

## **Self-interest or Self-importance: Afghanistan's Lessons for Canada's Place in the Modern World**

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On October 7, 2006, the 40<sup>th</sup> Canadian soldier died in Afghanistan, his armoured vehicle struck by an improvised road-side bomb buried in the sand. The soldier's death marked the sad fact that Canadian military casualties had, for the first time, matched those endured by our British allies since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001. By month's end, Canadian casualties would rank second highest of all coalition fatalities, behind those of the United States alone.

That 80 percent of all Canadian casualties in Afghanistan have occurred since March 2006 has not been lost on the Canadian media or the Canadian public. Canada's role in the beleaguered country, along with our government's overarching policy objectives in the Global War on Terrorism, has become the principal foreign policy debate for Canadian citizens. News on the subject of Afghanistan has become ubiquitous, the Canadian Forces the central theme of radio and television news shows.

Political battle-lines have been drawn as a result, with supporters of the Afghan mission locking horns with their vocal detractors. At times, the

rhetoric has gotten rather ugly. Political blows have been traded; positions have been marked; political futures are certainly at stake. The constant chatter, however, is muddying the important fact that Canadian military forces continue to do battle with a resurgent Taliban to secure Canada's national interest. Humanitarian relief, minority group protection, democratic value promotion, provincial reconstruction, and economic development are each solid foreign policy objectives for Canada to be emphasising in Afghanistan, but each must be understood as part and parcel of a greater, ultimate policy objective: defending Canada's national security and protecting our national interest.

Canada must do what it can to ensure that Afghan soil no longer remains the ripe, fertile ground upon which extremist groups can root their activity. Fanatical organizations, like the Taliban, must not be given the opportunity to rebuild symbiotic associations with terrorist clients, as had developed during the 1990s with the companionable relationship between Mullah Muhammad Omar's Taliban regime and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network. Rejecting a territorial rallying point for terrorist proxies and

their government allies, a requisite factor needed in training fanatical foot soldiers, indoctrinating operatives, constructing and stashing weapons, and planning acts of catastrophic terrorism, is of paramount importance to Canada and her allies. This principal goal, above all others in the myriad of objectives pursued by NATO forces in reconstructing Afghanistan, is of primary interest to Canada's national security and our collective national interest.

### Remember the Taliban

*"The [religious scholars] issued a fatwa that the non-Muslim population of the country should have a distinctive mark such as a piece of cloth attached to their pockets so they should be differentiated from others."* (Mohammed Wali, Chief, Taliban Religious Police, 2001)<sup>1</sup>

On September 10, 2001, few states, Canada included, paid much attention to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It was simply one of the dozen ineffectual rogue states with little, if any, international weight or political importance. In the decades following the 1988 retreat of the Red Army from Kabul, the Taliban was generally left alone to run Afghanistan as an Islamic theocracy. Only very meekly did the West intervene, coercively or otherwise, in Afghan affairs.

In 1998, for instance, President Clinton ordered Operation Infinite Reach, a series of cruise missile attacks against Taliban infrastructure in retaliation for al Qaeda's devastating attack on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. While the American bluster was technologically impressive, its effect on the Taliban and al Qaeda

was minimal, its lasting message one of general disinterest.<sup>2</sup>

The following year, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1267, levying financial and travel restrictions on Taliban officials. The consequences, however, were again only mildly influential.<sup>3</sup> And in March 2001, the West, especially members of the NGO community, took notice of the Taliban's threat to destroy the massive and ancient Buddha statues of Bamyan Province. Heavy diplomatic and popular pressure was levied against the Taliban, but the stoic Buddhas eventually fell in a hail of Taliban rocket and tank fire. They were, Mullah Omar explained, "un-Islamic graven images".<sup>4</sup>

In each case, the world did *something* about the Taliban regime and its ally, al Qaeda, if only for a brief moment. Certainly, pariah status was levied against Kabul, but no Western leader, save perhaps a few steadfast officials from the NGO community,<sup>5</sup> overtly called for regime change,

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<sup>2</sup> In his related television address, President Clinton stated: "Our mission [in Afghanistan] was clear – to strike at the network of radical groups affiliated with, and funded by, Osama bin Laden, the pre-eminent organizer and financier of international terrorism in the world today." President Clinton, quoted in: Jamie McIntyre and Andrea Koppel, "U.S. Missiles Pound Targets in Afghanistan, Somalia", *CNN*, August 21, 1998

<<http://edition.cnn.com/US/9808/20/us.strikes.02/>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution, Resolution 1267, (October 15, 1999), <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/300/44/PDF/N9930044.pdf?OpenElement>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> W. L. Rathje, "Why the Taliban are Destroying Buddhas", *USA Today*, March 22, 2001, <<http://www.usatoday.com/news/science/archaeology/2001-03-22-afghan-buddhas.htm>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch, "The Massacre in Mazar-I Sharif", *Afghanistan Report*, Vol. 10. No. 7, November 1998, <<http://hrw.org/reports98/afghan/>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Wali, quoted in: Pamela Constable, "Taliban Singles out Religious Minorities: Non-Muslims Told to Wear Markings", *Washington Post*, May 23, 2001, A1.

coercive military engagement, or humanitarian intervention. Afghanistan might have been the territorial embodiment of a callous strain of political extremism, but as an international actor, especially in terms of its hard military power (tanks, bombs, and guns) Afghanistan was a nuisance, not a clear and present global threat.

Of course, the Taliban *was* considered a threat to some of those living within Afghanistan. In 1994 the Taliban rose to power with a promise to bring peace and prosperity to a country wracked by decades of internal strife, foreign occupation, and warfare. Most Afghans, exhausted as they were by years of famine, violence, and anarchy, were willing to give the Taliban's political order a trial run. Perhaps Afghans believed a firm Taliban hand would prove useful in catalyzing domestic stability, stemming crime, combating warlordism, and checking the blossoming poppy trade.

But like most, if not all, fundamentalist groups that have risen to political power in decades past, the Taliban's populist agenda of peace, stability, and development was carried out with heavy expense against women, ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities and humanitarian law. Certain groups, especially Hindus, Hazaras, and Tajiks, were targeted with extrajudicial arrests, beatings, and executions, their communities forcibly expelled from villages, their creed victims of mass killing.<sup>6</sup> The Taliban also reinstated forms

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, "Executions, Amputations, and Possible Deliberate and Arbitrary Killings", April 1, 1995, <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA110051995?open&of=ENG-AFG>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

of severe punishment: "thieves had their arms or legs amputated, adulterers were stoned to death, and drinking liquor resulted in lashings."<sup>7</sup>

However unjust the Taliban, the international community had little incentive, rightly or wrongly, to intervene and topple the regime. The international mood for another multilateral, UN-sponsored humanitarian intervention had soured substantially following the debacles in Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti, and the lessons offered by the *mujahideen* in their protracted guerrilla war against the Red Army were still fresh and troubling to Western policymakers.

Perhaps most fundamentally, however, states simply did not consider Afghanistan a pressing threat to their own national interests and national security. No state intervened against the Taliban grip because no state cared to risk its blood and treasure for a few ramshackle villages. Even on September 10, 2001, the rationale for inaction was simple enough: so long as Kabul abused its own citizens – short, perhaps, of systemic and widespread genocide – but refrained from threatening the citizens and interests of other states, the Taliban would be left to its own devices.

Of course things changed on September 11, 2001. The moment 19 terrorists, aided and abetted by the Taliban regime, killed 3,000

<sup>7</sup> Anna Shoup, "Afghanistan and the War on Terror: The Taliban", Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), October 3, 2006 <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/asia/afghanistan/keyplayers/taliban.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/asia/afghanistan/keyplayers/taliban.html)>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

people, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban by proxy, had made its business, everybody's business.

Lest we forget, twenty-four of those murdered on 9/11 were Canadian citizens. We too had become casualties of this new and uncertain war.

### **Al Qaeda's Lesson:**

*"In today's wars, there are no morals, and it is clear that mankind has descended to the lowest degrees of decadence and oppression. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets."* (Osama bin Laden, 1998)<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that while al Qaeda and the Taliban are two separate organizations, they nonetheless share common views concerning militant Islam, religious governance, international *jihād*, and so on. They share common strategic goals as well – the projection of Islamic revolutions around the globe, the construction of theocracies in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, the purging of infidels from Muslim lands, and the coercive removal of foreign elements from Islamic territory.

In one sense, bin Laden played a philosophical leadership role (and of course a financial role as well) to Afghan *jihādists* while the Taliban aided in operational logistics. There was also general consensus within al Qaeda's leadership that Taliban Afghanistan was the only pure Islamic government; a model to be supported and emulated elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> By the early 1990s, bin

Laden established a network of training facilities within Afghanistan, recruited thousands of foreign-born fighters, and trained them as an elite force with the dual tasks of defending the Taliban from domestic groups and carrying out acts of terrorism abroad.

By 1996, al Qaeda had flourished as a coercive organization. Sufficiently prepared, it called for open warfare. It issued a *fatwa* (a declaration of war) – published in *Al-Quds Al Arbi*, a London-based newspaper – declaring its intent to fight *jihād* against Westerners.

As a prelude to the coming conflict, the *fatwa* notes the many successes Islamic terrorists had already secured against Western forces. Bin Laden specifically comments on the "false courage" of Westerners in three distinctive cases: the retreat of American and French troops from Beirut following the 1983 barrack attacks, the withdrawal of Western forces from Yemen (used as a base in preparation for humanitarian action in Somalia) following the 1992 double-bombing of the Gold Mohur Hotel in the city of Aden, and the flight of American servicemen from Somalia following the mob killing of 18 American soldiers during the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that bin Laden makes specific and careful note of these three events in his first declaration of war should not be interpreted as a simple and curious historical footnote. Indeed, they are of vital importance, offering us a rare

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<sup>8</sup> Osama bin Laden, quoted from, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), "Frontline: Hunting Bin Laden, Interviews",

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>9</sup>Talea Miller, "Afghanistan and the War on Terror: Al-Qaida in Afghanistan", Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), October 3, 2006,

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<[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/asia/afghanistan/alqaida.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/asia/afghanistan/alqaida.html)>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>10</sup>"Declaration of War against the American Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places", *Al Quds Al Arabi*, republished by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), "Bin Laden's Fatwa",

<[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1996.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html)>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

glimpse as to the nature of the ongoing struggle with modern terrorism and fundamentalist Islam. Because bin Laden interprets these events as victorious lessons for al Qaeda and its struggle, we too do best to absorb them ourselves.

In Beirut, Aden, and Mogadishu, concentrated yet limited attacks had wildly uneven political repercussions, resulting in substantial and monumental shifts in foreign policy. It was not lost on the perpetrators, for instance, that French and American troops evacuated Lebanon within four months of the barrack attacks, that Yemen was no longer utilized as a Western forward-operating base, that the UN mission in Somalia collapsed following the US retreat five months after the Battle of Mogadishu, and so on and so forth. In a 1998 interview with ABC reporter John Miller, bin Laden himself gives credence to this important lesson plan. It is worth quoting him at length. Bin Laden explains, rather bluntly:

*After our victory [against the Soviet Union]... in Afghanistan, the legend about the invincibility of the superpowers vanished. Our boys no longer viewed America as a superpower. They went to Somalia and prepared themselves carefully for a long war. They had thought that the Americans were like the Russians, so they trained and prepared. They were stunned when they discovered...the low morale of the American soldier and they realized that the American soldier was just a paper*

*tiger. He was unable to endure the strikes that were dealt to his army, so he fled... After a few blows, [the Western Forces] rushed out of Somalia in shame and disgrace, dragging the bodies of [their] soldiers.<sup>11</sup>*

Lesson learned.

Simply put: enough coercive force could turn the tides in an asymmetric war with the West. The three aforementioned attacks are considered substantial victories for exactly that reason – enough violence, exactly positioned and expertly timed, would likely result in a reversal of policies in any weary Western state.

That this lesson evolved into the *modus operandi* for the al Qaeda network should come as no surprise. Just in case anybody had missed the first call to arms (which, as we have noted, almost all Western governments had), al Qaeda issued a second *fatwa* in February 1998. This time, the message was curt. “The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.”<sup>12</sup> And kill they did.

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<sup>11</sup> Osama bin Laden, quoted from, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), “Frontline: Hunting Bin Laden, Interviews”, <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.  
<sup>12</sup> “World Islamic Front Statement: Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders”, *Al Quds Al Arabi*, republished by Federation of American Scientists (Intelligence Resource Program), <<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>>, see also,

An emboldened al Qaeda carried out a number of catastrophic terrorist attacks. The Khobar Towers, housing US servicemen in Saudi Arabia, were bombed in 1996; *Operation Bojinka*, a plan to place over a dozen small bombs on various airlines (developed by Ramzi Yousef, perpetrator of the 1993 al Qaeda-linked bombing of the New York Trade Center), was botched in the Philippines in 1995; the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were destroyed in 1998; the *USS Cole* was bombed in Sudan in 2000; and of course al Qaeda carried out the attacks of 9/11 in 2001.

Following 9/11, al Qaeda, its various allies, and like-minded associates point to an extensive, and growing, list of successes in their long war with the West. The Madrid bombings of 2004, which killed 191 and wounded nearly 2000, contributed to Spain's immediate reversal of policy concerning its involvement in the war that overthrew Saddam Hussein. Al Qaeda in Iraq, then led by terrorist mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, targeted both the United Nations Headquarters in Iraq and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Baghdad in 2003, resulting in the closure of these, and virtually all other, international humanitarian agencies active in rebuilding the country.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, al Qaeda points to the victory Hamas and Islamic Jihad have had in forcing an Israeli retreat from Gaza after a prolonged campaign of suicide terrorism on Israeli civilians, and note Israel's inability to crush Hezbollah's stronghold in Southern Lebanon this past summer. And al Qaeda has continued to employ this tactic with its near daily massacre of Shia in Iraq in hopes of successfully fomenting destabilizing sectarian conflict that might force a reluctant reversal of American, British, and Australian policy.

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<<http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/fatw2.htm>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

Elsewhere, the tactic has been used with, as of yet, uncertain ends. Jemaah Islamiyah, an Islamic terrorist group associated with al Qaeda, attacked Australian civilians twice, during the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings, in an attempt to reverse both the government's policy concerning Iraq and influence in Southeast Asia. The first of the two London transit attacks in 2005 has been attributed to al Qaeda in Europe and was likely an attempt to reverse England's staunch support for the Global War on Terror and the Iraq War.

Abu Sayyaf, a terrorist group with substantial ties to al Qaeda, took responsibility for numerous devastating attacks in the Philippines, most notably the 2004 bombing of a Manila Bay ferry which killed 130 passengers, in an attempt to influence the Philippine's friendly stance with the American government.<sup>13</sup> The 2004 Taba, the 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh, and the 2006 Dahab attacks in Egypt, along with the various other acts of terrorism conducted in the Sinai Peninsula since 2001, have been attributed to various terrorists groups loosely associated with al Qaeda, and have targeted Israeli, Egyptian, and Western interests in the region.

Chechen terrorist activity, supported in part with links to al Qaeda, has plagued Russian authorities since 2001, much of it targeting Moscow's political will in its battle over Chechnya's sovereignty.<sup>14</sup>

In the Middle East, Al-Zarqawi was responsible for the 2005 blasts in Amman, Jordan, which were intended to alter Jordanian support for regional stabilizing initiatives (Arab-Israeli 'road

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<sup>13</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Terrorism Havens: Philippines", December 2005, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9365/#3>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Chechnya-based Terrorist (Russian, Separatist)", July 11, 2006, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9181/>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

map' and other regional peace overtures, for instance) and for its ties with the United States and other Western states. The July 2006 Mumbai train bombings in India, a series of seven coordinated blasts that killed 209 people, was conducted by the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) in association with the al Qaeda-linked Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorist group<sup>15</sup> in hopes of wresting Indian control over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. And of course there is the case of Afghanistan, where terrorism is being employed against Western forces and reconstruction teams in an overt attempt to sway support for the mission.

**Canada's Lesson:**

*"These are detestable murderers and scumbags...they detest our freedoms, they detest our society, they detest our liberties. We're not going to let those radical murderers and killers rob from others and certainly we're not going to let them rob from Canada."* (General Rick Hillier, Chief of Defence Staff, Canadian Forces, 2005)<sup>16</sup>

Canada's continued and enhanced involvement in Afghanistan is a reaction to the global events

that are shaping the post-Cold War international environment. Our battle with Taliban and al Qaeda forces in Southern Afghanistan is based on a policy calculation that seeks to protect our national interest in light of worrisome developments concerning the spread and effectiveness of international terrorism. There are three principal reasons behind this calculation.

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- General Rick Hillier,  
Canadian Forces

First, as we have noted extensively, terrorist organizations require a territory from which to organize their activities. Allowing the Taliban to recapture and control even small pockets of Afghanistan invites the resuscitation of its associated links with al Qaeda and other like-minded terrorist groups. Consider, for instance, the relationships that have flourished between terrorist organizations and their government supporters in Iraq, Somalia, Gaza, Iran, Lebanon,

and Sudan. That similar developments in Afghanistan contravene Canada's national interest is a simple understatement. To be sure, a renewed Taliban foothold in Afghanistan would be devastating to the people of Afghanistan too, though such a concern is a related, albeit secondary, interest to Canadian involvement in the region.

Last spring, Jim Judd, the head of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Canada's spy agency, stated bluntly that "during the past year, Canada and Canadian interests abroad continue to be under threat from al Qaeda and its affiliated groups. While the threat remains concentrated overseas, an attack on Canadian soil

<sup>15</sup>B. Raman, "Kashmir and the Pro-bin Laden Terrorist Infrastructure in Pakistan", *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper No. 477, (June 17, 2002) <<http://www.saag.org/papers5/paper477.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> General Rick Hillier, quoted from, Daniel Leblanc, "JTF2 to Hunt al-Qaeda", *The Globe and Mail*, July 15, 2005, <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20050715/AFGHAN15/TPNational/TopStories>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

is now probable.”<sup>17</sup> Canada’s entrenched presence in Afghanistan and the continued contribution of our military personnel to fighting insurgent groups in the country is assisting in securing these principal Canadian interests.

Second, the nature of the violence utilized by insurgents against NATO forces in Afghanistan, especially suicide bombings and the use of hidden improvised explosive devices (IEDs), is a hallmark of the lessons history has bestowed on al Qaeda: concentrated violence can provide, over the long- and short-term period, marked policy reversals in Western states. Insurgent attacks against Afghans, especially the targeted killing of women, teachers, government officials, and aid workers, is a second strategy, likely adopted from the Iraq conflict, meant to foster domestic chaos and fear by driving out the forces that assist in developing an Afghan middle class. This tactic attempts to diminish Afghan development (which it has) while simultaneously impacting the political will of Western governments to continue in the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan.

Consider the frustration expressed by Sgt. Christopher Murdy of the Canadian Forces following a suicide attack on his convoy in September 2006: “I just feel like this is not a stand-up fight. They won’t fight out in the open.”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it is this frustration, especially

<sup>17</sup> Jim Judd, quoted from, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), “Attack in Canada ‘now probable’: CSIS Report”, May 10, 2006, <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/05/10/attack-probable.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Murdy, quoted from, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), “Suicide Bomber Injures Afghan in Attack on Canadian Troops”, September 27, 2007,

when it turns into widespread concern that things are simply not getting better that brings with it an important victory for terrorist groups. Behind every policy reversal is political doubt borne of frustration.

To be sure, al Qaeda and its associates are well aware of this fact and indeed hope to catalyze the process of Western political despair in Afghanistan as they have nurtured in Iraq. We should remain aware of this strategy and respond accordingly, with reinvigorated and staunch support for Hamid Karzai’s Afghan government and the fledgling democratic process that is now an Afghan reality. We must do so both diplomatically and militarily. Turning the tide against global

*jihad* begins in Afghanistan with an important lesson of our own: a victory on the battlefield will frustrate the insurgency’s own desire to continue its campaign of terror.

Third, al Qaeda has threatened Canada specifically and repeatedly, with terrorism. Canada is, by virtue of its economic development, European historical and cultural descent, inclusive and secular political system, diplomatic and economic alliances, territorial proximity to the United States, and close diplomatic associations with the United Kingdom and continental Europe, considered a legitimate target by al Qaeda and its fundamentalist allies. In 2002, Canada was listed as an al Qaeda target, along with the UK, France, Italy, Germany, and Australia, in a videotape attributed to bin Laden.<sup>19</sup> Canadian citizens were again targeted

<<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2006/09/27/bombing-target.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), “Al-Jazeera Broadcasts Tape Said to be Bin Laden”, November 13,

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in 2004, in an 11-page al-Qaeda terrorist manual, listed fifth in priority below Americans, Britons, Spaniards, and Australians. That citizens of each of these Canadian allies have since died at the hands of al Qaeda should be more than worrisome to all Canadian citizens.<sup>20</sup>

And in the fall of 2006, Canada was marked for attack on two separate occasions, first by bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who referred to Canada as a "second-rate crusader", and then later in an al Qaeda document which stated, "[Canada] will either be forced to withdraw their forces in the fire [of South Afghanistan] or face an operation similar to New York, Madrid, London and their sisters."<sup>21</sup> That bin Laden and al Qaeda have proven their willingness to follow through with their many threats against our allies should not be taken for granted by Canadians. We are at war and should expect to be engaged by our enemy.

And so Canada continues to fight alongside her NATO and Afghan allies in a maelstrom of Taliban and al Qaeda activity. We continue to absorb combat deaths and remain steadfast in sending our brave men and women serving with the Canadian Forces and diplomatic corps into uncertain battle.

That our mission of reconstruction and rehabilitation is a difficult, and as-of-yet uncertain one, is not in question. Fallen states,

like Afghanistan, take time to heal. It is certain that a long and dizzying road lies ahead for Canadian and NATO reconstruction teams. Yet a failure to entrench our gains is a sure invitation to the Taliban and al Qaeda to recoup their losses in the region.

That Canada continues to fight in Afghanistan in order to assist in the reconstruction of the country's political, social, and economic systems is, to be sure, a noble and just endeavour. That Canada does so in order to safeguard our shared national security and common interest is of principal and unwavering concern.

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2002,  
<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2002/11/12/binladen021112.html>>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), "Canadians Fifth on Al-Qaeda Hit List", May 12, 1004,  
<[http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2004/05/12/attack\\_list040512.html](http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2004/05/12/attack_list040512.html)>, Accessed January 16, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Stewart Bell, "Al-Qaeda Warns Canada", The National Post, October 28, 2006,  
<<http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=e9f20f44-ec19-470c-9ac3-6c79218d4d91&k=70612>>,  
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