

For the Next Dead Canadian

Written by

Sunday, 02 April 2006 02:08 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 April 2006 02:08

For the Next Dead Canadian

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - For the next dead Canadian's benefit, or at least the family of said: This needn't have happened. Yes, you may wish to believe in the script written by the war-makers, and uttered already too many times: Your loved-one died "doing the right thing." But, it's untrue. It is not the "right thing" to waste life for the furtherance of the aims of twisted ideology. Today, or maybe tomorrow, or the next day, news will filter home of another tragic wasting of sacred Life in Afghanistan; what follows is a chronicle, a time-line of the mechanations leading to that sorry end.

www.PEJ.org For the Next Dead Canadian

C. L. Cook

PEJ News

April 2, 2006

Inexorable War Creep: Canada Another Step into the Breach

Canada's pretence to non-alignment, or at least nothing more than a loose affiliation, with Bush administration ambitions of global energy domination lost another veil with Bill Graham's announcement of a Canadian troop deployment to the oilfields of Darfur. [-{lex}](#)

[http://www.listentome.net/
evil/bush_mad.jpg](http://www.listentome.net/evil/bush_mad.jpg)

Inexorable War Creep
C. L. Cook
May 9th, 2005

[http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/
department/pr_2003/site/images/bill.gif](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/department/pr_2003/site/images/bill.gif)

PEJ News - There's been thunder and bluster coming from the Tory benches for more than a year demanding the humanitarian situation in

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Darfur requires an immediate military response. The risk we take in waiting, they insist, is another Rwanda in Sudan. But that logic begs belief in the necessity to spend Canadian lives and taxes to avoid *the possible* repeat of an event they didn't care about when actually happening in Rwanda.

Saving black African lives has never been a priority here, not among the men making policy. Who cares today about Congo, where nearly ten times as many have died as have in the tragic Sudan, and continue to do so? No, the real tragedy of Darfur is its unfortunate proximity to a great black sea of oil. As in other theatres of the grand global turmoil: Iraq; Colombia; Venezuela; it's oil putting Sudan in the octopus' sights. The humanitarian disaster is simply side-show, another Kosovo.

Canada's tentacles do great agency to the Bush administration's great work: Canadian troops engaged in the illegal war and regime change in Afghanistan. [Canadian war ships, under U.S. command](#) running search and seizure patrols in the Persian Gulf, federal police and Canadian military aiding an illegal and brutal regime in Haiti, a regime [Canadian machinations](#) helped implace. Yugoslavia, Somalia and now Darfur; it would be just another sad and too typical foreign policy story. Canadians have endured these past years, but there's more to Darfur than meets the media eye. Because, there's more than one monster lurking in the tar.

Both [China and India](#) haven't rested on their sweatshop laurels. The two most rapidly growing economies in the world have been going abroad, investing, greasing palms, doing the ugly deeds need done to cut deals. China has been especially industrious, [securing much of coveted Darfur](#), and they're determined to keep it. With the "Stans" gone Uncle Sam's way for now, China has to make a play in Africa. They've supported the government there with equipment and, depending on the source, some thousands of Chinese troops. Are Canadians really up for the Red Army? Is the final gambit in the great game a WWIV scenario over control of Africa's oil and minerals?

Clearly there is a humanitarian crisis in Darfur, but it has little to do with the story being peddled to "justify" another bloodbath for oil and reconstruction contracts. The infamous [dastards this time are the Janjawid](#), an "anti-government militia" much in the style of [Colombia's AUC](#); they are conveniently classified as enemies, while being used to do the government's dirtiest work. In this case, as in the wilds of Colombia, their job is to clear the indigenous from the riches they happen to reside atop. Meanwhile the [emperors' agents](#) have the ears and balls of the "rogue" leadership firmly in hand. It's a crisis, but not without a calculated cause.

Judging by ongoing [Canadian interventions](#) around the world, is it reasonable to expect positive results from a Canadian-style operation?

Afghanistan is still a disaster three and half years after their liberation. Haiti worsens by the day; Iraq and the Persian Gulf boil hotter now than ever, and Central America is poised on a hair's edge, Castro and Chavez calling militias to readiness.

And now, Canada is to sally 150 hapless souls into the emperors' breach. Just the first of more hundreds of handfuls of fodder to feed the indefatigable maw of war?

And barely a murmur. The great opposition to our collective march into the 19th century coming from Ottawa is a political slingshot sent at Minister Graham, purporting his announced intentions are merely a move to [appease a disaffected defector](#) of the Liberal party.

Like the Gomery hullaboo, it's a stain on a blue dress to keep the "dogs of the press" busy while Martin dons the steel.

Afghanistan: Canada's Iraq?

PEJ News: Defence Minister, Bill Graham says the plan to re-deploy Canadian operations currently in and around the northern capital city of Kabul are to go ahead. He also announced, an [additional 1250 troops](#) by early next year. [-flex} nbsp;](#)

Afghanistan: Canada's Iraq?

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C. L. Cook
May 22, 2005

Last week, in a speech to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, [National Defence Minister Graham](#) reiterated how Canada will face its "new" role in global military affairs. He cited the completion of a new [Defence Policy Statement](#) and its central document, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*.

According to Graham, that pride and influence will be expanded in Afghanistan first, then on to other "failed and failing states" around the globe. How those "failed and failing" will be chosen, or by whom, was left unsaid, but the minister did make it clear, Canada will move towards a "more sophisticated" operational integration with the U.S. military. Presumably, enhanced sophistication isn't necessary on the [diplomatic front](#).

Graham informed the assembled worthies, Canada recognizes, "security at home often begins with security abroad," adding the [new policy means](#) his government will be "enhancing Canada's contribution to global security and peace building." The new direction is, in Graham's view, "informed by the rich operational experience of the Canadian Forces, both in Canada and locations ranging from Afghanistan to the Balkans, [to Haiti](#)"

That that "rich operational experience" includes the [death and maiming of Canadian soldiers](#), as in Afghanistan; providing assistance to murderous thugs in the overthrow of a democratically elected government in Haiti; allowing the world's fastest growing human trafficking region in the Balkans; uselessly witnessing the explosion of [heroin production](#), again in Afghanistan, and the of course, Somalia; or Rwanda. Minister Graham will excuse a lack of enthusiasm for his proudly announced new initiatives.

Never mind the more than \$600 million cdn price tag for Afghanistan alone that comes with Mr. Graham's new found muscularity. Never mind that what the minister and his government recognize as splendid achievements are less charitably described in the countries where his largesse is experienced. The problem with Mr. Bill Graham's *Role of Pride and Influence in the World* is the precise diminishment of Canada and Canadians it will bring. Unleashing well-heeled [GO's like CIDA](#) in accompaniment with military logistic support, ala the U.S.A., will undoubtedly put Canada in the sights of the very terror groups he so sonorously warns against. But, there is a more immediate problem with Graham's thinking: Afghanistan. N

After four years of occupation, the coalition occupiers have little "influence" beyond the city limits of Kabul. Hamid Karzai is in Washington, D.C. at this very hour, readying to break the news to George Bush. But Bush's knows this. His pre-emptive jab at Karzai for allowing the heroin trade to flourish, designed to take some of the steam out of [Karzai's "demands"](#) that justice be brought against American soldiers involved in Afghanistan's Abu Ghraib-like abuses against prisoners at [S. air-base/detention centre Bagram](#) in [U.](#), tacitly acknowledges as much. Now, Bill Graham will preside over the relocation of the Canadians from their secure base, Camp Julien, to the south and west of the country, both areas seeing a resurgence of [Taliban rebel activity](#); activity bearing more resemblance to Baghdad than the relatively calm Kabul.

Though Graham may like to believe all's well in Afghanistan, and Haiti for that matter, due to Canada's foreign adventurism, the fact is: things are not rosy in Afghanistan, and they're poised to get worse. Canadians are being marched into the mouth of the lion, while the pied Bill Graham pipes merrily away.

Chris Cook hosts [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. He also serves as a contributing editor to PEJ.org. You can check out his [blog here](#).

Addendum: M25-- Now too, I hear, the Israeli Defense Force will send pilots to "train" Canada's pilots to better bomb cities.-- *Proud and Influentially yours - ape*

[Into the Mouth of the Lion: More Canadian Troops for Afghanistan](#)

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - Overshadowed in the media by events in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan worsens by the day. Yesterday, a U.S. helicopter ferrying in Navy SEALs reinforcements was downed, with all 17 aboard missing and feared dead. Also yesterday, Canada began sending a new contingent made up of soldiers, RCMP, and Foreign Affairs officials to establish a base near Kandahar.

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<http://gorillaradioblog.blogspot.com>

[Into the Mouth of the Lion](#)

C. L. Cook
PEJ News

June 29, 2005 - In mid-May, Canada's Defence Minister, Bill Graham announced a historic new foreign policy direction and the role to be played by Canadian Forces to implement it. Speaking to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, [Minister Graham reiterated](#) how Canada will face its "new" role in global military affairs. He cited the completion of a new [Defence Policy Statement](#) and its central document, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*.
What this pride means in essence is Canada becoming more "muscular" in its prosecution of the 'War on Terror.'

It's a new direction George Bush and America's stretched military must appreciate, even if most Canadians don't. It means the freeing up of U.S. military resources for deployment in Iraq, or elsewhere in the Middle East, possibly leading to the U.S. Army's eventual departure from Afghanistan. At a time when [attacks are increasing sharply](#) and ISAF casualties following suit, the prospect of another force sharing garrison duties, and the more perilous search and destroy missions, is the only good news the U.S. military in Afghanistan has received lately.

Just yesterday, [17 more Americans](#), most from the elite Navy SEALs, were downed, purportedly by a Taliban rocket. The 17 are currently listed as "missing in action."

Though Canadian troops have been in Afghanistan for years, until now they have been operating out of Camp Julien, near Kabul in the north of the country. [According to David Rudd](#), of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, deploying to Kunar province is "significantly" more dangerous for troops. He says, "The potential for casualties is much more in the south than in Kabul." Adding: "Kandahar is the wild west compared to Kabul."

The redeployment of Canadians from the relative safety and stability of Kabul to Kandahar, seat of power for the former Taliban rulers of Afghanistan and reputed locus of al Qaida, is just one part of Canada's new role in the world, as elucidated by Mr. Graham in his speech to the Standing Committees.

On the occasion of his address, Graham informed the assembled worthies, Canada recognizes, "security at home often begins with security abroad," adding the [new policy means](#) his government will be "enhancing Canada's contribution to global security and peace building."

This new direction is, in Graham's view, "informed by the rich operational experience of the Canadian Forces, both in Canada and locations ranging from Afghanistan to the Balkans, [to Haiti](#)". The irony of this statement seems entirely lost on Graham.

It's an irony apparently lost for the Canadian public too, that while America's citizens are increasingly turning away from the war and the attitudes that spawned it, Canada, who refused overt involvement in the war in Iraq, is now moving in the opposite direction.

In an echo of expectations expressed by Rumsfeld prior to Iraq, Graham and Foreign Affairs seem convinced the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams mission will be well received by a local population in the south currently schooling themselves on Iraq's "Occupation for Dummies.'

So far, Canadian troops have been lucky, the only deaths reported being those killed in 'friendly fire' by an American Reserve pilot, and two others killed by a suicide bomber, but now Minister Graham is committing to a greater, and more dangerous role for Canada that seems bound to see further Canadians coming home in 'transit tubes.'

Chris Cook hosts Gorilla Radio, broad/webcast from the [University of Victoria](#), Canada. He also serves as a contributing editor at PEJ.org. You can check out the [GR Blog here](#).

[\[Update: Today \(June 30\) 16 bodies were recovered from the crash site in Kunar province. The U.S. military had originally said there were 17 on board the ill-fated flight, but later revised that figure. Among the dead are reported 8 Navy SEALs and 8 flight crew. It's still unclear how the helicopter was brought down, with Taliban press releases claiming a "new weapon" was used, and the U.S. military speculating a "lucky" shot by a Rocket Propelled Grenade.\]](#)

[\[Further developments: The violence in Afghanistan continues to escalate, promising a second front for America's War on Terror.\]](#)

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Two Americans, Two Americas

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - Two National Football League stars walk away from the game at the height of their lucrative careers for reasons that illustrate the divide in today's America.

www.PEJ.org

Two Americans, Two Americas

C. L. Cook

PEJ News
Dec. 5th 2004

Red Team, Blue Team

There's been much written, in the wake of the recent U.S. elections, of the split in the American political psyche. Some have extrapolated this division to the spiritual sphere, making of it a struggle to find the soul of the nation. The twin tales of the departure from the NFL of star players, Pat Tillman and Ricky Williams serve as analogues of a nation seeking its identity.

Pat Tillman came from a military family. After the 9/11 attacks against America, he began to view football as irrelevant in the broader scope of the nation's affairs. He and his brother, Kevin, a former football professional himself, joined the elite Army Rangers because, in Pat's words:

"A lot of my family has gone and fought wars, and I really haven't done a damn thing."

The brothers were assigned to the same unit, and initially sent to Iraq, before a subsequent transfer to Afghanistan. On April 22nd, 2004, they were ambushed while on patrol and Pat Tillman was killed.

The army was quick to award Tillman the Silver Star, and released a glowing account of the fatal encounter and Pat's heroism that would later prove to be mostly fiction. The truth was: Tillman's death was the culmination of a series of incompetent decisions made by superiors along the chain of command, compounded by equipment failure. Ultimately, he was killed by "friendly-fire," or in civilian terms, shot by his own side.

Some on the anti-war, anti-empire side of the American bifurcation used the lies told by the Pentagon, and the media's shameless jingoistic lionization of Tillman, to impugn his character and the accounts of his courage under fire, (completely untrue), while others went so far as to question the intelligence of the man who swallowed the Bush line on the "War on Terror" whole and ultimately died for a lie (less completely untrue).

Tillman believed he was serving the interests of his country, but he was no dummy. He graduated summa cum laude from Arizona State, while playing football, in less than four years. His friends say he was a voracious reader, and loved to discuss conspiracy theories. Whether he had come to doubt Washington's veracity, or entertain the greatest conspiracy theory of them all before the end, is an open question.

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Ricky Williams was a Heissman Trophy-winning star Running Back for the Miami Dolphins making millions a year, and on pace to break every record in the book. Then he decided to walk away. He'd been troublesome for the Dolphins, failing numerous drug tests for marijuana, and facing fines and suspension from the league. His drug use hadn't always been a problem for the NFL, though.

While recovering from an injury, doctors (and drugs-making giant Glaxo SmithKline) convinced Williams his aversion to crowds of autograph seekers was due to a condition they called, "social anxiety disorder," or (SAD). He was quickly signed on as a "celebrity patient" for Glaxo's new miracle cure for shyness, Paxil, and began making the media rounds promoting the anti-depressant. But the drug didn't sit well with Williams, so he gave it up in favour of weed.

He wasn't shy about the benefits of leaf, saying it was "ten times better than Paxil," and should be made legal. The NFL didn't agree.

Just weeks before the 2004 season began, still facing fines and censure, Ricky Williams walked, saying:

"I've realized, both on a psychological and physical level, that the things we do in football don't bring more harmony to your life. They just bring more disharmony."

Since his departure, Williams has gone on a world-wide odyssey, travelling through Asia, Europe, Australia, and finally home to California, in an effort to find his own path. He's gone vegan, enrolled in a course teaching the ancient Indian holistic medicinal practice, Ayurveda, and, though faced with law suits from the league and savage attacks by the press, says he's never been happier. At his now defunct website, RunRickyRun.com, he wrote:

"I wish athletes today could have the same impact on social reform as they did when he [Jim Brown] was playing. When the likes of Ali, Malcolm X and Jim Brown all sat in the same room and discussed their views on America. Nowadays, it seems all some of us are interested in is how much money we can make. I love playing football, and I love making money, but I am starting to realize that those aren't the only reasons God has given me so much talent."

Out of the game for good, Williams won't have the soap-box of professional sport to effect the kind of change he had envisioned, but his Ricky Williams Foundation continues to raise money to educate under-privileged kids in America.

We'll never know what positive contributions Pat Tillman could have made to his country.

Both these Americans, bright, driven, independent, and courageous will fade from the national consciousness, but together they represent the deep divisions of that country in a time when the need for existential soul-searching has never been more relevant.

Chris Cook serves as a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#) . He also produces and hosts the public affairs program, [Gorilla Radio](#) , heard weekly on CFUV Radio, University of Victoria, Canada. You can check out the [GR Blog here](#).

Annotations:

Run Ricky Run: Football, Pot, and Pain

Fred Gardner

Counterpunch.org

Aug. 7/8, 2004

<http://www.counterpunch.org/gardner08072004.html>

Ricky Williams at Holistic Medicine School

Associated Press

Nov. 24th, 2004

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<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6562580/>

In the Kill Zone: The Unnecessary Death of Pat Tillman
Steve Coll
The Washington Post
Dec. 5th, 2004
http://www.truthout.org/docs_04/120604Y.shtml

Pat Tillman and Ricky Williams
Dec., 5th, 2004
Mickey Z.
<http://www.mickeyz.net>

The Runaway
Chris Jones
Esquire Magazine
Dec. 2004 Volume 142, Issue 6
http://www.esquire.com/features/articles/2004/041104_mfe_ricky.html

Former Dolphin Star Goes for Ayurvedic Medicine
<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/sports/football/pro/dolphins/sfl-rickyphgal04,0,5297408.photogallery?coll=sfla-dolphins-front>

Canadians Too Thick to Support Afghanistan Mission: Defence Minister

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - By way of getting to know his new subjects, freshly minted Conservative Defence Minister, [Gordon O'Connor](#) summed up what he sees as his greatest challenge: How to get through to the sixty-two percent of Canadians who don't believe the country should be involved with the worsening occupation of Afghanistan.

http://pm.gc.ca/grfx/ministry/oconnor_s.jpg

"The population out there doesn't really understand right now why we're there and what we're doing. You have to say the thing five, six, seven, eight times before it really gets through to a large number of people." - Defence Minister O'Connor instructs the foreign press.

Canadians Too Thick to Support Afghanistan Mission: Defence Minister

C. L. Cook

PEJ News
February 25, 2006

A Globe and Mail/ Strategic Counsel poll published yesterday ([G&B, Fri. Feb. 24, 2006](#)) pronounced, 'Majority Opposed to Afghan Mission.' As the Canadian Forces prepare to pick up the mantle of the NATO mission in-country this week, and as the nation expands its fifth year of picket duty for Afghanistan's effective occupation, a bewildered Defence Minister can merely shake his head. Or, so Gordon O'Connor would have it.

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With his bum barely in the chair at the head of Canada's armed forces, rookie Cabinet Minister [O'Connor is holding forth to the world's press](#), complaining of the dumb asses, in the form of the majority of Canadians polled, he has to deal with. More amazing perhaps to O'Connor is the desire of an even greater number of Canadians asked that demands be made of Parliament to debate war issues before committing troops, a novel notion sure to displease the Freshman Tories.

But, put on the spot, O'Connor bleats:

"Our policy is that, in future, if we're committing troops somewhere in substantial numbers we would go to Parliament and we'd basically seek the support of Parliament."

But, that future is happening fast. It's a miracle no more than eight unfortunate Canadians have seen their futures end in Afghanistan to date. If not for the professionalism of the Canadian military, and a deployment in the relatively calmer capital region, the only place effectively ruled by the Karzai government put into power, it would be much worse.

But, it's about to get worse. And, [Saturday's wounding of a Canadian](#) in a grenade attack near Kandahar is evidence of that.

For those Canucks too stupid to fail to support Minister O'Connor, or to see the gathering cloud, and what it is likely to mean for Canadian families from Victoria to Saint John, prepare for terrible news: Canada is taking over in the heart of the Taliban-led resistance.

So, what makes Afghanistan worth it? Yes, Gordon do tell we, your dimmer fellow citizens: Why is Canada occupying a nation shattered in an illegal blitzkrieg, employing nuclear weapons of mass destruction, all carried out in the name of avenging the alleged perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks of 2001. Explain now please, what your party failed as the official opposition to mention.

Why Gordie, after four and more years of trying to teach the Afghans the glory of our superior ways, are the locals lobbing grenades and firing AKs' at "our" boys and girls?

And what about the suicide bombers? Are they ingrates? Or maybe too dumb to know what's good for them, too? Tell us do, Mr. Minister. But, speak slowly please, we're Canadian.

O'Connor's dismissive opinion of the mental alacrity of the citizenry is an attitude shared by Canada's number one military man, General Rick Hillier, as witnessed by his gape-jawed statement of wonderment:

"Many Canadians do not know or understand the complexities of what the Afghan mission is about, why we are there, and its importance, its critical importance to Canada."

Those not yet brain-dead denizens of the Great White North may recall [Hillier as the author](#) of Canada's answer to George W. Bush's famous "Bring 'em on" performance regarding that other bunch of recalcitrant converts in Iraq. Clever tactical move, General. Original too. For more on Hillier, please see [Justin Podur's piece](#), posted at KillingTrain.com.

With the exception of some sorrowfully late complaint by the NDP regarding the need to hold open parliamentary debate concerning matters of war in Canada, the house has sat largely silent on the Afghanistan "mission" through two elections. Despite wide-spread rejection of the official line doled over by the Liberals and now reiterated by their superior heirs, Canada and Canadians are being frog marched into George Bush's vision of global militarism.

Maybe O'Connor is right: Canadians just don't understand.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#), and hosts [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. You can check out the [GR Blog here](#).

[Afghanistan: What Does it Serve Canada?](#)

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - Five Canadians were injured, one ["seriously,"](#) today when their convoy was struck by a suicide attacker driving a bomb-laden car outside Kandahar, Afghanistan. The incident comes as Prime Minister Stephen Harper engages in an increasingly vitriolic Ottawa shooting match over the legitimacy of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' and only days after the [death of Corporal Paul Davis](#) in an auto accident. Davis was the second Canadian killed in the Kandahar redeployment. Nine Canadians have been reported killed in Afghanistan since 2001, four of those in the infamous "friendly fire" U.S. bombing of an active target range.

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Afghanistan:
What Does it Serve Canada?

C. L. Cook

PEJ News
March 3, 2006

Just a year ago, while holding the Defence portfolio, the now nominal leader of the Liberal party, Bill Graham went on a [ghoulish public relations tour](#), warning every rubber-chicken devotee who would listen about the coming Canadian casualties. The effort seemingly designed to "soften up" a public already dubious of Afghanistan. That unease was magnified today by Canadian Forces honcho, [Rick Hillier](#) who says Canada could expect to be in Afghanistan for [at least a decade](#), or more. Hillier is the shoot from the lip General who marked his arrival on the Aghan scene last year, talking [tough as George W.](#) "Bring 'em on!" Bush, who last week lamented in the national press the too-dumb public's failure to grasp the vital importance impoverished, distant, hopeless Afghanistan poses Canada, and why a "decade, or more" military occupation is its duty.

This past week, Stephen [Harper too sputtered](#) across the front pages, outraged that "any Canadian" would challenge the country's commitment to "its men and women in uniform, etcetera ..." That commitment has deepened with Canada's leadership ascension of Nato's ISAF mission in the Kunar, centre of Taliban activity. Until recently, Canadians had it relatively easy, based at Camp Julien, outside the capital, Kabul. But, that all ended last year, when Defence Minister Graham, addressing [another banqueting gaggle of camp followers](#), pronounced Canada's improved military, apparently equipped with a spanking new set of marching orders; orders bearing an unmistakable echo.

What Graham outlined, and Stephen Harper is executing, is [the end of Canada's "traditional" Peacekeeping role](#). Today, Nato, not the UN is where Canada's foreign "commitments" are drawn up. Brussels, not Ottawa decides where, when, and how many of Canada's soldiers will take the field. As for why, it depends on who you listen to. But, the most scarifying question, a query naturally left untended by the ["mum's the word" media](#), is the question gnawing at the conscience of, according to a Globe & Mail poll, at least 62% of Canadians is: "What?"

Just what will Canada be doing?

Will it look like what America is doing in Iraq? Or, will it look like what Israel is doing in Palestine? Will it look like Gaza? Groszny? Llassa. Or, perhaps it will be another [Port-au-Prince](#), with countless Somalia-like instances of random torture and murder thrown in.

[Yes. Port-au-Prince where blue-helmets kick in the doors](#) of the poor, pouring hundreds of rounds of automatic rifle fire, and a shock grenade, or two into and through where the tarpaper-shacked populace cowers in terror sounds more the future of Canada's Afghanistan Mission. Besides the ludicrous notion Afghanistan bears any threat to the security of Canada; and, ignoring the situation, worsening after four years of liberation from the despotic religious zeal of the Taliban regime, is committing thousands of soldiers for years sound reasoning?

Can history teach us anything?

Following the aerial destruction of Afghanistan's military and infrastructure, the infantry started collecting prisoners. Thousands were bagged

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and tagged in the manner now made familiar through Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and the long list of other chambers of horror located, seemingly, everywhere. The least fortunate we know of being those finding themselves at Shebarghan Prison. Thousands of men, rounded up in village sweeps by U.S. forces, were sent on a [death journey](#) across the wastes of Afghanistan, crammed into unventilated semi-trailers.

Three thousand souls now inhabit shallow graves in the desert beyond Shebarghan, a crime left largely unaddressed yet. And, now in the news, revelations Bagram Airbase still hosts facilities at least as gruesome as those in Guantanamo, or Iraq. Kandahar, now under titular Canadian control, too has an airbase, and attendant prison/torture centre. Will Canada, a willing supplier of prison/torture fodder until now, also oversee the America's prison methodology?

Shall Canadians become further mired with a demented president bent on a program the scope of which even the bravest dread mention? How long before Canadians serve picket duty in Iraq, or Iran?

George W. Bush is even now busy lighting fires. He's today reported in Pakistan, following his jaunt to India, where he pledged U.S. nuclear technology. Something of more than passing interest to bitter India foe, Pakistan, and regional rival, China. Some analysts warn this is a move promising a renewed nuclear arms race. Bush's stop in India brought hundreds of thousands in protest. In Pakistan there was a suicide bombing attack that killed a high-ranking American diplomat, and three others.

Canada's facade of independence is now its only hope of side-stepping the American march to self-destruction. When America falls, Canada will too be economically wounded, but how much worse for the nation should it now abandon its soul to only forestall the inevitable American demise?

The Canadian rabble is finally rousing to Afghanistan, as reflected in some major media. The country's most influential newspaper, The Toronto-based, Globe & Mail, picked up the gauntlet last week, promising to run a "talking to Canadians" campaign to gauge public opinion. A campaign they maintain necessary due to Parliament's failure to adequately debate the issue.

In the meanwhile, Canadians are at grave risk, and as Minister Graham told all who'd listen last Spring:

It's to be expected.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#) and host [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. His writings are also featured at Chris Floyd's [E](#)

[mpire Burlesque](#)

. You can check out the

[GR Blog here](#)

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You can contact the author at: pej.info.ca

Navigating Afghanistan's Propaganda Minefields

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - An e:mail press release from no less an august body than the irreproachable Canadian Landmine Foundation found its way recently into my in-box, informing: "Canadians Support Canada's Commitment to Afghanistan." Being a Canadian singularly unsupportive of Canada's support of an immoral and illegal invasion and occupation of a once-sovereign nation, I was anxious to discover what changed "my" mind.

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Navigating Afghanistan's
Propaganda Minefields

C. L. Cook

PEJ News

March 9, 2006

On its face, the Canadian Landmine Foundation is the perfect example of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) doing good in the world. Who could argue with the cause of the saintly Lady Diana (RIP), or its mission statement: "to raise awareness and funds to end the human and economic suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines," after all?

Queer then the CLF would join the Public Relations battle currently being waged for the hearts and minds of Canadians regarding an always unpopular decision by the former Liberal government to send Canadian soldiers, reconstruction, and civil infrastructure specialists on an open-ended mission to Afghanistan - unpopular not because Canadians don't care about the deprivation of those necessities suffered by the people of Afghanistan, but more due to how those deprivations came about - to many of the "Canadians" scooped wholesale into the CLF's news release headline, Canada's military deployment, *an incumbent requirement for any humanitarian effort*, served to legitimize the ruthless and bloody senseless American aerial annihilation of what little infrastructure remained in war-torn, Taliban Afghanistan on September 10th, 2001.

Queer until you probe the groundcover.

The CLF is an affiliate of the larger [Adopt-A-Minefield organization](#). The AMA is, as cited on the CLF website: "an initiative of the Canadian Landmine Foundation in partnership with the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) and the Better World Fund (BWF)." Those affiliated with the CLF's affiliate are not largely the group of peaceniks one might expect. They include: spookworld notables from perennial conspiracy theorist favourite, the Council on Foreign Relations; State Department officials; ex-diplomats; Reaganites; and oily businessmen of all stripe.

A look at the [UNA-USA's board](#) reveals principles: [President Ambassador William H. Luers](#), "active" CFR member, who cut his diplomatic teeth in communist Czechoslovakia, (shortly before it becoming the tipping point that brought down the USSR in Eastern Europe), and Venezuela. Luers served in South America during the opening days of Reagan and George H. W. Bush's reign of terror there, 1978-82. When not busy ridding the world of landmines, William spends his time championing other humanitarian efforts, such as those led by the Harriman Institute and Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

And, on his right-hand: [John C. Whitehead](#), former Deputy Secretary of State in the Reagan administration, (so highly held in fact was "the Gipper's" regard for the work Mr. Whitehead carried out for on-again-off-again G-Man/Bechtel Corporation CEO, Secretary of State George Shultz during those sticky Iran-Contra years, Reagan awarded Whitehead the Presidential Citizens Medal), and former head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Whitehead is a current confrere to blue-blood trusts, institutes, and foundations too numerous to mention. He's also serving as appointed chair of the Board of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. That's the outfit overseeing the reconstruction of the World Trade Center lands.

It seems a little less strange that an humanitarian organization would be trying to deliver the soul of Canada wholesale over to a, as Canadian Broadcasting Corporation icon and 'The National' anchor, Peter Mansbridge refers it, ["more robust mission,"](#) in Afghanistan, when looking at some of the personalities at the

[Canadian Landmine Foundation](#)

itself. It reads like a Who's Who of the Canadian Public Relations industry and the companies it represents; companies that spend more of their time flogging "Genetically Modified" Frankencrops, munitions, drugs, and eager to cover any number of malefactions their committed pursuit of pure profit engender. Luckily, the equally eager PR sweepers are there, ready to brush the latest outrage under the media rug.

Among the crop at CLF are: Gaetan Lussier, President of Gaetan Lussier and Associates. You can catch Gaetan at the upcoming ["Smarter Regulation of Foods in Canada"](#) conference in Ottawa later this month. He's scheduled to present, "The Impact of Regulation on the Business of Food in Canada" lecture. I'll bet that impact is BAD!

The conference is sponsored by notable humanitarians, Nestle, Unilever, and General Mills, amongst others.

Joining Gaetan at the CLF: The mysterious Dr. Irene Sage, Director of the shadowy, U.K.-based, 'Foundation for International Security.' Her [name appears on lists](#), and as a funding friend of the Institute for

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[Multi-Track Diplomacy.](#)

itself another gaggle of Council on Foreign Relations; State Department diplomats; Reaganites; and, oily businessmen of all stripe types.

With Irene and Gaetan: Remi Bujold, Senior Counsel for [GPC International](#) , an adjunct of Canadian Public Relations firm, Fleishman-Hillard Canada, subsidiary of Omnicon Group Inc. Fleishman-Hillard sums up their company values and culture in the pithy (and copyright phrase): "To make ourselves as valuable to our clients as they are to us."

They list some of their areas of special service as: government affairs and advocacy consulting; issues management; government communications, and of course; crisis communications. As the "robustness" of Canada's mission in Afghanistan increases, there will no doubt be a great need of some of that "crisis communications" stuff. It could be just the job for an upright sounding organization, staffed with a raft of operators operating from a spider's web of cross-referenced do-gooder organizations.

The recent redeployment of Canadians, sent to fill the boots on the ground of departing Americans, has already meant death for both Canadians and Afghans. Just tonight, (M9, 2006), the CBC announces a massive military mobilization of Canadian soldiers in an operation to scour the countryside around Kandahar for Taliban "insurgents." They're reported to begin the operation in the village where a Canadian soldier was recently wounded in [an axe-attack](#) .

Yes, it seemed passing queer an organization so concerned with "human and economic suffering," as the CLF proposes to be, would stand behind a massive military campaign currently ramping up in benighted Afghanistan; queer until considering the pedigree of the Canadian Landmine Foundation's stable of corporate promoters.

And who supports the Canadian Landmines Foundation and its President and CEO Scott Fairweather, another PR operative, when he says "Canadians support Canada's commitment to Afghanistan?"

Polls reveal a large and growing discomfort with the already four plus-year Canadian commitment in Afghanistan. But, Scott does hit the nail on the head when he says: "Landmines are a significant threat to Canadians serving in Afghanistan..."

And what better way to alleviate that threat than to leave Afghanistan to the Afghans?

The Canadian Landmines Foundation news release is reproduced in full below.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#) , and host of [Gorilla Radio](#) , broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. You can check out the [GR Blog here](#) .

From: "Canadian Landmine Foundation" < paul@canadianlandmine.org >

To: < director@uvic.ca >

Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2006 2:24 PM

Subject: Canadians support Canada's commitment to Afghanistan

Press Release: For immediate release

Canadians support Canada's commitment to Afghanistan

Toronto (March 7, 2006) - For the past four years Canada has been committed to assisting Afghanistan on the path to stability, democracy and self-sufficiency. They have been working diligently to support the establishment of a stable environment in which the people of Afghanistan can rebuild their country and their lives.

Through the Canadian Landmine Foundation, Canadians are directly supporting this effort by getting involved in the rebuilding of the country. For the past four years, events have been held, raising money to clear landmines in Afghanistan where our personnel are serving. In 2005, Canadians raised enough money to clear an estimated 120,000 square metres of land just outside of Kabul.

2006 is off to a good start. On March 1, an event in Waterloo, Ontario raised \$40,000 which will be put toward a clearance project in Afghanistan.

"Landmines are a significant threat to Canadians serving in Afghanistan, it is great that Canadians are working to alleviate this threat to our dedicated men and women and the communities in which they work" said Scott Fairweather, President and CEO of The Canadian Landmine Foundation, from his office in Toronto.

Afghanistan is one of the world's most mine-affected countries. The first landmines were laid in Afghanistan more than 25 years ago. Since then tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or disabled by mines or unexploded bombs. An Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), completed in November 2004, identified 2,368 mine- and ERW-impacted communities in 259 of the 329 districts of Afghanistan. The scope of the problem is immense.

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Landmines contaminate the soil serving as booby traps against Canadian Forces as they patrol the streets and the country side bringing stability to the country - and for civilians on their way to the water well, or children on the way to school. These indiscriminate weapons threaten the daily life for hundreds of thousands of people in Afghanistan. They also threaten the ability of economic life of the community, leaving large areas of land unusable and damaging farm animals at work.

Removal of landmines is a significant step in the reconstruction and revitalization process of Afghanistan. It protects our Canadian personnel and innocent Afghan civilians that want to rebuild their lives.

The Canadian Landmine Foundation is working hard to bring safety and security to the Afghan community. Please join us in this very important effort.

-30-

For more information and interviews contact:
Paul Faucette, Manager
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<http://www.foundationforinternationalsecurity.com/>

Peter Mansbridge: Carrying the Torch of the New Told Lie

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - Is it possible, after nearly three years of the war and occupation in Iraq, after the millions of words written and uttered regarding the lies leading to that illegal act, and the bald-faced perfidy that has followed, anyone with half an eye to what is going on could still believe the Iraq "campaign" was a result of the September 2001 attack against the World Trade Center and Pentagon? Is it possible someone working at the apex of the Canadian media could seriously ask the nation to swallow this demonstrably false premise?

"9/11 was, of course, the event that prompted the military campaigns both here in Afghanistan, and in Iraq." - Peter Mansbridge, [The National Mar. 6, 2006](#)

www.PEJ.org

Peter Mansbridge:
Carrying the Torch of the New Told Lie

C. L. Cook

PEJ News
March 6, 2006

Fascinating, now Canada has moved into the war-footing we've witnessed south of the border these past terrible years, to hear Canada's government news organ, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, importing propaganda from the mired U.S. The grossest of the lies designed to lend credibility to America's murderous rampage through benighted Iraq was George Bush's ludicrous allegation implicating Saddam Hussein with the 9/11 attacks.

For Peter's sake, and for Canadians who may have spent the past three years lost in the wilds; [the connection between Iraq and 9/11 has been dismissed](#) by everyone. Even the Bush camp never went as far as Mansbridge did tonight; having the good sense to merely mention, time and time again, Iraq and 9/11 together, leaving it to the feeble-minded to fill in the blanks.

Maybe Peter is onto something; maybe Afghanistan and Iraq are connected after all. As Canada's role in-country becomes "more robust" in nature; and, as "our" generals appear on television, telling Canadians the mission could last more than a decade, and saying we should be prepared for more casualties, Afghanistan is starting to look a lot like Iraq.

And, isn't Ottawa starting to sound a lot like Washington?

Conservative Party Foreign Affairs minister, Peter McKay refuses to waver on the policies drawn up by his Liberal predecessors, while the freshly sworn Defence minister and former General, Gordon O'Connor refuses to consider debating Canada's Afghan adventure in Parliament. The Liberals have little to say, beyond that they too support the deepening mire that is the occupation. The New Democrats, arrived to the debate a day late and dollar short, having allowed the war issue disappeared through two elections, now have Jack Layton bleating for public hearings, though not going so far as to call for troops to be removed.

Canadians are dying and killing in Afghanistan. The death will continue, and for what?

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The generals tell us "defence begins abroad," and if the Taliban take back the country, what country will fall, domino-like next? The C.B.C. promises more stories from Afghanistan to explain better to too-dumb Canadian opponents of the glorious little war beginning there.

And, the Prime Minister tells us today, it is the generals, not Parliament, not the government, not the people, that will determine how long Canada stays in Afghanistan.

Perhaps it is all connected.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor at [PEJ News](#) and host of [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. You can check the [GR Blog here](#).

Afghanistan: Media Fiddles While Canadians Come Under Fire

PEJ News - C. L. Cook - The "[muscular](#)" [new Canadian approach](#) to fulfilling the foreign policy objectives of the Bush administration today again bore bitter fruit for Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Dismissing the damage to troops and their Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) as "minor," the [national broadcaster](#) missed entirely the damage being done to Canada's international image.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/images/oef-logo.gif>

www.PEJ.org

Afghanistan:
Media Fiddles While Canadians Come Under Fire

C. L. Cook

PEJ News
February 9, 2006

Four Canadian soldiers were hurt when their convoy, on what was described as a joint U.S.- Canadian reconnaissance mission, was struck by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted along their route. The Canadian contingent, dubbed 'Task Force Orion,' are recently arrived in the Taliban heartland city of Kandahar, and are expected, according to the Canadian general slated to take command of the greater, 'Task Force Afghanistan,' Brigadier-General David Fraser, to both "[kill and die](#)" there.

Indeed, just last month, [Glyn Barry, Canada's head diplomat](#) to the country was killed, and [three Canadian soldiers wounded](#) when their convoy was hit by a suicide car bomber. Attacks have been on the increase for at least a year in Afghanistan; attacks increasingly emulating the tactics seen in Iraq.

The Brigadier-General minces no words about Canada's involvement and his upcoming role as the Number One of the Multinational Brigade in Regional Command South, adjunct of the greater, American-led [Operation Enduring Freedom](#); saying; "This is a dangerous mission. This is a dangerous environment, and I cannot reduce the risk to zero."

Neither Canada's [number one commercial broadcaster](#), nor Brig.-Gen. Fraser seem overly concerned with the greater danger the [country's military adventurism](#) poses for Canadian citizens, at home and abroad, or Canada's squandered reputation as mediator and peacekeeper on the world stage.

Instead, as [Stephen Thorpe of Canadian Press reports](#), the [increase IED and suicide attacks](#) have led to "more liberal rules of engagement" for NATO troops, allowing they "fire on suspect vehicles and other attackers in Afghanistan." It can only be hoped, NATO will take more care than their American counterparts in Iraq, where un-tolled numbers of civilians have been killed at checkpoints, and just last week, a [car carrying Canadian diplomats was shot at](#).

There will doubtless be more stories to come of Canadians wounded to a less "minor" degree as the campaign in Afghanistan continues, but few published by Canada's over-concentrated media are likely to explore their role in down-playing the nature of the conflict before the fact, the sea-change in Canadian foreign policy it represents, or the new understanding of Canada's role in [further military deployments](#) to Afghanistan,

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and those other "hot spots" around the edges of America's burgeoning empire.

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