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***Canadians Making a
Difference in the World***



AFGHANISTAN

Canada 

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Canadians Making a Difference: Afghanistan

CIDA, Roger Lemoyne



Afghans in a Kabul marketplace.

Afghanistan, one of the world's most impoverished countries, is slowly recovering from decades of war, oppression and, more recently, a devastating drought. A landlocked country in South Asia about the size of Manitoba, Afghanistan is home to a population of approximately 30 million people, slightly less than the Canadian population, who belong to several different ethnic groups and speak two official languages.



Map of Afghanistan.

A Multifaceted Approach

The interests that motivated Canada's initial engagement in Afghanistan have not changed. Our main objective is to help Afghanistan become a secure and self-sufficient democratic state that never again serves as a terrorist haven.



CIDA, Pedram Pirnia

Afghan girls playing in the streets of Kabul.



Inauguration of Canadian Embassy Chancery, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Canada re-established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan in January 2002, following the fall of the Taliban regime. We recently expanded the Canadian Embassy, which first opened in September 2003, in the capital city of Kabul.

Afghanistan is facing numerous challenges, including security sector reform, reducing narcotics

production and trafficking, promoting human rights and gender equality, good governance and economic reconstruction. These are mutually reinforcing and must be addressed simultaneously.

Meeting these challenges involves an integrated and coordinated approach. In leveraging resources and expertise across all levels of government, along with complementary engagement of military and Canadian civilians, Canada plays an active role in assisting the Afghan authorities and Afghan people in stabilizing the country, strengthening governance and reducing poverty.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper shakes hands with Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai, Kabul Afghanistan.

Canada is investing major human and financial resources and contributing significantly to the consolidation of peace and to the improvement of human security:

- Since September 11, 2001, more than 14,000 Canadian Forces members have been deployed to the region;
- Canada has pledged, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), over \$656 million in developmental assistance to Afghanistan from 2001-2009;



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Every spring the arrival of nomadic peoples from across Afghanistan in Qal'eh-ye Moheb, a small village outside of Kabul, causes friction with the residents due to lack of water. Recognizing this issue, the Canadian Forces civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) officers worked with local officials and an Afghan contractor to dig two wells with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).



MCpl Brian Walsh ADWM(PA)/Combat Camera

Then-Lieutenant General Rick Hillier receives the flag of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from General Gerhard Back, NATO's Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces North Europe, on February 9, 2004 when Canada took command of ISAF.

- Supporting the efforts of our embassy in Kabul, an extensive network consisting of over 70 diplomatic officers who regularly work on Afghanistan, both at headquarters and in various missions abroad, lends political support to ensure the strategic coordination of Canadian involvement in Afghanistan.

Stabilizing Afghanistan

The defence commitment began shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, and included the deployment of troops from the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry to the region in support of the international campaign against terrorism. Since then, more than 14,000 Canadian Forces members have been deployed to the region under the auspices of NATO and the UN.

Security means a stable, dependable, organized civilian police force. Canada, through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other civilian and military forces deployed to Afghanistan, has provided training, advice and equipment to help Afghanistan build a more secure and stable country and maintain the rule of law. Some of the projects include the distribution of operational equipment to the Afghan National Police, repairing vehicles and helping to rebuild local police stations. Training includes the provision of instruction on operational policing, firearms safety and traffic control.

The first two phases of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program in Afghanistan were successfully completed on July 7, 2005.



DND/CF

RCMP Cpl. Bob Hart distributes a warm jacket to a member of the Afghan National Police (ANP) to better equip him for winter duties. Clothing distributed to ANP members also helped to give them a more uniform appearance, making them look more professional. Other equipment that was distributed included boots, gloves, reflective vests and flashlights.



Cpl. John Bradley, 3 R22nd R. Bn. Gp

Sergeant Frederic Caron from C Company 3rd Battalion the Royal 22nd Regiment Battalion Group greets some children from a small village during a patrol in the mountains south of Kabul, Afghanistan.

Cpl Robert Bottilli, ADM(PA)/Combat Camera



Members of 1 Combat Engineer Regiment Explosive Ordnance Disposal team prepare munitions for disposal at the Central Demolition Site in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Through CIDA funding, Canada was the second-largest donor to the DDR program. Our embassy played a critical role in shepherding the process.

More than 63,000 ex-combatants and members of the militia have been demobilized and over 35,000 weapons collected. Canada remains committed to the final phase of the process, reintegration, which involves providing ex-combatants with education, training and/or job opportunities.

Security requires the collection and disposal of weapons and ammunition. Canada has played a key role in this process. In addition to providing funding from CIDA, Canada negotiated an agreement authorizing the movement of Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) heavy weapons in the Kabul area to cantonment sites outside the city limits. Heavy weapons collection involves the Afghan Ministry of Defence and ISAF forces.



MCpl Brian Walsh, ADM(PA)/Combat Camera

Artillery pieces from the Afghan Militia Force are loaded aboard a truck in preparation for cantonment outside Kabul.



CIDA

Four Canadian police experts shared their expertise with police officers and chiefs, including women, in Afghanistan. The job was much more difficult than many would have suspected. Team leader Claude Rochon, retired police chief of the Montréal Urban Community Police, said “No one even knows the precise number of police officers in Afghanistan. The Taliban destroyed every document they could find. There were no computers, no police stations, and few officers had uniforms or were paid.”

The Canadian team also included Serge Barbeau, an associate professor at the Université de Montréal; former police officer François Hummell, a retired RCMP officer from Navan, Ontario, with extensive experience in UN peacekeeping; and Tonita Murray, director of the Canadian Police College in Ottawa.

In Afghanistan, they provided advice on how to improve the training of senior officers, how to create routine policing policies and how to recruit women officers.

Courtesy of Dan Kelly



Dan Kelly surveys the Afghan terrain in search of an invisible enemy: millions of buried landmines. He was head of UNMACA at the time. Each landmine he finds and disarms helps to save lives and restore the livelihoods of thousands of Afghan farmers. A former Major in the Canadian Forces, Dan first worked in landmine removal in Cambodia in 1994.

Landmines affect as much as 850 square kilometres of Afghanistan's most fertile valleys. They prevent refugees from going home, keep farmers from returning to the fields, and even hinder children attending school. Through the United Nations Mine Action Centre in Afghanistan (UNMACA), Canada is one of the lead donors for mine action, which includes mine clearance, mine risk education, and rehabilitation of victims — a

prerequisite for resuming economic and social life in contaminated areas. Canada is also the lead nation in a project to collect and destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines and unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition.

Security also requires ending opium cultivation and drug trafficking. Through the Counter Narcotics Capacity Building project in Afghanistan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Canada supports the efforts of the Afghan government to strengthen its capacity to curtail trafficking. Key legal professionals such as judges, prosecutors and investigators receive specialized training. In addition, courthouses and detention centres are being repaired or built to provide the physical infrastructure required to detain and try alleged drug offenders. Through CIDA, Canada also supports a number of initiatives to help Afghan farmers sustain their families, while giving up the illegal cultivation of poppies. These initiatives assist in the development of alternative livelihoods through rural infrastructure, assistance with better agricultural practices and crop diversification.

In late fall 2005, Canadian military operations shifted from Kabul to the region of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. Canada also deployed an approximately 2200-member task force that includes a Canadian-led Multinational Brigade and a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). The PRT brings together Canadian Forces personnel, civilian police, diplomats and development officials in an integrated effort to assist Afghanistan in the stabilization and reconstruction of the Kandahar region.



Col Robert Bottrill, ADIM(PA)/Combat Camera

The Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation meets during a professional development day on UN humanitarian demining.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper with Brigadier-General David Fraser, Commander of the Canadian-led Multi-National Brigade for Regional Command South in Afghanistan.

The Canadian Forces carry out civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) projects that fall into two categories: building relationships of trust with the international community and Afghan government administrators, and using CIMIC funds to allow Afghan nationals to carry out small-scale projects. CIMIC creates connections and trust between the military and the residents of Afghanistan. CIMIC teams also typically hold regular meetings with city officials, the police, and international agencies.

Strengthening Afghan Governance

Building democratic institutions is crucial to long-term security, stability and prosperity. In 2004, Afghanistan adopted a new constitution that protects human rights, which was developed by an Afghan Grand Council (the Loya Jirga).



FAC, Eileen Oteuxuk

Just over eight million Afghans voted in the first-ever presidential election on October 9, 2004. Forty percent of these voters were women.



CIDA

With a snowplough and a ballot box, Calgary's Chris McGeough – a UN field worker – helped register people for the 2004 election. "Just the fact of starting voter registration created a stir in town," he said. "The effort to bring about change is enough to give people hope."

Since 2001, Canada has contributed over \$33 million to help the democratic process in Afghanistan. Canada fully supported the presidential election in the fall of 2004 as well as parliamentary and provincial elections in September 2005. More than 12 million Afghans – many times the expected number – registered to vote in these successive elections. In December 2005, the Afghan parliament sat for the first time in over 30 years, giving Afghans a voice and laying the foundation for a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.



Loya Jirga, October 2004

After weeks of deliberation, a Constitutional Loya Jirga of 502 delegates (including 114 women) from across the country approved Afghanistan's new Constitution establishing the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" and deciding on a presidential system rooted in Islam. (October 2004)

As part of our commitment to Afghanistan's democratic process, Canada supported civic education and screening at polling stations and voter registration. We also assisted in monitoring the vote and providing security.

Recognizing that a democratic and vibrant civil society requires independent news media, Canada has helped Afghanistan develop legislation to protect its media and has offered special training in elections coverage. Canadians have also helped train women journalists who have set up independent radio stations.



CIDA, Pedram Pirnia

Jaime Little, a CBC North reporter in Yellowknife, travelled halfway around the world to teach Afghan women radio broadcasting and help them regain their voice – not just in the marketplace or at school, but on the air. “They learn so fast,” she said. “Some of them have never seen a microphone before, yet they’re already producing complex reports on extremely challenging subjects. It’s astounding and humbling.”

Reducing poverty

Development, good governance and security are intrinsically linked. Canada's development commitment to Afghanistan began during the 1980s.

A Place to Work

Canada is the lead donor to the Micro-finance Investment and Support Facility of Afghanistan (MISFA), a microfinance program that is helping small-scale entrepreneurs, particularly women, work their way out of poverty through the establishment of small businesses.



CIDA

This Afghan widow received a small loan to purchase her store. She is helping other Afghan widows to launch their own small businesses.



CIDA

Dr. Iqbal Kermali, an agriculture specialist from Canada, has helped 100,000 farmers in 180 villages take major steps from food aid to food sufficiency. "Food aid kept the people alive through the difficult years," he said. "Now incomes have risen, malnutrition is on the way out, and the survival rate of children is increasing."

Helping Rural Afghans

The majority of Afghanistan's population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture for survival. Through the National Solidarity Program and the National Area-Based Development Program, Canada has helped hundreds of thousands of rural Afghans with rural infrastructure, reintegration of refugees and demobilization of ex-combatants, community governance, sustainable employment and other initiatives to help them to take charge of their own future.

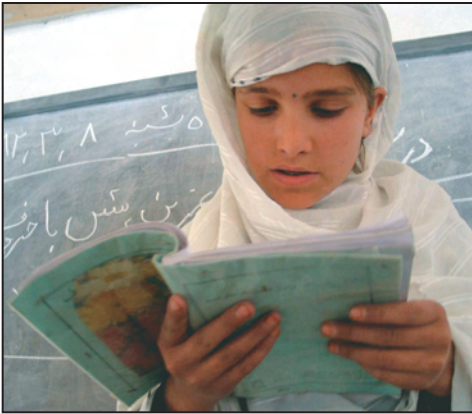
Education Spells Hope for the Future

Canadian Susan Bellan, founder of Breaking Bread for Women, is working to bring hope to an entire generation of women who are illiterate as a result of successive regimes that denied them basic rights and freedoms. During five years of Taliban rule, girls were forbidden to go to school.



CIDA

This education resource centre in Kabul is having trouble meeting the intense demand. Classes are held anywhere there's space: on the floors and even in the basement. These young women are eager and motivated to learn.



CIDA, Pedram Pirnia

Although in her late teens, this young woman is only now able to complete primary school. She attends a makeshift school set up in a basement where, along with lessons in basic literacy, she learns about her rights granted by the new constitution.

Now that Afghanistan has embarked upon a path towards greater stability and democracy, many women are seeking the education they need to improve their own lives. Since 2002, Breaking Bread for Women has held more than 355 potluck gatherings in almost every province in Canada and raised \$425,000 to support Afghan teachers and establish literacy programs for women.

The combined efforts of the international community are making a difference. Today, 4.8 million Afghan children – nearly one third of them girls – are back in school.



Courtesy of Sgt. Najillis

Sergeant Mariangeles Najillis, who deployed to Kabul as part of the Canadian Forces CIMIC platoon, led a project to transform the site of the Taliban's last battle in Kabul into a school for more than 1,000 children. "It's quite symbolic," she said. "A military building surrounded by gravestones will be a centre for learning."

Making a Difference

Through an integrated approach, Canadians are truly making a difference in Afghanistan. Indeed, the situation in Afghanistan remains fragile. By enhancing its role in Afghanistan, particularly in the south, Canada is helping security and stability spread throughout the country. We believe that all citizens deserve to live in peace and prosperity, free from fear and violence.

The adoption of a constitution and the staging of presidential, parliamentary and provincial election are impressive gains that demonstrate the determination of the Afghan people. These are Afghan success stories in which Canada can also take pride as a major donor in support of security and development.



Cpl John Bradley, 3 R22nd Bn Gp

Sergeant Gaétan Cyr interacts with school children from the Omara Khan School in Kabul.

Kabul: A bustling capital city

While the destruction of civil war is still evident in Kabul, there are also signs that the city is growing quickly, with tall modern buildings rising from bustling bazaars. Streets are filled with buses, taxis, cars, oxen-pulled carts and people, all competing for space on the crowded laneways. Music mixes with the blaring horns as radios come on at 7 a.m. and stay on well into the night. Commerce is alive and well, with shops selling an astonishing array of goods.

Bird Street is aptly named for its wares, while Chicken Street sells much more than chickens! At Shahre Naw Park, people are playing volleyball and cricket, soaking up the sun, and chatting.

These are all signs of a new calm and hope that has been restored to the city.

For more information on the Government of Canada's programs and services supporting Canada's international efforts, including the re-building and stabilization of Afghanistan, visit

www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca

or call

1-800-0-CANADA (1-800-622-6232)

If you use a TTY, call

1-800-926-9105