affairs minister urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

The father of Canada's only female combat soldier to die in battle supports the Manley report's main recommendations to extend the mission.

Capt. Nicola Goddard, who attended high school in Antigonish while her father was a professor at St. Francis Xavier University, died May 17, 2006, in a grenade attack in Panjwahi district. Tim Goddard said extending the mission to achieve the goal is "an appropriate way to go" and he believes his daughter would agree.

He said she had expressed concerns about the poverty and lack of schooling for children in the country.

"It was abhorrent to her and she felt it was important we contribute to correcting that," he said from Calgary.

It makes sense, said Goddard, to bolster the number of troops policing Kandahar province, which is roughly the size of Nova Scotia.

"We've got 2,500 troops and 750 maybe go outside the wire? How would we possibly control Nova Scotia with 750 troops?" he said. "There needs to be a bigger, more physical presence outside the wire, and if takes 1000 troops, another battle group coming in from another country, so be it."

But changing the mission to being only mentors and teachers could prove difficult, said Goddard.

"You can't just say, 'OK, we're going to just stay in the classrooms now and just teach the (Afghan army) how to do it while not going out and engaging insurgents," he added.

"I think there's not one counter insurgency that's been defeated by an imported army. The Afghans have to win this. All we're doing is helping and providing the human support in terms of training."

Manley suggested Ottawa take the two demands to NATO with the understanding that if it hasn't committed troops by February 2009, Canada will pull out.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: we cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar," he said. "We are gone."

All of the family members said they would be satisfied if Canadian troops stayed beyond 2009 if it meant the military could increase security, destabilize the Taliban and help in the reconstruction effort.

They will wait to see what NATO officials do in April when they meet in Romania.

"If Canada were to pull back, I strongly believe that would be the end of NATO," Davis said. "So if NATO wants to take this mission seriously, then I think they have to listen to Manley's report. They don't have a choice."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper didn't comment on the report Tuesday, saying he needed some time to review it.

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SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
BYLINE: Stephen Maher Ottawa Bureau
WORD COUNT: 747

A fresh perspective, but with a dash of unhealthy politics

LAST OCTOBER, when Stephen Harper announced that he was appointing former Liberal foreign minister John Manley to lead a panel to consider what Canada should do in Afghanistan, he said that he wanted to "take the unhealthy politics of a minority government out of a decision that has wide-ranging implications for Canada for a long time to come."

In a sense, the report achieved that objective, providing a fresh perspective on a difficult problem by an impressive group of Canadians.

In another sense, though, the report is just part of unhealthy politics as usual.

The very appointment of Mr. Manley served as a reminder that it was the Liberals who sent the Canadian troops to Afghanistan in the first place.

And the content of the report Mr. Manley produced - although it is critical of Mr. Harper - will be useful in Mr. Harper's war of attrition with the Liberal party.

The report gives a non-partisan stamp of approval to the Tory government's position on Afghanistan. It recommends Canada keep its troops in the Kandahar meat-grinder until the Afghan government can take over from the Canadians - as long as another NATO country agrees to help out.

When Mr. Harper appointed the panel, Mr. Dion welcomed it but said: "It should not be a pretext for the government to postpone what the government has to do, and that's to notify NATO and the government of Afghanistan that our combat mission in Kandahar will end in February 2009."

Mr. Manley's report rejected the idea of any firm exit date, saying: "The timing of that withdrawal depends largely on increasing capacities of the Afghan army and police" - certainly not before 2011.

So Mr. Dion endorsed the panel but said he didn't want it to oppose his position. The panel then did oppose his position. On Tuesday, Mr. Dion said he needs time to read the report, but he reiterated that he doesn't want the combat mission to go beyond 2009.

He seems to have played a difficult position badly.

Former leadership rival Bob Rae said that the Liberals might, though, be open to changing that position after "a period of intense discussion and consideration."

The last time MPs voted on the Afghanistan mission the caucus was divided, with some Liberal MPs, including all the Nova Scotians, voting with the government. Those MPs likely hope that Mr. Dion now rethinks his position and signs on to the Manley report, something he is unlikely to want to do.

There are several reasons for him to stick to his position. For one, the polls show Canadians dislike Canada's Afghan combat mission, which has taken 77 lives. A Strategic Counsel poll last week showed only 17 per cent of Canadians want our troops to continue fighting the Taliban. Thirty-one per cent want the troops to stay in Afghanistan but hand off the combat role to another NATO country. Forty-seven per cent want the troops to come home as soon as possible.

Secondly, if Mr. Dion changes his position he will open himself up to attacks that he has flip-flopped, both from the Tories and from the NDP, who are tanking in the polls and keen to draw attention to the fact that their position is in line with Canadian public opinion.

The NDP wants the troops to be withdrawn right now, the only possible position for them given their supporters' strong feelings on the subject. Their explanations about how this should happen and what should happen in Afghanistan after Canada's withdrawal are not very detailed, but they are in line with the views of many Canadians. That position, though, does not seem to be helping them in the polls.

When Mr. Harper appointed Mr. Manley, he pointed out that following polls isn't always the way to success.

"I don't think the people of Canada, when they're addressing issues like Afghanistan, are going to cast a judgment on whether they like or don't like a government's policy," he said. "I think what they are going to cast a judgment on is whether they trust the government's leadership and judgment on such a question."

When he delivered his report on Tuesday, Mr. Manley made the same point.

"It's very easy to say public opinion says pull the troops out," he said. "But my experience is that people don't necessarily vote on their opinion on a given issue. People understand that this is complicated. Many of them are going to vote for a party that they think can handle an issue that's complicated."

Mr. Dion can now flip-flop, he can stick to his position or he can play for time, delaying any decision until after a NATO meeting in April. None of those options looks great. Whichever choice Mr. Dion makes, expect Mr. Harper, as usual, to remain a step or two ahead.

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PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Alexander Panetta

WORD COUNT: 918

Manley: Stay the course; Special panel says Afghan mission should continue with more troops, better equipment

OTTAWA - The call for a long-term extension of Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan appeared to win no plaudits from federal opposition parties - all of whom favour an end to Canada's current military role next year.

The minority Conservative government has been isolated against all three opposition parties, who say Canada should scale back its fighting efforts when its current commitment expires in 13 months.

None showed any signs of relenting Tuesday after a federal panel proposed an open-ended commitment.

The Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois leaders reiterated their earlier preference for a February 2009 overhaul of the mission that would reduce Canada's combat role in Kandahar province.

This after a panel headed by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, said Canadian soldiers should remain indefinitely, on two conditions.

The blue-ribbon panel said Canadians should keep fighting in Kandahar as long as they get more foreign troops to help them and better equipment to protect them.

The panel declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

Manley delivered his 90-page report Tuesday to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who said he would need a few days to digest it.

The NDP and Bloc suggested the prime minister got the political fig leaf he wanted when he appointed a group of pro-military panellists, including Manley, three months ago.

Given Manley's prominent status within the Liberal party, leader Stephane Dion was careful to avoid criticizing the report. He promised to examine it but quickly added that his party has "good reasons" for wanting a pullout next February.

The panel chair himself admitted that the mission has not gone well. Even as he endorsed an extension, Manley noted insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile in Afghanistan.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded Afghanistan has made economic and social progress in spite of its deteriorating security situation.

It urged the Canadian government to play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan.

The panel noted that only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan - compared with 2,500 soldiers.

Ottawa needs to show greater diplomatic leadership, the report says, and also needs to stop sugarcoating the realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

The panel questioned why Canadian diplomats appear to be muzzled and why aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar are then prevented from leaving the base to work on reconstruction projects.

But Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause.

He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

- The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.
- The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

"(Give) NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require - or we pull out," Manley said.

"That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.'"

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament.

"Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations with cabinet and our caucus before coming forward with our response," Harper said.

Dion said he had not yet read the report and declined to offer detailed comment.

However, he repeated the party's long-held position that Canada's combat mission must end as scheduled in February 2009, although Canada could continue to play a role in construction, training and humanitarian aid.

"We have strong reasons for that," he said at a Liberal caucus meeting in Kitchener, Ont.

"We think it's by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission during three years and it's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan."

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe said Manley had given Harper more than he had asked for and said the prime minister is trying to buy time until he can win a majority government.

"Canadian and Quebec troops have done their part," he said.

The NDP was most dismissive of the report and reiterated its call for a 2009 pullout.

"At a time when Canada should be drastically changing course to help the Afghan people build a lasting peace in the region, this report is recommending more of the same," said NDP Leader Jack Layton.

"The combat role is the wrong role for Canada and it's not making life more secure for Afghans."

The blue-ribbon report is sure to reignite debate over one of the thorniest issues facing Parliament and the Conservatives.

Polls suggest most Canadians would like to see Canadian troops come home as scheduled next year.

Harper has promised a vote on the mission's future, and Canada's NATO allies need to be informed by May or June at the latest.

Manley emphasized that Canada's mission in Afghanistan simply cannot be wound down in a year. He said it makes no sense to set an end date on the mission at this point when so much work remains to be done.

The report said it's unrealistic to expect that Afghanistan - a country racked by ancient tribal hostilities and decades of warfare - could soon boast European- or North American-style stability.

But it said Afghanistan should not be abandoned until the Afghan National Army is able to defend the country on its own. The force is recruiting

steadily and is expected to almost double to 80,000 soldiers by May 2010.

"We found no operational logic around ending the mission in February 2009 or any real ability to complete the job by that date," Manley said.

Days after naming the panel, the Conservative throne speech made it clear the government wanted to maintain the military mission in Afghanistan until at least 2011.

All evidence since then suggests planning has continued behind the scenes based on that scenario.

Regiments to cover the next three years have already been identified by staff officers at the Defence Department.

A source said the call went out within the army in November for reservists to volunteer for rotations in the fall of 2010.

Foreign Affairs, meanwhile, is staffing positions at the provincial reconstruction base in Kandahar city well into 2009.

Earlier this month, the Defence Department posted a call for tenders on major construction projects worth from \$500,000 to \$10 million in Kandahar, suggesting planners don't anticipate a major shift of Canadian operations in just 12 months.

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PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: National Affairs

BYLINE: Travers, James

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 596

Manley report a mixed blessing for two parties

If leaving Afghanistan in the lurch or exacerbating a NATO crisis were viable options for John Manley, he would not have been Stephen Harper's choice to head the panel that reported Tuesday. So it's no surprise that the former Liberal deputy prime minister recommends continuing Canada's polarizing military effort in one of the world's most dangerous places.

That's what the prime minister anticipated in October when he asked Manley and four other relatively like-minded Canadians to review the Kandahar mission and identify the best course beyond February 2009 when it's set to end. What Harper should also have foreseen is that someone with Manley's foreign affairs and international development expertise - he's a CARE Canada director - would grasp that current military and reconstruction strategies are failing a failed state. Equally important, the prime minister should have known that Manley's habitual candour would lead to the public airing of awkward truths.

It's that combination of known components that made Tuesday's report a mixed blessing for ruling Conservatives and Opposition Liberals. While siding with the government in staying the Afghanistan course, Manley exposes the status quo as unacceptable. Success isn't simply battling the Taliban to a stalemate, avoiding a NATO schism or being seen to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Uncle Sam. It demands that partners and regional powers find the now-missing resolve to counter a determined insurgency, provide the minimum cash and security necessary to reconstruct the country, root out Kabul's endemic corruption and ultimately find a diplomatic solution to a conflict that won't be won by force alone.

Manley isn't just telling Harper what he wants to hear, he's telling Canadians what they need to know: Afghanistan is a worthy project that can't be put right quickly or cheaply. To retreat before the national army is ready to replace foreign troops would plunge the country back into civil war, reopen its borders to al-Qaida and further slow progress toward modernity.

Part of Manley's preferred solution is to disconnect the mission from controversial and essentially meaningless dates and to instead concentrate on results. That means focusing on retraining the army while re-emphasizing development and diplomacy in a mission now dominated by the military. It

means not holding out false hope that Afghanistan is about to become a model democracy, not obscuring vexed problems with statistics about, say, the numbers of girls in school and not asking Canadians to let patriotism blind their judgment.

Along with encouraging a broader national debate, Manley's layered report will put pressure on Harper as well as Stéphane Dion to build a consensus rather than use Afghanistan as a wedge political issue. It implies that the prime minister must be more forthright about the challenges as well as more insistent that allies share the deadly risks. It suggests that the Liberal party Manley once hoped to lead should offer a more sophisticated, nuanced and realistic policy alternative than an arbitrary withdrawal that might wreck NATO as well as Canada's reputation.

This report is not the rubber stamp the prime minister wanted when he appointed the panel and it's far from an endorsement of Liberal or other opposition party positions. Instead it's Manley's consistent, predictable plea for Canada and its friends to keep their promises to a country in dire straits.

James Travers is a national affairs columnist.

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SECTION: The Province/Canada

PAGE: A5

SOURCE: THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATELINE: Ottawa

ILLUSTRATION: John Manley, chairman of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference in Ottawa Tuesday. Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 502

Panel recommends long-term extension of Afghan mission, with two conditions; Manley urges more foreign help, better equipment

A clarion call for an open-ended extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan fell on stoney ground Tuesday among the majority opposition in Parliament.

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper follows the advice of his blue-ribbon panel, the immediate reaction suggests his Conservatives could lose a vote on extending the Afghan mission.

The leaders of all three opposition parties reaffirmed their long-stated view that Canada should scale back or retool when the current military commitment runs out in 13 months.

Their leeringness of an extended mission flies in the face of a multi-year extension recommended by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

The panel suggested Canada's Kandahar mission should continue indefinitely on two conditions: that our soldiers get 1,000 more foreign troops to help them, and better equipment to protect them.

Manley declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

He delivered his 90-page report to the prime minister on Tuesday and Harper said he would need a few days to digest it. Even as Manley endorsed an extension, he admitted the mission has gone badly. Insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress - with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example.

But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghanistan approach and show leadership in non-military areas.

It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned, for instance, why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan - a miniscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers stationed there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base.

Instead an acceleration of aid projects - especially highly visible ones such as new hospitals or irrigation systems - would be an effective way of gaining local support, the panel said. The panel also asked Ottawa to stop sugarcoating the difficult realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

Despite its challenges, Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause. He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

- The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.
- The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

"(Give) NATO 'til February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require - or we pull out," Manley said. "That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: 'We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.'"

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament about how to proceed.

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PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: National

PAGE: A11

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Bruce Cheadle

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 586

Manley report sets up new political dynamic; Former Grit cabinet minister savages former party's stance on Afghanistan

It was supposed to bridge partisan divides in a fractious minority Parliament.

But the panel report on the future of the Afghanistan military mission, commissioned last October by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and delivered Tuesday, looks more like a 90-page rolled up newspaper with which to smack the Liberals on the nose.

Led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, the five-member panel issued a clarion call for Canada to continue its combat mission indefinitely in the war-racked country - albeit on condition that NATO provides Canada more robust support.

At its core, the panel's central recommendation couldn't be more in tune with Harper's Conservative government: the Afghan military mission embodies Canada's renewed commitment to robust internationalism and cannot be abandoned. Full stop.

Manley, the blue-chip Grit who served as Jean Chretien's foreign affairs minister, did nothing to soften the message at a news conference.

After invoking the name of Liberal icon Lester Pearson, Manley ripped into the left flank of his own party brethren.

"The world isn't a pretty place," Manley boomed.

"But I happen to believe that the people that came before me in the Liberal party, that believed in a strong role for Canada on the international stage, would say: there are times when we have to count. There are times when it matters. We're not prepared to retreat under the U.S. missile shield and live in Fortress North America. We're prepared to be out there and we're prepared to pay the price, because that's what you expect of a country like Canada." For a Liberal party that only recently achieved a fragile internal consensus on the Afghan question, the report is highly problematic and

Manley's bombast is incendiary.

"Our current position, as you know, is that the combat mission end in February 2009," Liberal Leader Stephane Dion emerged to say at a Liberal caucus meeting in Kitchener, Ont.

His foreign affairs critic, Bob Rae, was more equivocal: "I think we're in for a period of intense discussion and consideration."

Conservative government insiders immediately leapt on the perceived divergence to e-mail reporters off-the-record jibes alleging Liberal inconsistency.

But Liberals quietly conceded they need to keep their powder dry. Some noted that if NATO fails to meet the conditions set by the Manley panel during a summit in early April, the combat recommendation becomes moot and the Conservative government will be back under the gun.

Harper himself refused to comment on the report Tuesday, instead leaving his PMO underlings to snipe from the bushes.

But reaction from the political left was loud, swift and predictable.

"At a time when Canada should be drastically changing course to help the Afghan people build a lasting peace in the region, this report is recommending more of the same," said NDP Leader Jack Layton.

Elizabeth May of the Green Party likened the report to pouring fuel on a fire.

The Canadian Peace Alliance said the five panelists, "which represent a very small sector of pro-George Bush Canadians, have delivered a pre-ordained document designed to support the Conservative government's position."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations lauded the report as sensible and achievable.

None of the opinions will matter a whit when the House of Commons resumes after a six-week break on Jan. 28.

It is the Liberals, the party that first sent Canadian troops into Afghanistan in 2002, who will determine whether the Manley report serves as a blueprint or triggers a spring election.

Ernie Regehr, a former founder of Project Ploughshares who's now with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ont., said the report failed to meet its mandate.

"When the prime minister appointed the panel, he said the idea here is to take the complications of a minority Parliament out of it," said Regehr.

"Well, the implication is you're trying to find a majority viewpoint here and not press ahead with a minority government's point of view. I think they produced a report that pretty much stays with the minority Parliament problem."

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PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Alison Auld

DATELINE: HALIFAX

WORD COUNT: 434

Fallen soldiers' families praise military report

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report Tuesday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies - contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results - that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was "smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

"Manley's reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora, Ont.

"But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley said the mission in Afghanistan is "in jeopardy" if NATO allies don't commit to a bigger role in the south, which has been hit by increased insurgent attacks.

The former Liberal foreign affairs minister urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

Julie Mason, whose husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh was killed in 2006, said she watched the release of the report closely to see what it would recommend for a mission she feels has become deeply politicized over the last few years.

"They need better equipment and they need more equipment and (the Conservatives) have never been a really big party for getting that for them," she said from her home in Shilo, Man.

"They definitely need to focus on getting what these soldiers need to do their job properly."

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PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2008.01.23

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: THE CANADIAN PRESS

BYLINE: Alexander Panetta

DATELINE: OTTAWA

ILLUSTRATION: John Manley, chairman of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference in Ottawa Tuesday. - Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 350

Panel recommends long-term extension of Afghan mission

A clarion call for an open-ended extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan fell on stoney ground Tuesday among the majority opposition in Parliament.

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper follows the advice of his blue-ribbon panel, the immediate reaction suggests his Conservatives could lose a vote on extending the Afghan mission.

The leaders of all three opposition parties reaffirmed their long-stated view that Canada should scale back or retool when the current military commitment runs out in 13 months.

Their leeringness of an extended mission flies in the face of a multi-year extension recommended by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

The panel suggested Canada's Kandahar mission should continue indefinitely on two conditions: that our soldiers get 1,000 more foreign troops to help them, and better equipment to protect them.

Manley declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

He delivered his 90-page report to the prime minister on Tuesday and Harper said he would need a few days to digest it.

Even as Manley endorsed an extension, he admitted the mission has gone badly. Insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile.

"The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

"We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress - with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example.

But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghanistan approach and show leadership in non-military areas.

It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned, for instance, why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan - a miniscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers stationed there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base.

That cautious stance might reduce verbal gaffes by diplomats and protect aid workers, the panel said, but it doesn't help win hearts and minds either in Afghanistan or in Canada.

Instead an acceleration of aid projects - especially highly visible ones such as new hospitals or irrigation systems - would be an effective way of gaining local support, the panel said.

The panel also asked Ottawa to stop sugarcoating the difficult realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 123

Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praise Manley report

HALIFAX _ The families of several Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are praising a report today that recommends troops get better equipment and that NATO take on a greater role in the country.

Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006, says it's time NATO stepped up and offered more assistance in the volatile southern region where Canada is operating.

He says Canada can't be expected to bear the brunt of the responsibility without help.

Julie Mason lost her husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh in 2006 and says it's been a longstanding complaint that soldiers don't have the gear they need to do their jobs.

Both relatives were responding to a report by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

Manley says Canada's mission is noble and justifiable, but is doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 114

Duceppe says Harper must be clear with Canadians about Afghan mission

MONTREAL _ Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says Prime Minister Stephen Harper must be frank with Canadians about the future of the country's military mission in Afghanistan.

Duceppe told a news conference in Montreal today that a federal panel examining the mission has given Harper more than he hoped.

The panel led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley says Canadian troops should stay in Afghanistan indefinitely but need help from NATO allies and more equipment.

Duceppe says Harper is trying to buy time with the controversial mission until he can win a majority government in a federal election.

But the sovereigntist leader says Harper must be clear about the future role to be played by Canadian troops and how long they will be in the wartorn country.

Duceppe says he favours ending the combat role by February 2009.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 327

CBC National News, Tuesday, Jan. 22

OTTAWA _ Canada's military should remain in Afghanistan beyond February 2009, contingent on more support in terms of troops and equipment, according to a panel led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley; the panel is not specific about how long Canada's mission in Afghanistan should last; Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he has not yet read the report. CVD.

TORONTO _ The recommendations in John Manley's report fall under the categories of leadership, strategic planning, aid in Afghanistan, force protection and diplomacy; Manley says Prime Minister Stephen Harper must make the mission a top priority. CVD.

TORONTO _ The Toronto stock market closes almost 509 points ahead; the Bank of Canada cuts its key lending rate by a quarter of a percentage point to four per cent in a bid to keep the effects of a U.S. slowdown from spilling over into Canada; the U.S. Federal Reserve also cuts rates. CVD.

TORONTO _ The goal of the interest rate cuts is to increase stability in the economy; some analysts say that the real estate industry is becoming less volatile. MAIN ELEMENTS CVD.

OTTAWA _ Some analysts say that the market will level out in the next couple of weeks. CVD.

LONDON _ Global markets react to fears that a possible U.S. recession will cause a worldwide economic slowdown. CVD.

UNDATED _ A nearly two-day power shortage in the Gaza Strip eases as Israel heeds international pleas and lifts a blockade at border crossings into the impoverished region. CVD.

UNDATED _ Republican Fred Thompson quits the presidential race after weak showings in early primary and caucus states. CVD.

VANCOUVER _ B.C. teenager Willow Kinloch alleges she was assaulted and unlawfully confined by Victoria police when she was just 15; police surveillance videotape shows Kinloch detained in a padded cell, where police officers are seen holding her down, handcuffing her, tying her feet and tethering her to the cell door for four hours. CHECKING.

NEW YORK _ Actor Heath Ledger is found dead at age 28, with sleeping pills near his body

OTTAWA _ Many Canadians among the nominees for this year's Oscars. CVD.

UNDATED _ The striking Hollywood writers will not picket the Grammy Awards. CVD.

The Canadian Press - Toronto

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1640

The Canadian Press News Budget, Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008

Here's a recap of top stories for editions of Wednesday, Jan. 23, moved as of 23:00 ET. The next coverage advisory will move at about 13:00 with fresh details on coverage for Thursday editions. If you have any questions, contact CP's National Desk at 416-507-2150.

For queries about non-Canadian Press syndicated copy, call the Specials Desk at 416-507-2152.

CANADA-AGHANISTAN

OTTAWA _ Canada should extend its military mission in Afghanistan but only if it gets more equipment and if other countries step up with troops, says a high-profile panel appointed by the prime minister. The panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley says Canada's mission is noble and justifiable but is doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden. Now it's up to Parliament to deal with the hot-button issue. 1,300 words. By Alexander Panetta. See CP Photos FXC101-103. BC-Manley-Afghan-Report, 8th Writethru. Moved.

See also:

_ BC-Manley-Afghan-Highlights. Moved.

_ BC-Manley-Afghan-QuickFacts. Moved.

_ BC-Manley-Afghan-Chronology. Moved.

OTTAWA _ It could very well fall to the United States to fulfil the conditions set down by a blue-ribbon panel for Canada's continued involvement in the Afghan war, but seasoned international observers say the Harper government should not let European allies off the hook. 900 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-Manley-Afghan-Conditions. Moved.

OTTAWA _ When Stephen Harper appointed former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley to lead a panel on the future of the Afghan military mission, the Conservative prime minister was counting on defusing one of Canada's most contentious public policy decisions. Now that Manley's delivered his report calling for a continued Canadian combat mission without end date, his Liberal opponents face a political minefield. 720 words. By Bruce Cheadle. See Photos OTTH101-105. BC-Manley-Afghan-Politics. Moved.

OTTAWA_ Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he can't comment on the recommendations in the Manley Afghan report until he has a chance to read it, but that the party's position is that the Canadian combat mission in the war-torn country should not be extended beyond 2009. Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae, however, wouldn't rule out accepting Manley's suggestion that the mission be extended provided two key conditions are met. 750 words. By Joan Bryden. BC-Manley-Afghan-Liberals, 1st Writethru. Moved.

OTTAWA _ A leading international aid group is criticizing the Manley panel's report on Afghanistan for urging that a higher priority be given to projects that address immediate needs in Kandahar. World Vision Canada says the focus should be on long-term projects that bring about lasting change in the war-torn country. 750 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-Manley-Afghan-Development. Moved.

HALIFAX - The families of some Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report Tuesday that stepped up pressure on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops. But one relative said the report merely restates the obvious _ that Canada needs more help from its international allies. 1,000 words. By Alison Auld. BC-Manley-Afghan-Families, 2nd Writethru. Moved.

MARKETS-ECONOMY

TORONTO _ North American markets heaved a sigh of relief Tuesday as central banks in Canada and the United States slashed interest rates and eased some of the tension building up over a possible U.S. recession. But experts were quick to point out that the one-day revival was not a sign that the rocky ride is anywhere near over for global markets. 1,200 words. By David Friend. See Graphics, Photos. BC-Stock-Markets, 7th Writethru. Moved Business (B) and General (G).

TORONTO _ Canadians looking to put their money into RRSP investments have got some tough decisions to make after the turmoil in global stock markets. Foreign investments in overseas markets have helped fuel growth in RRSPs since the federal government took off limits on foreign investing. But markets in Asia and Latin America have dropped significantly so the choices during this RRSP season are even more difficult to make. 670 words. By Romina Maurino. BC-Stock-Markets-RRSPs. Moved Business (B) and General (G).

See also: BC-Interest-Rates and BC-Rates-Surprise.

TORONTO _ Manufacturing jobs will continue to be under pressure, but the Ontario economy is not in danger of falling into a recession despite deepening fears of a major slowdown in the United States, Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday. McGuinty said the latest projections from economists are that Ontario's economy will continue to grow in the foreseeable future, notwithstanding the fact the province relies heavily on exports to the U.S. 625 words. By Keith Leslie. BC-Ont-Economy-McGuinty, 2nd Writethru. Moved regional (C) and Business (B).

OTHER CANADIAN

MONTREAL _ A decision forcing Quebec provincial police to end dangerous solo patrols in remote areas is being looked on with envy by their Ontario counterparts, who claim only luck has prevented the shooting tragedies that have shaken the RCMP. The union representing OPP officers is calling on Ottawa to respect its promise to address police staffing shortages. 600 words. By Jonathan Montpetit. BC-Police-Shortages. Moved.

TORONTO _ A decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal in the case of Hamilton Spectator reporter Ken Peters, who was found guilty of contempt

in 2004 for refusing to reveal the identity of a confidential source, will set an important precedent, the journalist's lawyer said Tuesday. Peters was ordered to pay \$31,600 in legal costs after he refused to disclose the identity of a person who was on hand when he received documents alleging incidents of abuse at the St. Elizabeth Villa retirement home in Hamilton. 550 words. By Gregory Bonnell. BC-CRAFT-Secret-Sources, 2nd Writethru. Moved.

TORONTO _ A retired Ottawa police superintendent whose work helped to convict Romeo Phillion on a murder charge nearly 40 years ago said Tuesday he can't remember the details of a preliminary investigation that could have prevented what Phillion has long insisted was a wrongful conviction. John McCombie said he ``had absolutely no recollection" of an investigation that could have cleared Phillion's name in the fatal 1967 stabbing of an Ottawa firefighter. 500 words. By Jered Stuffco. BC-Phillion-Conviction, 2nd Writethru. Moved.

VANCOUVER _ The skunky smell of marijuana wafted into the main lobby of provincial court Tuesday, where British Columbia's self-proclaimed "prince of pot" attended a court hearing on his plea bargain with the United States. 500 words. By Terri Theodore. BC-Pot-Prince, 1st Writethru. Moved.

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - A beleaguered Newfoundland health board that has become the subject of a judicial inquiry over faulty breast cancer tests will try Wednesday to block the release of peer review audits, a move victims fear could derail the inquiry itself. In a case that pits the public's right to know versus the rights to privacy, lawyers for Eastern Health will argue before the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador that releasing the audits would discourage peer reviewers from being frank in their assessments, and therefore could compromise patient safety. 700 words. By Tara Brautigam. BC-NL-Cancer-Test-Errors. Moved.

TORONTO _ Millions of people take over-the-counter cough medicines for respiratory infections each year, but a review of studies sheds new light on their effectiveness. Many of these remedies aimed at children under two were taken off the market recently. 820 words. By Sheryl Ubelacker. BC-Cough-Medicines, 1st Writethru. Moved General (G) and Lifestyles (L).

HALIFAX IMP Group chairman Ken Rowe _ who founded Atlantic Canada's largest aerospace firm _ cautioned Tuesday that Ottawa must secure intellectual property rights from Boeing and Lockheed Martin for a new fleet of military transport planes, if promises of long-term economic spinoffs are to come true. 800 words. By Michael Tutton. BC-Military-Planes-Spinoffs, 3rd Writethru. Moved General (G) and Business (B).

MONTREAL _ Vincent Geracitano may be at least a year away from going on air with a national TV channel that broadcasts all crime, all the time. But a recent CRTC decision will give the Montreal businessman six cents a month from each cable subscriber in Quebec, which means close to \$1 million a year for Avis de recherche, the French equivalent of the All Points Bulletin channel he wants to launch elsewhere in Canada. 600 words. By Peter Rakobowchuk. BC-All Points-TV. Moved General (G) and Entertainment (E).

EDMONTON _ Pam Barrett was the firecracker of Alberta politics who fought for the little guy, never backed away from a scrap and who as one-time leader of the province's New Democrats became a respected opponent of her political foes. Barrett, 54, died in hospital Monday night after a two-year battle with cancer. 800 words. By Jim Macdonald. BC-OBIT-Barrett, 3rd Writethru. Moved.

TORONTO _ Ontario can't wait until the end of the year to decide whether to join other provinces by banning smoking in cars carrying kids, health advocates said Tuesday as they called on the Liberals to mark national non-smoking week by moving ahead with the ban. A private member's bill,

which would ban drivers from smoking while carrying young passengers, has been introduced but isn't scheduled for debate until October. Health groups say that's too late for many youngsters, who in the meantime are being exposed to harmful second-hand smoke, increasing their risk for infections, asthma and heart disease. 600 words. By Chinta Puxley. BC-Smoking-Cars-Kids, 2nd Writethru. Moved Regional (C).

VICTORIA _ B.C. Housing Minister Rich Coleman announced a new initiative Tuesday to fight the burgeoning homelessness in his province _ a step ahead of an appeal by the Council of the Federation for action. 550 words. By Dirk Meissner. BC-Homeless-Help, 1st Writethru. Moved regional (D).

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
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A timeline of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan since 2001

OTTAWA _ Following is a chronology of major events in Canada's involvement in Afghanistan:

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Oct. 7: Prime Minister Jean Chretien announces that Canada will contribute air, land and sea forces to an international force being formed to conduct a campaign against terrorism.

Nov. 21: United Nations Security Council condemns Taliban, supports international efforts to establish new Afghan government.

2002

Jan. 25: Canada re-establishes diplomatic relations with Afghanistan.

Jan. 26: Defence Minister Art Eggleton announces that Canadian troops are departing for Afghanistan.

Jan. 28: House of Commons holds 'take note' debate on Afghanistan mission.

Feb. 1: 3rd battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry battle group deploys in Kandahar.

April 17: Four Canadian soldiers killed and eight others injured by bomb mistakenly dropped by a U.S. fighter jet during a live-fire exercise.

2003

March 17: Canada pledges \$250 million in reconstruction aid.

September: Canadian embassy reopens in Kabul.

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Oct. 9: Afghanistan holds presidential election. Amid high turnout, Hamid Karzai wins presidency.

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August: Canadian troops deploy to Kandahar from Kabul.

Aug. 16: Canada assumes command of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar City; first deployment of civilian police (RCMP) to the PRT.

September: Canada strategic advisory team deployed as advisers to Afghan government.

2006

May 17: Parliament votes to extend Canada's military presence in Kandahar until 2009; Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces an additional \$310 million in development funding.

Sept. 1-20: Canadian military launches Operation Medusa, major attacks on Taliban strongholds in Kandahar province.

Autumn: Various sources allege that suspected insurgents detained by Canadian troops are abused after being turned over to Afghan authorities. Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says International Red Cross is monitoring the handling of detainees.

2007

February: Canada signs agreement with Afghan Human Rights Commission to monitor condition of detainees in Afghan prisons. Amnesty International Canada says it's a sham.

Feb. 16: Canada pledges another \$200 million in aid.

March 19: Connor apologizes to Commons, saying he was wrong in his comments about the Red Cross and detainees.

April 19: Opposition brings a motion in Commons calling on the government to confirm that the Afghanistan mission will be withdrawn at the end of February 2009. Motion defeated 150-134.

April 26: The Opposition brings a motion to call upon the government to immediately notify NATO of Canada's intention to begin withdrawing forces immediately. Motion defeated 255-28.

Oct. 12: Harper names former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley to lead a panel to study Canada's role in Afghanistan.

2008

Jan. 22: Manley's report says Canada should extend mission if other troops can relieve the Canadians to allow them to ramp up training of the Afghan army, and if the government can acquire new helicopters and sophisticated aerial drones by next February.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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Manley report sets up new political dynamic

OTTAWA _ It was supposed to bridge partisan divides in a fractious minority Parliament.

But the panel report on the future of the Afghanistan military mission, commissioned last October by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and delivered Tuesday, looks more like a 90-page rolled up newspaper with which to smack the Liberals on the nose.

Led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, the five-member panel issued a clarion call for Canada to continue its combat mission indefinitely in the war-racked country _ albeit on condition that NATO provides Canada more robust support.

At its core, the panel's central recommendation couldn't be more in tune with Harper's Conservative government: the Afghan military mission embodies Canada's renewed commitment to robust internationalism and cannot be abandoned. Full stop.

Manley, the blue-chip Grit who served as Jean Chretien's foreign affairs minister, did nothing to soften the message at a news conference.

After invoking the name of Liberal icon Lester Pearson, Manley ripped into the left flank of his own party brethren.

"The world isn't a pretty place," Manley boomed.

"But I happen to believe that the people that came before me in the Liberal party, that believed in a strong role for Canada on the international stage, would say: there are times when we have to count. There are times when it matters. We're not prepared to retreat under the U.S. missile shield and live in Fortress North America. We're prepared to be out there and we're prepared to pay the price, because that's what you expect of a country like Canada."

For a Liberal party that only recently achieved a fragile internal consensus on the Afghan question, the report is highly problematic and Manley's bombast is incendiary.

"Our current position, as you know, is that the combat mission end in February 2009," Liberal Leader Stephane Dion emerged to say at a Liberal caucus meeting in Kitchener, Ont.

His foreign affairs critic, Bob Rae, was more equivocal: ``I think we're in for a period of intense discussion and consideration."

Conservative government insiders immediately leapt on the perceived divergence to e-mail reporters off-the-record jibes alleging Liberal inconsistency.

But Liberals quietly conceded they need to keep their powder dry. Some noted that if NATO fails to meet the conditions set by the Manley panel during a summit in early April, the combat recommendation becomes moot and the Conservative government will be back under the gun.

Harper himself refused to comment on the report Tuesday, instead leaving his PMO underlings to snipe from the bushes.

But reaction from the political left was loud, swift and predictable.

``At a time when Canada should be drastically changing course to help the Afghan people build a lasting peace in the region, this report is recommending more of the same," said NDP Leader Jack Layton.

Elizabeth May of the Green Party likened the report to pouring fuel on a fire.

The Canadian Peace Alliance said the five panelists, ``which represent a very small sector of pro-George Bush Canadians, have delivered a pre-ordained document designed to support the Conservative government's position."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations lauded the report as sensible and achievable.

None of the opinions will matter a whit when the House of Commons resumes after a six-week break on Jan. 28.

It is the Liberals, the party that first sent Canadian troops into Afghanistan in 2002, who will determine whether the Manley report serves as a blueprint or triggers a spring election.

Ernie Regehr, a former founder of Project Ploughshares who's now with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ont., said the report failed to meet its mandate.

``When the prime minister appointed the panel, he said the idea here is to take the complications of a minority Parliament out of it," said Regehr.

``Well, the implication is you're trying to find a majority viewpoint here and not press ahead with a minority government's point of view. I think they produced a report that pretty much stays with the minority Parliament problem."

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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The Canadian Press picture advisory for Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008

The Canadian Press picture advisory for Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008. Daily coverage is provided by a combination of The Canadian Press staff and member papers. Entries with an estimated photo transmission time are staffed by The Canadian Press or Associated Press photographers, all other events are requested coverage by member papers.

EAST

ENFIELD, N.S. _ Industry Minister Jim Prentice and Defence Minister Peter MacKay make funding announcement. (1230)

QUEBEC

MONTREAL _ Boston at Montreal NHL. (2130)

CENTRAL

OTTAWA _ Prime Minister Stephen Harper receives Independent Panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan report. (1030)

OTTAWA _ Independent Panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan releases report. Panel members, Chair John Manley, Derek Burney, Jake Epp, Paul Tellier and Pamela Wallin, hold news conference. (1130)

KITCHENER, Ont. _ Annual winter meeting of national Liberal caucus concludes, Federal Liberal leader Stephane Dion speaks. (1300)

WEST

CALGARY _ Minnesota at Calgary NHL. (2230)

CANMORE - World Cup cross country skiing. (1630)

Coverage has been arranged on the following Canadian activities outside Canada:

MIAMI _ Ottawa at Florida NHL. (2130)

TAMPA BAY _ Edmonton at Tampa Bay NHL. (2130)

THE CANADIAN PRESS, Toronto

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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PUBLICATION: cpw
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A brief summary of facts about Canada's commitment in Afghanistan

OTTAWA _ Some facts about Canada's mission in Afghanistan:

Began _ January 2002, with the deployment of an infantry battlegroup.

Numbers _ There are about 2,500 Canadian troops deployed.

Cost _ The military mission will have cost about \$6.3 billion by the time the current commitment ends in February 2009. Over \$750 million more has been earmarked for development aid.

Casualties _ Canada has lost 77 soldiers and a diplomat killed.

Quote _ ``Canada's presence in Afghanistan matters." _ Former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, head of a special panel which says Canada should stay in Afghanistan past 2009 if certain conditions are met.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
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DATE: 2008.01.22
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Manley report smacks of desperation, says aid group

OTTAWA _ A leading international aid group says the Manley panel's call for a new development strategy in Afghanistan smacks of desperation.

Much to the dismay of World Vision Canada and other international aid groups, the panel says Canada's development contribution needs to be revamped with a higher priority given to visible projects that address immediate needs in Kandahar.

World Vision says that represents a departure from the low-key, long-term approach _ aimed at making lasting change _ that has characterized the mission's reconstruction efforts thus far.

The Christian aid group's president is disappointed the with direction and the findings of the blue-ribbon panel that was assembled to recommend the country's future course in Afghanistan.

``There's a certain amount of desperation in this; you can feel it in the report," said Dave Toycen.

World Vision Canada operates out of Herat in the quieter, more stable western portion of the country.

The escalation of violence in southern Afghanistan and the extent of suffering among the people also makes international aid groups desperate, Toycen said, but they haven't abandoned their well-established techniques.

``We're frustrated, but we're still really cautious," he said. ``You have to do this right _ or it's going to make things worse."

Ottawa expects to spend as much as \$1.2 billion in reconstruction and aid by 2011 in Afghanistan. The Canadian International Development Agency has been criticized publicly by some international organizations and privately by the military, which has accused the department of not concentrating on the basic needs of Afghans.

The fundamental premise of most international development can be boiled down to the old adage: Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.

Over the last two years, the federal government's approach to development in Kandahar has focused on initiatives that show a benefit in the

long-term, such as justice reform, encouraging entrepreneurs through micro-credit programs, and cleaning irrigation canals.

In delivering reconstruction, Canadians have preferred to hire local Afghan contractors, a slow and sometimes frustrating process that is rarely visible and definitely goes unnoticed by the Canadian public.

But the panel, headed by former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley, says the federal government ``should concentrate more on aid that will directly benefit the Afghan people."

It should include so-called ``signature projects" such as a hospital or some other major infrastructure need that is ``identified with Canada and led by Canadians."

Such short-term, visible development could run in tandem with long-term projects, the report suggested.

But Toyce is skeptical, partly because such a conspicuous presence has political overtones. Canadian politicians can point to Afghan projects for their own ends.

``I think pasting a Canadian flag on something _ or saying this is a great thing for Canada _ is still far secondary to (the question) is it really going to make a difference for local people," Toyce said.

``We're very cautious about quick projects because our experience says, if the local people don't own it, if it isn't something they believe is a priority for them, it usually doesn't work in the long-run."

The Manley report did point out that the signature projects should still be ``defined by Afghan community leaders, generating local employment and other benefits."

Other organizations expressed concern that the report paid too much attention to military matters.

There is a deep, enduring concern among international aid groups that the Conservative government will hand over responsibility for the delivery of reconstruction entirely to the army, as suggested by a European-based think-tank, the Senlis Council.

``Canadian (non-governmental organizations) on the ground in Afghanistan have emphasized, again and again, that this practice turns both aid workers and Afghans into war targets and often has no long term security or development benefit," said Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation.

The organization represents over 100 aid groups.

Barr said the panel's report touches on many of the right issues, but its recommendations are potentially a recipe for more, not less, insecurity for Afghans."

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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BC-Cda-News-Digest

TORONTO _ Staggering back to its feet after a severe beating, the Toronto stock market pushed ahead Tuesday to shake off more than two-thirds of the losses it endured the day before.

It was helped in its partial comeback by central banks in Canada and the United States slashing interest rates to ease some of the tension building up over the possibility of a U.S. recession.

But experts were quick to point out that a one-day revival was not a sign that the rocky ride is anywhere near over for global markets.

The moves to soothe investor anxiety helped the Toronto stock market recover partly from its biggest one-day drop in seven years. Wall Street was down, but avoided sinking as deeply into the red as some economists had expected.

The TSX moved up 508.76 points _ one of its biggest one-day climbs in the past five years _ to 12,640.89, reversing much of Monday's loss of 605 points or 4.75 per cent.

U.S. markets were in catch-up mode after being closed Monday for a holiday commemorating civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 128 points at 11,971 _ recovering from a 457-point fall in early trading.

BoC trims overnight rate, U.S. Fed cuts deeper to shore up markets

OTTAWA _ The Bank of Canada and its U.S. counterpart came to the defence of staggering equity markets and weakening economic prospects by lowering interest rates Tuesday, a move designed to spur borrowing and spending.

In separate but related moves, the Canadian central bank trimmed its key overnight rate by one-quarter percentage point, while the U.S. Federal Reserve, acting a week before its scheduled announcement date, axed its target rate by three-quarters of a point.

The actions left the key policy interest rates for the two countries at four per cent in Canada and 3.5 per cent in the U.S., with the Canadian bank saying it is all but certain to cut further in March.

The Bank of Canada's move had been widely anticipated. However, the Fed's dramatic cut was larger and sooner than most economists would have predicted as little as a week ago.

Major Canadian banks followed the central bank's reduction of the overnight lending rate by announcing they will be trimming their prime rate by 25 basis points to 5.75 per cent on Wednesday.

Both the Bank of Canada's overnight rate and the commercial banks' prime rates are benchmarks that influence many other rates, to greater or lesser extent.

Panel recommends long-term extension of Afghan mission _ on two conditions

OTTAWA _ The call for a long-term extension of Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan appeared to win no plaudits from federal opposition parties _ all of whom favour an end to Canada's current military role next year.

The minority Conservative government has been isolated against all three opposition parties, who say Canada should scale back its fighting efforts when its current commitment expires in 13 months.

None showed any signs of relenting Tuesday after a federal panel proposed an open-ended commitment.

The Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois leaders reiterated their earlier preference for a February 2009 overhaul of the mission that would reduce Canada's combat role in Kandahar province.

This after a panel headed by John Manley _ a former Liberal cabinet minister _ said Canadian soldiers should remain indefinitely, on two conditions.

The blue-ribbon panel said Canadians should keep fighting in Kandahar as long as they get more foreign troops to help them and better equipment to protect them.

The panel declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

OPP wants Ottawa to deal with police shortage after Quebec ends solo patrols

MONTREAL _ A decision forcing Quebec provincial police to end potentially dangerous solo patrols in remote areas is being touted by their Ontario counterparts who say only luck has spared them the shooting deaths that have shaken the RCMP.

Quebec's workplace safety tribunal recently ruled that patrolling alone in areas where communication is unreliable represents a threat to officer safety.

“The potential of . . . violence is present in the majority of police intervention regardless of the location or method of the patrol, and it is significantly more risky for an officer alone,” the ruling reads.

The decision follows the RCMP's announcement last month of its new backup policy which requires at least two officers in remote detachments to respond to dangerous calls.

The RCMP's move was sparked by the fatal shootings of eight officers in rural areas in the past three years.

Now, members of the Ontario Provincial Police want similar protection.

"The OPP, the QPP, the Newfoundland Constabulary, along with the Mounties, are all in equal circumstances," said Karl Walsh, head of the OPP's union.

According to Walsh, the OPP is short by between 350 and 500 officers, meaning some can wait "hours" for backup.

Quebec digital TV subscribers to pay for French crime channel

MONTREAL _ Crime has finally started to pay for Vincent Geracitano.

He has struggled for the past three years to keep broadcasting his French-language TV channel which helps track down criminals in Quebec.

Now the federal broadcast regulator says satellite and cable TV operators will have to pay him for broadcasting his channel Avis des recherche.

And he's confident he will also be able to go on air with a national English channel early next year.

The 46-year-old Montreal businessman started Avis de recherche, a Quebec digital TV channel that broadcasts all crime, all the time, in October 2004.

The channel features police bulletins, which include photos and descriptions of crime suspects.

It also reports on missing children and broadcasts information from the Correctional Service of Canada on escaped criminals.

But Geracitano had to mortgage his home and his parents' home to keep the channel going.

Geracitano said he had to pay cable operator Videotron Ltd., for example, up to \$18,000 per month to carry the service, which was free to its subscribers.

A recent CRTC decision will now allow Geracitano to collect money from cable and satellite subscribers in Quebec, helping him to move forward with plans for All Points Bulletin, a national English-language version of his channel.

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Top news stories for Tuesday, Jan. 22

The Canadian Press suggests the following stories and photo for front-page consideration:

OTTAWA, OTTH102, (Horizontal) John Manley (left) presents his report on Canada's future in Afghanistan to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Parliament Hill.

Top Stories

SHORT-TERM REVIVAL MAY NOT MEAN LONG-TERM MARKET STABILITY

TORONTO _ North American markets heaved a sigh of relief Tuesday as central banks in Canada and the United States slashed interest rates and eased some of the tension building up over a possible U.S. recession. But experts were quick to point out that the one-day revival was not a sign that the rocky ride is anywhere near over for global markets. By David Friend. With Graphics, Photos. BC-Stock-Markets, 7th Writethru. Moved Business (B) and General (G).

REPORT SAYS CANADA NEEDS HELP IN SHOULDERING AFGHANISTAN BURDEN

OTTAWA _ Canada should extend its military mission in Afghanistan but only if it gets more equipment and if other countries step up with troops, says a high-profile panel appointed by the prime minister. The panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley says Canada's mission is noble and justifiable but is doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden. Now it's up to Parliament to deal with the hot-button issue.. By Alexander Panetta. See CP Photos FXC101-103. BC-Manley-Afghan-Report, 7th Writethru.

ACTOR HEATH LEDGER DEAD AT 28

NEW YORK _ Heath Ledger was found dead Tuesday at a downtown Manhattan apartment, naked in bed with sleeping pills nearby, police said. The Australian-born actor was 28. It wasn't immediately clear if Ledger had committed suicide. He had an appointment for a massage at a residence in the tony neighbourhood of SoHo, NYPD spokesman Paul Browne said. A housekeeper who went to let him know the massage therapist had arrived found him dead at 3:26 p.m. By Tom Hays. BC-FILM-Heath-Ledger-Dead, 7th Writethru. Moves World (W) and Sports (S).

The buzz...

CANADIAN ``JUNO" JOY AS OSCAR NOMINATIONS REVEALED

TORONTO _ It was a joyous day for ``Juno" on Tuesday as the teen pregnancy comedy snagged a handful of prestigious Oscar nominations, including best picture, best actress for Halifax's Ellen Page, best director for Montreal-born Jason Reitman and best original screenplay for first-time screenwriter Diablo Cody. Toronto's Sarah Polley, who's been honoured by various film critics' associations for her direction of the moving Alzheimer's drama ``Away From Her," picked up a surprise best adapted screenplay nomination for her deft reworking of an Alice Munro short story. By Lee-Anne Goodman. See Photos. BC-Oscars, 7th Writethru. Moved Entertainment (E) and General (G).

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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WORD COUNT: 843

Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praise Manley report

HALIFAX _ The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report Tuesday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies _ contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

``I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

``We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

The 90-page report, headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended that Canada extend its stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 only if the two conditions are met.

Manley said NATO has to commit a battle group of 1,000 troops to the Kandahar area and provide soldiers with better equipment, including medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial drones to help soldiers avoid a deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results _ that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was ``smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

``Manley's reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora, Ont.

``But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley said the mission in Afghanistan is ``in jeopardy" if NATO allies don't commit to a bigger role in the south, which has been hit by increased insurgent attacks.

The former Liberal foreign affairs minister urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

Julie Mason, whose husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh was killed in 2006, said she watched the release of the report closely to see what it would recommend for a mission she feels has become deeply politicized over the last few years.

``They need better equipment and they need more equipment and (the Conservatives) have never been a really big party for getting that for them," she said from her home in Shilo, Man.

``They definitely need to focus on getting what these soldiers need to do their job properly."

The father of Canada's only female combat soldier to die in battle supports the Manley report's main recommendations to extend the mission.

Capt. Nicola Goddard died May 17, 2006, in a grenade attack in Panjwaii district. Tim Goddard said extending the mission to achieve the goal is ``an appropriate way to go" and he believes his daughter would agree.

He said she had expressed concerns about the poverty and lack of schooling for children in the country.

``It was abhorrent to her and she felt it was important we contribute to correcting that," he said from Calgary.

It makes sense, said Goddard, to bolster the number of troops policing Kandahar province, which is roughly the size of Nova Scotia.

``We've got 2,500 troops and 750 maybe go outside the wire? How would we possibly control Nova Scotia with 750 troops?" he said. ``There needs to be a bigger, more physical presence outside the wire, and if takes 1000 troops, another battle group coming in from another country, so be it."

But changing the mission to being only mentors and teachers could prove difficult, said Goddard.

``You can't just say, `OK, we're going to just stay in the classrooms now and just teach the (Afghan army) how to do it while not going out and engaging insurgents," he added.

``I think there's not one counter insurgency that's been defeated by an imported army. The Afghans have to win this. All we're doing is helping and providing the human support in terms of training."

Jackie Coble, whose husband Dale is leaving for Afghanistan in three weeks _ his second tour there _ said she's scared to death.

But she and her husband, who is a master warrant officer at the Edmonton Garrison, believe in the mission.

``I see the pictures, I hear the stories from the soldiers that have come back, and they're still all pumped. My husband's told me from his last tour ... they've done a lot, (so) to pull them out right now would be defeating everything that they have done."

Manley suggested Ottawa take the two demands to NATO with the understanding that if it hasn't committed troops by February 2009, Canada will pull out.

``That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: we cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar," he said. ``We are gone."

All of the family members said they would be satisfied if Canadian troops stayed beyond 2009 if it meant the military could increase security, destabilize the Taliban and help in the reconstruction effort.

They will wait to see what NATO officials do in April when they meet in Romania.

``If Canada were to pull back, I strongly believe that would be the end of NATO," Davis said. ``So if NATO wants to take this mission seriously, then I think they have to listen to Manley's report. They don't have a choice."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper didn't comment on the report Tuesday, saying he needed some time to review it.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 959

Panel recommends long-term extension of Afghan mission - on two conditions

OTTAWA _ A clarion call for an open-ended extension of Canada's combat role in Afghanistan fell on stoney ground Tuesday among the majority opposition in Parliament.

If Prime Minister Stephen Harper follows the advice of his blue-ribbon panel, the immediate reaction suggests his Conservatives could lose a vote on extending the Afghan mission.

The leaders of all three opposition parties reaffirmed their long-stated view that Canada should scale back or retool when the current military commitment runs out in 13 months.

Their leeriness of an extended mission flies in the face of a multi-year extension recommended by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

The panel suggested Canada's Kandahar mission should continue indefinitely on two conditions: that our soldiers get 1,000 more foreign troops to help them, and better equipment to protect them.

Manley declared Canada's fighting mission to be noble and justifiable, but also said it's doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

He delivered his 90-page report to the prime minister on Tuesday and Harper said he would need a few days to digest it.

Even as Manley endorsed an extension, he admitted the mission has gone badly. Insurgent attacks are on the rise and security is fragile.

``The mission is in jeopardy," Manley told a news conference.

``We are going to need to see more troops in Kandahar province or this mission will not succeed."

The blue-ribbon panel concluded that Afghan society has made remarkable progress _ with 10-per-cent annual economic growth being one example.

But with the security situation teetering, the panel urged the Canadian government to rebalance its Afghanistan approach and show leadership in non-military areas.

It was critical of Canada's diplomatic and aid efforts.

It questioned, for instance, why only 47 Canadian government civilians are working in Afghanistan _ a miniscule amount compared with 2,500 soldiers stationed there.

It also wondered why the Canadian government muzzles diplomats who want to communicate to the public, and keeps aid workers who volunteer to go to Kandahar cloistered on the base.

That cautious stance might reduce verbal gaffes by diplomats and protect aid workers, the panel said, but it doesn't help win hearts and minds either in Afghanistan or in Canada.

Instead an acceleration of aid projects _ especially highly visible ones such as new hospitals or irrigation systems _ would be an effective way of gaining local support, the panel said.

The panel also asked Ottawa to stop sugarcoating the difficult realities of the Afghan mission and start communicating them more honestly to Canadians.

Despite its challenges, Manley said the Afghan mission is a worthy cause.

He said it can contribute to international security, improve the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries, and restore Canada's leadership role in global affairs.

That's why the combat mission must be extended beyond its current deadline of February 2009, he said, on two conditions:

_ The UN's International Security Assistance Force sends 1,000 more soldiers to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army.

_ The government secures medium-lift helicopters and high-performance, unmanned aircraft to help soldiers avoid the deadly scourge of roadside bombs.

Manley suggested Ottawa take these two demands to NATO and draw a clear line in the sand.

“(Give) NATO ‘til February 2009 to provide the additional troops we require _ or we pull out,” Manley said.

“That's the point at which we'd say to NATO: ‘We cannot continue this mission of security in Kandahar; we are gone.’”

The panel urged political parties to wait to see what happens at a NATO summit in Romania in April before making any decisions in Parliament

about how to proceed.

The report was the result of three months' work in which the panel toured four Afghan provinces and spoke with hundreds of experts.

“Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations with cabinet and our caucus before coming forward with our response,” Harper said.

The Bloc and NDP were quick to condemn the report while the Liberals said they wanted to examine it more closely.

The two smaller opposition parties mused privately that they could still table a non-confidence motion on Afghanistan and risk taking down the minority government over the issue.

They also suggested that Harper himself may choose to force the issue onto the Commons floor in order to split the Liberal party, which is divided between hawks and doves.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion repeated his party's long-held position: Canada should end its combat mission as scheduled in February 2009, but continue to help with construction, training and humanitarian aid.

“We have carried this mission during three years and it's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan,” he said.

Other opposition parties were far more emphatic in rejecting the Manley panel's central conclusion.

“It's recommending the status quo,” said NDP defence critic Dawn Black.

“The counterinsurgency has been going on since 2001 . . . and the situation has only got worse. Poppy production's up. Corruption's up. Drug-trafficking's up. IED deaths, up.

“It's not working and it's time for a rethink.”

She noted that some aid groups have stated publicly that they prefer working far away from the military _ because being near soldiers makes them an insurgency target.

If the military provides a lightning rod to the insurgency, she suggested perhaps the flow of aid could actually increase if the military presence was reduced.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe said Manley's report appeared designed as a political fig leaf for Harper.

When the panel was convened three months ago, the prime minister's critics noted that he had stacked it with prominent pro-military figures likely to be sympathetic to the Conservative view.

Some Liberals were privately livid at Manley for participating in what they suspected was a partisan strategic move by Harper.

Duceppe said Tuesday that Manley gave the prime minister an even more hawkish report than he had asked for.

“Canadian and Quebec troops have done their part,” the Bloc leader said.

The blue-ribbon report is sure to reignite debate over one of the thorniest issues facing Parliament and the Conservatives.

Polls suggest most Canadians would like to see Canadian troops come home as scheduled next year.

Harper has promised a vote on the mission's future, and Canada's NATO allies need to be informed by May or June at the latest.

Manley emphasized that Canada's mission in Afghanistan simply cannot be wound down in a year.

He said it makes no sense to set an end date on the mission at this point when so much work remains to be done.

The report said it's unrealistic to expect that Afghanistan _ a country racked by ancient tribal hostilities and decades of warfare _ could soon boast European- or North American-style stability.

But it said Afghanistan should not be abandoned until the Afghan National Army is able to defend the country on its own. The force is recruiting steadily and is expected to almost double to 80,000 soldiers by May 2010.

“We found no operational logic around ending the mission in February 2009 or any real ability to complete the job by that date,” Manley said.

Days after naming the panel, the Conservative throne speech made it clear the government wanted to maintain the military mission in Afghanistan until at least 2011.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 119

Highlights from the report of the special Afghanistan panel led by John Manley

OTTAWA _ Highlights of the report issued Tuesday by a special advisory panel on Afghanistan led by John Manley:

_ Canada should remain in Afghanistan past February 2009 if NATO or other countries can provide 1,000 reinforcements and the government can obtain some medium-lift helicopter capacity and high-tech surveillance drones.

_ If Canada stays, it should continue its combat role, but should also emphasize training the Afghan national army to take over the security role.

_ Canada should push in diplomatic councils for a comprehensive NATO plan for Afghanistan and should press Pakistan to do more to promote regional security.

_ Canada should revamp its development efforts to deal with Afghanistan's immediate needs.

_ The government should do a better job of informing Canadians about the situation in Afghanistan and promote ``a continuous, frank and constructive dialogue."

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DATE: 2008.01.22

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 519

bc-CCN-ON-GOV-INT

^Canada Urged to Shift Focus of its Afghanistan Mission@<

January 22, 2008

Independent Panel sets out conditions for extending military commitment

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - Jan. 22, 2008) - Canada's future role in Afghanistan must place greater emphasis on diplomacy and reconstruction and the Canadian military focus must shift gradually from combat to training Afghan national security forces, an expert panel report today recommended to the federal government.

"We are recommending a Canadian commitment to Afghanistan that is neither open-ended nor faint-hearted," says the report by the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan.

"We owe it to the Afghans, to our allies and to our own future security needs to give this mission every possible chance to succeed," says John Manley, Chair of the Panel. "What is evident is that the commitment to Afghanistan made by successive Canadian governments has not yet been completed. The ultimate objective is to enable the Afghans to manage their own security."

The Independent Panel says Canada's military mission in southern Afghanistan should be extended beyond February 2009, provided two key conditions are met:

1. That a new battle group is deployed by International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners to Kandahar province, enabling Canadian forces to accelerate training of the Afghan National Army; and
2. That the Government secure by February 2009 at the latest new, medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

If these conditions are not met, the Independent Panel urges the government to notify Afghan and allied governments that Canada intends to transfer responsibility for security in Kandahar.

The Panel also recommends a new diplomatic push by Canada to ensure that the international effort to help Afghans rebuild their country and

reconcile their differences is better coordinated and produces measurable results. The report calls on the Prime Minister to personally take charge of this diplomatic effort.

"The Prime Minister has substantial influence and we urge him to use it, commensurate with Canada's contributions," adds Manley. "Specifically, we urge efforts to make the international, civilian and military effort more coherent and more effective. Equally, there is an urgent need to reduce regional tensions and to press for stronger action by the Afghan Government to tackle corruption and deliver basic services to the Afghan people. Canada's development assistance should be revamped to bolster that objective."

The Independent Panel also says the government must do a better job of informing Canadians on why Canada is involved in Afghanistan, what are the risks and challenges of being there, and what outcomes can realistically be achieved.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper established the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan in October 2007. It was given the task of advising Parliament on options for the Canadian mission in Afghanistan once its mandate ends in February 2009.

In addition to John Manley, the Panel includes former federal Cabinet Minister Jake Epp, former Clerk of the Privy Council Paul Tellier, former Canadian Ambassador to the United States Derek Burney, and Pamela Wallin, former Canadian Consul General in New York City.

The Panel's report is available on the internet at the following two addresses:

www.independent-panel-independant.ca

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/afghanistan

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INDUSTRY: Government - International, Government - Local,
Government - National, Government - Security (law enforcement,
homeland etc), Government - State

SUBJECT: INT

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

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KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 704

Canada needs to `play chicken' with NATO allies to get help: former diplomat

OTTAWA _ The United States may be called on to help meet conditions set down by a blue-ribbon panel for Canada's continued involvement in the Afghan war, but international observers say the government shouldn't let European allies off the hook.

``It's not very hard for NATO to come up with another 1,000 (troops) _ it's always been a question of political will, not capacity," said Paul Heinbecker, a former diplomat who represented Canada at the United Nations.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommended the Conservative government give its military partners until February next year to come up with another battle group _ roughly 1,000 soldiers _ to reinforce hard-pressed Kandahar province.

If such an assurance isn't forthcoming, then the federal government should issue notice that Canada's troops will be withdrawn.

``We need to be very direct with NATO," said Manley, who once served as foreign affairs minister.

``Either they mean it, that this is the most important mission, or they don't. And if they don't, well then we need to look at the well-being of our young people."

Heinbecker says when he was Canada's ambassador to Germany that country had an army of 280,000 soldiers, but the government in Berlin has steadfastly refused to let its nearly 3,000 soldiers in northern Afghanistan participate in combat.

``There has to be more boots on the ground for the mission to succeed and it has to play chicken to some extent with its NATO partners to get them to take their responsibility," Heinbecker said in an interview.

``To my mind, this is not a bad way of doing it."

Fulfilling the panel's key conditions of more troops, helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft will likely depend on the willingness of the United States to lend a hand, say defence observers.

In releasing his report, Manley made clear he hopes the preconditions will not end up driving Canada out of the war.

“We hope this is not a poison pill because we believe the mission is an important one,” he said.

In addition, the panel says the federal government must secure battlefield helicopters and sophisticated unmanned surveillance drones within a year to ensure troop safety. Both projects have been stalled within the National Defence bureaucracy.

Canada has 2,500 troops on the ground in Kandahar, whose current mandate expires in February 2009.

The appeal for NATO and the international community to “get its act together” in Afghanistan will probably fall on deaf ears in Europe.

The major countries already in Afghanistan _ France, Germany, Italy and Spain _ have refused to commit more troops or lift combat restrictions on the soldiers already there.

Britain has twice increased its troop strength to fight insurgents in Helmand province, next to Kandahar.

The Dutch, after going through a similar soul-searching last fall, reluctantly extended their deployment to 2010, but not before that country's defence minister was forced to make a near-tearful plea for support to recalcitrant NATO allies behind closed doors.

That pretty much leaves the United States, which last week grudgingly committed 3,200 U.S. Marines, complete with helicopter support, to a seven-month deployment beginning in April.

Canada's concerns could easily be addressed with a tiny application of American military might, one panel member suggested.

“We're working with our American allies on daily basis and if they increase their numbers that will increase security for Canadian Forces as well,” said Pamela Wallin, a former consul general in New York City and ex-broadcaster.

In fairness, newer members of the military alliance such Poland have answered the call and other former Warsaw Pact countries are eager to participate, but much of their equipment is in need of upgrade.

Securing battlefield helicopters and advanced unmanned aircraft may prove to be as big a challenge.

The Conservatives decided in the summer of 2006 to buy 16 Chinook medium-lift helicopters from Chicago-based Boeing and entered in sole-source contract negotiations.

Last week, the air force acknowledged a deal is not expected to be signed until late this year, meaning delivery likely won't happen until 2011.

The choppers are deemed essential in getting soldiers off bomb-laced and booby-trapped highways.

National Defence has tried without success to persuade other countries to let Canada butt ahead of them in the aircraft production line.

In the spring of 2006, National Defence was told it could get its hands on used U.S. Army CH-47D Chinooks under a program called Cargo

Helicopter Alternate Procurement Strategy.

But the Harper government accepted the military's argument for new CH-47 F-model Chinooks, for which the air force has demanded modifications.

It's been suggested Canada lease helicopters, an idea the air force has repeatedly rejected.

Similarly a program to acquire 12 sophisticated Predator aerial drones (UAVs) from the U.S. Air Force was halted by the federal cabinet before it got off the ground last spring.

Two senior ministers apparently objected to the military doing another sole-sourced contract and the Canadian air force has since been forced to review its UAV programs.

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--Twelfth NewsWatch--

Canada's military mission in Afghanistan should be extended only if other countries step up with more soldiers and our forces get more equipment.

That's according to a report from a high-profile panel appointed by the prime minister.

The panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley calls the mission noble but doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

The New Democrats and the Bloc Quebecois are dismissing the report -- saying there is no justification for extending the mission beyond February of next year. (12)

(Stock Markets) (Audio: 125)

Interest rate cuts in Canada and the United States appear to be having a positive effect on stock markets today.

The Toronto market, which lost 605 points on one of its worst one-day showings in history yesterday, is up about 480 points today.

South of the border, stocks are pulling out of an early morning nosedive and the Dow is now down just 75 on the day.

But economists say it's doubtful rate cuts by the Bank of Canada and the U-S Federal Reserve will have a sustained impact on markets or the slumping American economy.

David Wolf of Merrill Lynch Canada says ``even the Fed doesn't have a magic bullet out of this." (12)

(Canadian dollar)

The Canadian dollar received a boost today when the U-S Federal Reserve slashed interest rates by three-quarters of a percentage point.

The Bank of Canada also cut its key lending rate, but by a more modest quarter-point, at its regularly scheduled meeting.

The loonie is back above 97 cents U-S after dipping yesterday to its lowest point since mid-September. (12)

(Korea-Trade-McGuinty)

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty says he doesn't want to see any free-trade auto deal with South Korea unless it's a two-way street.

McGuinty is threatening to impose provincial barriers to imports of South Korean automobiles if a free-trade agreement limits Canadian auto exports.

He says South Korea exported 114-thousand cars to Canada in 2006, but the Koreans allowed fewer than 100 Canadian-made cars into their market. (12)

(Tainted-Toys)

Toy maker Ty Incorporated is fighting a recall of lead-tainted dolls in Illinois.

The company, best known for making Beanie Babies, contends U-S federal law takes precedence over the Illinois statute under which the recall has been ordered.

The state says it may sue Ty, which is based in Westmont, Illinois, to force it to comply with the recall order of Jammin' Jenna dolls.

The Chicago Tribune tested red vinyl shoes on three of the dolls and found all three exceeded Illinois lead limits. (12)

(Oscars-Juno)

Montreal-born Jason Reitman says he is stunned that he got a best director nomination for ``Juno."

Star Ellen Page of Halifax is nominated for best actress for the film and it's also up for best picture.

During an appearance on N-B-C's ``The Today Show", Page said she's grateful to be part of the film and happy that people have responded to it in the way that they have. (12)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 286

--Fifth NewsWatch--

More bad news for investors today.

World stock markets have tumbled for the second day in a row.

Japan's Nikkei dropped 5.7 per cent -- its biggest decline in nearly 10 years -- after falling 3.9 per cent yesterday.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was down 8.7 per cent after slumping 5.5 per cent yesterday.

And Australia's benchmark index sank 7.1 per cent, its steepest one-day slide in nearly 20 years.

Yesterday, saw one of the worst one-day selloffs ever with the T-S-X plunging 605 points and the dollar closing below 97 cents U-S -- its lowest level since September. (5)

(Economy-Stimulus) (Audio: 07)

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office says the underlying fundamentals of Canada's economy remain solid.

Bureacrats say Flaherty and his staff are keeping close watch on any fallout from the downturn in the markets.

But, there's no indication the government is considering any economic stimulus package, similar to the one announced by U-S President Bush. (5)

(Liberals-Dion)

Canadians are watching the markets, wondering how all of this is going to affect their retirement savings, especially those who hold mutual funds.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says its more important than ever for the Harper government to bring down a budget that takes the new financial realities into account.

The Liberals are holding a strategy session in Kitchener, Ontario. (5)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: 42)

A panel headed by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley is about to unveil its recommendations to the Harper government about Canada's future role in Afghanistan.

One thing is fairly certain, it will recommend that Canada remains in the war-torn country beyond February 2009.

The report is expected to stop short of setting a specific date for pulling out Canadian troops. (5)

(Afghan-Cda-Detentions) (Audio:196)

The B-C Civil Liberties Association says it has obtained documents that prove the Harper government knew that detainees transferred to Afghan authorities faced torture.

Association president Jason Gratl is calling on the prime minister to do something about it. (5)

(Oscars-Nominations)

The Oscar nominations will be announced this morning.

``There Will Be Blood," is expected to be nominated for best picture and best director and Daniel Day-Lewis and possibly Paul Dano could be up for acting honours.

Other best picture nominees could include ``No Country For Old Men," ``Juno," ``Atonement" and possibly ``Sweeney Todd" and ``American Gangster." (5)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 170

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

OTTAWA _ The divisive debate over Canada's role in Afghanistan will get a fresh look today.

John Manley will unveil this morning what an independent panel has recommended to Prime Minister Stephen Harper for a continuing role in Afghanistan.

Before he was appointed to head the five-member panel studying Canada's mission in the war-torn country, Manley made clear his thinking on the subject.

Last September, Manley wrote that Afghanistan helped define Canada's role in the world.

He wrote that Canada should not abandon the mission too easily, but should use its influence to make sure the job of stabilizing Afghanistan is completed.

All signals point to the panel recommending that Canada extend its military mission beyond the current February 2009 end date, reflecting the Conservative government's wishes.

But their analysis may also recommend bolstering aid and reconstruction efforts in southern Afghanistan at least through 2011.

Published reports today suggested Manley's panel will recommend that Canada's participation beyond 2009 be contingent on NATO allies pledging to share the burden.

Manley's report will be released on the panel's web page (www.independent-panel-independant.ca) at 9 a.m. Eastern Time, followed by a news conference one hour later.

(The Canadian Press)

TAP

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DATE: 2008.01.22
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PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 358

--Seventh NewsWatch--

Central banks in Canada and the U-S are taking action as fears of an American recession send stock markets tumbling across the world.

The Bank of Canada has cut its key policy rate by one-quarter of a percentage point.

That announcement came less than an hour after the U-S Federal Reserve Board jolted financial markets with a surprise three-quarter-point cut in its benchmark policy rate.

It's the most dramatic signal the Fed can send that it's concerned about a potential recession in the United States. (7)

(World-Markets)

U-S stock markets are headed for a huge selloff at the open despite a move by the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates.

Indexes in New York will play catch-up a day after worries about the American economy sent global stock markets reeling.

Toronto's T-S-X composite index plummeted 605 points yesterday but analysts are hoping for more calm today.

European markets improved following the U-S rate cut.

But Asian markets had another miserable session as Japan's Nikkei stock average closed down 5.65 per cent. (7)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: P01)

A panel appointed by the prime minister says more international troops are needed for Canada to extend its mission in Afghanistan.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, is recommending a new battle group be deployed by the U-N's International Security Assistance Force to Kandahar province.

It say that would allow Canadian forces to gradually refocus the mission on reconstruction, training and diplomacy rather than combat.

The panel is also recommending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan be extended indefinitely. (7)

(BC-Gangland-Shooting-Chief) (Audio: 88)

Vancouver's police chief has outlined a five-year-plan that he says would make the city one of the safest in Canada.

The move comes just days after the gangland-style killings of two men sitting in a car outside a trendy Vancouver restaurant.

Chief Jim Chu admits it's hard to get a handle on the kind of targeted violence that has flared up in the city after a spate of similar gangland-style killings last fall. (7)

(Oscar Nominations) (Audio: 90)

Halifax actress Ellen Page and Montreal-born director Jason Reitman have received Academy Award nominations for their work on the film ``Juno."

The movie about a quirky teenager who is pregnant is also nominated for best picture.

Toronto's Sarah Polley has received a screenplay adaptation nomination for ``Away From Her."

The Oscars are set to be held February 24th but are in jeopardy because of the ongoing writers strike. (7)

(NL-Funeral-Theft)

The Mounties in Newfoundland have charged a 46-year-old woman with stealing cash from sympathy cards at a recent funeral service.

They say that on January 7th, mourners left the cards, some of which contained money, at an Anglican church in Harbour Breton.

Investigators allege she was volunteering at the church during the service and collected the sympathy cards, took them from the church and removed money intended for the family of the deceased. (7)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 183

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics, Social

A blue-ribbon panel says Canada's military mission in Afghanistan should be extended indefinitely, but the recommendation comes with conditions that could be tough to meet.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, also suggests gradually refocusing the mission on reconstruction, training and diplomacy rather than combat.

The military mission in the war-torn country is due to end in February 2009, but the 90-page report says the mission should be extended provided NATO come up with a new battle group for Kandahar and that the air force secure new medium-lift helicopters, as well as advanced unmanned surveillance aircraft.

NATO allies have been reluctant to free up additional troops, despite pressure from the United States, Canada, Britain and the Netherlands, which have been doing the bulk of the fighting in the south.

As well, efforts to secure helicopters have been stalled.

The air force had hoped to get 16 new Chinooks by 2010, but last week it quietly conceded the choppers likely won't be available until late 2011.

As well, the federal cabinet last spring halted the purchase of 12 advanced Predator unmanned aircraft because of concerns over sole-sourced contracts.

The report is sure to reignite debate over one of the thorniest issues facing Parliament and the Conservatives.

(The Canadian Press)

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WORD COUNT: 584

ADVISORY-Central-Canada-Calendar

Here is the Central Canada calendar for Tuesday, January 21, 2008

Good Morning from the Ontario Desk of The Canadian Press in Toronto.

The Ontario Editor is Alan Black

The phone number is (416) 507-2185.

Stations wishing to file by fax can dial (416) 364-1325 or 1-800-561-0297.

The email address is news(at)broadcastnews.ca

The Quebec Editor is Peter Ray

The phone number is (514) 985-7235.

Stations wishing to file by fax can dial (514) 849-7693.

QUEBEC

MONTEBELLO, Que. -- NDP holds caucus retreat to focus on making life more affordable for middle-class families. Sunday dinner at 7:30 p.m. in Igloo Extension Room. Monday photo op 9:15 a.m., leader's report 11:30 a.m. and media availability at noon all in the Canada Room. Tuesday news conference at 1 p.m. in the Canada Room. (Fairmount Chateau Montebello)

MONTREAL -- CN reports fourth-quarter earnings. Conference call at 1-888-300-0053. (4:30 p.m.)

OTTAWA

OTTAWA -- Inquest into death of Jason Steacy, 20, who died Nov. 5, 2005, while in custody of Ontario Provincial Police. Through Jan. 30. (9:30

a.m. at Tribunal of Competitions, 90 Sparks St.)

OTTAWA -- Statistics Canada releases November retail trade. (8:30 a.m. at www.statcan.ca)

OTTAWA -- Statistics Canada releases November employment insurance. (8:30 a.m. at www.statcan.ca)

OTTAWA -- Statistics Canada releases January social trends with articles on car dependence in urban neighbourhoods and on city/suburban contrast. (8:30 a.m. at www.statcan.ca)

OTTAWA -- Bank of Canada releases its target for the overnight rate. Lock-up at 8 a.m. in the Bank's head office 234 Wellington St. East Tower entrance. (9 a.m. at www.bankofcanada.ca)

OTTAWA -- Independent Panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan releases report. Panel members, Chair John Manley, Derek Burney, Jake Epp, Paul Tellier and Pamela Wallin, hold news conference 10 a.m., Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St., (lower level) Laurier Salon. (9 a.m. at www.independent-panel-independent.ca)

OTTAWA -- Supreme Court hears Quebec appeal of HydroQuebec vs. Technical Professional Union of HydroQuebec. (9:30 a.m. at Supreme Court, 301 Wellington St.)

OTTAWA -- British American Tobacco and Imperial Tobacco Canada hold technical briefing on snus, a Swedish-style smokeless tobacco product. (10 a.m. at National Press Theatre, 150 Wellington St.)

OTTAWA -- Part-time college workers hold news conference to discuss joining Ontario Public Service Employees Union. (10:30 a.m. at Algonquin College, C Building, main entrance)

OTTAWA -- BMO economist Sherry Cooper speaks at Canadian Club event. (1 p.m. at Fairmont Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St.)

ONTARIO

BRANTFORD, Ont. -- Inquest into death of Douglas Benham, 60, who died March 18, 2006, at Brantford General Hospital after being transferred from Brantford Jail. Through Jan. 22. (9 a.m. at Superior Court of Justice, 70 Wellington St.)

KITCHENER, Ont. -- Annual winter meeting of national Liberal caucus concludes. Federal Liberal leader Stephane Dion speaks at 11:15 a.m. in Waterloo B and C and will be available to the media at 11:45 a.m. Dion chairs urban communities caucus at 12 p.m. in Waterloo A; media availability at 2 p.m. (Holiday Inn Kitchener-Waterloo Conference Centre, 30 Fairway Rd. S. at Highway 8)

TORONTO -- Public hearings in an inquiry into the work of discredited pathologist Dr. Charles Smith. (9:30 a.m. at 180 Dundas St. W., 20th floor)

TORONTO -- Ontario Court of Appeal review of 1972 second-degree murder conviction of Romeo Phillion, who spent 31 years in prison until his release on bail in 2004. (Ontario Court of Appeal, Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen St. W.)

TORONTO -- Premier Dalton McGuinty appears live on CFRB's "The Bill Carroll Show." (9 a.m.)

TORONTO -- Finalists for the Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction announced. (10 a.m. at Consort Bar, King Edward Hotel)

TORONTO -- Health Promotion Minister Margaret Best makes unspecified announcement. (10:30 a.m. at Variety Village, 3701 Danforth Ave.)

TORONTO -- Hamilton Spectator reporter Ken Peters appears in court to appeal conviction of contempt-of-court case involving allegations of problems at a retirement home. (10:30 a.m. at Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen St. W.)

TORONTO -- Retailer Danier Leather Inc. holds second-quarter earnings conference call. Dial 416-695-6324. (4 p.m.)

TORONTO -- The Ontario Securities Commission holds hearing on Global Partners Capital, WS Net Solution, Hau Wai Cheung, Christine Pan, Gurdip Singh Gahunia.

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 379

--Thirteenth NewsWatch--

A report on Canada's role in Afghanistan is not getting good reviews from the federal New Democrats and Bloc Quebecois.

The panel, led by John Manley, recommends Canada's military mission there be extended -- but only if more equipment and NATO troop support is provided.

N-D-P Leader Jack Layton says that contradicts the wishes of most Canadians.

And Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe says Canada has already done more than its fair share. (13)

(Interest Rates-Markets) (Audio:130)

Economists don't expect interest rate cuts today will fix the economic woes that have caused a stock market meltdown.

The Bank of Canada cut a key rate by a quarter of a percentage point soon after the Fed in the U-S cut rates by a dramatic three quarters of a percentage point.

That's helped the Toronto market rebound from yesterday's big losses and turned around a sharp drop in New York.

But even with more rate cuts expected, economists predict it won't be a quick fix they say because fewer people are willing to borrow -- and banks are wary of lending. (13)

(CRIME-NL-Doctor-Sex-Drugs)

Legal problems may not be over for a Newfoundland doctor who has been sentenced to seven years in prison for sex and drug offences involving his patients.

The federal Crown is seeking leave to appeal a decision during trial to acquit Dr. Sean Buckingham on five of the 23 charges that went to a direct verdict.

Justice James Adams ordered the jury to acquit, saying there was not enough evidence to convict. (13)

(Pot-Prince) (Audio:132)

The so-called Prince of Pot showed up at B-C Supreme Court in Vancouver with a posse in hand, only to see his hearing date delayed.

Marijuana advocate Marc Emery says lawyers on both sides of the border are negotiating his surrender to the United States for selling pot seeds over the Internet.

Emery, who has agreed to a five-year prison term in exchange for no jail time for his two co-accused, says he won't be making any apologies for what he's done. (13)

(Padilla-Terror-Charges)

Convicted U-S terror conspirator Jose Padilla (puh-DEE'-yuh) has been sentenced to 17 years and four months in prison on terrorism conspiracy charges.

Padilla had faced a life sentence, but his lawyers asked for no more than 10 years, saying he had been mistreated and tortured while in custody.

The judge rejected that but he did get credit for time served since his arrest in 2002 on allegations he plotted with al-Qaida to blow up a radioactive ``dirty bomb."

Those allegations were not part of his Miami trial. (13)

(Writers' Strike)

There's finally a sign of hope for resolving the dispute between striking Hollywood writers and studios.

A person familiar with the bargaining strategy says officials with the writers' guild held informal talks today with the studios, and that the talks could lead to the resumption of negotiations. (13)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 346

--Eleventh NewsWatch--

Things are looking a little better today for Canadians with money or retirement funds tied to the stock market.

The Toronto market is bouncing back, after plunging more than 600 points yesterday.

The T-S-X is up about 360 points today while in New York, the Dow is down just 150, after an initial plunge of about 500 points in the first hour of trading.

The Bank of Canada cut its key rate by a quarter-point to four per cent this morning, while the U-S Federal Reserve slashed its rate by a surprise three-quarters of a percentage point.

But David Wolf of Merrill Lynch Canada warns interest rate cuts by the Fed are not going to be enough to avoid a recession in the U-S. (11)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio:p03)

Former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley says Canada was right to send troops to fight in Afghanistan.

And a panel led by Manley suggests Canada's military mission in southern Afghanistan be extended indefinitely beyond 2009 -- on two conditions.

The report says Canadian troops need additional equipment and NATO needs to deploy more soldiers from other countries.

Manley says Canada's mission is noble and justifiable -- but is also doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden. (11)

(Military-Plane-Spinoffs)

Lockheed Martin and Boeing will spend more than 290 (m) million dollars in Atlantic Canada to help build and maintain Canada's new fleet of military transport planes.

The two aerospace giants made the announcement this morning at the I-M-P Group hangar near Halifax.

The bulk of the investment comes from Lockheed Martin, for work linked to the 17 C-130-J Super Hercules military transport aircraft. (11)

(US-Pakistan)

American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says the U-S must maintain a ``long-term, consistent, predictable relationship with Pakistan."

Rice will meet with President Pervez Musharraf in Switzerland tomorrow.

It will be her first face-to-face meeting with the Pakistani leader since Benazir Bhutto's assassination.

Rice says she wants to ensure elections there will put the country ``back on the democratic path." (11)

(Padilla-Terror-Charges)

A federal judge in Miami has handed Jose Padilla a more than 17-year-long sentence on terrorism conspiracy charges.

The U-S citizen was held for three and a-half years as an enemy combatant after his 2002 arrest amid allegations that he was plotting to detonate a radioactive ``dirty bomb."

The ``dirty bomb" allegations were not mentioned in his trial. (11)

(ENT-Oscars)

The teen pregnancy comedy ``Juno" has snagged a handful of Academy award nominations -- including two for a pair of Canadians.

Halifax's Ellen Page was nominated for best actress and Montreal-born Jason Reitman for best director.

``Juno" is also nominated for best picture -- the only comedy among four other dark offerings.

It's competing against ``No Country for Old Men," ``There Will Be Blood," ``Atonement" and ``Michael Clayton." (11)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 221

--Seventeenth NewsWatch--

It was a wild day on the New York stock market after the U-S Federal Reserve chopped its key funds rate by three-quarters of a point.

The bigger-than-expected cut is aimed at preventing the U-S economy from slipping into a recession.

At one point today, the Dow Jones plunged more than 450 points before recovering.

On the day, the Dow lost 128-points, which is only one per cent.

On this side of the border, the Bank of Canada trimmed its key overnight rate from 4.25 per cent to an even four.

The S-and-P T-S-X gained 509 points, which is 84 per cent of what it lost yesterday. (17)

(BIZ-Dollar)

The dollar gained almost half-a-cent to end the day at 97.27 cents U-S.

Traders attribute it partly to signs the U-S economy is slowing down faster than the Canadian economy. (17)

(BIZ-Oil-Gasoline Prices)

Signs the U-S economy is very close to a recession are credited with pushing oil below 90-dollars U-S a barrel.

It lost more than 70-cents to end the day at \$89.85 cents U-S.

In the past three weeks, the price of oil has dropped 11 per cent.

As a result, the latest M-J Ervin survey shows the average price of regular gasoline across Canada dipped 1.3 cents in the last week.

It now stands at 104.5 cents a litre. (17)

(Manley-Afghan Report)

The Manley report on Canada's role in Afghanistan has drawn a non-committal response from Opposition Leader Stephane Dion.

The report by a blue-ribbon panel led by ex-Liberal finance minister John Manley recommends Canada's Afghan mission be extended indefinitely.

That's provided other countries chip in more soldiers and equipment.

Dion says he will comment on the report after he has read it. (17)

(OBIT-Ledger) (Audio: 182)

Actor Heath Ledger has died at the age of 28.

His body was found in his apartment in Manhattan, where police suspect the death may be drug-related.

Ledger was nominated for best actor for his performance in the 2005 movie ``Brokeback Mountain."

He also had roles in ``Monster's Ball" and ``The Patriot." (17)

(WEA-Mideast Cold Snap)

Parts of the Middle East are shivering in their worst cold snap in 40 years.

In the Syrian capital of Damascus, forecasters are calling for an overnight low of slightly below freezing for most of this week.

A freak snowstorm hit the Jordan capital of Amman today. (17)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 116

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics, Social

MONTREAL - Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says Prime Minister Stephen Harper must be frank with Canadians about the future of the country's military mission in Afghanistan.

Duceppe told a news conference in Montreal today that a federal panel examining the mission has given Harper more than he hoped.

The panel led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley says Canadian troops should stay in Afghanistan indefinitely but need help from NATO allies and more equipment.

Duceppe says Harper is trying to buy time with the controversial mission until he can win a majority government in a federal election.

But the sovereigntist leader says Harper must be clear about the future role to be played by Canadian troops and how long they will be in the wartorn country.

Duceppe says he favours ending the combat role by February 2009.

(The Canadian Press)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 145

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics, Social

TORONTO _ Foreign affairs critic Bob Rae says there's no need for the Liberals to immediately take a hard position on the Manley report on Afghanistan.

Rae adds -- at least not until it's clear how the Conservative government and Canada's NATO allies intend to respond to the recommendations.

The high-profile panel, led by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, is recommending Canada's military mission in southern Afghanistan be extended -- on two conditions.

The panel says Canadian troops should continue their mission in Kandahar province beyond 2009 if they receive additional equipment and more support from other countries.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, who was attending a party caucus retreat in Kitchener, Ontario when the panel's report was released today, says he won't comment until he's read the report.

Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale says his party will decide on an issue-by-issue, vote-by-vote basis whether to support or oppose the government when Parliament resumes next week.

(The Canadian Press)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 270

INDEX:Advisories

Ottawa says federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is keeping close watch on the markets.

But the government isn't likely to offer an economic kick-start program like the 145- (b) billion-dollar plan proposed by Washington.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion says the government's new budget will need to reflect the new reality Canadians are facing.

N-D-P leader Jack Layton says Ottawa is doing nothing for Canadians worried about their retirement savings. (3)

(BIZ-Oil-Prices)

Mounting hand-wringing over the possibility of a U-S recession is causing oil prices to drop sharply overseas.

The continued tumble of global stock markets today is also pushing prices down.

At last check, crude oil is down about three-dollars a barrel. (3)

(Manley-Afghan-Report)

The Stephen Harper government is expected to get some support in its wish to have Canadian troops stay in Afghanistan beyond 2009.

A five-member independent panel is set to recommend today that Canada extend its military mission in that country beyond the current February 2009 end date.

The panel is headed by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley. (3)

(CO-Poisoning) (Audio: 37)

Two elderly seniors are in critical condition in Edmonton after deadly carbon monoxide filtered through their condo in Linden, Alberta.

They were among eight elderly residents who were evacuated and rushed to hospital for hyperbaric chamber treatment yesterday.

Police and firefighters suspect a car had been left running overnight in the condo's garage. (3)

(Hollywood-Labour)

There's a chance that striking Hollywood writers could begin informal talks with studio chiefs as early as this week.

Officials at the writers guild plan to review the recent tentative contract negotiated by the directors' union and evaluate how it fits in with writers' demands.

The directors' contract establishes a precedent for the industry's creative talent, giving the union jurisdiction over programs produced for online distribution. (3)

(ENT-AC-Spears-Custody)

Britney Spears reportedly made it to a deposition yesterday in the custody dispute over her two young sons.

The troubled pop star has had some trouble making recent legal dates.

Spears did make one scheduled appointment earlier this month, but ended up being taken to a hospital hours later after a standoff at her home. (3)

(NewsWatch by Neena Chowdhury)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 276

--First NewsWatch--

Global markets continue to plunge as investors show worry over the risk of a U-S economic downturn.

Oil prices have also dropped sharply due to speculation that slower U-S growth will weaken demand for crude.

Trading halted in India when its benchmark index plummeted nearly 10 per cent within minutes of opening.

And Australia's share market plunged 7.1 per cent today -- its biggest drop in nearly 20 years. (1)

(BIZ-Stock Markets-Preview) (Audio: 197)

An economist with B-MO Capital Management says the Toronto market could see a little bit of calm after yesterday's storm.

Doug Porter says investors will likely be licking their wounds following one of the worst one-day selloffs ever when the T-S-X plunged 605 points yesterday.

But he says we can expect some serious selling stateside when the markets open today after being closed yesterday for the Martin Luther King holiday. (1)

(Manley-Afghan-Report)

It's expected an independent panel will recommend Canadian troops remain in Afghanistan beyond its February 2009 end date.

But its report could call for Canada's role to be very different from the one it has now in the troubled nation.

Former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley heads the panel, which will release its report this morning. (1)

(NL-Breast-Kisser)

An Iranian student in Newfoundland and Labrador will be sentenced Thursday after pleading guilty yesterday to kissing a woman's breast in a

university elevator.

Twenty-five-year-old Farhood Azarsina admitted to impulsively kissing the top of the woman's breast while the two were on an elevator at Memorial University in September.

The PhD engineering student has apologized, saying he didn't know his actions are a serious offence in Canada. (1)

(NB-Wind-Farm)

New Brunswick says it wants to be an energy hub and today it will make an announcement towards that end.

Premier Shawn Graham will announce plans today to harness the winds blowing across Lameque Island in the northeastern corner of the province.

He wants a wind farm up and running there next year. (1)

(ENT-Oscar-Nominations) (WATCH FOR DATING)

Will Halifax's Ellen Page get an Oscar nod for her performance as a pregnant teen in the film ``Juno?"

We'll find out this morning as the Oscar nominations are announced.

Meantime, Oscar organizers insist the show will go on next month, with or without the striking writers. (1)

(NewsWatch by Neena Chowdhury)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 327

--Sixth NewsWatch--

Tumbling world stock markets brought more bad news for North American investors today.

For the second day in a row, investors fled the markets in Asia, Australia and Europe.

All eyes will be on North American markets today following yesterday's massive selloff that saw the T-S-X plunge 605 points, losing 4.75 per cent of its value.

That was on top of a six-per-cent loss last week.

Wall Street markets were closed yesterday for the Martin Luther King holiday and amid fears of a recession, nervous investors are anxiously awaiting today's market activity in the States. (6)

(Bank Rate)

Retiring Bank of Canada governor David Dodge will be setting the key central bank rate for the last time today.

Analysts expect a drop of at least a quarter of a per cent, although some experts suggest, that with stocks in a tailspin, a half-point reduction might be in order.

Mark Carney is set to take over Dodge's job on February first. (6)

(Manley Afghan Report) (Audio: 02)

An eagerly awaited report, recommending Canada's future role in Afghanistan, is due out this morning.

One thing is virtually certain -- Canadians will remain there beyond next year.

The report, by a blue-ribbon panel headed by former foreign affairs minister John Manley, is not expected to set a specific timetable for Canada's

presence in Afghanistan.

The Harper government suggests the mission should be extended to at least 2011. (6)

(Child-Death-Report)

The head of UNICEF Canada has high praise for this country's support for innovative programs and research aimed at reducing child deaths in poverty-stricken African countries.

Nigel Fisher says Canada's ``pioneering" role in successful programs has saved the lives of many children.

The Canadian-supported program provides integrated primary care delivering life-saving health and nutrition services to some 17 (m) million people in 11 West and Central African countries. (6)

(Democrats-Debate) (Audio: 62)

Fireworks erupted at the U-S Democratic debate in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, last night, with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton accusing each other of distorting the truth.

Obama told the former first lady he was helping the unemployed workers of Chicago while she was in a Wal-Mart boardroom.

Clinton shot back that she was helping disadvantaged Americans as Obama partnered with a fraudulent real estate developer. (6)

(Vimy Ridge Swingers)

At the Canadian National Vimy Ridge Memorial in northern France, people are making love -- not war.

Authorities say exhibitionism, cruising, swinging couples and open sex is rampant at the First World War memorial.

Police have arrested several people for lewd behaviour at the sacred spot, which bears the names of missing Canadian soldiers. (6)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 337

--Tenth NewsWatch--

More fear and uncertainty on global stock markets today.

Shares are down in New York while the main Toronto index has recovered somewhat from its biggest one-day drop in seven years.

After plunging 605 points yesterday, the T-S-X bounced back this morning, clawing back about half of those losses.

The New York stock market plunged early this morning but has started to recover as investors digest the Federal Reserve's move to cut its key interest rate by three-quarters of a point.

The Bank of Canada cuts its key rate a quarter-point today amid the market turmoil and signalled more cuts are coming. (10)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: 104)

The Harper government says it will respond to a report on Canada's future role in Afghanistan by the end of the week.

A high-profile panel, led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, recommends extending the mission on two conditions.

It says Canadian troops should continue their mission in Kandahar province beyond 2009 if they receive additional equipment -- and if NATO steps up to the plate and provides more troops.

Manley says either NATO shows it's an important mission -- or Canada will have to look to the well-being of its troops. (10)

(US-Iraq)

A top American General in Iraq says troops have al-Qaida on the run but will never completely be finished chasing them.

Army Major-General Mark Herling, commander of coalition forces in northern Iraq, says expanding security in a four-province area has caused significant damage to al-Qaida, killing 130 militants.

But he says ``Whenever you feel comfortable that you've eliminated them in one area, they tend to re-emerge." (10)

(Clinton-Obama-Fight) (Audio: 73)

The Democratic presidential race is getting nasty.

Hillary Clinton is accusing Barack Obama of ``looking for a fight" in a bitter debate last night in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

She suggests her presidential rival acted out of frustration over primary campaign losses in New Hampshire and Nevada.

Obama argued the Clintons -- Hillary and Bill -- have been distorting his record, attacking him in ways that are not accurate. (10)

(Italy-Politics)

Italy's prime minister is seeking a vote of confidence in Parliament.

Romano Prodi is taking that step after a small but critical partner withdrew from his shaky coalition government today.

If Prodi loses either of this week's votes in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, he will have to resign after only 20 months in office. (10)

(Bedridden-Rescue)

Firefighters in Gladwin, Michigan had to cut a hole in a wall to rescue a bedridden man weighing between 600-and-700 pounds from a burning building.

It took 10 firefighters to carry the 49-year-old man to safety.

Darrell Seager covered himself with blankets to shield himself from the heat and flames as he was waiting to be rescued. (10)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 125

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

HALIFAX - The families of several Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are praising a report today that recommends troops get better equipment and that NATO take on a greater role in the country.

Jim Davis, whose son Cpl. Paul Davis was killed in 2006, says it's time NATO stepped up and offered more assistance in the volatile southern region where Canada is operating.

He says Canada can't be expected to bear the brunt of the responsibility without help.

Julie Mason lost her husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh in 2006 and says it's been a longstanding complaint that soldiers don't have the gear they need to do their jobs.

Both relatives were responding to a report by a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley.

Manley says Canada's mission is noble and justifiable, but is doomed to fail unless other NATO countries shoulder a heavier burden.

(The Canadian Press)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 85

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics, Social

OTTAWA _ Some facts about Canada's mission in Afghanistan:

Began -- January 2002, with the deployment of an infantry battlegroup.

Numbers -- There are about 25-hundred Canadian troops deployed.

Cost -- The military mission will have cost about 6.3 billion dollars by the time the current commitment ends in February 2009. Over 750 million more has been earmarked for development aid.

Casualties -- Canada has lost 77 soldiers and a diplomat killed.

Quote -- ``Canada's presence in Afghanistan matters." -- Former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, head of a special panel which says Canada should stay in Afghanistan past 2009 if certain conditions are met.

(The Canadian Press)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 329

--Fifteenth NewsWatch--

What a difference a day makes.

After a staggering, 605-point loss yesterday, the Toronto Stock Exchange rebounded with a gain of 509 points today.

Fuelling the recovery was a dramatic, sudden move by the U-S Federal Reserve in chopping its key funds rate by three-quarters of a point in a bid to avert a recession.

The Bank of Canada cut its key rate by a quarter-point.

In New York, the Dow lost 128 points. It was closed yesterday for a U-S holiday. (15)

(Manley-Afghan-Families) (Audio:162)

Political party leaders Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe don't agree, but the families of some Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are praising a report today on the Canadian mission there.

The report, from a panel led by former Liberal cabinet member John Manley, recommends troops get better equipment and that NATO take on a greater role if the mission is to continue past the current February 2009 deadline.

Jim Davis, whose son Corporal Paul Davis was killed in 2006, says Canada can't be expected to bear the brunt of the responsibility without help. (15)

(OBIT-Ledger)

Actor Heath Ledger is dead.

A New York Police Department spokesman says Ledger has been found at a downtown Manhattan residence in a possible drug-related death.

He received an Academy Award Best Actor nomination in 2005 for his role in the movie ``Brokeback Mountain," which lost the Best Picture Oscar that year to ``Crash."

Ledger was 28. (15)

(CO-Poisoning)

One of the Linden, Alberta seniors who needed emergency treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning has been released from hospital.

But another of the eight patients taken to an Edmonton hospital for treatment at its hyperbaric chambers remains in critical condition.

The remaining six seniors have been upgraded to stable.

Police suspect fumes from a running car permeated the complex yesterday with the potentially deadly gas. (15)

(Police-Shortages)

Police in Ontario are praising a decision forcing Quebec provincial police to end potentially dangerous solo patrols in remote areas.

Quebec's workplace safety tribunal has ruled that patrolling alone in areas where communication is unreliable represents a threat to officer safety.

Karl Walsh, head of the Ontario force's union, suggests only luck has spared them the shooting deaths that have shaken the R-C-M-P. (15)

(ENT-Grammy-Pickets)

The Writers Guild of America says it will not picket next month's Grammy Awards.

But the Grammys have not been granted a waiver by the Guild that would allow striking writers to work on the February 10th ceremony in Los Angeles.

The guild has said it is unlikely to grant the waiver, after refusing to grant one for the Golden Globes. (15)

(NewsWatch by Chris Mayberry)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 122

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics, Social

OTTAWA _ Highlights of the report issued today by a special advisory panel on Afghanistan led by John Manley:

- Canada should remain in Afghanistan past February 2009 if NATO or other countries can provide one-thousand reinforcements and the government can obtain some medium-lift helicopter capacity and high-tech surveillance drones.
- If Canada stays, it should continue its combat role, but should also emphasize training the Afghan national army to take over the security role.
- Canada should push in diplomatic councils for a comprehensive NATO plan for Afghanistan and should press Pakistan to do more to promote regional security.
- Canada should revamp its development efforts to deal with Afghanistan's immediate needs.
- The government should do a better job of informing Canadians about the situation in Afghanistan and promote ``a continuous, frank and constructive dialogue."

(The Canadian Press)

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DATE: 2008.01.22
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 367

--Ninth NewsWatch--

It's a tale of two markets in North America today after central banks in Canada and the U-S cut interest rates amid growing fears of an American recession.

The Toronto stock index is up more than 350 points -- bouncing back after its worst one-day loss yesterday in seven years.

The Bank of Canada cut its key policy rate by a-quarter of a percentage point after the U-S Federal Reserve Board sliced its benchmark rate by three-quarters of a point.

Despite that cut, stocks in New York started the day with the kind of heavy selloff that hit the Toronto market yesterday -- before recovering some of the loss. (9)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: 102)

A blue-ribbon panel says Canada should not abandon the people of Afghanistan.

It's calling for an indefinite extension of Canada's military mission -- on the condition that our troops are given additional equipment and more NATO troops are sent to Kandahar province.

The five-member panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, also suggests gradually refocusing the mission on reconstruction, training and diplomacy rather than combat.

The Harper government will respond to the report in a few days. (9)

(Shootout-Killing)

Toronto police say they can't understand why not one of about 100 people who were near a gun battle that killed an innocent bystander have come forward with information.

One investigator says he's utterly disgusted that no one has offered as much as a tip to help police.

Hou Chang Mao, a father of two, was caught in the crossfire at a busy market last week where he was stacking oranges on an outside display.

He was the second innocent bystander killed by gunfire in Toronto this year. (9)

(BC-Father-Daughter-Death)

Psychiatric evidence is expected today at the trial of a Kitimat, B-C man accused of killing his teenaged daughter.

Blair Donnelly is charged with second-degree murder in the stabbing death of his 16-year-old daughter Stephanie last November.

Two psychiatrists are expected to testify that Donnelly is not criminally responsible due to a mental condition. (9)

(Oscars-Cda)

The teen pregnancy comedy ``Juno" has received a handful of Oscar nominations, including best picture and best actress for Halifax's 20-year-old Ellen Page.

Montreal-born Jason Reitman is also nominated for best director for the film.

The movie's first-time screenwriter Diablo Cody was also nominated for best original screenplay .

Toronto's Sarah Polley picked up a best adapted screenplay nomination for her smart reworking of an Alice Munro short story for ``Away from Her." (9)

(Underwear Thief)

A man in Colfax, Washington is going to jail for at least a month after admitting he stole one-thousand pairs of women's underwear from laundry rooms.

Twenty-four-year-old Garth Flaherty was arrested after police were called about a man hanging around an apartment complex.

Police say they went to his home and in his bedroom, found enough women's underwear to fill five garbage bags. (9)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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WORD COUNT: 269

INDEX:Advisories

(NS-All-Weather-Jobs)

One of the largest window and door manufacturers in Eastern Canada is expanding.

Atlantic All-Weather Windows will create up to 200 jobs at a new location in Amherst, Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia Business Incorporated has signed a five-year payroll rebate worth almost 1.2 (m) million dollars.

The company is developing key export markets for its hurricane-rated products.

(The Canadian Press)

(Manley-Report-Families)

Family members of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are praising a report today by John Manley on the mission there.

Jim Davis of Nova Scotia lost his son Paul in 2006.

He says he's pleased the document recommends that NATO play a bigger role in the country's dangerous southern region.

Manley says Canadian soldiers should remain in Afghanistan indefinitely _ but only if they get more foreign troops to help them and better equipment to protect them. (The Canadian Press)

(NS-Forestry-Future)

Forest industry officials say they're confident Nova Scotia will be able to weather the fallout from a soaring Loonie and the housing market collapse in the U-S.

The downturn has already cost the province three-thousand jobs.

John MacLellan, president of the Nova Scotia Forestry Products Association, says he believes research and development will help meet a growing demand for bio-energy products like wood pellets or ethanol production.

(The Canadian Press)

(Military-Plane-Spinoffs)

Two giant U-S aerospace firms are committing to provide more than 290 (m) million dollars in contracts to Atlantic Canadian firms.

It's part of a deal involving Ottawa's purchase of a new fleet of military transport planes.

Lockheed Martin and Boeing made the announcement of the figures today at the I-M-P hangar near Halifax.

(The Canadian Press)

(NS-Lobster-Fines)

Two Nova Scotia fishermen have pleaded guilty to charges of possessing undersized lobsters.

Fifty-four-year-old Myles Anthony Blackburn and 39-year-old Clifford William Goodhew of Terrance Bay were handed stiff fines today.

Blackburn must pay five thousand dollars, forfeit his pickup truck and the illegal lobsters.

Goodhew was fined 25-hundred dollars.

(CKBW)

(NS-Oscars-Page)

Nova Scotia's Ellen Page is up for an Oscar.

Family and friends say they're thrilled she's become an academy award nominee.

Page, who still lives in Halifax, was nominated today for the prestigious Best Actress category for her role as the quick-witted title character in the teen-pregnancy comedy ``Juno."

(The Canadian Press)

(Atlantic Update by John Lewandowski)

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--Eighth NewsWatch--

Central banks in Canada and the United States are slicing interest rates in an effort to fend off a major economic slump.

The Bank of Canada has cut its key rate by a quarter-point to four per cent.

And the U-S Federal Reserve has slashed its key rate by three-quarters of a percentage point to 3.5 per cent.

Both central banks also indicated further rate cuts are likely.

One U-S economist says the move is not an instant fix and the American economy is still staring recession in the face -- but he says ``at least the Fed now gets it." (8)

(Stock Markets)

New York stock markets are seeing the kind of heavy selloff that struck the Toronto market yesterday.

In the first day of trading since global markets plummeted, the Dow Jones dropped 420 points or 3.5 per cent.

After its biggest one-day drop in seven years, the Toronto market bounced back a little in early trading, gaining about 150 points.

Turbulence also continued to roil world stock markets, with Asian shares down for a second day on fears of recession in the U-S. (8)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: P-02)

A panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley says the Canadian mission in Afghanistan should be extended beyond February 2009 -- but only if certain conditions are met.

The panel says Canadian troops should continue their mission in Kandahar province if they receive additional equipment and more troop support from other countries.

The panel also suggests gradually refocusing the mission on reconstruction, training and diplomacy rather than combat.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper calls the report ``substantial" and says the government will respond later in the week. (8)

(Child-Death-Report) (Audio: 86)

Canada is being hailed for its role in reducing child deaths in poverty-stricken African countries.

Nigel Fisher, the C-E-O of UNICEF Canada, says this country's backing of innovative programs and research is paying off big time.

He says the Canadian-supported programs help deliver life-saving health and nutrition services to about 17 (m) million people in 11 West and Central African countries. (8)

(Military-Plane-Spinoffs)

A big shot in the arm for a number of firms in Atlantic Canada.

They will receive more than 290 (m) million dollars in contracts to help build and maintain Canada's new fleet of military transport planes.

I-M-P Group, Northstar Network and Wiebel Aerospace will get contracts linked to Lockheed Martin's C-130 Super Hercules aircraft and Boeing's C017 Globemaster transport planes. (8)

(Oscar Nominations) (Audio: 91)

Canadians are in the running for some high-profile awards at this year's Academy Awards.

Halifax actress Ellen Page received a best actress nod and Montreal-born Jason Reitman got a directing nomination for ``Juno" in the Oscar nominations announced today.

Juno is also nominated for best picture.

Toronto's Sarah Polley received a best screenplay nomination for ``Away From Her."

``No Country for Old Men" and ``There Will Be Blood" led with eight Oscar nominations each, followed by "Atonement" and ``Michael Clayton" with seven. (8)

(NewsWatch by Phil Godin)

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--Eighteenth NewsWatch--

Recovery was the key word today on the Toronto stock market, where the main index gained almost 85 per cent of what it lost yesterday.

The S-and-P T-S-X picked up 509 points to close at 12-thousand-641.

In New York, the Dow Jones plunged then recovered, ending the day down 128 points, which is one per cent.

Brokers say both markets were propped up by interest rate cuts by the U-S Federal Reserve and the Bank of Canada. (18)

(Manley-Afghan-Report) (Audio: P11)

Two of the three opposition leaders wasted no time rejecting the Manley report on Canada's role in Afghanistan.

A five-member panel led by ex-Liberal finance minister John Manley recommends Canada's mission there be extended indefinitely -- provided other NATO allies contribute one-thousand more soldiers and equipment.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe and N-D-P Leader Jack Layton want Canadian soldiers out of Afghanistan right now.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he will comment on the 90-page Manley report after he has read it. (18)

(Korea-Trade-McGuinty)

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is threatening to impose tariffs on vehicles from South Korea if Canada can't get its own vehicles into that country.

McGuinty notes 144-thousand Hyundais, Kias, and other South Korean-made vehicles came to Canada in 2006.

But, less than 100 Canadian-made vehicles were allowed into South Korea that year.

McGuinty says ``what's good for the goose is good for the gander." (18)

(CO Poisoning) (Audio: 186)

Only two of the eight seniors rushed to an Edmonton hospital yesterday with carbon monoxide poisoning will spend a second night in the facility.

One remains in critical condition, while the other has been upgraded to stable condition.

The gas came from a car that was left running overnight in the parking garage of their condo complex in Linden, Alberta, 100-kilometres northeast of Calgary. (18)

(OBIT-Barrett)

Pam Barrett, former leader of the Alberta New Democratic Party, has died of cancer of the esophagus.

She was 54.

Barrett was leader of the Alberta N-D-P from 1996 to 2000. (18)

(Thompson Quits)

There's one less candidate in the race for the Republican party's presidential nomination.

Actor-politician Fred Thompson dropped out of the race after a string of poor finishes in primaries and caucuses.

Thompson is best known as gruff district attorney Arthur Branch in ``Law and Order." (18)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

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--Nineteenth NewsWatch--

N-D-P Leader Jack Layton says there's no way he's accepting a report from a blue-ribbon panel on the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.

The panel -- led by ex-Liberal finance minister John Manley -- says Canadian soldiers should remain in that country indefinitely provided other NATO countries send more soldiers and equipment.

Layton rejects that, saying the Manley report recommends ``more of the same."

He says ``the combat role is wrong for Canada, and it's not making life more secure for Afghans." (19)

(Manley-Afghan Families) (Audio: 179)

The Manley report is being supported by Tim Goddard, whose daughter -- Captain Nicola Goddard -- was killed in Afghanistan in 2006.

Tim Goddard says the mission, which is due to end in 13 months, should continue until its goals are reached.

He adds there has never been a counter-insurgency that has been defeated by foreign forces.

Goddard says beating the Taliban must be done by Afghan forces, adding all NATO can do is help them. (19)

(BIZ-Markets)

Cuts in interest rates by the American and Canadian central banks are credited with putting some upward pressure on the major stock markets.

After plunging more than 450 points this morning, New York's Dow Jones recovered to end the day with a loss of 128 points, which is only one per cent.

After plunging just over 600 points on Monday, Toronto's S-and-P T-S-X gained 509 points today.

In Wednesday morning trading, the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong is up more than seven per cent. (19)

(HEALTH-Cough Medicines) (Audio: 198)

A new review questions the effectiveness of cough remedies purchased over the counter.

The international review says there's no scientific evidence to say they either work or are useless.

Twenty five studies on the matter are covered by the review, which is published by the Cochrane Library. (19)

(ONT-ENT-Ledger)

An autopsy will be done Wednesday on actor Heath Ledger, whose body was found in his Manhattan apartment.

Ledger, who was 28, was discovered naked in bed with sleeping pills nearby.

Police say there's no sign of suicide.

Ledger got an Academy Award nomination for best actor for his role in the 2005 movie ``Brokeback Mountain." (19)

(OBIT-Barrett)

Tributes are coming in for former Alberta N-D-P leader Pam Barrett, who has died of cancer at the age of 54.

Premier Ed Stelmach says Barrett was ``a very good debater and legislator" who had a tremendous passion for Alberta.

Provincial Liberal Leader Kevin Taft says although Barrett was ``small in stature, she had a mighty heart."

She led Alberta's New Democrats from 1996 to 2000. (19)

(NewsWatch by Bill Marshall)

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NETWORK ADVISORY-LIVE-Report on Canada-Afghanistan

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan releases its report today -- Tuesday, January 22nd.

The Canadian Press will provide a LIVE, unanchored feed when the panel -- chaired by the Honourable John Manley -- holds a news conference at 10:00 a.m. E-T in Ottawa to discuss its findings.

The feed will be available on Channel 06. The start time is APPROXIMATE, so please monitor the channel.

The Canadian Press Toronto

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'Step up,' get NATO to help, PM told; Pull out of Kandahar unless allies pitch in, Manley report urges

Prime Minister Stephen Harper must take personal responsibility for the success or failure of Canada's Afghan mission by pressing NATO allies for an extra 1,000 troops for Kandahar while better explaining the mission to Canadians, a respected study group says.

And if Canadian soldiers don't get NATO reinforcements, along with new transport helicopters and unmanned surveillance planes to track insurgents, Canada should withdraw from its security mission in Kandahar in February 2009, the independent panel said yesterday.

The five-member panel, led by former Liberal minister John Manley, painted a "brutally frank" picture of the difficulties NATO armies face bringing security to the country, including a worsening insurgency, ineffective aid strategy, poor co-ordination among defence, foreign affairs and development officials, and an imbalance between military and civilian efforts.

"What we're saying is that the mission is in jeopardy. There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province, " Manley told a news conference.

"But there is a significant difference between saying, 'We're gone in February 2009,' and saying, 'We're staying provided you find us a partner.'"

Canada's contributions of about 2,500 troops and at least \$100 million a year in aid give Harper the diplomatic muscle to press international partners for extra forces and get diplomatic and development efforts on track, the panel says.

"To get the result that we believe is necessary, the Prime Minister must step up and make this mission a top priority," Manley said.

"Even more important, he must personally lead our diplomatic initiative, making our voice heard to a degree commensurate with our contributions."

Harper came away empty-handed at the last meeting of NATO leaders in Riga, Latvia, in 2006. But the panel says NATO must be prepared to act on Canada's demands for more troops when leaders meet again in Bucharest, Romania, April 2 to 4.

"Either they mean it, that this is the most important mission, or they don't. And if they don't, well then we need to look at the well-being of our young people," Manley said. Seventy-seven Canadian troops, and one diplomat, Glyn Berry, have died in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2002.

All eyes are now set on a future vote that the government has promised in the House of Commons that will let the majority of MPs decide whether troops stay in Kandahar or leave next year. Manley's report suggests that vote be postponed until after the critical NATO meeting to give Harper that opportunity to secure additional support for Canadian soldiers.

The Commons returns on Monday after a six-week winter break.

Harper said yesterday his cabinet would take a few days to study the report before responding in detail.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion told reporters in Kitchener he had not yet read the report. However, he repeated his position that Canadian soldiers should leave Kandahar next year, and should inform NATO immediately.

"It's time for Canada to do something else to help the people of Afghanistan. This is our position," Dion said.

The panel said that a lack of troops has made life more dangerous for troops in southern Afghanistan, noting that Canada has suffered the highest casualty rate per capita of any of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) nations.

"We believe that Canadian casualties are greater than would otherwise be the case if additional troops were there," Manley said.

The panel, which received more than 200 submissions, also pointed to serious communications problems it says have left Canadians in the dark about the rationale for Ottawa's involvement in Kandahar.

"It's a fact that the information Canadians are getting today is not well balanced," said panel member Paul Tellier, a former clerk of the Privy Council.

Harper struck the panel last October to advise parliamentarians on the future of the Afghan mission. His decision to name Manley - a known advocate of the mission - as chair was controversial.

Critics said the commission was biased in favour of extending the mission, and they said the report backs up their fears, even though it was tough on the Tory government.

NDP Leader Jack Layton yesterday repeated his demand that Canadian troops leave Afghanistan, and said NATO should pull out, too.

"What we need is the United Nations to develop a comprehensive peace process for this regional conflict," said Layton.

However, an immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifices," Manley said.

The report suggests the NDP demand is out of touch, and that an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops with none to take their place "would trigger a security collapse."

It is not realistic either to suggest Canadian soldiers end their combat duties and concentrate only on training the Afghan army, as demanded by the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois, the panel said.

That's because the Canadian trainers must work alongside the Afghan troops in the field, leaving them exposed to the same dangers.

If the conditions are met and the mission extended, the panel says Canada's eventual withdrawal should depend on the ability of Afghanistan's army and police forces to handle security on their own.

"The quicker the transition occurs, the faster the Canadian Forces can reduce their combat activity in Kandahar," the report says.

Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae said Parliament should hold off on a vote on the future of the mission until after the NATO meeting in April in Romania.

"We want to make sure that the approach that NATO takes is well shared among the NATO partners, and we want to make sure the NATO mission can be successful, " Rae said in an interview.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe said the report gives Harper "carte blanche" to carry on the war.

With files from Les Whittington

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IDNUMBER 200801230123
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PAGE: AA06
ILLUSTRATION: FINBARR O'REILLY reuters Only a coherent strategy that has somechance of success can justify the sacrifice of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, argues John Manley. ;
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 865

'Use hard-earned influence to ensure the job gets done'

What follows is an edited excerpt of John Manley's "Chair's Forward" to the report by the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan:

If I learned one thing from this enquiry, it is that there is no obvious answer to the question of Canada's future role in Afghanistan. But our presence in that distant land does matter.

Canada's commitment in Afghanistan matters because it concerns global and Canadian security, Canada's international reputation, and the well-being of some of the world's most impoverished and vulnerable people. Our commitment is important because it has already involved the sacrifice of Canadian lives.

At the same time, I realize many Canadians are uneasy about Canada's mission in Afghanistan. They wonder what it's all for, whether success is achievable, and in the end, whether the results will justify the human and other costs. The most difficult decision a country can make is to send its young men and women into harm's way, particularly when the outcome may appear less than certain. I can assure Canadians that each of us on the panel wrestled with this question throughout our enquiry.

We find ourselves, with our allies, in a situation of conflict in a land that is far from us, little known by us and where our interests do not seem self-evident. We are trying to help a country whose recent history has been one long, unending tragedy, and whose prospects still appear bleak.

The question of Canada's future role defies a simple answer. It is complicated by the challenging nature of the mission and by the difficult neighbourhood in which Afghanistan is situated. ... It is made more complex because we assumed responsibility for fighting an insurgency in a

dangerous province of the country and we did so with little political debate and not much public engagement. And that insurgency is far from defeated.

Our panel consulted very broadly - both here at home and abroad. We travelled through four provinces in Afghanistan. We tried to assess progress made to date and the requirements for improved prospects. And we sought to answer the question of Canada's appropriate role in the future.

Our assessment of the situation recognizes the enormity of the challenge: regional instability; slow progress on reconstruction and development; mounting insecurity and violence; corruption, criminality and increasing poppy production. But there can be no doubt that compared to the starting point in 2001, living conditions in Afghanistan have seen measurable, even significant improvement.

Whenever we asked Afghans what they thought ISAF (the International Security Assistance Force) or Canada should do, there was never any hesitation: "We want you to stay; we need you to stay." Without the presence of the international security forces, they said, chaos would surely ensue.

The panel learned early that we must be careful to define our expectations for success. Afghanistan is a deeply divided tribal society. It has been wracked by decades of war and is one of the poorest countries on Earth. There should be no thought that after five or even 10 years of Western military presence and aid, Afghanistan will resemble Europe or North America. But we came to the conviction that with patience, commitment, financial and other forms of assistance, there is a reasonable prospect that its people will be able to live together in relative peace and security, while living standards slowly improve.

The essential questions for Canada are: How do we move from a military role to a civilian one, and how do we oversee a shift in responsibility for Afghanistan's security from the international community to Afghans themselves?

To achieve these objectives, much still needs to be done.

Institutions that are respected need to be built and the Afghan national army and police need to be further recruited and trained.

Agricultural districts need to be reclaimed from land mines and poppy fields, so that traditional crops can once again flourish where they have in the past.

Both the reality and the perception of corruption in the government of Afghanistan must be rooted out. They are undermining not only the hope for an Afghan solution but also support for the Western forces sacrificing their lives to help secure the situation.

Roads, bridges and electrification must be enhanced, so that ordinary Afghans can see progress.

With all that needs to be done, no end date makes sense at this point.

Afghanistan presents an opportunity for Canada. For the first time in many years, we have brought a level of commitment to an international problem that gives us real weight and credibility. For once, our 3Ds (defence, diplomacy and development assistance) are all pointed at the same

problem, and officials from three departments are beginning to work together.

But the cost is real, and it is high.

Canadians don't need any lessons in sacrifice. ... But our panel concluded that the sacrifice of Canadian lives could only be justified if we and our allies and the Afghans share a coherent, comprehensive plan that can lead to success, and if our allies are willing to stand with us with the resources and commitment that are necessary to make success possible.

We like to talk about Canada's role in the world. Well, we have a meaningful one in Afghanistan. As our report states, it should not be faint-hearted nor should it be open-ended. Above all, we must not abandon it prematurely.

Rather, we should use our hard-earned influence to ensure the job gets done and gets done properly.

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'The world isn't a pretty place'

John Manley, former Liberal foreign affairs minister and deputy prime minister, spoke about his views on Canada's involvement in Afghanistan yesterday:

"I believe in a strong international role for Canada. I think this world is getting more complicated, more difficult, more dangerous.

I don't think those issues should just be resolved by nuclear superpowers. I think countries like Canada have an important, meaningful role to play projecting our values, standing for the rights of individuals, the human security of people whose own governments can't protect them. . . .

"You either stay and you say you mean it and you get something that you can call success, which is giving the Afghan government the ability to maintain its own security like any sovereign country should be able to do. Or you get out. And if we get out, what's the next mission? When are we going to say 'no' to the United Nations when they come forward and say 'Here's where we need troops.'

"We're a rich country. We've got to do some of this stuff. ... The world isn't a pretty place."

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Report simply endorses the mission status quo

At its core, former foreign affairs minister John Manley's report on Afghanistan is an eloquent call for more of the same.

His five-member panel of one-time politicians and bureaucrats says that since, "for whatever reason," Canada's former Liberal government volunteered for a combat role in Kandahar, we now have no choice but to stay there.

Not just for one more year (as the Liberals want) or for three more years (as the Conservatives want), but indefinitely.

True, there is a condition attached. The report says that if, by the end of February 2009, NATO hasn't come up with 1,000 more battle troops capable of supporting Canadian soldiers in Kandahar, then Ottawa should serve notice that - at some undetermined time - it will pull its forces out.

But that too is simply the formal articulation of an implicit threat already in play. The current government has long argued that unless NATO deploys more troops in Afghanistan, domestic politics will make Canada's current involvement there untenable.

The panel, handpicked by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, makes the standard call for more military equipment, in this case helicopters and aerial drones.

Like Harper, it talks of gradually shifting focus from pure combat to a combination of combat and training.

And it repeats the mantra, which is already NATO doctrine, that success in Afghanistan depends on diplomacy and development as well as military might.

In short, it says we should continue to do what we are doing already - but better.

Which, for those who support the Afghan war already, is sensible advice. A new cabinet committee (one of the panel's recommendations) would undoubtedly make the war operate more smoothly.

But for those skeptical of the war - and polls suggest these are a majority - the report offers few reasons to shift ground.

It repeats the well-known, and somewhat contradictory, reasons for our being at war.

On the one hand, we invaded - with the sanction of both the United Nations and NATO - to help the U.S. depose a Taliban government that had been sheltering alleged terror kingpin Osama bin Laden.

On the other, we are trying to fix the problems we exacerbated by that invasion - including banditry, civil war, renewed opium production and the destruction of whatever feeble strands of governance had once existed.

The Manley panel makes an eloquent case that Canada has a moral obligation to help the Afghans, one that most Canadians would probably agree with.

But on the key question - our hopes of success - it is far from encouraging.

"It is our conviction that the recommendations in our report ... carry a reasonable probability of success," the panel writes. "In the circumstances now prevailing, that's the strongest assurance that can be credibly given."

As Manley told reporters yesterday, the security situation in Kandahar is actually deteriorating.

So why would we continue with a losing strategy? The panel says we have no choice if we are to maintain our credibility in NATO and NATO's credibility in the world. (In the Vietnam War too, the "credibility gap" argument loomed large.)

It also says that this is the right thing to do.

But is it?

The panel is almost certainly correct when it says Afghans yearn for normal lives. Will more of the same give them that? Will another decade of warfare in Afghanistan really make Canada safer?

Thomas Walkom's column usually appears Thursday and Sunday.

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BYLINE: Chantal Hebert
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COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
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Manley takes swipes at PM, Dion

John Manley has handed Prime Minister Stephen Harper a Rubik's cube that he cannot solve without Liberal Leader Stephane Dion.

Unless Harper convinces NATO to move 1,000 additional troops into Kandahar over the next 12 months, he need not even bother to ask the House of Commons for a mandate to pursue the Canadian deployment in the troubled Afghan province beyond next year.

In their report, Manley and his group argue that without more support from NATO allies, Canada does not stand a chance to fulfill its objectives in Kandahar. A prime minister would have to be politically suicidal to ignore that kind of advice.

But there is little point in Harper showing up at the NATO summit in Bucharest in April to make demands unless there is a relative certainty that he can leverage more allied soldiers in Kandahar into parliamentary support for extending Canada's security mission in the province.

With the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois set to vote against any extension of the combat mission, the government needs Liberal support to implement the Manley plan and Dion would have to reverse himself to extend it.

On that score, his former cabinet colleague has left Dion with little save- face room. The report bluntly dismisses the Liberal prescription for a 2009 end to Canada's combat role, calling it an option that it not "viable." It offers the prospect of an eventual phasing-out of Canada's fighting role in favour of training at some unspecified point in the future as a fallback bridge between the Liberal position and its main recommendation.

That is not to say that the group has totally shut out the views of the opposition. While its heart is forcefully behind a continued Canadian combat presence in Kandahar, its head is somewhat less sanguine. And even as it rejects calls to end the mission next year, the report endorses the bulk of

the opposition critique of Harper's management of it.

It states that Canada's casualties are inexplicably high by comparison to its allies, even in light of the particular risks of the mission, and prescribes that new helicopters and drones be deployed if it is to continue beyond next year.

It notes the large discrepancy between the resources expended on military and civilian efforts and describes the Canadian International Development Agency's initiatives as held back by bureaucracy at home and lack of co- ordination and focus on the ground.

It takes sharp digs at the government's opaque communications strategy.

And it suggests that the Prime Minister will have to invest more political energy on the file at home and abroad if the mission is to achieve measurable goals.

Yesterday, Harper and Dion both reserved comment until they had studied the report further. But the Liberal leader reiterated his call for Canada to trade its combat role for other Afghan duties next year, a statement that prompted a volley from Harper's spin doctors.

Under the timetable put forward by Manley, the Commons might not vote on the issue until after the April NATO summit. The debate could be overtaken by a spring election.

Under that scenario, voters would have to choose between a prime minister whose management of a defining foreign policy file has been found wanting and a leader of the opposition whose plan for its future has been dismissed as half- baked by one of his own elder statesmen.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
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ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS WATTIE reuters Former deputy prime minister John Manley saysextra troops and transport helicopters are needed in Afghanistan. ;
BYLINE: Bruce Campion-Smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 425

Military's best hope for help? Probably the U.S.; Washington could provide extra troops, choppers, expert says

From extra troops to new choppers, Ottawa could be turning to the United States to help it meet the conditions that will keep Canadian troops in Afghanistan, a defence expert says.

With NATO allies reluctant to provide additional soldiers for Afghanistan's dangerous southern regions and helicopter production lines sold out, it could be Washington's vast military resources that might be the saving grace, said Brian MacDonald, a senior analyst at the Conference of Defence Associations.

Yesterday, an independent panel said any extension of Canada's military mission should be conditional on NATO allies providing 1,000 more troops for Kandahar as well as Canadian troops getting transport helicopters and unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles.

Ottawa is in negotiations with Boeing to buy 16 Chinook helicopters - the chopper of choice for transport - but they aren't expected to arrive until 2011.

Canada could, however, negotiate with Washington to snag some CH-47 Chinooks off the production line where they are now being made for the United States army, said Mark Kronenberg, vice-president of international business development for Boeing's defence business.

"There's going to have to be some government-to-government discussions. ... It's always in the realm of the doable when governments get together," he said in an interview.

Ottawa did a similar deal with Washington that allowed Canada's air force to take quick delivery of C-17 transport jets last year.

But MacDonald said the American choppers, built to U.S. specifications, won't have features sought by the Canadians, such as self-protection systems.

That could leave the option of renting Russian choppers and using foreign pilots to ferry gear around the war zone - something Canadian military officials might be averse to doing.

"There's the question of whether or not you would feel comfortable having Canadian personnel onboard a Russian helicopter being piloted by a Russian," MacDonald said.

The air force, which uses unmanned aerial vehicles in Kandahar, was already looking at upgrading its capability to better protect troops on the ground.

The federal cabinet last spring rejected a proposal to buy large Predator vehicles, able to carry missiles. MacDonald said smaller drones might be more feasible.

"The Americans have found that the little UAVs are in fact intensely useful, " he said.

On the question of troops, the United States has already announced that it is dispatching 3,200 marines to the Kandahar region this April. And while that's meant only as a seven-month deployment, it could be the start of future American deployments to the area that could help meet the condition for extra soldiers, MacDonald said.

"I think that is the most probable scenario," said MacDonald, a retired colonel in the Canadian military

Otherwise, Canada could have trouble persuading European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, who have so far been reluctant to pony up reinforcements of equipment or troops for the allied effort in Afghanistan's dangerous southern region.

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COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
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Recast Canada's Afghan mission

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's advisory panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan got it half-right in the report it issued yesterday calling for "sustained resolve and determined realism" to rescue a mission that is in serious jeopardy.

As the panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley recommends, the Canadian government should agree to keep our 2,300 troops in Kandahar after February 2009 only if the United States, France or some other North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally provides 1,000 reinforcements. Otherwise, says Manley, Ottawa should serve notice that it is pulling out.

But even if Canada does get more support, Harper should tack on a second proviso that the Manley panel did not address:

Starting next year, fewer Canadians and more of the reinforcement troops should head up the counter-insurgency war against the Taliban. There should be an understanding in NATO that Canada will focus more on training the Afghan army and on providing aid. The newcomers can concentrate on chasing insurgents, as need be.

It would not be an unreasonable demand, given that our 25 NATO partners embrace the notion of "burden sharing" in the field but have yet to deliver. While Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, our battle group comprises 1,200 troops. They have been waging the counter-insurgency war in the Kandahar area for almost three years, on their own, and ought not to be expected to do it for another three. A new force of 1,000 U.S. Marines or other NATO forces should be prepared to do their bit in that regard. Just last week U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates observed that Americans are better at counter-insurgency fighting than many allies. They deserve a chance to strut their stuff.

This could be Harper's pitch, at any rate, to our NATO allies prior to their April summit in Bucharest. It would go a long way to meeting Liberal Leader Stephane Dion's demand that our "combat mission" be wound down early in 2009, and other NATO troops be rotated in.

This would take more leadership than Harper has yet shown, and compromise from Dion. But both owe it to our troops to craft a bipartisan

consensus, if possible, to prevent the mission from becoming a corrosive election issue that further saps public confidence.

If NATO agrees, Parliament should opt to continue the mission. If NATO does not agree, Parliament should vote to pull out of Afghanistan in 2009.

Beyond these redeployment issues, the Manley panel paints a disturbing picture of the situation on the ground today in Afghanistan: The Taliban insurgency appears to be gaining strength, corruption is rampant in the Afghan government and police, the opium trade remains a problem, the aid effort is missing its targets, and NATO lacks "a comprehensive strategy" for dealing with the situation.

Manley also says that from the start of Canada's Afghan involvement, which began under Jean Chretien's Liberal regime, governments of all stripes have "failed to communicate with Canadians with balance and candour" about the reasons for the mission.

For today's Prime Minister, Manley offers this sage advice: Play a more active role promoting and co-ordinating our mission; keep Canadians better informed; make sense of our ramshackle \$7 billion-plus diplomatic, military and aid effort; lean on Pakistan to stop harbouring insurgents; move forward the day when Afghans themselves can take charge; and begin now.

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BYLINE: Rosie DiManno
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No retreat under Manley Manifesto

No retreat - for Canadian soldiers.

No surrender - for the Conservative minority government.

Of course, one cares a great deal more about the former than the latter, although their fate is inextricably linked, from the punishing terrain of Kandahar to the reins of power in Ottawa.

John Manley's report on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, as predicted, has given Prime Minister Stephen Harper the moral and political traction he needs to keep troops in Afghanistan - as more than war-theatre mannequins - beyond the 2009 deadline that was always a fanciful notion.

Whether Stephane Dion and his heebie-jeebie Liberals can find in the report's contents a limb on which to hold virtuously fast remains to be seen.

For the moment, what Liberals think of the panel's proposals is irrelevant. Indeed, the proposals themselves are largely irrelevant, existing - some of them - in that blurry realm where policy (comprised of words) runs headlong into practice (comprised of action), the diplomatic wing of foreign affairs struggling for ascendancy over the department of defence.

Canadian troops, under the Manley Manifesto, will not be running away from combat anytime soon. And they certainly won't be running away from whatever Afghanistan is in the process of becoming - a transition to which this country pledged itself, as a NATO member and under UN endorsement.

However, anybody paying attention - to reporters in the front lines, not from-a-far-country pundits - will know that Canadian troops really haven't been conducting aggressive combat operations in more than a year. Nobody's chasing those "scumbag" Taliban. Well, the Americans are, in the east.

But conventional fighting in Kandahar has been avoided, both by an enemy well aware that annihilation that way lies, and in cautious orders now imposed upon Canadian patrols and convoys.

I suspect this has a lot to do with "managing" casualties during the Van Doos' rotation - Afghanistan deployment a particular vulnerability to Tories in Quebec, so it was believed. Casualties have thus been reduced, those that have occurred almost entirely attributable to the dastardly roadside explosive device and the suicide bomber. Even garrisoned troops have to move about somewhat, Taliban redoubts occasionally routed in territory that endlessly change hands, insurgents pouring in when NATO forces bug out.

That's the fallacy of an Afghan National Army looking out for the country. They're nowhere near ready for it, despite a second battalion coming down the pipes. And let's not even talk about Afghan National Police, staggeringly corrupt and venal, but also only sporadically paid and most openly exposed to merciless attack.

Manley makes a good practical point in demanding that more choppers be made available to troops, thereby keeping them off the dangerous, mined roads whenever possible.

Problem is - that's no way to fight an insurgency. And maybe U.S. Defence Secretary Bob Gates was not entirely daft last week in questioning the counter- insurgency smarts of NATO allies in Afghanistan. (It's doubtful he meant Canada or Britain.)

There is one palpable reason the "surge" has somewhat worked for American forces in Iraq - an increased understanding that foreign troops need to protect the citizenry as much as they need to separate warring factions and wean tribal leaders away from Al Qaeda.

Afghans need protection, too, from a pathological alliance of insurgents, criminals and warlords. That means troops in the towns and the villages, visible, trustworthy putting themselves between civilians and those who blow up children to terrify a nation.

Staying in Kandahar is meaningful only if Canadian troops get out in Kandahar.

Rosie DiManno usually appears Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

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SECTION: News Index

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WORDS: 341

WORD COUNT: 403

INSIDE TODAY'S GLOBE AND MAIL

Brokeback Mountain star found dead On a day of the Hollywood calendar normally reserved for giddy celebration and gratitude for the happy winds of fate, talk suddenly turned grim with the discovery yesterday afternoon that the promising 28-year-old Australian-born actor Heath Ledger, had died in a downtown Manhattan apartment of a seeming drug overdose. He had been previously nominated for an Oscar for his performance as a gay cowboy in Brokeback Mountain .

NEWS, PAGE 7 Moving them on Today the Kenyan government will send police with tear gas and batons to drive Magdelene Njeri and thousands of refugees out of the Nairobi fairgrounds, Stephanie Nolen reports.

NEWS, PAGE 13 B.C. mining boom The recovery of British Columbia's mining sector, which languished for a decade in a freeze, was demonstrated with the release of numbers that show exploration spending at an all-time high. REPORT ON BUSINESS In search of truth Gooteleak Judea was the first Inuk to testify at a historic \$2-million truth commission investigating long-standing allegations the RCMP slaughtered sled dogs from the 1950s to the 1970s. NEWS, PAGE 5 Thompson drops out Republican Fred Thompson dropped out as a U.S. presidential candidate yesterday, ending a short-lived campaign that got off to a late start and never gathered much steam. NEWS, PAGE 15 JEFFREY SIMPSON: The panel's quite sobering and accurate picture of Afghanistan's challenges made clear the difficulty for NATO in achieving "success" there. Comment, Page 17 EDITORIAL: Trying to get straight answers from CIDA is like grasping at air. NEWS, PAGE 16 Christie Blatchford: 'At the risk of channelling Sally Field in her Oscar acceptance speech, Ms. Wallin, John Manley, Derek Burney, Paul Tellier and Jake Epp get it.' NEWS, PAGE 8 Full details: News, analysis and reaction to the Manley Report.

NEWS, PAGES 8-9 GLOBEANDMAIL.COM 'We like to talk about Canada's role in the world. Well, we have a meaningful one in Afghanistan.' Read John Manley's report in full and view reaction.

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BYLINE:

SECTION: News

EDITION: Metro

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WORD COUNT: 57

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"What we're saying is that the mission is in jeopardy. There are simply not enough troops to make sure that the job can properly be done." John Manley after the release of the Afghanistan report by the panel of distinguished Canadians . A8

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PAGE: A8

BYLINE: CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

SECTION: Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 1062

WORD COUNT: 1043

THE AFGHAN MISSION: MANLEY REPORT: A REPORT THE TROOPS DESERVE

Government must now embrace the full, bloody truth of Afghanistan

CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD cblatchford@globeandmail.com What a ridiculous person I am.

I almost wept with relief reading the Manley report early yesterday, and actually did cry a little as, at a later news conference, panel member Pamela Wallin spoke of the willingness and enthusiasm of Canadian troops and how their efforts, and the mission in Afghanistan, are undermined and diminished "if we threaten to leave with every roadside bomb and mortar round." At the risk of channelling Sally Field in her Oscar acceptance speech, Ms. Wallin, John Manley, Derek Burney, Paul Tellier and Jake Epp get it.

This is the report Canadian soldiers and their 77 fallen brothers (and one sister, Captain Nichola Goddard) and many more wounded deserve, an unvarnished evaluation of the mission in Kandahar.

It is now up to Prime Minister Stephen Harper not to sell the mission so much, although the panel is clear that the government must do a better job of communicating the truth of it to Canadians, but to embrace it fully in a way he has not done before.

The report urges the PM to take charge of the Kandahar file personally and lead from the political front - first, to explain it at home; second, to use the influence hard-won by the blood of young Canadians to badger NATO allies into providing more troops, with fewer restrictions placed upon them, in the volatile south of Afghanistan and to be ready to pull the troops out if that help isn't forthcoming; third, to co-ordinate the Canadian aid and diplomatic efforts that so lag behind the military one; and fourth, although this is implicit, to be prepared to stake his government's future on it.

As Mr. Manley says in a foreword: "We like to talk about Canada's role in the world.

"Well, we have a meaningful one in Afghanistan." In other words, this is worth fighting for, and not just in that shattered country over there, but in this one. If it's sufficiently important that Canadian soldiers are paying with their lives and limbs, it's important enough for a mere government to rise to the challenge and, if necessary, pay the infinitely less significant political price.

It may be naive to expect politicians to find the big nuts that ordinary infantrymen have, but Mr. Manley was a politician, and he seems to have found his.

It must be said that the Liberal government of which Mr. Manley was a cabinet member, and which first sent the troops to Kandahar, was unwilling to do this very thing.

As the report notes: "To put things bluntly, governments from the start of Canada's Afghan involvement have failed to communicate with Canadians with balance and candour about the reasons for Canadian involvement, or about the risks, difficulties and expected results of that involvement." Yet in succinct prose on 39 pages - the rest is maps, graphs, bios and other bumph - the report explains why the mission is good and right for Canada.

As Mr. Manley said yesterday in reply to a reporter's question about whether the mission in Afghanistan falls within the Liberal tradition, "Absolutely . . . this is a UN mission, and Lester Pearson's fingerprints are all over the UN Charter" under which auspices the UN Security Council has "repeatedly and explicitly authorized" the international military presence in Afghanistan, most recently last fall.

The report should be read by anyone who purports to hold an informed view of the mission, particularly those who haven't been to Afghanistan (this includes many of the most regular, not to mention most smarmy, commentators on the subject) and thus haven't been exposed, as the panel members have been, to the visceral punch to the gut packed both by Canadian troops and Afghans themselves.

Our soldiers have it because they are so fiercely committed even as it is they and their families who suffer most grievously. Afghans have it because they are so fierce, so bloody deprived, yet so full of promise and so worth the effort. Together, they knock your socks off, and most people who spend any time in the country end up as converts.

But most Canadians can't go to Afghanistan and see for themselves, and in the communications vacuum that has surrounded the mission, it remains poorly understood.

The logic for Canada being there is robust.

The day after 9/11, the UN Security Council and NATO collectively deemed the attacks on the United States as an attack against their respective members.

Within weeks, the Taliban, who had sheltered the al-Qaeda leaders who planned the attacks, collapsed and withdrew, "deposed but not defeated," to lick their wounds, replaced by an interim authority led by Hamid Karzai. In December of 2001, the UN authorized the International Security Assistance Force to secure Kabul and vicinity, and two years later, NATO assumed command of ISAF.

Correctly, the panel doesn't "accept any parallel between the Afghanistan mission and the U.S.-led war in Iraq. To confuse the two is to overlook

the authority of the UN, the collective decisions of NATO and the legitimacy of the Afghan government that has sought Canada's engagement." That's it in a nutshell.

The only disingenuous note in the report is its insistence on an equitable description of the impressive "Canadian soldiers and civilians" that panel members met in Afghanistan. I expect that is but a courtesy. The report itself says 2,500 soldiers are now in the country, and a grand total of 47 Canadian government civilians; it's pretty damn clear who is pulling their weight and who isn't.

Aside from the obvious central recommendation that Canada stay the course (assuming, and it is one hell of an assumption, that NATO can be persuaded to ante up more troops for Kandahar province), and the recognition that the beloved line Stephane Dion draws between "combat" and "training" is entirely fraudulent, the panel makes one pitch I love.

This is for a "signature" project, such as a hospital, that would put a visible Canadian stamp on our efforts there (and, not said but implied, perhaps give the Canadian International Development Agency and others a much-needed focus).

A recommendation I'd add, and I borrow it from retired Canadian colonel Mike Capstick, is that Mr. Harper ask John Manley to serve as Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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SECTION: Comment

EDITION: Metro

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WORD COUNT: 915

A call for stronger Canadian leadership The panel is unsparing in describing Afghanistan's problems, but it correctly notes the situation isn't hopeless

ROLAND PARIS Director of the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa John Manley and his fellow panelists have done this country a tremendous service. Their report is the single most useful contribution in the past two years to the debate over Canada's role in Afghanistan.

Its honesty and clarity stand in stark contrast to the Conservative government's overly managed messaging strategies and the opposition parties' lack of credible analysis of the Afghanistan mission.

While the panel's recommendations will be debated over the coming weeks, its unvarnished description of conditions in Afghanistan and lucid assessment of the options facing Canada are, in themselves, important and welcome. If these descriptive elements of the report help to foster a more informed political debate on the future of our mission, the panel's work will have been a success, even if its specific prescriptions are contested.

But surely we should expect more from our party leaders. There is too much at stake in this mission - for Canadians, our allies, and the Afghan people - to accept anything less than a serious effort, at least between the government and the Official Opposition, to find common ground on Canadian policy for the period following February, 2009.

Nor is there any need for an immediate vote in Parliament on Canada's future in Afghanistan. The panel wisely suggested deferring such a vote until after next April's NATO summit in Bucharest. The alliance recently launched a major review of its strategy, and the results of this review are expected to be discussed at that meeting. Canada will be in a much better position to make judgments about the future of the international effort -

and the prospects for additional commitments from our NATO partners - after that meeting has taken place.

Indeed, NATO urgently needs to conduct this strategic review.

The security situation in Afghanistan has been deteriorating since 2005. Failure to reform key Afghan government institutions, including the deeply corrupt national police, is reportedly having a demoralizing effect on the Afghan people. Neighbouring Pakistan, where insurgent training camps are located, has become even more unstable in recent months. While there are some signs of improvement in Afghanistan, particularly in development indicators, the overall picture is distressing.

The panel is unsparing in its description of these problems, but it also correctly notes that the situation in Afghanistan is not hopeless, and that a return to chaos and civil war would have grave consequences for regional and international security - not to mention for the people of Afghanistan itself, who have suffered through three decades of conflict. The good news is that the Afghan people continue to strongly support the international presence (yes, including NATO combat troops), and that neither Kabul nor any provincial centres are on the verge of falling to the Taliban, who are still too weak to operate openly in most parts of the country.

Given all this, the panel made an interesting choice. Rather than focusing narrowly on Canada's specific role in Afghanistan, they framed Canada's policy choice within the context of the larger international effort. If NATO cannot get its act together by February, 2009 - specifically, by sending reinforcements to Kandahar, and by developing a strategy that has a reasonable hope of success - Canada should leave. The ingenuity of this recommendation is that it is simultaneously a self-interested and public-spirited ultimatum to our allies. On one hand, it would reduce the risk of our troops being mired in a hopeless mission without adequate support. On the other hand, it would also be an inducement to the rest of the alliance to do what NATO needs to do: face up to the urgency of the situation in southern Afghanistan and adjust its strategy and resources accordingly.

We can debate whether Canada's main "ask" - the deployment of at least 1,000 additional International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops to join the Canadians in Kandahar - is enough. We might also wish to seek assurances that Canadian forces in Kandahar will be fully replaced by another country at a specific later date.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion is not being unreasonable when he talks about the importance of rotation among NATO contingents. The key question for the federal parties - and for Canada's dealings with NATO - may ultimately be the timing and circumstances of this rotation, rather than the principle.

In short, Mr. Manley and his colleagues are calling for stronger Canadian leadership. The Prime Minister should, himself, spearhead a diplomatic effort aimed at pressing for a more effective NATO strategy. We should use our impending decision to exert leverage, not just for the sake of being influential, but to help NATO and to help ourselves.

At home, too, greater leadership is needed, according to the panel.

The government should provide Canadians with regular, detailed and honest reports on the progress of the Afghan mission, recognizing that no strategy is worth its salt without reliable and relevant benchmarks.

While their report will not end the controversy over our role in Afghanistan, the members of the Manley panel have captured and articulated the essence of the problem we collectively face. For doing so in an extremely short time - and over the Christmas holidays to boot - they deserve our thanks.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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BYLINE: JEFFREY SIMPSON

SECTION: Comment Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

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Manley wants us to play a game of chicken with NATO

JEFFREY SIMPSON jsimpson@globeandmail.com John Manley, while still in politics, had a terrific but cutting metaphor to describe Canada in the world.

With our defence and diplomatic budgets plummeting, Mr. Manley said Canada was like the guy at dinner who heads for the washroom just before the cheque arrives. In Afghanistan, Canada has not headed for the loo, but paid its fair share of the bill, and more, in money and deaths.

For this payment to continue, Mr. Manley and the four other members of his task force yesterday urged the Canadian government to say to other NATO countries in Afghanistan: Help us or we're gone. Canada, his group recommended, should remain in troubled Kandahar province past the February, 2009, deadline set by Parliament - but only if the government better equips Canada's soldiers and if NATO finds another 1,000 combat troops to complement the 1,000 or so Canada has there now.

The task force, therefore, recommended a course that no party now endorses. It dismissed, quite properly, the naive (and very dangerous) NDP pullout strategy, and dissed the Liberal and Bloc Quebecois demands for troop removal in February, 2009.

But the group also nixed staying beyond that date willy-nilly, instead inviting Canada to play a game of chicken with NATO. It's quite a game the Manley group recommended. If NATO can't find 1,000 more troops to help in Kandahar, how would it ever find, say, 3,000 to replace the Canadians if they left? A guess - and it's only a guess - is that the extra troops will be some of the 3,000 or so U.S. Marines who will be going "temporarily" to Afghanistan. Their temporary assignment could easily be made permanent if some U.S.

forces are withdrawn from Iraq.

A permanent increase in the U.S. contingent in Kandahar would mean the Manley task force's objective had been met. The Harper government could therefore sign up Canada for longer duty, assuming Parliament agreed. Of course, in its current minority situation, that would not happen. Predictably, all three opposition parties restated their well-known positions without even reading the report.

How long should Canada remain? That would depend, said the task force, on better training for the Afghan army and police so that they could defend their own country. An optimist would say this task would take a decade; a pessimist would predict it will happen when the Leafs next win the Stanley Cup. Either way, the security situation in the South is worsening, the police are incompetent, the Afghan army only slightly better.

The Manley group made a persuasive case for Canada to remain in Afghanistan, a mission sanctioned by the United Nations and desired by the majority of Afghans. Mr. Manley himself made a customarily passionate mini-speech about Canada doing its fair share of heavy lifting internationally, and effectively dismissed those who want Canada to do traditional "peacekeeping," by observing that there is no peace to keep.

Less persuasive, however, was the idea that another 1,000 combat troops, plus perhaps additional NATO troops elsewhere in the country, might speed along the process of political stability, military security and economic development.

The panel's quite sobering and accurate picture of Afghanistan's challenges made clear the difficulty for NATO in achieving "success" there.

Insurgents get money from the opium trade, but the task force essentially urged more of the same to combat that trade, the same having proved a spectacular failure.

Nor did the panel have much to recommend - in fairness, how could it? - about how to stop the spread of radical Islam from Pakistan into southern Afghanistan in the form of suicide bombers and other Taliban extremists. Nor could the panel - again, how could it? - do more than report on the endemic corruption within the Afghan government that turns citizens against it.

The panel did chastise the Canadian International Development Agency for poor co-ordination and not enough effective aid. It also blasted the Harper government's centralized control of information, including gagging of Canadian officials, that contributed to an "information deficit." (Fat chance this recommendation will be heeded.) Afghanistan is a conflict of "ferocious complexity," said the panel. "No simple solutions present themselves." Both observations are profoundly correct, and both will be ignored by most politicians.

Mr. Manley and his colleagues didn't say so directly, but their report argued that the current strategy in Kandahar (and more widely in Afghanistan) isn't working. A thousand or so additional troops, helpful as they would be, won't put things right either.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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AFGHAN AID Searching for CIDA

The question mark still hangs over the Canadian International Development Agency. Talk to CIDA, and you will hear all manner of good things about the work it is contributing to in Afghanistan - more wells, better roads, greater literacy, reduced child mortality. But those who seek a clearer idea of what it can actually put its name to from the \$1.2-billion Canada has pledged in Afghan aid between 2002 and 2011 are left exasperated.

Last summer, the international Senlis Council asked whether millions of dollars in aid was spent as CIDA intended. Yesterday, Senate defence committee chair Colin Kenny told CBC Radio that trying to get straight answers from CIDA is like grasping at air, and that when committee members went to Kandahar to see projects for which Canada could claim credit, and to ask village elders whether such projects were of value to them, the word from Ottawa was invariably that it was too dangerous to go into the field.

Yesterday's report from the panel led by former foreign minister John Manley makes the same point. CIDA staffers themselves have trouble visiting sites in Kandahar because CIDA's headquarters in Canada won't let them for security reasons. The panel urges CIDA to let the officials in Kandahar assess the risks. "It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help." As for the achievements of which CIDA boasts, it has to trust others for most of those. It spends less than 15 per cent of its money directly, for "locally managed quick-action projects" that immediately improve everyday life for Afghans or for projects readily identifiable as supported by Canada. The rest goes to multilateral agencies such as the Red Cross or to programs run by the Afghan government. The reality is that CIDA must take much of what those groups do on faith - the wisdom and efficiency of the spending, or the amount that actually reaches intended recipients. If CIDA cannot get more heavily involved, or better investigate the projects it is funding, it might as well just pop a cheque into the mail.

The Manley panel urges CIDA to direct more of its energy to projects of direct benefit to the Afghan people, such as a hospital or major irrigation

project "identified with Canada and led by Canadians." Beyond that, as the panel says, the government should "conduct a full-scale review of the performance of the Canadian civilian aid program." Some things are too important to be taken on faith.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign aid; reconstruction; political

ORGANIZATION NAME: Canadian International Development Agency

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AFGHANISTAN Demand the help of NATO partners

The blue-ribbon panel headed by former Liberal minister John Manley has made an eloquent and impassioned case for extending Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan. Seeing "no operational logic" for pulling out of a combat role in Kandahar in February, 2009, as Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and others have called for, Mr. Manley and his co-panelists correctly assess in a report released yesterday that the job of Canada and other members of the International Security Assistance Force will be done only when Afghanistan's army is ready to provide security. "The hard truth is that an ISAF retreat from Afghanistan, before that country's own forces can defend its security, would most likely condemn the Afghan people to a new and bloody cycle of civil war and misrule - and raise new threats to global peace and security." This undoubtedly is the conclusion Stephen Harper expected Mr. Manley to reach when he appointed him to chair the panel, and it is the right one. To forsake Kandahar is to forsake Afghanistan, and to forsake Afghanistan is to invite calamity. But far from merely helping make the Prime Minister's case for an extension of the mission, the report also places a burden on Mr. Harper to do a better job of selling the mission both at home and abroad.

Domestically, the panel cites a failure by the federal government - not just under the Conservatives, but under the Liberals before them - to "communicate with balance and candour about the reasons for Canadian involvement, or about the risks, difficulties and expected results of that involvement." To build domestic support, it contends, "this information deficit needs to be redressed immediately." But if there is one recommendation around which the rest of the report revolves, it is the need for Canada to convince its partners in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to do more. It argues that the mission should be extended only if about 1,000 additional battle troops are committed to Kandahar by our allies. That will require "coherent and sustained diplomacy by Canada, led by the Prime Minister and specifically including interventions on the subject in his bilateral conversations with foreign leaders." What Mr. Manley proposes is essentially a game of diplomatic chicken, but it is one Mr. Harper cannot avoid. Considering that Canada currently has roughly 2,500 combat troops in Kandahar, it is a pitiful abdication of responsibility for larger countries such as France and Germany to refuse to assign another 1,000 when that relatively small contingent could vastly improve security

and the likelihood of the mission's success. Even the United States, which recently announced a seven-month deployment of 3,200 additional troops to Afghanistan, must be pressed to make a longer and more specific commitment.

Having provided leadership in a region that few others have dared enter, Canada has earned a stronger diplomatic voice. Now, as the panel recommends, it is time for Mr. Harper to make that voice heard.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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SECTION: National News
EDITION: Metro
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THE AFGHAN MISSION: MANLEY REPORT: RECOMMENDATIONS Ottawa must dictate terms to NATO, panel says Battle against Taliban can be won in Kandahar, but at least 1,000 more soldiers needed to support Canadian Forces

GLORIA GALLOWAY With reports from Daniel Leblanc in Ottawa and Bill Curry in Montebello, Que.

OTTAWA Canada's mission in Afghanistan should not arbitrarily end in February of 2009 but the conditions for the continued presence of Canadian troops in the dangerous southern part of the country must be clearly dictated to NATO allies, a much-anticipated report said yesterday.

Former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley said the battle against the Taliban can - and should - be won in Kandahar province, but at least 1,000 more soldiers from some other NATO country are needed to reinforce Canada's efforts.

"What we're saying is that the mission is in jeopardy. There are simply not enough troops to make sure that the job can properly be done," Mr. Manley told reporters after the release of the report by his panel of distinguished Canadians. The panel was established last October by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to recommend a course of action in Afghanistan.

The report could be a significant bargaining chip for Canada if this country negotiates a new role in the war that has now claimed 78 Canadian lives.

However, the report's recommendations were quickly rejected by the leaders of the federal opposition parties who instead demanded a full withdrawal of troops.

Mr. Harper's staff said he wanted time to review the report carefully before offering a response.

The Conservatives have said Parliament will vote on whether to extend the mission past February of next year - a vote that Mr.

Manley suggests deferring until after a NATO summit meeting in April in Bucharest so Canada has an opportunity to present its views "at the highest level." His panel rejected all four options proposed by the Conservative government for Canadian Forces in Afghanistan because each entailed a pull-out of Canadian troops starting in February, 2009. It instead argues for an indefinite extension that would see the Canadian Forces gradually refocus on reconstruction and then withdraw as Afghans are able to do their jobs.

"We do not expect that NATO will be able to replace us in 2009, nor will the Afghans be ready to take over," Mr. Manley said. "But we can insist that NATO find us a partner in Kandahar, enabling us to expand the scope of security and to shift increasingly from fighting to training the Afghan forces." Canada is the only country operating in southern Afghanistan that does not have such a partner, he said. The report, which found security in Kandahar is deteriorating despite the efforts of 2,500 members of the Canadian Forces who are stationed there, also sets the purchase of medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles as a condition for the mission's continuation.

But Mr. Manley and the other members of the panel - Jake Epp, a former Progressive Conservative cabinet minister, Paul Tellier, a former Privy Council clerk, Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S. and Pamela Wallin, a former Canadian consul-general in New York - argue that the mission should not be abandoned "prematurely." "We believe an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan without making a further effort to achieve a better result for Afghans would squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifice to date," Mr. Manley said.

The report took a broad swipe at the Canadian International Development Agency, saying its policy of funnelling aid through multilateral organizations and the central Afghan government is unwieldy and its staff are hampered by their unwillingness to leave the safety of the military base. The panel urges more direct bilateral funding for specific projects.

The report also recommended a more "disciplined diplomatic position" regarding Afghanistan, including: the appointment of a UN representative; the adoption by NATO of a comprehensive military and political plan; forceful representations with Afghanistan's neighbours to improve security; and concerted efforts to tackle Afghan corruption.

The panel also argues that successive governments have failed to adequately explain to Canadians why Canada is in Afghanistan - or what the troops are doing there - and calls for the government to have a more balanced communications strategy.

Mr. Harper himself should take a lead on the file, the panel says.

"The Prime Minister must step up and make this mission a top priority with a cabinet committee to ensure co-ordination of Canada's efforts and even more important, he must personally lead our diplomatic initiative, making our voice heard to a degree commensurate with our contribution," Mr. Manley explained.

The former Liberal leadership candidate refused to be drawn into a political debate yesterday.

But the report could pose problems for the Liberals, in part because Mr. Manley's impassioned and eloquent defence of his position will prompt inevitable comparisons to Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, whose English language skills remain weak, and in part because the Liberal position was entrenched before the report was released.

Mr. Dion stuck to his policy yesterday, saying the mission must end in February, 2009, while Bob Rae, the Liberal foreign affairs critic, said Mr. Manley's recommendations warranted further discussion.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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THE AFGHAN MISSION: ANALYSIS: THE MANLEY REPORT PM asked for advice, but can he afford to follow it?

BRIAN LAGHI OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF Stephen Harper has invested heavily in John Manley. Now he'll have to live with what the former Liberal foreign minister has to say.

If the Prime Minister was expecting a carte blanche to remain in Afghanistan under the current configuration, Mr. Manley delivered a surprise yesterday with a report that applies more than a little bit of pressure on Mr. Harper. And because Mr. Manley was the Prime Minister's handpicked choice to lead the panel, Mr. Harper will have little alternative but to listen.

"A careful reading of the report puts the onus on the PM," said Fen Hampson, head of the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University. "The PM now has to catch the ball and run it across the goal line." Mr. Manley's report raises the stakes for Mr. Harper by saying it must be the PM who leads diplomatic efforts to get NATO to contribute 1,000 troops to Canada's effort in Kandahar.

If that fails, then Mr. Harper should remove Canada from the field.

Moreover, Mr. Harper needs to show the way with a more consistent policy approach and the government must purchase more helicopters and drones for the mission.

"To put things bluntly, governments from the start of Canada's Afghan involvement have failed to communicate with Canadians with balance and candour about the reasons for Canadian involvement or about the risks, difficulties and expected results of that involvement," writes the panel.

It's a straight-talking assessment from a group that was expected by some to deliver a whitewash intended to embarrass Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, because of the political affiliation of its author.

If the Prime Minister accepts Mr. Manley's recommendations, the PM will be obliged to begin convincing NATO members at a key meeting in Bucharest in April of the merits in belying up to the bar. Whether Mr. Harper is willing to remove Canada from Afghanistan - and risk international criticism if he can't get his way - is a game of chicken that has yet to play out.

"We hope this is not a poison pill because we believe the mission is an important one," said Mr. Manley yesterday.

But if there's a risk in the report, there's also an opportunity.

Mr. Manley has probably done the Prime Minister a favour by supplying him with some weapons to make his case with NATO. Heads of state across the alliance who aren't heavily invested in Afghanistan will be reading Mr. Manley's report carefully because of what it might mean for their own troops and NATO generally.

"You could argue that the report really arms the Prime Minister," said Janice Gross Stein of the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto. "It should be very, very clear to everybody that if there's not that commitment that Canada will not stay." If Mr. Harper were to vigorously pursue Mr. Manley's recommendations, it could leave NATO members with a difficult choice.

A pullout by Canada would clearly be noticed by countries such as the Netherlands, which is in similar difficulties in the province of Uruzgan, and it might pull out as well. And if a threatened Canadian departure starts the dominoes falling, NATO members just might conclude that it's better to find 1,000 troops to help Canada than to allow for serious questions to be raised about what NATO is good for.

The key is just how hard Mr. Harper is willing to push.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; political

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper; John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

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THE AFGHAN MISSION: MANLEY REPORT: AN IN-PERSON VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN 'It's an indescribably poor country'

BRIAN LAGHI OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF If John Manley needed a reminder about the daunting task facing Canada in Afghanistan, it came with the dull thud of artillery rockets that sent him and his panel heading for cover at the Kandahar airfield.

The two blasts, while not terribly close by, were still near enough that Canadian military personnel had to hustle the panel members into a protective shelter. From there, the members waited it out, emerging about 30 minutes later to continue their tour.

"We don't think it was directed at us and these things happen on a common basis," Mr. Manley said in an interview of his experience in the war-torn country. "But it was, you know, close enough that you heard the impact of this rocket. We spent a little bit of time in the bomb shelter." What Mr. Manley experienced on the ground in Afghanistan greatly informed the report that his panel released yesterday, which calls for Canada to stay in the country provided the military gets help in the form of new equipment and NATO soldiers. Despite the violence, bombs and many other difficulties that the Afghan people are facing, a tour of the strife-torn country persuaded Mr. Manley that it is worthwhile to continue the rebuilding process.

"Afghanistan is a complicated story. There are clear signs of progress. Of better things happening in people's lives," Mr. Manley said. "But it's an indescribably poor country." Mr. Manley's report draws on a number of sources for its conclusions, including non-governmental organizations, academics and officials in Ottawa, New York, Brussels and Washington. In Afghanistan, panel members also met with government officials, police chiefs, religious leaders and many members of rank-and-file society.

What Mr. Manley found was a paradox - a country, he says, that is still overwhelmingly needy. But also a nation where things are slowly getting

better. Child mortality rates, he says, are down, health care is more accessible and more electricity is being provided to residents.

"It's very hard to get a fix on this, because when you look at it from one point of view, you say, things are actually getting better," he said. "On the other hand, things are desperately bad." Since he visited Kabul for the first time in 2002, Mr. Manley reported that the city has grown from about 400,000-500,000 to five million today, many of them returnees. From an interview with a local vendor, Mr. Manley learned that many Afghans make their own bricks so they can build shelter in the overstressed city.

"A typical house will have two rooms, no indoor sanitation and the city of Kabul largely does not have any kind of municipal sewage system. So you've got in the developed parts, channels in the streets so the sewage runs untreated into the river." An educator told the panel that although education is improving, his school is so full that children must attend in four shifts, receiving instruction for two hours per day.

As for the Taliban, Mr. Manley is convinced that after speaking with a number of Afghans, the vast majority desperately don't want its members to return to power. But if corruption becomes endemic, they will look to someone to help them out and it could be the Taliban.

Another problem for the country is a lack of qualified people to run it, he said.

"A large majority of the educated people had fled, some to Pakistan, some to Iran but many to Europe and America, especially the people that you might be looking to today to provide governance and other help." But Canada and other nations cannot feel weighed down by the problems.

"We're going to have to accept that Afghanistan is never going to be Switzerland," he said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; poverty; reconstruction; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

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SECTION: National News

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THE AFGHAN MISSION: MANLEY REPORT New hardware

Daniel Leblanc Ottawa The Manley report said Canadian troops in Afghanistan need medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial vehicles for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance before February, 2009. The report did not provide specifics, leaving the government with a number of options to explore.

HELICOPTERS WHY ARE THEY NEEDED? A majority of the 78 Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan were victims of roadside bombs or suicide attacks against armoured vehicles. Canadian soldiers have long called for helicopters to fly people and supplies to forward bases and keep them off the roads.

WHAT CAN CANADA DO? New helicopters are unlikely, as experts say Canada cannot make a major purchase in a year. The Department of National Defence is already in discussions to obtain 16 heavy-lift Chinook helicopters from Boeing at a long-term cost of \$4.7-billion, but delivery is not expected until 2011.

Canada could also ask one of its allies to share transport helicopters in Kandahar. The Americans, the Dutch and the British already have Chinooks in the area. Canada has failed to persuade its allies to share helicopters on a regular basis, but NATO is pushing countries to pony up extra aircraft and pool their resources. As one expert said, using another country's military helicopters would be the "cheapest and easiest" solution for Canada.

UAVS WHY ARE THEY NEEDED? Drones would help the Forces see what is happening on the roads around them, day and night. Eventually, Canada could equip UAVs with missiles or bombs.

WHAT CAN CANADA DO? The government has already looked at UAVs for domestic and foreign use, and contemplated purchasing Predators

from General Atomics last year. However, cabinet refused to approve the sole-sourced contract. The Manley report could now allow the government to invoke an "urgent operational requirement" to go around usual procurement rules and obtain UAVs quickly.

Predators are already used by U.S. and British forces, and sources said there are also two Israeli companies that are interested in selling UAVs to Canada.

Officials said the cost of the UAVs varies depending on how many are purchased. In addition, the government will have to decide whether it wants its own command centre to control the drones, or use an existing one. Experts said the project should cost less than \$100-million.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

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Experts comment on the report's recommendations

Compiled by Michael Valpy MICHAEL BYERS "The most striking thing for me is the second last paragraph of Mr. Manley's introduction - 'We like to talk about Canada's role in the world. Well, we have a meaningful one in Afghanistan.' That language is remarkably similar to the concluding paragraph in an article he published in Policy Options magazine last October.

It strikes me he has come to the same conclusions using almost the same language in a piece he published as recently as October.

This is my principal problem with him being appointed as chair of the Afghanistan panel. He was so publicly on the record . . .

and he quite clearly hasn't changed his mind one iota, and I say this as someone who is conscious that I would have been an inappropriate appointment to the panel precisely because I've been on the record very publicly with my views. It's like appointing a person to a jury in a criminal trial who has already expressed a clear opinion on the guilt or innocence of the accused party.

This is supposed to be an independent panel, taking an objective, clear-eyed, fresh look at the situation, and this is a repeat of his previous position. He had already formed his views." Michael Byers holds a Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law at University of B.C.'s Liu Institute. JANICE GROSS STEIN "He's shone the spotlight on the really grave problems in international co-ordination - the lack of co-ordination between NATO, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan National Army and the extraordinary poor co-ordination among international donors.

These are issues not normally talked about and he's shining the spotlight on them.

I read his report as having not only one condition - which is 1,000 troops, the battle group - I read his report as saying if we don't fix all these problems both internationally and nationally we cannot be effective. So I think that part is a very valuable contribution.

We need a serious, major international co-ordinator. We need a seriously regional diplomatic and political strategy.

He's also damning in his indictment of the UN, which is an important point. It has a very small office in Kabul. It has a very skilled representative on the ground, [former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan] Chris Alexander, but fundamentally the UN is absent. Afghanistan is a UN mission subcontracted to NATO. Where's all the UN involvement on the ground?" Janice Gross Stein is director of University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies. LEWIS MACKENZIE "I think it's probably the best synopsis that I've seen of why we went there, what we've been doing, what we're doing now and what we might have as a strategy in the future.

It puts the ball squarely in the Prime Minister's lap, which is good, because so far ministerial pleadings and editorial pleadings for NATO to live up to its obligations have fallen sort of flat.

And I can't help but think that the hardball that's being played here [in the Manley report] with the additional resources demanded for the Kandahar area as a precondition [for Canada staying] will move that item to the top of the agenda in Romania in April [at the NATO heads of state and government meeting].

With the knowledge that there's some wiggle room here.

Because let's assume, as I anticipate, that no other NATO country fesses up, then the additional 3,200 [promised U.S.] marines of which 2,000 are available for combat operations coming to the south could be seen to be meeting Canada's requirement [for additional troops from NATO]." Major-General Lewis MacKenzie (ret.) established and commanded Sector Sarajevo as part of the United Nations Protection Force or UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia in 1992. PAUL HEINBECKER "I like the emphasis on diplomacy. I very much think we have both an interest and the standing to be pushing on the diplomatic front.

The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is obviously very important. It's horrendously complicated and fraught with dangers, but I have the impression the Pakistanis haven't done as much as they could have, and I think we need to be pressing them.

If you look at the Americans and the British in particular, their main preoccupation - especially the Americans - has been al-Qaeda.

The second preoccupation has been stability in Pakistan and the fact of the nuclear weapons. And the third - and I think some distance down the list - has been the relationship between the Pakistanis, the Pakistan intelligence service, and the Taliban and the support given to the Taliban by those people.

So when you get into a situation where the Americans have to make a decision, our highest priority comes third on their list and I think we have to be pressing them and pressing the British for a more aggressive stance." Paul Heinbecker is Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations and distinguished fellow at CIGI.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; strife; statements

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley; Michael Byers; Janice Gross Stein; Lewis MacKenzie; Paul Heinbecker

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EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Toronto ONT
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Slain soldiers' families support call to stay

CAROLINE ALPHONSO TORONTO Master Corporal Darrell Priede, a military photographer who died in the crash of a Chinook helicopter in May, wanted to be in Afghanistan to capture images of the good that Canadians were doing there. It is for that reason that his mother believes Canadian troops should stay put, even if it means extending the mission beyond 2009.

"I think they need to stay there until they feel they've done to the max what they could do," Roxanne Priede said from her home in the southeastern British Columbia community of Grand Forks. "I think there's a lot of good things happening there, but maybe they need more troops, more support." Ms. Priede's sentiment was echoed yesterday by the families of several Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, who welcomed John Manley's recommendation that Canada indefinitely extend its military mission in the war-ravaged country provided that soldiers get additional equipment and NATO commits more troops.

In his 90-page report, Mr. Manley suggested that if NATO does not meet the two demands, Canada should pull out.

Soon after Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Mr. Manley to head a blue-ribbon panel to look at Canada's role in Afghanistan, Ms. Priede sent an e-mail to commend him on his action. Her 30-year-old son died along with six other NATO soldiers on May 30.

"They fought for a cause. They believed in what they did. And I think it would have been somewhat a slap in the face [to call off the mission]," Ms. Priede said. "We can't turn our back on this mission. I don't think we can." The father of Canada's first female soldier killed in combat said it makes sense to extend the mission as long as NATO bolsters the number of troops working outside the wire in Kandahar province.

Tim Goddard's daughter, Captain Nichola Goddard, was killed in 2006 by a rocket-propelled grenade while she was riding partly exposed in a light

armoured vehicle during heavy fighting with Taliban guerrillas.

Dr. Goddard said his daughter and other soldiers who have died in Afghanistan believed they were doing meaningful work.

"If that's true and that's the understanding that our soldiers and our development people are out there trying to make a difference, it doesn't stop on a certain day," he said from Calgary. "You have to get the job done." Lincoln Dinning, whose son Corporal Matthew Dinning died in Afghanistan in 2006 after a G-Wagon carrying him and other soldiers was struck by a roadside explosive, agreed wholeheartedly. "It's work that they started and you'd like to continue it," he said from his home in Wingham, Ont.

Leona Arnold said that pulling troops out of Afghanistan without finishing the task would mean her son and other soldiers died in vain. Ms. Arnold's son, Corporal Glen Arnold, was killed by a suicide bomber in 2006.

"To leave the job half done, it's as though we wasted all these lives, we wasted everything. As much as I'd like to say, 'Oh come home and let's close the door,' how would we feel after we do that?" Ms. Arnold asked from her home in McKerrow, a pulp-and-paper-mill town in Northern Ontario. "It's like closing the door on somebody's face that desperately needs your help."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; war deaths; foreign policy; strife; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Darrell Priede; Roxanne Priede; John Manley

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ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press John Manley, chairman of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference yesterday in Ottawa, where he said the mission should be extended but only if much-needed equipment and NATO troop reinforcements are provided.

BYLINE: PETER ZIMONJIC, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 310

Mission at risk: Manley Inadequate NATO help cited

Canada should extend its mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 but only if NATO provides more manpower and equipment to bolster coalition forces, a government-appointed panel recommended yesterday.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, calls for urgent action to salvage Canada's operation against the Taliban.

"The mission is in jeopardy. There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province," Manley said.

"We are giving NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops that we require or we pull out."

The reports calls for NATO to find a partner country with a battle group of at least 1,000 troops to join Canada in the dangerous Kandahar region.

HELICOPTERS, DRONES

It also asks Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to secure more medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial drones.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan was appointed by Harper last October and given the task of advising government on possible options once Canada's current mission there ends.

The prime minister did not address reporters yesterday but issued a statement saying: "Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations ... before coming forward with our response."

The report criticized NATO's efforts in co-ordinating the 39 countries who have forces in Afghanistan and called on Harper to take charge of Canada's domestic and diplomatic efforts on the mission.

"The prime minister must step up and make this mission a priority with a cabinet committee and ... he must personally lead Canada's diplomatic effort," Manley said. "He must make (Canada's) voice heard."

Canada's commitment in Afghanistan was to end in February 2009. Harper considered extending the mission until 2011 but the Manley report went further by not tying Canada's mission to a specific end date.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion declined to comment yesterday but Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae described its recommendations as hawkish.

"To talk of a military victory I think is not what we should be aiming for. We should be aiming for political stability and a political solution."

NDP defence critic Dawn Black reiterated her party's stance on Afghanistan, saying: "I think that the troops need to come home. I think that we have to remove ourselves from a combat role."

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe seized on the lack of an end date to the mission calling the report "an open book for Stephen Harper."
KEYWORDS=CANADA

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BYLINE: CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU
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Liberals stand by deadline to abandon combat role

The federal Liberals, who want Canada to end its combat role in Kandahar, Afghanistan, just over a year from now, were ducking for cover yesterday after John Manley's assertion that there is "no operational logic" to setting such a firm deadline.

The report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, chaired by the former Liberal foreign affairs minister, suggested Canada "conditionally" extend its combat role, provided it could procure much-needed equipment and troop reinforcements from its NATO allies. The report also rejected for the peacekeeping role the Liberals favour.

Meeting with his MPs and senators in Kitchener, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said the party was still studying Manley's recommendations. However, he repeated the Liberals' official position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009.

The party would prefer Canada to continue in a training role, he said. "We want to be very active on training the Afghan forces, training the police and we want to focus on development."

Dion said Canada's role in Kandahar "is by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission three years. It's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan to help the people of Afghanistan."

Dion would not say if the party was prepared to force a confidence vote over the issue. "I need to read the report."

Deputy Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who recently visited Afghanistan with Dion, was not available for comment yesterday.

But Ignatieff told reporters before the report's release, "You can't go to Kandahar and not feel a tremendous sense of pride in what we are trying to do. The question is whether we have a strategy with NATO that allows us to succeed, and the caucus has to make a judgment about whether we've got a strategy going forward that can give the Canadian public a sense we're achieving something." KEYWORDS=CANADA

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BYLINE: GREG WESTON
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Next move NATO's Canadian troops in Afghanistan need more help from allies

In the days of fear and uncertainty that followed 9/11, it was then foreign affairs minister John Manley who finally raised a nation's battle cry, promising Canadians would stand "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the U.S. in a war on terrorism.

Back then, there was no talk of battleground Afghanistan, and even when our troops were eventually deployed, there wasn't supposed to be much of a war left to fight.

Now more than six years after Manley's first stand, he is again trying to steel the national resolve, imploring Canadians to stay the course in Afghanistan, a conflict that has already killed 78 of our soldiers.

The only difference is this time, it may be the Americans who come to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's hand-picked "panel of experts" headed by Manley released its report and recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan.

With Canada's current duties in Kandahar set to officially expire in February, 2009, the PM created the Manley group last fall in the obvious hope it would tell him what he needed to hear to extend the mission.

Harper cannot be disappointed by the Manley report.

Far from calling on a Canadian withdrawal or even reducing Canadian forces in Afghanistan next year, Manley's group recommends remaining at full strength in the dangerous Kandahar region indefinitely.

The one major condition for Canada's continuing role would be getting reinforcements of 1,000 combat troops from another NATO country,

roughly doubling Canada's current battle group deployment.

TOO FEW TROOPS

"What we are saying is the mission is in jeopardy," Manley said yesterday. "There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province."

If none of the other NATO countries agrees to come to the aid of our troops, Manley said, then Canada should pack up and get out of Afghanistan.

Manley's report also recommends that the Canadian forces urgently acquire helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft to reduce the amount of troop travel on roads littered with deadly enemy landmines.

All of which sounds logical enough in theory.

The problem is Canada doesn't have helicopters or unmanned drones to send to Afghanistan, and the choppers now on order from the U.S. aren't likely to be delivered for at least another three years.

But by far the biggest glitch in the Manley commission's otherwise laudable report is that the Harper government has already spent the past two years trying to convince NATO and its member countries to augment our forces in Kandahar or, better still, take over from Canada when our mission hits its best-before date a year from now. So far, no luck. And no wonder.

Most of the Manley report describes the situation in Afghanistan as dire, if not something just short of a losing battle.

The report begins: "We are trying to help a country whose recent history has been one long, unending tragedy, and whose prospects still appear bleak."

The panel's assessment of the situation "recognizes the enormity of the challenge: Regional instability; slow progress on reconstruction and development; mounting insecurity and violence; corruption, criminality and increasing poppy production."

DETERIORATING

But worst of all from a Canadian perspective, Manley admitted at a press conference yesterday that after six years of war, after billions of dollars and 78 Canadian lives lost, "the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving."

In the end, Canada's future in Afghanistan may well turn on the one NATO country that does have an abundance of helicopters, unmanned surveillance aircraft, and combat units that will go anywhere: The United States.

Shoulder to shoulder.

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BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
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Filling Manley's prescription

Along with the economy, the federal election campaign expected this year will be dominated by a debate over Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

It's sure to be divisive. The federal opposition parties and most Canadians have said they want our troops out of the war zone as scheduled next year.

But a panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley yesterday recommended otherwise.

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To which others, quite reasonably, will ask: Will it ever be finished?

The only sure result of the report is a more heated debate -- not such a bad thing -- and more questions. Can we leave a war zone simply because it is dangerous?

Which countries should ante up? Germany? The United States? Have the British and Dutch, like Canada, already made enough of a contribution? Or are white, Western soldiers even the best ones suited for such a mission? And what role -- if any -- can Afghanistan's closer neighbours play in ensuring security and stability in the region?

Most important, is "peacebuilding" even possible in Afghanistan without more "peace enforcement?"

Manley's prescriptions for a successful Canadian mission are sensible: More diplomatic leadership; more effective humanitarian work by aid workers; more honest assessments of the mission.

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SOURCETAG 0801230460
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
WORD COUNT: 258

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SOURCETAG 0801230455
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 460

Next move NATO's Canadian troops in Afghanistan need more help from their allies.

In the days of fear and uncertainty that followed 9/11, it was then foreign affairs minister John Manley who raised a nation's battle cry, promising Canadians would stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the U.S. in a war on terrorism.

There was no talk of battleground Afghanistan, and even when our troops were eventually deployed, there wasn't supposed to be much of a war left to fight.

Now more than six years after Manley's first stand, he is trying to steel the national resolve, imploring Canadians to stay the course in Afghanistan, a conflict that has killed 78 of our soldiers.

The only difference is this time, it may be the Americans who come to stand shoulder to shoulder with us.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's hand-picked "panel of experts" headed by Manley released its report and recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan.

With Canada's current duties in Kandahar set to expire in February 2009, the PM created the group last fall in the obvious hope it would tell him what he needed to hear to extend the mission.

Harper cannot be disappointed.

Far from calling for a Canadian withdrawal or even reduction next year, Manley's group recommends remaining at full strength in the dangerous Kandahar region indefinitely.

The one major condition for Canada's continuing role would be getting reinforcements of 1,000 combat troops from another NATO country,

roughly doubling Canada's battle group.

"What we are saying is the mission is in jeopardy," Manley said yesterday. "There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province."

If none of the other NATO countries agrees to come to the aid of our troops, Manley said, then Canada should pack up.

Manley's report also recommends that the Canadian forces urgently acquire helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft to reduce the amount of troop travel on roads littered with deadly enemy landmines.

All of which sounds logical enough in theory. The problem is Canada doesn't have helicopters or unmanned drones to send to Afghanistan, and the choppers now on order from the U.S. aren't likely to be delivered for at least another three years.

But by far the biggest glitch in the Manley commission's otherwise laudable report is that the Harper government has already spent the past two years trying to convince NATO and its member countries to augment our forces in Kandahar or, better still, take over from Canada. So far, no luck. And no wonder.

Most of the Manley report describes the situation in Afghanistan as dire, if not something just short of a losing battle.

The report begins: "We are trying to help a country whose recent history has been one long, unending tragedy, and whose prospects still appear bleak."

The panel's assessment of the situation "recognizes the enormity of the challenge: Regional instability; slow progress on reconstruction and development; mounting insecurity and violence; corruption, criminality and increasing poppy production."

But worst of all from a Canadian perspective, Manley admitted yesterday that after six years of war, billions of dollars and 78 Canadian lives lost, "the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving."

In the end, Canada's future in Afghanistan may well turn on the one NATO country that does have an abundance of helicopters, unmanned surveillance aircraft, and combat units that will go anywhere: the United States.

Shoulder to shoulder.

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SOURCETAG 0801230441

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2008.01.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A2

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, CP TABLES REPORT: John Manley, chairperson of the independent panel on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, says the mission is worthy, but needs support and better equipment.

BYLINE: PETER ZIMONJIC, SUN MEDIA NATIONAL BUREAU

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 384

Panel supports extension of mission in Afghanistan But the Canadians need better equipment and support from foreign troops, it says.

Canada should extend its mission in Afghanistan beyond February 2009, but only if NATO provides more manpower and equipment to bolster coalition forces, a government-appointed panel recommended yesterday.

The panel, headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, calls for urgent action to salvage Canada's operation against the Taliban.

"The mission is in jeopardy. There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province," Manley said yesterday.

"We are giving NATO till February 2009 to provide the additional troops that we require or we pull out."

The reports calls for NATO to find a partner country with a battle group of at least 1,000 troops to join Canada in the dangerous Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan.

It also asks Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to secure more medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial drones to aid Canadian troops.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan was appointed by Harper last October and given the task of advising government on possible options once Canada's current mission there ends.

The prime minister did not address reporters yesterday, but issued a statement saying: "Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations . . . before coming forward with our response."

The report criticized NATO's efforts in co-ordinating the 39 countries who have forces in Afghanistan and called on Harper to take personal charge of Canada's domestic and diplomatic efforts on the mission.

"The prime minister must step up and make this mission a priority with a cabinet committee and . . . he must personally lead Canada's diplomatic effort," Manley said.

"He must make (Canada's) voice heard."

Canada's commitment in Afghanistan was to end in February 2009. Harper considered extending the mission until 2011. The Manley report went further by not tying Canada's mission to a specific end date.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion declined to comment on the report until he could read it, but Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae described its recommendations as hawkish and perhaps out of step with Canadians.

"To talk of a military victory I think is not what we should be aiming for," Rae said. "We should be aiming for political stability and a political solution."

The other opposition parties were quick to condemn Manley's findings.

NDP defence critic Dawn Black said: "I think that the troops need to come home. I think that we have to remove ourselves from a combat role."

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe seized on the lack of an end date to the mission calling the report "an open book for Stephen Harper."

The report also said Harper's government needs to do a better job of communicating Canada's purpose in Afghanistan to Canadians.

To emphasize his point, Manley delivered an impassioned speech on why the mission was important.

"We are a rich country, we've got to do some of this stuff," Manley said.

"There are times when we have to count, there are times when it matters, we are not prepared to retreat under the U.S. missile shield and live in fortress North America -- that is not what you expect from a country like Canada." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

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SOURCETAG 0801230553
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHANE DION Training focus
BYLINE: CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: KITCHENER
WORD COUNT: 292

Liberals stand by deadline to abandon combat role

The federal Liberals, who want Canada to end its combat role in Kandahar, Afghanistan, just over a year from now, were ducking for cover yesterday after John Manley's assertion that there is "no operational logic" to setting such a firm deadline.

The report of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, chaired by the former Liberal foreign affairs minister, suggested Canada "conditionally" extend its combat role, provided it could procure much-needed equipment and troop reinforcements from its NATO allies. The report also rejected for the peacekeeping role that the Liberals favour.

Meeting with his MPs and senators in Kitchener, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said the party was still studying Manley's recommendations. However, he repeated the Liberals' official position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009.

The party would prefer Canada to continue in a training role, he said. "We want to be very active on training the Afghan forces, training the police and we want to focus on development."

Dion said Canada's role in Kandahar "is by far the most dangerous mission in Afghanistan. We have carried this mission three years. It's time for Canada to do something else in Afghanistan to help the people of Afghanistan."

Dion would not say if the party was prepared to force a confidence vote over the issue. "I need to read the report."

Deputy Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who recently visited Afghanistan with Dion, was not available for comment yesterday.

But Ignatieff told reporters before the report's release, "You can't go to Kandahar and not feel a tremendous sense of pride in what we are trying to do. The question is whether we have a strategy with NATO that allows us to succeed, and the caucus has to make a judgment about whether we've got a strategy going forward that can give the Canadian public a sense we're achieving something." KEYWORDS=CANADA

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SOURCETAG 0801230552

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2008.01.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press John Manley, chairman of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference yesterday in Ottawa, where he said the mission should be extended but only if much-needed equipment and NATO troop reinforcements are provided. 2. graphic by Sun Media

BYLINE: PETER ZIMONJIC, NATIONAL BUREAU

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PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 486

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Harper cannot be disappointed by the Manley report.

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roughly doubling Canada's current battle group deployment.

TOO FEW TROOPS

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If none of the other NATO countries agrees to come to the aid of our troops, Manley said, then Canada should pack up and get out of Afghanistan.

Manley's report also recommends that the Canadian forces urgently acquire helicopters and unmanned surveillance aircraft to reduce the amount of troop travel on roads littered with deadly enemy landmines.

All of which sounds logical enough in theory.

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Shoulder to shoulder.

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SOURCETAG 0801230548
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 261

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SOURCETAG 0801230664
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 486

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PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 261

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PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
ILLUSTRATION: photo of STEPHANE DION Training focus
BYLINE: CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: KITCHENER
WORD COUNT: 291

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SOURCETAG 0801230649

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2008.01.23

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 10

ILLUSTRATION: FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS John Manley, chairman of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, concludes a news conference yesterday in Ottawa, where he said the mission should be extended but only if much-needed equipment and NATO troop reinforcements are provided.

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KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

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PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B5
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 543

Suggestions met with approval from families

OTTAWA -- Maureen Eykelenboom takes umbrage at those who suggest the real reason she supports continuing the mission in Afghanistan is because she cannot bear to think her son Andrew died in vain when he was killed in a suicide bombing on Aug. 11, 2006.

Eykelenboom says her reasons for backing the mission go beyond the death of her son, and she is heartened to see that John Manley and his panel are on the same page as she is.

"I would not say because my son was killed, and other soldiers were killed, we need to stay," she said Tuesday from Victoria. "That isn't a reason for staying. We should stay because that's the right thing to do."

Eykelenboom said she agrees with the Manley report's blunt assessment that the status quo isn't working and it's time for NATO to get in there in a bigger way and do the job properly.

Eykelenboom's take was shared by some family members of other fallen soldiers. Several applauded the key recommendation that Canadian Forces stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009, but only if they get new helicopters from the Canadian government and are joined by at least 1,000 soldiers from another NATO country by February 2009, the date the current mission expires.

They also gave a thumbs-up to the panel's conclusion the troops should continue to play a combat role as that role refocuses on training Afghan soldiers and police.

"John Manley gave one heck of a report," declared Ben Walsh, whose son Jeffrey was killed on Aug. 9, 2006, in a shooting incident for which a

fellow Canadian soldier has since been charged.

"In effect, he said s--- or get off the pot," said Walsh of Regina. "He's right. Why double our death rate if other countries are not interested in helping out?"

Jane Byers, who lost her son David in a suicide bombing in 2006, said "NATO needs a kick in the ass," but the mission's future shouldn't be made contingent on NATO providing 1,000 new troops. "I'm hoping that we stay on or else my son died for nothing," she said in interview from Espanola, Ont.

Byers said she has no doubt about how her son would react to the report if he was still alive. "He'd be saying, 'Yes, let's stay.' " I know he'd be saying that," a sobbing Byers said over the telephone.

Tim Goddard says his daughter Nichola would say the same thing.

"She would be adamant that we have to stay until the job is done," he explained in an interview from Calgary.

Capt. Nichola Goddard was killed on May 17, 2006 -- the first female combat soldier to die on the front lines in Afghanistan and the first Canadian woman killed in action since the Second World War.

Goddard said he hopes Manley's report will help ensure an informed and vigorous debate among members of the public and parliamentarians before MPs are asked to vote on the future of the Afghan mission sometime this spring.

Jim Davis, whose son Paul died in an armoured car crash in 2006, said Canada cannot afford to cut and run in Afghanistan.

"If you want to sit at any negotiating table around the world, you have to walk the talk," he said from Bridgewater, N.S. "If we pull back, I don't see why the rest of the world should listen to what we have to say."

Davis also said his support for the Afghan mission has been longstanding -- and preceded his son's deployment there.

Like Eykelenboom, he says people are wrong to link his support for extending the mission to his son's death.

"I think about that," Davis said, "but I don't believe I would ever, ever think of putting another soldier's life in danger to justify my son's death."

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DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 1028

Manley demands NATO's presence

OTTAWA -- John Manley gave Prime Minister Stephen Harper some ammunition Tuesday to take to this spring's crucial summit of NATO allies -- find 1,000 additional troops for Kandahar or face the end of Canada's combat mission sometime after February 2009.

Manley, the former Liberal cabinet minister, and his blue-ribbon panel of experts also threw Harper a lifeline to help him navigate Canada's stormy political waters in coming months: they suggested he postpone a vote in the House of Commons on the future of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan until after the key April meeting of NATO leaders in Romania.

In his report, Manley came out shooting at the Harper Conservatives for trying to sugar coat the controversial mission, his own party for playing politics, and some "delusional" NATO members in Europe for flirting with a disastrous failure in Afghanistan.

The report was a carefully crafted document aimed at uniting Canada's badly divided Parliament. It gave the Harper Conservatives tools to prod reluctant NATO allies, while offering the Liberals a face-saving way to back away from their insistence on ending combat operations in February 2009.

The report called for the Conservatives to supply much needed transport helicopters to minimize the dangers to Canadian troops from roadside bombs in Afghanistan, which are responsible for the majority of the country's 77 military fatalities there. It was also critical of the reconstruction efforts of the Canadian International Development Agency, which oversees the \$100-million annual aid budget for Afghanistan.

But the key finding was its blunt demand on NATO to find 1,000 additional troops for southern Afghanistan by February 2009 or else Canada would announce its intention to withdraw its 2,500 troops.

Canada has vocally -- although not very successfully -- tried to prod some European partners to send more troops to the volatile south. Manley urged the Conservatives to abandon their "megaphone diplomacy," and for Harper to personally mount a diplomatic offensive behind the scenes.

"This can't be seen as just another idle threat. We were asked to look carefully at this mission and we clearly came out believing that the mission itself is worthwhile," Manley told Canwest News in an interview. "But there is a risk, a serious risk of failure unless things happen."

Panel member Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., added: "At a minimum, we think that by setting a hard condition like this, we're increasing the government's leverage, particularly at the level of the prime minister, to try to get us that support."

Manley also said Harper's hands at NATO should not be tied by an unsupportive vote in Parliament, so it should be avoided.

"When our prime minister -- he's our prime minister no matter what party we're in -- goes into an international forum like a NATO summit where an issue is being discussed on where we have some real interests, it's better not to weaken him before he gets there," Manley told Canwest.

Manley's panel received more than 300 submissions and traveled to Afghanistan and NATO headquarters in Brussels, which convinced his commission that some members of the alliance needed to do more. Canada, he said, is the only country working in southern Afghanistan that is not partnered with another nation, and that must change.

"We left with the impression that many NATO governments were living in a bit of a delusional world and thought they could do no more and the mission would still succeed," Manley explained.

Manley's panel called for a conditional extension of the mission.

While NATO needs to reaffirm its commitment, Harper was urged to strike a cabinet committee, and do a better job of explaining the importance of the deployment to Canadians, without shielding them from the realities of war.

"The prime minister must step up," said Manley. "We don't believe Canadians need sugar coating on what's going on and that's why we've said the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving ... We think Canadians are quite prepared to undertake things that are tough, things that are difficult, things that are dangerous, but we've got to give them the facts."

Manley said Canada's efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan cannot be completed by February 2009 and there is no "operational logic" to pulling troops out on that date. An immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifice to date."

Manley made no apologies for the panel's "brutally frank" report, saying Canadians deserve to know the truth.

The report also criticizes the work of CIDA, whose staff are confined to the main NATO base in Kandahar.

"Funding allocations aside, CIDA staffers in Kandahar do not often venture beyond their base -- in part, we are told, because of restrictive regulations maintained by CIDA's headquarters in Ottawa," says the report. "It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar, only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help."

More than half of CIDA's spending flows through international bodies, such as the United Nations or World Bank, while about one-third is funneled through the Afghan government.

Harper received his copy of the report Tuesday morning and was not planning to comment immediately.

"Over the coming days, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations with cabinet and our caucus before coming forward with our response," Harper said.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion reiterated his call the combat mission to end in February 2009, but wants Canada to continue to play a role in Afghanistan.

"We want to be very active on training -- training the Afghan forces, training the police. We want to focus on development, we want better governance of this mission."

Manley acknowledged in the interview that the Liberal position may be coloured by domestic politics, but suggested his old party should rise above that consideration.

"I know what it's like when you're coming up to an election and the need to differentiate your party from another party," he said. "I just hope that the political actors in this case will acknowledge that when our kids are putting their lives on the line we've got to look at this from a little different perspective than we do any other kind of issue."

NDP Leader Jack Layton stood firm to his party's call for an immediate withdrawal of combat troops, saying the report was "out of touch" with public sentiment.

"This mission is failing on many fronts," he said.

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said the report "gives Stephen Harper carte blanche to attain his true objective, which is to continue the war in Afghanistan indefinitely, without a defined period to end it."

-- With files from Megan Fitzpatrick

Ottawa Citizen

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PAGE: A12
COLUMN: Iain Hunter
BYLINE: Iain Hunter
SOURCE: Special to Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 634

We should be in Afghanistan until the job is done

Well, that should certainly strike terror into the hearts of the Taliban: Canadian soldiers will continue to fight the murderers and scumbags in southern Afghanistan beyond next year, but only if they get more soldiers from other countries to fight alongside them and if they get helicopters and planes to keep them well above those nasty things that blow up.

That seems to be the gist of what the panel headed by John Manley has recommended to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Forgive me for saying so, but that doesn't seem much like thinking outside the box that Manley, as a member of a Liberal cabinet, helped get us all into in the first place. It sounds pretty much like the things the Conservative government has been saying itself.

After appointing the panel to advise him what to do in Afghanistan, Harper announced that our troops would be there until at least 2011 anyway.

So with that settled, I suppose, Manley's only choice was to recommend what other countries should do.

But it was good of the panel to remind Harper that he's prime minister and there's a war on and that it's his job to show leadership and get the country behind it, for a change -- if he really believes Canadians should be fighting and dying in that rocky desert so far away.

The corollary, of course, that if he doesn't really think we should be there, he should show the same kind of leadership and pull the troops home.

Harper should stop behaving as if, somehow, the Liberals tricked us into this Afghan adventure.

He needs to stop pretending that there was no warning that Canadians who went over initially as palace guards in Kabul might be sent to do something more risky in less tame parts of the country.

He needs to stop giving the impression that he had no option in May 2006 except to ask Parliament to extend the military mission in Kandahar until 2009.

I suppose that when fiscal commitments are being made, dates have to be attached to them. But the idea that wars can be subjected to timetables and deadlines -- and the Americans have more reason to have learned this by now -- has always been unrealistic.

Canada set no time limit on its First or Second World War involvement. It didn't say it would bring the troops home in time for any Christmas or to help bring in any harvest.

When soldiers in camouflage set out late at night for enemy lines they're not told they have to be back to stand by their beds for inspection at 7 a.m.

Neither skirmishes nor wars have deadlines, but they do have objectives, and until those are achieved, or lost, fighting goes on.

That's what Harper should be telling Canadians who are telling the pollsters that they'd like the 2009 deadline adhered to. Harper, with bloody-minded indeterminateness, says Parliament will decide in time to inform our allies by May or June. He doesn't sound as if he's made up his mind which way to vote himself.

On this point, Manley grabbed the PM by the scruff of the neck and gave him a good shake: He should "step up and make this mission a top priority" co-ordinated by a special cabinet committee, Manley said, and lead the diplomatic initiative to get the international support needed in person.

It's not up to Canada's chief warrior, Rick Hillier, to win the hearts and minds of Canadians and their allies, as well as those of the Afghans to whose aid we've come.

Of course those Europeans for whom the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was first formed should be doing more for what is a NATO assignment by the United Nations. But to say that we're going to go home in a snit if they don't step up to bat by a certain time is shameful.

Maybe Canada was backed into this war by successive governments whose motives had less to do with objectives than they had with impressions.

But, especially since Hillier appeared on the scene, we've got a tighter grip on the sword and shield.

A lot of Afghans are more secure now than they were when we first went in. Murderers and scumbags still terrorize many, but more feel more secure and many more have been given hope.

And for this a lot of Canadian blood has soaked into the sand.

A lot of deadlines have passed.

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SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Former Liberal deputy primeminister John Manley, left, formally presented Prime Minister Stephen Harper with his panel's report yesterday. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 454

Leaders stick to party line on Afghanistan

The Manley panel's hard-hitting report on Canada's war in Afghanistan has stepped up pressure on both the Harper government and the Liberals to refine their positions on the mission -- a challenge that neither side was too keen to tackle yesterday.

But sometime in the next half year or so, those positions must converge if Canadians are to avoid heading to the polls for the third time in four years.

Foreign policy analysts praised the panel for delivering a frank yet sophisticated assessment of the war.

"This report offers the most realistic description in Afghanistan and lucid analysis of the choices facing Canada that we've seen to date," said Roland Paris, director of the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa.

Certainly, panel chairman John Manley pulled few punches yesterday, urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to "step up" while ridiculing Liberals who seek a peacekeeping role for Canada in Kandahar.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion was sticking to his party's position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009, when Canada's commitment to NATO expires.

NDP Leader Jack Layton stood firm to his party's call for an immediate withdrawal of combat troops, saying the report was "out of touch" with

public sentiment.

"This mission is failing on many fronts," he said.

Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe said the report "gives Stephen Harper carte blanche to attain his true objective, which is to continue the war in Afghanistan indefinitely, without a defined period to end it."

The Liberals say they are open to Canadian troops remaining in Afghanistan to train Afghan security forces or support development, but the Manley report effectively shoots down that position, noting that training requires some combat responsibilities, and arguing that leaving combat to another nation in Kandahar would be untenable.

The dilemma for Dion is whether to convince his caucus to bridge the considerable distance between the party's current position and Manley's recommendation of an open-ended, albeit refocused, mission. The Liberal leader has already taken flak over his decision to have his members abstain from voting down the throne speech; capitulating on Afghanistan might be too much.

But polls have consistently shown that Canadians are divided on the war, making it a risky issue on which to fight an election, and the Liberals have yet to consistently overtake the Conservatives in popular support.

Nor does Harper seem too eager to discuss the report. The Prime Minister's Office circulated talking points to reporters attacking the Liberals on leadership, but Harper would only say he plans to review it with his caucus and cabinet. He is expected to comment more extensively in a major speech in Ottawa later this week. Some analysts believe the government could delay taking a stand on Afghanistan until at least April, when Harper is scheduled to meet in Bucharest with the leaders of other NATO countries.

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DATE: 2008.01.23
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield and Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 492

Panel demands more from NATO allies

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's hands at NATO should not be tied by an unsupportive vote in Parliament, John Manley said yesterday.

"When our prime minister -- he's our prime minister no matter what party we're in -- goes into an international forum like a NATO summit where an issue is being discussed on where we have some real interests, it's better not to weaken him before he gets there," Manley said.

Manley's panel received more than 300 submissions and travelled to Afghanistan and NATO headquarters in Brussels, which convinced his commission that some members of the alliance needed to do more.

Canada, he said, is the only country working in southern Afghanistan that is not partnered with another nation, and that must change.

"We left with the impression that many NATO governments were living in a bit of a delusional world and thought they could do no more and the mission would still succeed," Manley explained.

Manley's panel called for a conditional extension of the mission.

While NATO needs to reaffirm its commitment, Harper was urged to strike a cabinet committee, and do a better job of explaining the importance of the deployment to Canadians, without shielding them from the realities of war.

Manley said Canada's efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan cannot be completed by February 2009 and there is no "operational logic" to pulling troops out on that date. An immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifice to date."

Manley made no apologies for the panel's "brutally frank" report, saying Canadians deserve to know the truth. The report also criticizes the work of CIDA, whose staff are confined to the main NATO base in Kandahar.

"Funding allocations aside, CIDA staffers in Kandahar do not often venture beyond their base -- in part, we are told, because of restrictive regulations maintained by CIDA's headquarters in Ottawa," says the report. "It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar, only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help."

More than half of CIDA's spending flows through international bodies, such as the United Nations or World Bank, while about one-third is funnelled through the Afghan government.

Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan appeared generally supportive of the report.

Maureen Eykelenboom takes umbrage at those who suggest the real reason she supports continuing the mission in Afghanistan is because she cannot bear to think her son Andrew died in vain when he was killed in a suicide bombing on Aug. 11, 2006.

Eykelenboom says her reasons for backing the mission go beyond the death of her son, and she is heartened to see that Manley and his panel are on the same page,

"I would not say because my son was killed, and other soldiers were killed, we need to stay," she said yesterday from Victoria. "That isn't a reason for staying. We should stay because that's the right thing to do."

Eykelenboom said she agrees with the Manley report's blunt assessment that the status quo isn't working and it's time for NATO to get in there in a bigger way and do the job properly.

Eykelenboom's take was shared by some family members of other fallen soldiers.

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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 419

Manley report calls for extension of mission

John Manley gave Prime Minister Stephen Harper some ammunition yesterday to take to this spring's crucial summit of NATO allies -- find 1,000 additional troops for Kandahar or face the end of Canada's combat mission sometime after February 2009.

Manley, the former Liberal cabinet minister, and his blue-ribbon panel of experts also threw Harper a lifeline to help him navigate Canada's stormy political waters in coming months: They suggested he postpone a vote in the House of Commons on the future of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan until after the key April meeting.

In his report, Manley came out shooting at the Harper Conservatives for trying to sugar-coat the controversial mission, his own party for playing politics, and some "delusional" NATO members in Europe for flirting with a disastrous failure in Afghanistan.

The report was a carefully crafted document aimed at uniting Canada's badly divided Parliament. It gave the Harper Conservatives tools to prod reluctant NATO allies, while offering the Liberals a face-saving way to back away from their insistence on ending combat operations in February 2009.

The report called for the Conservatives to supply much needed transport helicopters to minimize the dangers to Canadian troops from roadside bombs in Afghanistan, which are responsible for the majority of the country's 77 military fatalities there. It was also critical of the reconstruction efforts of the Canadian International Development Agency, which oversees the \$100-million annual aid budget for Afghanistan.

But the key finding was its blunt demand on NATO to find 1,000 additional troops for southern Afghanistan by February 2009 or else Canada would announce its intention to withdraw its 2,500 troops. Canada has vocally -- although not very successfully -- tried to prod some European

partners to sending more troops to the volatile south. Manley urged the Conservatives to abandon their "megaphone diplomacy," and for Harper to personally mount a diplomatic offensive behind the scenes.

"This can't be seen as just another idle threat. We were asked to look carefully at this mission and we clearly came out believing that the mission itself is worthwhile," Manley told Canwest News in an interview. "But there is a risk, a serious risk of failure unless things happen."

Panel member Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., added: "At a minimum, we think that by setting a hard condition like this, we're increasing the government's leverage, particularly at the level of the prime minister, to try to get us that support."

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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EDITION: Final
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KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 557

Manley on right Afghan track

In October, Stephen Harper presented a challenge to John Manley and a five-member panel: "Make sure we have a rational and considered debate" on our future involvement in Afghanistan, he effectively asked the former Liberal cabinet minister.

There were naysayers from the beginning. They howled that the group was stacked with hawkish amateurs with little experience in the region who would give the government cover for extending the mission. And many of those voices won't be happy with the committee's findings, which were released Tuesday.

But, as it has turned out, the former Liberal majordomo and his colleagues did exactly what they were asked, providing serious -- and generally sensible -- advice.

Polls have indicated a majority of Canadians would like to see our combat troops return home by the current February 2009 deadline.

The report addresses those concerns head-on. It counsels a measured change in direction from warfare to development projects. But it correctly concludes that the tough, dangerous jobs aren't finished yet. The sacrifices of our forces, the financial and emotional support of Canadians, and the promises made to allies all demand more time for success.

"The ultimate objective is to enable the Afghans to manage their own security," Manley writes.

In calling for the mission to continue past the current deadline, the panel lays down two important caveats. The government must secure new, medium-lift helicopters and unmanned, high performance aerial vehicles by February 2009. As well, a new ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) battle group must be deployed to help in training Afghan regulars.

"The most damaging and obvious deficiency (in the mission) is the insufficiency of the military forces deployed against the insurgents." That is an understatement nearly all Canadians might agree on, given the lack of commensurate effort by some of our erstwhile NATO allies.

The report was particularly critical of the Canadian International Development Agency, blaming a lack of progress in an admittedly dangerous landscape on its own administrative sluggishness.

And throwing down a gauntlet of its own, the panel called for the prime minister to "step up" to the plate by personally becoming the face and voice of the mission internationally.

While the pat calls by New Democrats, Bloquistes and Greens to pull out combat troops call into question each of those parties' foreign policy bonafides, we might extend a degree of sympathy to federal Liberals.

It was under the Martin government that Canada first became involved in the Afghans' cause. Almost ever since, in the midst of toxic minority-Parliament posturing, the former governing party has struggled to find a responsible position, with mixed results. For example, however inept he may have been in trying to communicate the sentiment, Stephane Dion was right to suggest that no solution is possible without somehow engaging Pakistan.

For years, Canada phoned in its foreign policy, issuing press releases condemning this or that, or sending peacekeepers in the hope their mere presence would suffice. When in doubt, we simply called upon the UN to get involved, usually without the much expectation that anything significant would be accomplished.

Beginning with the Paul Martin regime and continuing under the Conservatives, Canada is again up to its elbows in the world. That's for better and for worse, and the current government's communications intransigence doesn't always make involvement an easy sell.

But as the Manley report demonstrates, making a difference internationally -- once a Canadian hallmark -- is back. And while not without problems and a human cost, the effort is worthwhile.

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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: CANDIDATES; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; CAMPAIGNS
BYLINE: Richard Foot
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 729

Panel saluted for 'road map for the way forward'

John Manley and his colleagues waded into one of the thorniest foreign policy questions in Canadian history and emerged with a "balanced" and "sophisticated" set of answers that must be adopted if the mission in Afghanistan is to succeed, say defence and foreign policy thinkers across the country.

"I strongly commend Mr. Manley and his colleagues for coming to grips with a very complex problem and writing a clear, compelling story, with recommendations I hope can create a degree of political consensus -- that has eluded us, but is highly needed," says Peter Harder, a former senior bureaucrat who until last March was deputy minister of Foreign Affairs.

Harder says the panel's critique of the overall mission will likely also prompt "some serious reflection amongst our NATO allies of what's required to meet the expectations of the government of Canada.

"I can't predict how much of it will be followed, but I think it provides a very useful road map for the way forward."

Paul Heinbecker, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, applauded the call for a much stronger diplomatic effort, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, particularly in pushing the U.S. and Pakistan to control the flow of insurgents across the Afghan border.

"Canada has put a lot of emphasis on military efforts and that's correct, but we have to do more," Heinbecker says. "We're making a major contribution -- the number of dead soldiers is terrible, and we're spending billions -- we've earned the right to conduct aggressive diplomacy."

"I think to some degree we've been taken for granted."

Heinbecker also hailed the call for honest public talk from the prime minister, his generals and diplomats, about progress and setbacks in Afghanistan.

"I think the lack of frank communication is really harming public support for the mission," he says. "Canadians are not pacifists, but they need to know what the hell is going on. The government needs to level with people."

Douglas Bland, a professor of defence studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., calls the Manley blueprint "the best thing we've had so far that explains to Canadians in a few pages the essence of the situation and the operation in Afghanistan."

Bland, who returned from a research visit to Afghanistan last month, says the panel's two conditions for Canada's involvement past 2009 -- a second battle group of combat troops in Kandahar, and the acquisition of new helicopters and unmanned surveillance planes for the military -- should not be difficult to meet.

The U.S. has already announced the deployment of 3,000 marines to Kandahar, and the Polish government has said it will dispatch another 1,000 troops -- for use anywhere in the country -- later this year.

Heinbecker predicts an ultimatum to NATO, that Canada will quit the mission without a new military partner in Kandahar, will work.

"It's a game of chicken," he says. "The attitude around NATO is, if someone else is going to do a job, other countries will let them unless they're convinced the work won't get done."

Bland also says serious efforts are already underway by Canada's ambassador in Afghanistan to assert greater civilian control of Canada's overall mission.

"They're already doing a lot over there to shake up the whole mission and put a government stamp, as opposed to a military stamp, on it," says Bland. "I think you'll find the government will explain in the next few days or weeks that they not only accept the Manley recommendations, but have already taken action on many of these issues."

Bland also praises the panel's frank talk about the sheer complexity of Afghanistan's problems. He supports the message that Ottawa must refocus its strategy, particularly its goals of reconstruction, development, and training.

"I think it's an honest report. It's important that it puts pressure and on the prime minister, to get a grip and lead the public service on a whole-government-approach to the mission."

Brian Reid, a former artillery officer and now executive editor of the Ruxted Group, which publishes online commentary on defence issues, was pleased that the panel chose not to recommend an arbitrary end date for the Canadian mission.

"You don't abandon ship in the middle of an operation when things aren't going as well as planned, but instead refocus on how you're doing things," he says.

"I'm pleased by the realism of the report -- by a group of people who are used to dealing with the real world and who understand how the international community operates."

Heinbecker calls Manley and his panelists "some of Canada's premier public servants ... some of our best and brightest were asked to go and have a look at this problem and come back with advice. The prime minister would be in a very weak position to ignore it."

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KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 615

Manley still irritated Iraq distracted U.S. from Afghanistan

OTTAWA - The Peace Tower still dominates the view through the sweeping windows of the old corner office he occupied when he was Canada's foreign affairs minister.

John Manley returned to the familiar space in a downtown Ottawa highrise when he took up his current role as head of the non-partisan panel on Canada's mission to Afghanistan.

The old surroundings sparked a fresh, and candid, perspective on why Canadian troops now have such a tough fight on their hands in southern Afghanistan.

"One of the key arguments our government made to the United States in 2002 and 2003 was: don't go into Iraq while Afghanistan is unfinished business; we can only handle so many of these endeavours. I think that there was, in 2003, a serious loss of focus on Afghanistan. There was a misguided belief that the Taliban had been defeated. The Taliban were never defeated," Manley said in an interview after his five-member panel released its report on Canada's future military and diplomatic role in Afghanistan.

Following 9/11, Manley was a forceful voice in the cabinet of then prime minister Jean Chretien, advocating military intervention in Afghanistan. He was also a loyal ally of the U.S., sometimes to the annoyance of some fellow Liberals.

There was no trace of bitterness towards the U.S. as Manley spoke Tuesday of the unsuccessful efforts to stop the Bush White House from following through on its threats to invade in Iraq.

"The Bush administration was intent on going into Iraq and there was nothing we could have said or done that would have made a difference. Goodness knows, we tried, the Europeans tried," Manley recalled.

"I think we were entirely right."

But he's angry Iraq transformed Afghanistan into America's forgotten war.

"I think it's appalling. I think it's one of the reasons that we're in the mess that we're in."

In politics, Manley lived by the rule that Canadians should never get too close, nor stray too far from their powerful American neighbour.

In that vein, he's optimistic that with the U.S. presidential race in full swing, Afghanistan is back on the American radar.

"What I see in the political developments in the United States is all candidates, certainly all significant candidates ... in both parties firmly supporting the efforts in Afghanistan. Where there's lots of debate about what should or shouldn't be done in Iraq, there's a very general support for doing more in Afghanistan."

Framed by three large maps of Afghanistan and Central Asia, Manley said he remains passionately connected to Afghanistan and deeply concerned about the welfare of its people.

Enough to return to politics and perhaps take another run at the Liberal leadership?

"I'm not a politician anymore," he says. "I'm not a candidate for anything."

AFGHANISTAN CHRONOLOGY

- Sept. 20, 2001: The U.S. demands that the Afghan government turn over all resident al-Qaida members and close all terrorist training camps after Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.
- Oct. 7, 2001: U.S. and British forces, working under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), begin air strikes on al-Qaida and Taliban targets in Afghanistan
- Oct. - Nov. 2001: Canadian Operation Apollo, under OEF, sees deployment of Canadian warships and aircraft to the Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea; Northern Alliance enters Kabul and the Taliban government falls
- Dec. 2001: Bonn Agreement establishes interim Afghan government. International forces take control of Kandahar province. UN Security Council authorizes the creation of an International Security Assistance Force. Hamid Karzai sworn in as head of 30-member governing committee of Afghan Interim Authority (AIA)
- January 2002: First ISAF troops deployed as a multinational force, initially under British command. Canada re-establishes diplomatic relations with

Afghanistan; John Manley, deputy prime minister, visits Kabul

- February 2002: First of 850 Canadian troops deploy to Kandahar
- Feb. 9, 2004: Canada (Lt.-Gen. Rick Hillier) assumes overall command of ISAF forces for six months
- April 1, 2004: Berlin donors' conference -- \$8.2 billion US towards reconstruction; Canada pledges \$250 million.
- Oct. 7, 2004: Presidential elections; Hamid Karzai wins with 55 per cent of the vote.
- Aug.16, 2005: Canada assumes command of the provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar City
- August 2005: Canadian Forces begin process of redeployment from Kabul to Kandahar
- Jan.-Feb, 2006: Five-year Afghanistan Compact signed in London. International donors meeting pledges of \$10.5 billion in new aid to 2011
- Sept. 1-20, 2006: Canada leads ISAF Operation Medusa; attacking Taliban strongholds in Kandahar Province
- Oct. 5, 2006: NATO assumes responsibility for security across Afghanistan

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IDNUMBER 200801230016
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Former Liberal deputy prime minister JohnManley leaves a news conference Tuesday in Ottawa on the release of a report from the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: CANDIDATES; POLITICAL PARTIES; POLITICIANS; CAMPAIGNS
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 540

Families of fallen soldiers applaud Manley report; Support not linked to troops' deaths in Afghanistan

OTTAWA - Maureen Eykelenboom takes umbrage at those who suggest the real reason she supports continuing the mission in Afghanistan is because she cannot bear to think her son, Andrew, died in vain when he was killed in a suicide bombing on Aug. 11, 2006.

Eykelenboom said her reasons for backing the mission go beyond the death of her son and she is heartened to see that John Manley and his panel are on the same page as she is.

"I would not say because my son was killed, and other soldiers were killed, we need to stay," she said Tuesday from Victoria. "That isn't a reason for staying. We should stay because that's the right thing to do."

Eykelenboom said she agrees with the Manley report's blunt assessment that the status quo isn't working and it's time for NATO to get in there in a bigger way and do the job properly.

Eykelenboom's take was shared by some family members of other fallen soldiers. Several applauded the key recommendation that Canadian Forces stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009, but only if they get new helicopters from the Canadian government and are joined by at least 1,000 soldiers from another NATO country by February 2009, the date the mission is due to expire.

They also gave a thumbs-up to the panel's conclusion the troops should continue to play a combat role as the role refocuses on training Afghan soldiers and police.

"John Manley gave one heck of a report," declared Ben Walsh, whose son, Jeffrey, was killed on Aug. 9, 2006, in a shooting incident for which a fellow Canadian soldier has been charged.

"In effect, he said s-- or get off the pot," said Walsh of Regina. "He's right. Why double our death rate if other countries are not interested in helping out?"

Jane Byers, who lost her son, David, in a suicide bombing in 2006, said "NATO needs a kick in the ass," but the mission's future shouldn't be made contingent on NATO providing 1,000 new troops. "I'm hoping that we stay on or else my son died for nothing," she said in interview from Espanola, Ont.

Byers said she has no doubt about how her son would react to the report if he was still alive. "He'd be saying, 'Yes, let's stay.' I know he'd be saying that," a sobbing Byers said over the telephone.

Tim Goddard said his daughter, Nichola, would say the same thing.

"She would be adamant that we have to stay until the job is done," he said in an interview from Calgary.

Capt. Nichola Goddard was killed on May 17, 2006. She was the first female combat soldier to die on the front lines in Afghanistan and the first Canadian woman killed in action since the Second World War.

Goddard said he hopes Manley's report will help ensure an informed and vigorous debate among members of the public and parliamentarians before MPs are asked to vote on the future of the Afghan mission sometime this spring.

Jim Davis, whose son, Paul, died in an armoured car crash in 2006, said Canada cannot afford to cut and run in Afghanistan.

"If you want to sit at any negotiating table around the world, you have to walk the talk," he said from Bridgewater, N.S.

"If we pull back, I don't see why the rest of the world should listen to what we have to say."

Davis also said his support for the Afghan mission has been long-standing -- and preceded his son's deployment there. Like Eykelenboom, he said people are wrong to link his support for extending the mission to his son's death.

"I think about that, but I don't believe I would ever, ever think of putting another soldier's life in danger to justify my son's death" Davis said.

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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 515

Liberals, Conservatives both under pressure; Manley raises questions about Harper's leadership on issue, hands Dion a tough sell with his Liberal caucus

OTTAWA - The Manley panel's hard-hitting report on Canada's war in Afghanistan has stepped up pressure on both the Harper government and the Liberals to refine their positions on the mission -- a challenge that neither side was too keen to tackle Tuesday.

But sometime in the next half year or so, those positions must converge if Canadians are to avoid heading to the polls for the third time in four years.

Foreign policy analysts praised the panel for delivering a frank yet sophisticated assessment of the war.

"This report offers the most realistic description in Afghanistan and lucid analysis of the choices facing Canada that we've seen to date," said Roland Paris, director of the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa.

Certainly, panel chairman John Manley pulled few punches Tuesday, urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to "step up" while ridiculing Liberals who seek a peacekeeping role for Canada in Kandahar.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion was sticking to his party's position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009, when Canada's commitment to NATO expires.

The party says it is open to Canadian troops remaining in Afghanistan to train Afghan security forces or support development, but the Manley report effectively shoots down that position, noting that training requires some combat responsibilities, and arguing that leaving combat to another nation in Kandahar would be untenable.

The dilemma for Dion is whether to convince his caucus to bridge the considerable distance between the party's current position and Manley's recommendation of an open-ended, albeit refocused, mission. The Liberal leader has already taken flak over his decision to have his members abstain from voting down the throne speech; capitulating on Afghanistan might be too much.

But polls have consistently shown that Canadians are divided on the war, making it a risky issue on which to fight an election, and the Liberals have yet to consistently overtake the Conservatives in popular support.

Nor does Harper seem too eager to discuss the report.

The Prime Minister's Office circulated talking points to reporters attacking the Liberals on leadership, but Harper would only say he plans to review it with his caucus and Cabinet.

He is expected to comment more extensively in a major speech in Ottawa later this week.

Some analysts believe the government could delay taking a stand on Afghanistan until at least April, when Harper is scheduled to meet in Bucharest with the leaders of other NATO countries.

Harper has promised to put any extension of the mission to a vote in Parliament, but in year-end interviews he would only say a vote should happen before the summer.

The opposition will surely pummel Harper in Parliament, which resumes Monday, if he refuses to clarify the government's position.

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe declared Tuesday that he would like to see a vote on Afghanistan before the NATO summit.

NDP Leader Jack Layton said the report justifies his party's call for an immediate withdrawal.

When Harper appointed the Manley panel this fall, pundits called it a master stroke that defused an explosive issue.

Observers were, therefore, surprised Tuesday that the report actually raises questions about Harper's leadership, including whether he has done enough to convince Canada's allies to contribute to the mission.

"It sends the clear message that the prime minister has to pick up the phone and make the case to our allies," said Fen Hampson, director of Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs in Ottawa.

"If I were in the Prime Minister's Office right now, this report would be making me squirm."

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IDNUMBER 200801230003
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters, file / Soldiers from theEdmonton-based Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry third battalion hold their positions during a combat mission in the rugged Shah-i-Kot mountains, 25 kilometres southeast of Gardez, Afghanistan. A new report says another NATO nation should step up to partner with Canada in southern Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield, With files from Megan Fitzpatrick,Canwest News Service
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen, With files from Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 679

War Report blasts NATO; Manley panel says Afghan mission should end unless allies add troops

OTTAWA - Canada should end its combat mission in Afghanistan sometime after 2009 unless NATO contributes 1,000 more troops, John Manley recommended in his eagerly awaited reported Tuesday.

The stand gives Prime Minister Stephen Harper some ammunition Tuesday to take to this spring's crucial summit of NATO allies.

The former Liberal cabinet minister and his blue-ribbon panel of experts may also buy Harper some time by suggesting a delay in the Commons vote on the future of the Afghanistan mission until after the key April meeting of NATO leaders in Romania.

In his report, Manley accuses the Harper Conservatives of trying to sugarcoat the controversial mission, his own party of playing politics, and some "delusional" NATO members in Europe of flirting with failure in Afghanistan.

The recommendations appear to be aimed at uniting Canada's badly divided Parliament. It gives the Tories tools to prod reluctant NATO allies, and offers the Liberals a face-saving way to back away from their insistence on ending combat operations in February 2009.

The report calls for the Conservatives to supply badly needed transport helicopters to minimize the dangers to Canadian troops from roadside bombs in Afghanistan, which caused the majority of the country's 77 military deaths there. But the key finding was its blunt demand for 1,000 more NATO troops.

Canada has tried, with little success, to prod some European partners to send more troops to the volatile south to join its force of about 2,500. Manley urged the Conservatives to abandon "megaphone diplomacy" in favour of behind-the-scenes diplomacy by Harper.

"This can't be seen as just another idle threat. We were asked to look carefully at this mission and we clearly came out believing that the mission itself is worthwhile," Manley told Canwest News in an interview.

"But there is a risk, a serious risk of failure unless things happen."

Panel member Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., added: "At a minimum, we think that by setting a hard condition like this, we're increasing the government's leverage, particularly at the level of the prime minister, to try to get us that support."

Manley also said Harper's hands at NATO should not be tied by an unsupportive vote in Parliament, so it should be avoided.

Manley's panel received more than 300 submissions and travelled to Afghanistan and NATO headquarters in Brussels, which convinced his commission that some members of the alliance needed to do more. Canada, he said, is the only country working in southern Afghanistan that isn't partnered with another nation, and that must change.

"We left with the impression that many NATO governments were living in a bit of a delusional world and thought they could do no more and the mission would still succeed," Manley explained.

BETTER JOB OF EXPLAINING

The panel called for a conditional extension of the mission. As well, Harper was urged to strike a cabinet committee, and do a better job of explaining the importance of the deployment to Canadians, without shielding them from the realities of war.

"We don't believe Canadians need sugar-coating on what's going on and that's why we've said the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving," Manley said.

He said Canada can't complete its efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan by February 2009, and there is no "operational logic" to pulling troops out then. An immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifice to date."

The report also criticizes the work of CIDA, whose staff are confined to the main NATO base in Kandahar.

"It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar, only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help," it says.

Harper received his copy of the report Tuesday morning and was not planning to comment immediately.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion reiterated his call the combat mission to end in February 2009, but wants Canada to continue to play a role in Afghanistan.

"We want to be very active on training -- training the Afghan forces, training the police. We want to focus on development, we want better governance of this mission."

Manley said in the interview that the Liberal position may be influenced by domestic politics -- "the need to differentiate your party from another party" -- but suggested his old party should rise above that.

NDP Leader Jack Layton stood firm to his party's call for an immediate withdrawal of combat troops, saying the report was "out of touch" with public sentiment. "This mission is failing on many fronts," he said.

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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SECTION: News
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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters, file / Soldiers from theEdmonton-based Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry third battalion hold their positions during a combat mission in the rugged Shah-i-Kot mountains, 25 kilometres southeast of Gardez, Afghanistan. A new report says another NATO nation should step up to partner with Canada in southern Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield, With files from Megan Fitzpatrick,Canwest News Service
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; With files from Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 679

Troop ultimatum to NATO; Manley panel says Afghan mission should end unless allies share load

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DATE: 2008.01.23
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SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A17
COLUMN: National Affairs
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Chantal Hebert
SOURCE: Torstar News Service
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 486

Harper has few options without NATO

John Manley has handed Prime Minister Stephen Harper a Rubik's cube that he cannot solve without Liberal Leader St phane Dion.

Unless Harper convinces NATO to move 1,000 additional troops into Kandahar over the next 12 months, he need not even bother to ask the House of Commons for a mandate to pursue the Canadian deployment in the troubled Afghan province beyond next year.

In their report, Manley and his group argue that without more support from NATO allies, Canada does not stand a chance to fulfil its objectives in Kandahar. A prime minister would have to be politically suicidal to ignore that kind of advice.

But there is little point in Harper showing up at the NATO summit in Bucharest in April to make demands unless there is a relative certainty that he can leverage more allied soldiers in Kandahar into parliamentary support for extending Canada's security mission in the province.

With the New Democrats and the Bloc Qu b cois set to vote against any extension of the combat mission, the government needs Liberal support to implement the Manley plan and Dion would have to reverse himself to extend it.

On that score, his former cabinet colleague has left Dion with little save-face room. The report bluntly dismisses the Liberal prescription for a 2009 end to Canada's combat role, calling it an option that is not "viable."

It offers the prospect of an eventual phasing out of Canada's fighting role in favour of training at some unspecified point in the future as a fallback

bridge between the Liberal position and its main recommendation.

That is not to say that the group has totally shut out the views of the opposition.

While its heart is forcefully behind a continued Canadian combat presence in Kandahar, its head is somewhat less sanguine.

And even as it rejects calls to end the mission next year, the report endorses the bulk of the opposition critique of Harper's management of it.

It states that Canada's casualties are inexplicably high by comparison to its allies, even in light of the particular risks of the mission and requires that new helicopters and drones be deployed if it is to continue beyond next year.

It notes the large discrepancy between the resources expended on military and civilian efforts and describes CIDA's development initiatives as held back by bureaucracy at home and lack of co-ordination and focus on the ground.

It takes sharp digs at the government's opaque communications strategy.

And it suggests that the prime minister will have to invest more political energy on the file at home and abroad if the mission is to achieve measurable goals.

Yesterday, Harper and Dion both reserved comments until they had studied the report further.

But the Liberal leader reiterated his call for Canada to trade its combat role for other Afghan duties next year, a statement that prompted a volley from the prime minister's spin doctors.

Under the timetable put forward by Manley, the Commons might not vote on the issue until after the April NATO summit.

The debate could be overtaken by a spring election.

Under that scenario, voters would have to choose between a prime minister whose management of a defining foreign policy has been found wanting and a leader of the opposition whose plan for its future has been dismissed as half-baked by one of his own elder statesman.

Chantal H bert writes on national affairs.

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PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A17
COLUMN: Andrew Dreschel
BYLINE: Andrew Dreschel
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 568

Canada's role in Afghanistan 'honourable'

There's a little something for everyone in John Manley's report on Canada's future role in Afghanistan, including too-often forgotten notions of duty and honour.

Though the overall thrust calls for hanging tough in an enormously challenging and complex situation, there are also enough cautions and criticisms to satisfy those who may have butterflies about continuing our combat mission there after February 2009, when our current commitment expires.

For example, the report recommends that the continuation of Canada's military mission should not only be tied to other allied troops coming to help us in Kandahar, the Harper government must also get its hands on some new medium-lift helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles to improve the safety and effectiveness of our forces.

If neither happens by February 2009, Manley's panel says Canada should hand off security in Kandahar to others.

That's just one ingredient in a hot pot that includes concerns about corruption in Afghanistan's government, the booming opium trade and a recharged Taliban insurgency benefiting from safe havens in Pakistan.

But the report also talks about hope.

Six million children in school, a third of them girls. Improved child mortality rates. Roads being built. Power lines restored. Measurable improvements brought about by Canada and 50 other countries committed to an international program of aid to strengthen Afghanistan's security,

governance and development.

It's all sobering, daunting stuff that Canadians need to think about before deciding what price we're willing to pay in blood and treasure to help one of the poorest, most long-suffering countries on the planet.

Thankfully, the report also brings to the debate some dispassionate, but much needed context as to why we're there in the first place.

Over the years, as our casualties have mounted and opposition to the mission have grown, those crucial facts have often been lost in a swirl of emotions and partisan politics.

Manley reminds us that in 2001, Afghanistan was largely ruled by the Taliban, "a radical Islamist regime of exceptional violence" that sheltered al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization that planned and directed the 9/11 attacks against the United States.

The panel recalls that after those attacks, the UN Security Council formally called on states to co-operate in Afghanistan "to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of those terrorist attacks" that were understood to present a threat to global peace and security.

At the same time, NATO declared the attack on the U.S. an attack against all NATO members, of which Canada, of course, is one.

No need to dwell on the military assault that saw the Taliban regime collapse.

Suffice it to say the UN then authorized a new International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to prosecute the campaign against the Taliban and to help the new government in Kabul.

As the report notes, two distinguishing facts are worth repeating.

First, the international military presence has been "explicitly and repeatedly" authorized by the UN Security Council, most recently last September, as well as being approved collectively by the 26 members of NATO.

In short, Canada and ISAF are defending and enforcing international law.

Secondly, Canada and its allies are there at the request and approval of Afghanistan's own elected government.

"The panel is convinced that Canadian objectives in Afghanistan are both honourable and achievable," says the report.

Honourable and achievable. Principled and practical.

The report notes we're not aiming to create some fanciful model of prosperous democracy.

We're contributing to a better governed, stable and developing Afghanistan whose government can protect the security of the country and its people.

"The hard truth is that an ISAF retreat from Afghanistan, before that country's own forces can defend its security, would most likely condemn the Afghan people to a new and bloody cycle of civil war and misrule -- and raise new threats to global peace and security," the report says.

So there is it.

We need to stay the course not only to help others, but for enlightened self-interest.

We're in a war that's not only worth fighting, but which has to be won.

Andrew Dreschel's commentary appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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SECTION: Canada/World
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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press / John Manley, left, and his panel members Derek Burney, and Pamela Wallin present their findings at a press conference. ; Photo: Spectator File Photo / Canadians have lost 77 soldiers and one diplomat in Afghanistan. ; Photo: For more go to thespec.com Ckick: 'From Canada to Kandahar' for a photo slideshow ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Allan Woods and Bruce Campion-Smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star; With files from Les Whittington
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 717

'The mission is in jeopardy' without more NATO troops

Prime Minister Stephen Harper must take personal responsibility for the success or failure of Canada's Afghan mission by pressing NATO allies for an extra 1,000 troops for Kandahar while better explaining the mission to Canadians here at home, a respected study group says.

And if Canadian soldiers don't get NATO reinforcements, along with new transport helicopters and unmanned surveillance planes to track insurgents, Canada should withdraw from its security mission in Kandahar in February 2009, the independent panel said yesterday.

The five-member panel, led by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, painted a "brutally frank" picture of the difficulties NATO armies face bringing security to the war-torn country, challenges that include a worsening insurgency, ineffective aid strategy, poor co-ordination between defence, foreign affairs and development officials, and an imbalance between the military and civilian efforts.

"What we're saying is that the mission is in jeopardy. There simply are not enough troops to ensure that the job can be properly done in Kandahar province," Manley told a news conference.

"But there is a significant difference between saying, 'We're gone in February 2009,' and saying, 'We're staying provided you find us a partner.'"

Canada's contributions of about 2,500 troops and aid -- at least \$100 million a year -- give Harper the diplomatic muscle to pressure international

partners for extra military forces and get diplomatic and development efforts back on track, the panel says.

"To get the result that we believe is necessary, the prime minister must step up and make this mission a top priority," Manley said.

"Even more important, he must personally lead our diplomatic initiative, making our voice heard to a degree commensurate with our contributions."

Harper came away empty-handed at the last meeting of NATO leaders in Riga, Latvia in 2006. But the panel says NATO must be prepared to act on Canada's demands for more troops when NATO leaders meet again in Bucharest, Romania April 2-4.

"Either they mean it, that this is the most important mission, or they don't. And if they don't, well then we need to look at the well-being of our young people," Manley said. Seventy-seven Canadian troops, and one diplomat, Glyn Berry, have died in Afghanistan since the mission began in 2001.

All eyes are now set on a future vote that the government has promised in the House of Commons that will let the majority of MPs decide whether to stay in Kandahar or leave next year. Manley's report suggested that vote should be postponed until after the critical NATO meeting in order to give the Prime Minister that opportunity to secure additional support for Canadian soldiers.

The House of Commons returns next Monday after a six-week winter break.

Harper has said that his cabinet will take a few days to study the report before offering a detailed response.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion told reporters in Kitchener that he had not yet read the report, but repeated his position that Canadian soldiers should leave Kandahar next year, and should inform NATO immediately.

The panel said that a lack of troops has made life more dangerous for troops in southern Afghanistan, saying that Canada has suffered the highest casualty rate per capita of any of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) nations.

"We believe that Canadian casualties are greater than would otherwise be the case if additional troops were there," Manley said.

The panel, which received more than 200 submissions, also criticized serious communications problems it says have left Canadians in the dark about the rationale for Ottawa's involvement in Kandahar.

Harper formed the panel last October to advise parliamentarians on the future of the mission but his decision to name Manley -- a known advocate of the Afghan mission -- as chair was controversial. Critics said the commission was biased in favour of extending the mission, and they said that yesterday's report backed up their fears.

NDP Leader Jack Layton yesterday repeated his demand that Canadians troops leave Afghanistan and said that NATO should pull out too.

"What we need is the United Nations to develop a comprehensive peace process," Layton said, adding the report points to the mission's failings "on many fronts."

An immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifices," Manley said.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan

OTTAWA Some facts about Canada's mission in Afghanistan:

Began -- January 2002, with the deployment of an infantry battle group.

Numbers -- There are about 2,500 Canadian troops deployed.

Cost -- The military mission will have cost about \$6.3 billion by the time the current commitment ends in February 2009. More than \$750 million more has been earmarked for development aid.

Casualties -- Canada has lost 77 soldiers and a diplomat killed.

Quote -- "Canada's presence in Afghanistan matters." -- former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, head of a special panel that says Canada should stay in Afghanistan past 2009 if certain conditions are met.

The Canadian Press

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Hamilton Spectator File Photo / Troops from CFBSילו, Man., held a family day before leaving for overseas. Above, a youngster holds a gun. ;
DATELINE: HALIFAX
BYLINE: Alison Auld
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 438

Families of dead back the call for more troops

The families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan praised a report yesterday that called on NATO to increase its role in the country and improve equipment for troops if Canada is to maintain its presence there.

Several parents and spouses said they were pleased with the exhaustive document, which issued a blunt ultimatum to NATO allies -- contribute 1,000 more soldiers or face the withdrawal of Canadian troops.

"I really like what I see," Jim Davis, whose son Corporal Paul Davis was killed in 2006 in Afghanistan, said in an interview in Halifax.

"We can't just immediately pack up and change our role and pull back. We've got to stay the course, but we can only stay the course if NATO really recognizes the seriousness of this."

But a relative of a soldier injured in the conflict said the report merely restates a message that has been relayed repeatedly to NATO officials without results -- that Canada needs more help from its allies in the country's restive southern region.

Bill Hunter, whose son Trooper Jeffrey Hunter was seriously wounded in October 2006, said Canada has been calling for a greater sharing of the burden for months with little response.

Hunter said that while the report was "smart," he wondered if it would be acted upon since the international organization has rebuffed persistent calls for relief.

John Manley's "reiterating what was said in the news months ago when Canada went to NATO and said we need more manpower and more equipment," he said from his home Aurora.

"But I think he's hammering it home in a stronger way than the government has."

Manley, the former Liberal foreign affairs minister, urged Ottawa to rebalance the mission and play a more robust non-military role in Afghanistan, in such things as reconstruction, security and improving the quality of life in one of the world's most long-suffering countries.

Julie Mason, whose husband Master Corporal Jeff Walsh was killed in 2006, said she watched the release of the report closely to see what it would recommend for a mission she feels has become deeply politicized over the last few years.

"They need better equipment and they need more equipment and (the Conservatives) have never been a really big party for getting that for them," she said from her home in Shilo, Man.

"They definitely need to focus on getting what these soldiers need to do their job properly."

The father of Canada's only female combat soldier to die in battle supports the Manley report's main recommendations to extend the mission.

Captain Nicola Goddard died May 17, 2006, in a grenade attack in Panjwahi district. Tim Goddard said extending the mission to achieve the goal is "an appropriate way to go" and he believes his daughter would agree.

He said she had expressed concerns about the poverty and lack of schooling for children in the country.

"It was abhorrent to her and she felt it was important we contribute to correcting that," he said from Calgary.

But changing the mission to being only mentors and teachers could prove difficult, said Goddard.

"You can't just say, 'OK, we're going to just stay in the classrooms now.'"

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PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Local
PAGE: A1
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: John Manley;
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2008 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 54

MANLEY'S REPORT

90 PAGES: John Manley's panel recommends Canada extend its mission indefinitely if 1,000 foreign troops can relieve Canadians to allow them to ramp up training of the Afghan army and if the government can acquire new helicopters and sophisticated aerial drones by next February.

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IDNUMBER 200801230088
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2008.01.23
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / PULLING NO PUNCHES:Former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley pauses during a news conference on the release of a report from the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, in Ottawa Tuesday. ; Colour Photo: Capt. Nichola Goddard ; Colour Photo: Master Corp. Jeffrey Walsh ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 332

Families back Manley report; Parents of fallen soldiers agree NATO should be more involved

OTTAWA - Maureen Eykelenboom takes umbrage at those who suggest the real reason she supports continuing the mission in Afghanistan is because she cannot bear to think her son Andrew died in vain when he was killed in a suicide bombing on Aug. 11, 2006.

Eykelenboom says her reasons for backing the mission go beyond the death of her son, and she is heartened to see that John Manley and his panel are on the same page as she is.

"I would not say because my son was killed, and other soldiers were killed, we need to stay," she said Tuesday from Victoria. "That isn't a reason for staying. We should stay because that's the right thing to do."

Eykelenboom said she agrees with the Manley report's blunt assessment that the status quo isn't working and it's time for NATO to get in there in a bigger way and do the job properly.

Eykelenboom's take was shared by some family members of other fallen soldiers. Several applauded the key recommendation that Canadian Forces stay in Afghanistan beyond February 2009, but only if they get new helicopters from the Canadian government and are joined by at least 1,000 soldiers from another NATO country by February 2009, the date the current mission expires.

They also gave a thumbs-up to the panel's conclusion the troops should continue to play a combat role as that role refocuses on training Afghan soldiers and police.

"John Manley gave one heck of a report," declared Ben Walsh, whose son Jeffrey was killed on Aug. 9, 2006, in a shooting incident for which a fellow Canadian soldier has since been charged.

"In effect, he said s-- or get off the pot," said Walsh of Regina. "He's right. Why double our death rate if other countries are not interested in helping out?"

Jim Davis, whose son Paul died in an armoured car crash in 2006, said Canada cannot afford to cut and run.

"If you want to sit at any negotiating table around the world, you have to walk the talk," he said from Bridgewater, N.S. "If we pull back, I don't see why the rest of the world should listen to what we have to say."

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PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A8
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 587

Afghanistan; The mission must go on

Canada should continue its vital mission in Kandahar beyond 2009 provided our soldiers receive upgraded equipment like helicopters and provided our NATO allies up their military contributions, an independent panel struck by the government concluded Tuesday.

The panel, chaired by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, said there was "no operational logic" for adhering to the mission's existing 2009 deadline and nothing to suggest the mission's objective -- the creation of a democratic and stable Afghanistan -- would be achieved by then.

"The Canadian combat mission should conclude when the Afghan National Army is ready to provide security in Kandahar province," said the report. "Ending Canada's military contribution in Kandahar is therefore not a matter of setting artificial deadlines in time. It is a matter of making real progress in the context of events on the ground."

The report stresses Canada cannot step back and assume a more traditional peacekeeping role because "there is not yet a peace to keep in Afghanistan." It also stresses that pulling out of volatile Kandahar in the hopes other NATO allies will fill the gap in the line would be reckless and irresponsible and undermine Canada's hard-fought gains against a stubborn insurgency.

"A premature military withdrawal from Afghanistan, whether full or partial, would imperil Canadian interests and values," said the report. A pullout would embolden militants, encourage Afghans to support the insurgency, diminish the effectiveness of Canada's aid programs and undermine Canada's international influence.

"In sum, an immediate military withdrawal from Afghanistan would cause more harm than good."

While stressing the need for an extended military commitment, the panel acknowledged Canada, which has spent more than \$6 billion and lost 77 soldiers and a diplomat in Afghanistan, has shouldered a heavier burden than other countries in the 39-member coalition save for Britain and the U.S. It said those other countries, which have caveats preventing them from leaving the security of the base or fighting at night, must assume more

risk and responsibility.

"We are recommending a Canadian commitment to Afghanistan that is neither open-ended nor faint-hearted," said the report. "We do not expect that NATO will be able to replace us in 2009. Nor will the Afghans be ready to take over. But we can insist that NATO find us a partner in Kandahar, enabling us to expand the scope of security and to shift increasingly from fighting to training the Afghan forces."

The report also stressed the urgent need for the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to secure, by the beginning of February of 2009, the "latest new, medium-lift helicopters" and unmanned aerial drones. The procurement of this hardware is essential and would help reduce the risk to soldiers, who are targeted by suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices while resupplying forward operating bases.

Should Harper's government fail to adequately supply our soldiers and fail to persuade our NATO allies that they need to -- at the least - send a new contingent of 1,000 soldiers to Kandahar to alleviate Canada's burden, the report said Canada would have no realistic choice but to withdraw from the volatile southern province.

That would be a regrettable development that would undermine the NATO alliance and international security by allowing the bloody insurgency to spread north unchecked until it toppled the government of Hamid Karzai. If that were allowed to happen, the world would be a much more dangerous place.

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PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / PENSIVE: John Manley, right, released his Afghanistan report Tuesday. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 967

Manley report urges NATO ultimatum

OTTAWA - John Manley gave Prime Minister Stephen Harper some ammunition Tuesday to take to this spring's crucial summit of NATO allies -- find 1,000 additional troops for Kandahar or face the end of Canada's combat mission sometime after February 2009.

Manley, the former Liberal cabinet minister, and his blue-ribbon panel of experts also threw Harper a lifeline to help him navigate Canada's stormy political waters in coming months: they suggested he postpone a vote in the House of Commons on the future of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan until after the key April meeting of NATO leaders in Romania.

In his report, Manley came out shooting at the Harper Conservatives for trying to sugar-coat the controversial mission, his own party for playing politics, and some "delusional" NATO members in Europe for flirting with failure in Afghanistan.

The report was a carefully crafted document aimed at uniting a badly divided Parliament.

It gave the Harper Conservatives tools to prod reluctant NATO allies, while offering the Liberals a face-saving way to back away from their insistence on ending combat operations in February 2009.

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The report called for the Conservatives to supply much needed transport helicopters to minimize the dangers to Canadian troops from roadside

bombs in Afghanistan, which are responsible for the majority of the country's 77 military fatalities there. It was also critical of the reconstruction efforts of the Canadian International Development Agency, which oversees the \$100-million annual aid budget for Afghanistan.

But the key finding was its blunt demand on NATO to find 1,000 additional troops for southern Afghanistan by February 2009 or else Canada would announce its intention to withdraw its 2,500 troops.

Canada has vocally -- although not very successfully -- tried to prod some European partners to send more troops to the volatile south. Manley urged the Conservatives to abandon their "megaphone diplomacy," and for Harper to personally mount a diplomatic offensive behind the scenes.

RISK OF FAILURE

"This can't be seen as just another idle threat. We were asked to look carefully at this mission and we clearly came out believing that the mission itself is worthwhile," Manley told Canwest News. "But there is a risk, a serious risk, of failure unless things happen."

Panel member Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., added: "At a minimum, we think that by setting a hard condition like this, we're increasing the government's leverage ... to try to get us that support."

Manley also said Harper's hands at NATO should not be tied by an unsupportive vote in Parliament, so it should be avoided.

"When our prime minister ... goes into an international forum like a NATO summit where an issue is being discussed on where we have some real interests, it's better not to weaken him before he gets there," Manley said.

Manley's panel received more than 300 submissions and travelled to Afghanistan and NATO headquarters in Brussels, which convinced his commission that some members of the alliance needed to do more.

Canada, he said, is the only country working in southern Afghanistan that is not partnered with another nation, and that must change.

"We left with the impression that many NATO governments were living in a bit of a delusional world and thought they could do no more and the mission would still succeed," Manley explained.

The panel called for a conditional extension of the mission.

While NATO needs to reaffirm its commitment, Harper was urged to strike a cabinet committee, and do a better job of explaining the importance of the deployment to Canadians, without shielding them from the war.

"The prime minister must step up," said Manley. "We don't believe Canadians need sugar-coating on what's going on and that's why we've said the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving."

"We think Canadians are quite prepared to undertake things that are tough, things that are difficult, things that are dangerous, but we've got to give them the facts."

Manley said Canada's efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan cannot be completed by February 2009 and there is no "operational logic" to pulling troops out on that date.

"An immediate withdrawal would "squander our investment and dishonour our sacrifice to date."

Manley made no apologies for the panel's "brutally frank" report, saying Canadians deserve to know the truth.

The report also criticizes the work of CIDA, whose staff are confined to the main NATO base in Kandahar.

"Funding allocations aside, CIDA staffers in Kandahar do not often venture beyond their base -- in part, we are told, because of restrictive regulations maintained by CIDA's headquarters in Ottawa," says the report. "It makes little sense to post brave and talented professional staff to Kandahar, only to restrict them from making regular contact with the people they are expected to help."

More than half of CIDA's spending flows through international bodies, such as the UN or World Bank, while about one-third is funnelled through the Afghan government.

Harper received his copy of the report Tuesday morning and was not planning to comment immediately but said, "our government will thoroughly review the recommendations with cabinet and our caucus before coming forward with our response."

DION URGES DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion reiterated his call the combat mission to end in February 2009, but wants Canada to continue to play a role in Afghanistan.

"We want to be very active on training -- training the Afghan forces, training the police.

"We want to focus on development, we want better governance of this mission."

Manley acknowledged that the Liberal position may be coloured by domestic politics, but suggested his old party should rise above that consideration.

"I know what it's like when you're coming up to an election and (you) need to differentiate your party from another party," he said.

"I just hope that the political actors in this case will acknowledge that when our kids are putting their lives on the line we've got to look at this from a little different perspective than we do any other kind of issue."

NDP Leader Jack Layton stood firm in his party's call for an immediate withdrawal of combat troops, saying the report was "out of touch" with public sentiment.

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said the report "gives Stephen Harper carte blanche to attain his true objective, which is to continue the war

in Afghanistan indefinitely, without a defined period to end it."

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PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canwest News Service / Cpl.Tony Boneca sent thisphoto home to his family in Canada before he was killed in Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: FOREIGN AID; WAR; DRUGS; FARMERS & FARMING; AFGHANISTAN;CANADA
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 451

New report offers a sensible approach to mission in Afghanistan

The panel headed by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley has produced a remarkably sensible approach to a quandary with no clear resolution.

As the panel acknowledges, its report will disappoint Canadians who want to see our combat mission in Afghanistan end in 2009.

But it makes credible arguments for why we should stay, while warning that without more help from other North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations and better equipment from home, our troops might have no choice but to pull back despite the good they are doing.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper should be pleased that the panel he appointed has reinforced two of his key messages on Canada's role in Afghanistan: We are needed; we are making a difference.

But if, as critics have complained, he was expecting the Manley panel to relieve him of Afghanistan as a nasty political issue, he will be disappointed.

The panel lends legitimacy to the position that the sacrifice Canadian soldiers are making in Afghanistan is warranted by the value of the job they are doing. At the same time, it tries to play down expectations that even with a commitment that lasts for another decade, Canadian soldiers and aid agencies will be able to leave a country that bears much resemblance to what we in the West consider to be a modern democracy.

Panel members point out that Afghanistan is beset by tribalism, systemic corruption within the police forces and government, an economy that produces only half the GDP per capita of Haiti, in which the only real bright spot is opium production, and increasingly successful and bloody

attacks by the Taliban.

Progress, both military and economic, is also stymied by the ineffective foreign intervention, it notes.

The NATO forces fighting the Taliban are handicapped by poor leadership and soldiers who have effectively been ordered not to fight.

The Canadian International Development Agency, our lead aid organization, hobbles its field staff and has failed to create "signature projects" that allow Afghans to identify Canada as more than just a military force.

With this report, the Manley panel has handed the government three main challenges.

The first is within its sole purview to accomplish. That is to properly support Canadian troops with appropriate helicopters to limit their exposure to roadside bombs.

Harper can also light a fire under CIDA, to ensure that our money is not only making a difference for ordinary Afghans but is also being effectively used to make friends.

The NATO challenge is more difficult. The panel suggests we have more leverage than we have shown so far in persuading other countries to accept a combat role with a minimum of 1,000 troops helping Canada out in southern Afghanistan by 2009.

Given the response so far to such pressure from Canada, the United States and Great Britain, we're not persuaded that help will be forthcoming from our European partners.

But it is still worth trying. If we fail to persuade other nations to step forward, Canada's commitment will be that much harder to maintain.

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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Andrew Mayeda
SOURCE: Canwest News Service
WORD COUNT: 514

Manley report calls for defining Afghan mission; Panel chairman asks Prime Minister Harper to take a stand while ridiculing Liberals who seek a peace-keeping role for Canada

OTTAWA -- The Manley panel's hard-hitting report on Canada's war in Afghanistan has stepped up pressure on both the Harper government and the Liberals to refine their positions on the mission -- a challenge that neither side was too keen to tackle Tuesday.

But sometime in the next half year or so, those positions must converge if Canadians are to avoid heading to the polls for the third time in four years.

Foreign policy analysts praised the panel for delivering a frank yet sophisticated assessment of the war.

"This report offers the most realistic description in Afghanistan and lucid analysis of the choices facing Canada that we've seen to date," said Roland Paris, director of the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa.

Certainly, panel chairman John Manley pulled few punches Tuesday, urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to "step up" while ridiculing Liberals who seek a peacekeeping role for Canada in Kandahar.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion was sticking to his party's position that Canada must end its combat mission in Kandahar by February 2009, when Canada's commitment to NATO expires.

The party says it is open to Canadian troops remaining in Afghanistan to train Afghan security forces or support development, but the Manley report effectively shoots down that position, noting that training requires some combat responsibilities, and arguing that leaving combat to another nation in Kandahar would be untenable.

The dilemma for Dion is whether to convince his caucus to bridge the considerable distance between the party's current position and Manley's recommendation of an open-ended, albeit refocused, mission. The Liberal leader has already taken flak over his decision to have his members abstain from voting down the throne speech; capitulating on Afghanistan might be too much.

But polls have consistently shown that Canadians are divided on the war, making it a risky issue on which to fight an election, and the Liberals have yet to consistently overtake the Conservatives in popular support.

Nor does Harper seem too eager to discuss the report. The Prime Minister's Office circulated talking points to reporters attacking the Liberals on leadership, but Harper would only say he plans to review it with his caucus and Cabinet. He is expected to comment more extensively in a major speech in Ottawa later this week.

Some analysts believe the government could delay taking a stand on Afghanistan until at least April, when Harper is scheduled to meet in Bucharest with the leaders of other NATO countries. Harper has promised to put any extension of the mission to a vote in Parliament, but in year-end interviews he would only say a vote should happen before the summer.

The opposition will surely pummel Harper in Parliament, which resumes Monday, if he refuses to clarify the government's position. Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe declared Tuesday that he would like to see a vote on Afghanistan before the NATO summit. NDP leader Jack Layton said the report justifies his party's call for an immediate withdrawal.

When Harper appointed the Manley panel this fall, pundits called it a master stroke that defused an explosive issue. Observers were, therefore, surprised Tuesday that the report actually raises questions about Harper's leadership.

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PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ahmad Masood, Reuters / Displaced Afghan childrenstand in the cold in front of an abandoned building where they live in Kabul on Tuesday. Cold weather and heavy snow have killed more than 100 people and more than 35,000 head of cattle across Afghanistan this month. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT;CANADA

DATELINE: OTTAWA

BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield

SOURCE: Canwest News Service

WORD COUNT: 789

Arm-twist NATO: Manley; Harper urged to say we'll end mission if allies fail to add troops

OTTAWA -- John Manley gave Prime Minister Stephen Harper some ammunition Tuesday to take to this spring's crucial summit of NATO allies -- find 1,000 additional troops for Kandahar or face the end of Canada's combat mission sometime after February 2009.

Manley, the former Liberal cabinet minister, and his blue-ribbon panel of experts also threw Harper a lifeline to help him navigate Canada's stormy political waters in coming months: they suggested he postpone a vote in the House of Commons on the future of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan until after the key April meeting of NATO leaders in Romania.

In his report, Manley came out shooting at the Harper Conservatives for trying to sugar-coat the controversial mission, his own party for playing politics, and some "delusional" NATO members in Europe for flirting with a disastrous failure in Afghanistan.

The report was a carefully crafted document aimed at uniting Canada's badly divided Parliament. It gave the Harper Conservatives tools to prod reluctant NATO allies, while offering the Liberals a face-saving way to back away from their insistence on ending combat operations in February 2009.

The report called for the Conservatives to supply much-needed transport helicopters to minimize the dangers to Canadian troops from roadside

bombs in Afghanistan, which are responsible for the majority of the country's 77 military fatalities there. It was also critical of the reconstruction efforts of the Canadian International Development Agency, which oversees the \$100-million annual aid budget for Afghanistan.

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Canada has vocally -- although not very successfully -- tried to prod some European partners to send more troops to the volatile south. Manley urged the Conservatives to abandon their "megaphone diplomacy," and for Harper to personally mount a diplomatic offensive behind the scenes.

"This can't be seen as just another idle threat. We were asked to look carefully at this mission and we clearly came out believing that the mission itself is worthwhile," Manley told Canwest News in an interview. "But there is a risk, a serious risk of failure unless things happen."

Panel member Derek Burney, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., added: "At a minimum, we think that by setting a hard condition like this, we're increasing the government's leverage, particularly at the level of the prime minister, to try to get us that support."

Manley also said Harper's hands at NATO should not be tied by an unsupportive vote in Parliament, so it should be avoided.

"When our prime minister -- he's our prime minister no matter what party we're in -- goes into an international forum like a NATO summit where an issue is being discussed on where we have some real interests, it's better not to weaken him before he gets there," Manley told Canwest.

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Manley's panel called for a conditional extension of the mission.

While NATO needs to reaffirm its commitment, Harper was urged to strike a cabinet committee, and do a better job of explaining the importance of the deployment to Canadians, without shielding them from the realities of war. "The prime minister must step up," said Manley. "We don't believe Canadians need sugar coating on what's going on and that's why we've said the security situation in Kandahar seems to be deteriorating, not improving. . . . We think Canadians are quite prepared to undertake things that are tough, things that are difficult, things that are dangerous, but we've got to give them the facts."

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