

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Committee on the Civil
Dimension of Security (CDS) and the Sub-Committee on
Transatlantic Relations (Political Committee)**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Missouri and Washington, DC, United States of America

July 9 – 14, 2010

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report respecting its participation in the meetings of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, held in Missouri and Washington, D.C., United States of America from 9 to 14 July 2010. Canada was represented by Senator Jane Cordy.

A joint delegation consisting of Members of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security (CDS) and the Political Committee's Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR) visited the United States from 9 to 14 July 2010. The delegation, headed by Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson (United States), Chair of the CDS, and José Luis Arnaut (Portugal), Rapporteur ad-interim of the PCTR, comprised 31 Members from NATO member states and countries associated with the NATO PA. In Washington, the delegation held meetings with senior representatives from the US Departments of State, Defense and Homeland Security, as well with a number of independent experts. The discussions focused on Afghanistan, transatlantic relations, and the situation in Iran and Iraq. The group was also briefed on developments in Russia and Ukraine. Homeland security, biological threats and cyber defence were also covered in the meetings. Earlier, on 9-11 July 2010, Congresswoman Emerson hosted the visit of the CDS delegation to St Louis and Rolla, Missouri. The visit provided an opportunity for members of the delegation to meet representatives of leading defence and technology industries, learn about cutting-edge research projects conducted at the Missouri University of Science and Technology and discuss maritime and aviation security with officials from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the US Coast Guard, St Louis Lambert Airport and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

MISSOURI, 9-11 JULY (MEMBERS OF THE CDS ONLY)

During the visit to Missouri, the delegation met with top executives of two Missouri-based defence industries, Boeing Defense, Space and Security, and DRS Technologies – Sustainment Systems Inc. (DRS-SSI), as well as with the leadership of two leading companies in high technology solutions, Brewer Science and World Wide Technology. Information gathered on this visit will support the Committee's ongoing work on homeland security and civil protection.

At Boeing, members were able to tour the F-18 and F-15 jet production lines, and at DRSSSI, they learned about some of the company's products, including the Tunner 60K aircraft cargo loader, the Expeditionary Water Packaging System and the Expeditionary Water Reclamation System, the Armored Knight's systems integration platform, and a manportable ground surveillance radar.

The delegation toured the premises of Brewer Science and learned about the company's lead product – an anti-reflective coating for semiconductor chips. World Wide Technology executives informed the delegation about the company's services in the areas of supply chain management and cyber-security.

The delegation also toured the Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T) campus and visited several of the university's labs. Members were informed that Missouri S&T, with a student body of some 6,800 and a faculty of some 460, is one of the top five technological research universities in the United States. They

learned about several of the University's cutting-edge research projects, some of which are conducted in co-operation with industry or the Department of Defense. In particular, members were informed about research carried out on the detection and neutralisation of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), on the repair and rehabilitation of built infrastructure, as well as on the development of a millimetre wave imaging system.

The delegation held meetings with representatives of the USACE, the US Coast Guard and the navigation industry at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam in Alton, Illinois, to discuss inland waterway security. They all emphasised the vital importance of the Mississippi river transportation corridor to the local and national economy. The delegation was informed that more than 60% of the United States' grain exports, about 22% of domestic petroleum and petroleum products, and 20% of coal used in electricity generation, are transported on inland waterways. Ensuring the safety and security of navigation on these inland waterways is therefore essential.

The USACE plays three main roles in relation to inland waterways: supporting water resource development, providing engineering and supporting national security. Specifically, the Corps is tasked with maintaining a depth of 9 feet for navigation all along the Mississippi river from St Paul to New Orleans. It also assumes flood risk management, ecosystem restoration and environmental stewardship missions. USACE's St Louis district lies at a particularly strategic location, at the confluence of four major rivers: the Mississippi, the Illinois, the Missouri and the Ohio. It operates with a staff of 750 civilian and two military personnel.

The key policy document in the field of maritime security is the 2002 Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). The MTSA requires the establishment of Area Maritime Security Committees bringing together all relevant stakeholders, as well as the adoption of vessel and facility security plans. It also sets maritime security levels, and establishes a procedure for the adoption of risk assessments.

The Melvin Price complex is a key element of the Mississippi river navigation system. It includes a 1,200 feet long main lock and a 600 feet long auxiliary lock. The delegation learned that it takes just 30 minutes for a 15-barge tow to move through a 1,200 feet lock; however, most locks on the upper Mississippi are 600 feet, and thus require a two and a half hour passage time.

The delegation also visited another landmark infrastructure in the region: St Louis' Lambert Airport. Lambert is the 33rd busiest airport in North America, and received 12.8 million passengers in 2009. The airport hosts 237 flights a day and 14 airlines. It is also hoping to become a hub for cargo operations to and from China.

In meeting with airport and TSA officials, the delegation learned that the responsibility for securing the airport is shared between air carriers, airport operators and the federal TSA.

The TSA's two main missions are regulation and screening. The agency is responsible for setting the regulatory framework for aviation and cargo security. For instance, most recently, the TSA adopted a regulation requiring airports to screen 100% of cargo starting 1 August 2010. The TSA is also starting to reach out to surface transportation operators to establish security partnerships.

The TSA is also responsible for screening passengers and luggage. According to TSA officials, improvised explosive devices remain the primary threat for passenger planes. New technologies are now available for detecting explosives, including so-called “whole-body scanners”, using backscatter or millimetre wave technologies. The Lambert airport police also maintain nine canine police teams specialised in explosive detection. In addition to detecting explosives, the TSA and airport police also use observation techniques to detect suspicious behaviour.

WASHINGTON, DC 12-14 JULY

AFGHANISTAN

Both official speakers and independent experts agreed that security in Afghanistan remains fragile and that the situation will continue to be tense over the next months. Anthony Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), reminded the participants that the insurgency has gained momentum. In most of Afghanistan there is no meaningful government presence, the speaker said. He noted that Taliban “shadow governments”, which had not existed in 2003, had been established in 11 provinces by 2005 and 33 out of 34 provinces in 2009. Violence has risen by 88% nationwide compared to May last year. Violence and security varies regionally, with the most difficult areas being in the East and South of the country, although the situation in the North has experienced increased levels of violence as well, according to the independent expert.

Department of Defense officials warned that a rise in casualties could be expected as International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) moves into areas where it has not been before. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in particular pose a major threat to ISAF forces in Afghanistan, Mr Cordesman stressed. The period between January and April 2010 saw a 94% increase in IED-related incidents from the same period last year, he added. IEDs account for the majority of the fatalities of coalition troops in Afghanistan since 2008, according to General Stéphane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT). To counter the IED challenge, Allied Command Transformation (ACT) has elaborated a specific action plan that is designed to address the whole of the system that supports IEDs, i.e. the planning, the financing and the logistics behind it, the ACT commander informed the delegation. General Abrial also provided an overview of ACT activities and informed the group that ACT, in partnership with the US Joint Forces Command, has deployed the Afghanistan Mission Network, a system that enables information to flow seamlessly and securely from one national network to another.

46 countries, including all NATO member states, but also partners such as Japan which provides vital economic assistance, are currently engaged in Afghanistan. NATO Allies and coalition partners committed 9,700 additional troops, increasing the number of non-US forces there to over 50,000, the delegation was informed. Approximately two-thirds of the additional forces are currently in place, the remaining one-third will be on the ground by August 2010, Defense Department representatives informed the delegation. In the same timeframe, the US will have completed the deployment of additional 30,000 soldiers, increasing the total number of US forces in the country to about 100,000, a three-fold increase on the corresponding number of US troops in early 2009.

Complementing the military buildup, the US has tripled the number of civilian experts in Afghanistan to currently approximately 1,000, according to Defense and State Department officials. The number of civilian experts will continue to increase, reflecting the US administration's approach that Afghanistan requires a fully integrated civil-military effort, the delegation learned. Agriculture is the number one non-military priority, both on the provincial and district level, Dan Feldman, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan at the US Department of State, informed the delegation. Poppy production remains a very difficult challenge, and that the interconnectedness between drugs and insurgency is very clear, the delegation was told. Therefore, rebuilding the agricultural sector and developing alternative livelihood programmes will help draw away support from the insurgency and instead reconnect farmers with the government.

Official and independent speakers pointed to considerable progress in Afghanistan, both in terms of security and in terms of reconstruction. In the South, ISAF and US forces have taken away the sanctuaries from the insurgents and forced them to disperse. Although coalition troops have not been as successful as expected in the Marjah province, the population-centric focus is working in other areas in the South, according to Dr Cordesman. Moreover, nearly seven million Afghan children are now in school, as opposed to less than one million a decade ago under Taliban control. Immunisation rates for children have gone up substantially and are now in the 70- to 90%-range nationwide. Cell phones are widespread in a country where this was virtually unseen in the Taliban days, he said and added that roads and bridges and other infrastructures have been repaired or built.

Speakers emphasised that the focus of the military engagement is on population-centric counterinsurgency which requires killing, capturing and separating the insurgents from the population. One Department of Defense official reassured the delegation that the change in command of ISAF forces will not have an impact on the implementation of the plan in Afghanistan and pointed out that the new ISAF Commander, General Petraeus, had been closely involved in the planning. The campaign strategy pursued by Allied forces under General Petraeus is adapted to the complexity of the situation on the ground and aims at "reaching a reasonable degree of development" in the country, Dr Cordesman underlined. He described the campaign strategy in Afghanistan as focusing on:

- protecting the population (with the priority on high-density population areas where insurgent groups operate primarily with disaffected Pashtun populations);
- enabling the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF – with an emphasis on accelerating and expanding their force capacity and capability; partnering at every echelon);
- neutralising "malign influence" (identifying and reporting corruption; helping to forge responsible and accountable governance);
- supporting the extension of government (gaining active support of the population by empowering legitimate sub-national leaders with effective population security measures);

- supporting socio-economic development (gaining active support of the population by creating security conditions that provide space for community-based development opportunities).

There was consensus that NATO Allies and the international community need to have realistic goals as well as realistic timelines in Afghanistan. Defense and State Department officials stressed that the main goal of the Afghan campaign was unchanged: dismantling, disrupting and defeating Al Qaeda and the Taliban and preventing Afghanistan from ever becoming a terrorism safe haven again. There is, however, a divergence of coalition expectations and campaign timelines, Dr Cordesman commented. Speakers agreed that it will take some time to see how the new strategy, originally devised by General Stanley McCrystal, will work out. The CSIS expert said he expected that it will be possible to assess whether the new strategy and tactics will have been successful by mid-2011.

With regard to the ANSF, Dr Cordesman suggested that the Allies are just beginning to form effective Afghan forces. The attrition rates among the ANSF are still very high, sometimes up to 70%, he said. Earlier, up until 2008 and 2009 there were too few efforts to train the Afghan army and police, he regretted. One Defense Department official also acknowledged that the efforts in Afghanistan were under-funded and under-resourced for a considerable period of time. Moreover, the coalition was reactive rather than proactive and Afghanistan, which had been one of the poorest countries in the world before the war and was devastated by 30 years of conflict. While the resources for providing training have been significantly increased, finding personnel for the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) remains a challenge according to the independent expert. Mr Feldman said that the Afghanistan mission is still short of 420 trainers, as well as police mentors and that filling the trainer gap is a high priority. Department of Defense officials pointed out that the focus of training efforts for the ANSF is not only on the quantity of Afghan forces, but on quality as well; the Afghan National Army (ANA), is currently the most respected government agency, the delegation heard.

Speakers generally shared the view that it will take a number of years before Afghan forces can truly handle the security tasks in the country on their own. Success in Afghanistan therefore requires a sustained effort long beyond 2010 or 2011, according to Dr Cordesman. He said that the major transition to the ANSF should not begin until the force is ready, which, he suggested, could be probably at the end of 2012 at the earliest. Speakers agreed that the slow phasing down of US and Allied troops must be conditions-based, and that the ANSF will continue to rely on Allied funding and enablers for quite some time. They also emphasised that the beginning of the transition phase in July 2011 is not a race to the exit. Mr Feldman said that ISAF's mission will change, but not end with the beginning of the transition phase.

One Department of Defense official stressed the need to make the citizens part of the solution. The coalition's emphasis on population-centric counterinsurgency has led to a notable decrease in the number of civilian casualties in recent months, the delegation learned. However, as Dr Cordesman noted, winning popular support is as much a challenge as tackling the insurgents. The lack of good governance, both on national, provincial and district levels, remains a critical issue. The CSIS expert stressed the

need to achieve immediate progress in governance, prompt justice, jobs, and economic opportunity in the field as part of each operation. Building more effective local authorities will require considerable additional time and many of the local authorities are corrupt or incapable, Dr Cordesman said. The US is focusing aid more on the provinces, prioritising assistance for the most important districts first. He pointed out that according to recent polls, 83% of Afghans feel that government corruption affects their daily lives. However, despite their feelings about government corruption, Afghans' confidence in their government is slowly increasing according to polls.

Dr Cordesman also argued that a considerable part of the corruption is caused by international donors as well as the military which, over the years, have spent a vast amount of money but have not established effective accountability and transparency. He said that the US, ISAF, UNAMA, and international air organisations must address their role in causing corruption and waste. Moreover, UN, national, and NGO aid efforts need far more focus on validated requirements, Afghan perceptions, measures of effectiveness, and honest contracting as currently is the case, he added. Mr Feldman acknowledged that corruption remains a serious problem and added that the US Administration is trying to install as many robust oversight mechanisms as possible. In this context he said that the US is decreasing its emphasis on large contractors because working through them limits the opportunity to exert oversight over subcontractors.

Moreover, aid money has been centred on spending money, on doing projects, Dr Cordesman commented. He also suggested that the UN still lacks any reliable measure to rate how effective its civilian efforts are. Similarly, there were no reliable measures to rate military efforts, he added. "It has taken us about eight years to understand how the situation really is", Dr Cordesman said. Summarising his view on the international assistance provided to Afghanistan, the speaker commented that he had "never seen so many international efforts going into one project as in Afghanistan with so little effectiveness".

There was unanimity among speakers who commented on Afghanistan that better civil-military co-ordination was necessary to improve the situation in the country. There is still no unity of effort, Dr Cordesman said and noted that many militaries do not co-ordinate their work with aid organisations of their countries. The speaker also suggested that the civilian-military disconnect in the "clear-hold-build" campaign continues to be a major challenge that needs to be addressed. According to Dr Cordesman, co-operation between the military and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) must also be improved and become more operationally relevant. Not enough countries manage their PRTs effectively, often the time of deployment of officers and experts is too short.

Allies have recognised the need for improvements and General Abrial mentioned that ACT has been tasked with supporting Ambassador Sedwill, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan, with learning lessons from the experience in Afghanistan in integrating a range of civil and military actors. The first thing that is needed is a mindset of co-operation between the military, government agencies, international organisations, NGOs and some actors from the private sector, he explained. It must be inclusive enough to accommodate the operational cultures of very diverse players, yet

consistent enough to deliver. The keyword is unity of effort, not unity of command, he concluded. General Abrial informed the delegation that ACT had been working on developing a counterinsurgency doctrine for NATO, which was currently being reviewed by Allies.

State and Defense Department officials stressed the importance of the upcoming conference of Foreign Ministers in Kabul on 20 July, which would provide an assessment of the achievements and challenges. Mr Feldman noted that the conference will bring together 40 Foreign Ministers and will be the largest international meeting since the late 70s. The conference will provide the Afghanistan government with an opportunity to present the progress they have made. The government in Kabul can also inform about its reform agenda of developing a system of good governance, justice, accountability and services in the interests of the people.

Both official and independent speakers emphasised the pivotal role of Pakistan for the stabilisation of Afghanistan and stressed the importance of encouraging Pakistan to do more to improve the situation in Afghanistan and helping Pakistan to increase its ability to combat the insurgency. Dr Cordesman noted that 130,000 Pakistani forces are currently deployed to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), which, it is believed, insurgents use as a sanctuary. The troop deployment on the western border of Pakistan is the largest in the nation's history and more than 100,000 troops were moved from the eastern border with India.

Mr Feldman said that the US has developed a broad, long-term relationship with Pakistan that goes beyond Afghanistan. Reflecting the importance of the relationship, the strategic US-Pakistani dialogue has been elevated to ministerial level, he said. By now, thirteen working groups, co-chaired by both sides, have been established. The working groups go beyond purely military and security issues but also cover issues such as water management, health, agriculture, education, economics and finance, access to markets, energy, science and technology, communications, women's issues and law enforcement, Mr Feldman said. Acknowledging that many Pakistanis hold a negative view of the US, he expressed the hope that US assistance to help Pakistan address its economic and social problems will change this. The US will sustain its counterinsurgency support for Pakistan, but will also look at creative ways to help address the civilian-military relationship in the country. Mr Feldman emphasised that the US alone cannot succeed in helping Pakistan to address its challenges, but that a truly international effort is necessary. In this context, he mentioned a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), designed to restore infrastructure, services and livelihoods in the conflict-affected areas of the North-West Frontier Province and the FATA has been established. However, he admitted that reconstruction in FATA is extremely difficult. Countries like Turkey and the UAE can make a significant difference, particularly in education reform, he said.

Mr Feldman emphasised the importance of the regional stabilisation strategy, which is currently being updated. One of the goals of the US' regional strategy is also shifting the calculus of Afghanistan's neighbours from competition to co-operation. Responding to a question from the delegation, Mr Feldman said that Kashmir is not part of the mandate of the office of the US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He added, however, that the US welcomes high level Pakistani-India meetings on this issue.

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND NATO

Meetings in Washington also covered transatlantic relations and NATO issues. Speakers who spoke on the subject generally believed that Europe remains an important player as Paul Belkin of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) put it. The US recognises that it cannot handle all security challenges alone and continues to see Europe as a key, if not the key, partner in addressing security challenges, he said. The US and the Allies share the same values and continue to see challenges from a similar perspective, he added. John Rollins of the CRS stressed that the Obama Administration has taken a much broader approach to security as is reflected in the National Security Strategy (NSS). In comparison to the “wartime strategy” of the previous administration, the focus of the Obama Administration’s strategy is on restoring global leadership, the CRS expert noted. Therefore, the current NSS emphasises better collaboration and cooperation with international partners as one of the guiding principles, he added. Heather Conley, Senior Fellow and Director, Europe Program at CSIS, noted that US-European relations are in transition, mainly because they are less shaped by politics, i.e. by ideological divides such as freedom versus communism and because of the generational change in leadership. She considered the transatlantic relationship as shaped by four main issues, i.e. the global economic crisis, the resetting of the US-Russia policy, the Middle East (particularly Iran, but also the evolution of Turkey's foreign policy), and how the Allies shape the narrative of Afghanistan.

Speakers generally believed that a close NATO-EU partnership is important for tackling future security challenges as well as for relations with Russia. They noted, however, that NATOEU relations must be improved, particularly on a political level. Ms Conley cautioned that a closer relationship will be difficult to reach, mainly because European divisions make transatlantic unity even more difficult to achieve. Commenting on the future development of the EU, she said that there are three different scenarios in Europe: increased integration, disintegration of the Eurozone, or less co-operation among EU member countries. Mr Belkin argued that there is an unprecedented level of support in the US today for an EU security identity. Yet, there also seems to be some confusion in Washington about how to deal with the EU.

One of the challenges for a close US-European partnership is the big and increasing gap in defence spending. While the US is spending about 35% of its defence spending on investments (which is about two times as large as that of its NATO partners), the Allies are decreasing their defence expenditures. An additional challenge that may put strain on the transatlantic relationship is the gap in military technology between the US and the Allies, the delegation was informed. Ms Conley suggested that these developments will lead to the emergence of an interest-based Atlanticism where the US will also look to other partners to deal with the relevant issues.

Ms Conley noted that NATO is facing a number of challenges. Transatlantic unity will be tested by two other issues in particular, namely Afghanistan and Iran, Ms Conley said. Other speakers suggested that NATO’s ability to succeed in Afghanistan is seen by some in the US as a litmus test for Alliance solidarity. Mr Belkin argued that it is

difficult to imagine NATO ever engaging again in a similar operation based exclusively on a sense of solidarity; this will have to be supported by common interests as well, he said. Moreover, the Allies need to “rethink enlargement” as NATO is unlikely to take the lead in the open door policy in the immediate future, Ms Conley suggested. While NATO’s Open Door policy continues, it is unclear what this will mean for Ukraine and Georgia. Referring to the issue of tactical nuclear weapons, the CSIS expert suggested that NATO Allies are likely to revisit the issue of “nuclear burden sharing”. General Abrial and Mr Belkin considered that the update of NATO’s Strategic Concept, which is due to be agreed upon by Heads of State and Government at the November 2010 Lisbon Summit, will reinvigorate the Alliance. In this context, they said that the new concept is likely to reinforce Article 5 and to emphasise the relevance of partnerships.

IRAQ

The delegation also obtained briefings on the Gulf region, particularly on latest developments in Iraq and in Iran. According to Kenneth Pollack, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution the international community devotes far too little attention to Iraq. What happens in Iraq is crucial not only for the country, but for the whole region. Iraq today is fundamentally different from 2006/2007; there have been many positive developments in the last year, the speaker noted. Security in Iraq continues to improve and the insurgency has been gravely weakened, though it is not completely defeated. Attacks on US and Iraqi forces, and even attacks on civilians are down even from the already low-levels achieved last year.

However, although Iraq has become safer than it was even a few years ago, it is still not a “normal” country even by the standards of security in the Arab world. There are still many people killed every month by inter-communal violence. Moreover, corruption and organised crime continue to flourish while the country’s infrastructure, particularly water and energy, is still decrepit and dysfunctional as a result of twenty years of damage and neglect. Therefore, Iraq is “absolutely not solved”, he noted and added that there is a real chance that the country could slide back into a major civil war similar to the one it experienced from 2005 to 2007. Academic studies on inter-communal civil wars have shown that about half of the states that suffered from civil wars similar to the one in Iraq are very likely to face a re-occurrence of conflict, often within five years, he pointed out. Moreover, if the country possesses valuable natural resources like diamonds, gold or oil, the likelihood rises even higher. Thus, Iraq remains highly vulnerable to a resurgence of civil war.

Mr Pollack considered the parliamentary elections in early March as very successful and a “huge victory for the Iraqi people” who had largely voted for the two parties considered most secular, least connected with formal militias, and least tied to the vicious sectarianism of the civil war. Iraqis voted overwhelmingly for change, only 64 of the incumbents (out of 325 of the members of the Council of Representatives) were re-elected. The vote also reflects Iraqis’ desire for political, economic and social stability and progress. However, more than four months after the elections no government has been formed and a “furious battle for the formation of government” is still going on, he said. Many politicians do not believe in democracy; if they could, they would go back to the “old bad politics”. In contrast, the large majority of the Iraqi people have made clear that they want representative, transparent government that is responsive to their needs

and they want the rule of law. Consequently, there is a great danger in allowing the perception to take hold that the election was “stolen” in the politicking that followed it, the speaker underlined. He concluded by saying that the precedents set in this election will endure for a long time to come and the international community must pay more attention to the final outcome of this election.

Though foreign investment is increasing, particularly in the oil sector, the country's economy is still weak and unemployment remains high. Unfortunately, there will be no massive increase in oil revenues before 2014 due to the structure of the oil contracts that Iraq has signed with various oil companies. Iraq is, therefore, likely to face severe problems between 2011 and 2014 when the Iraqi people will request improvements in infrastructure but the financial resources are simply not there.

Although US influence in Iraq is declining, it is still very significant, and because of the political deadlock, that influence is rising again with many Iraqis looking to the United States as a mediator to help them out of this situation, the speaker said. Although Iraqi forces are increasingly efficient, US military forces remain vital to the stability and tranquility of Iraq. As long as US combat troops remain in Iraq a coup appears unlikely. Fear and anger remains pervasive and the reduction of the US troop presence to about 50,000 by the end of August 2010 raises fear among many Iraqis that the country will go back to fighting after the departure of US forces from Iraq in December 2011, according to the current Security Agreement between Iraq and the US. Iraq slipping back into a civil war would be catastrophic for the country as well as for the whole Gulf region, as civil wars tend to spill over into neighbouring countries, Mr Pollack warned.

IRAN

On Iran, Mr Pollack commented that the July 2009 presidential elections and the aftermath significantly changed the country. A large number of Iranians believed that the elections were rigged, he said adding that there was a real debate in the Iranian political elite on how to deal with the protests. However, after the hardliners prevailed, the regime cracked down very hard on the dissenters. As a result, the moderates have lost influence in the country's decision making process. The Iranian regime looks as hard-line as it did in 1981, he suggested and said that it presents a much more aggressive line, which raises real fears among its neighbours and the international community. Reaching a diplomatic agreement with Iran on its nuclear programme has thus become more difficult as even if the regime in Tehran did not pursue a nuclear weapons programme, there is a lack of trust.

If Iran were to pursue a nuclear weapons programme it would be the “death knell” for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Mr Pollack warned. If Iran developed nuclear weapons countries in the Gulf and Egypt would develop nuclear weapons' capability of their own. As difficult as it is to sanction Iran for its nuclear programme, it is unimaginable to sanction Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Gulf states. Mr Pollack stressed that the US Administration did make a genuine effort to reach a peaceful settlement with Iran on its nuclear programme, which Tehran declined. The peaceful offer to Tehran was also instrumental in obtaining Russia and China's support for a new UN Security Council resolution. The proposal by Brazil, Turkey and Iran to swap nuclear fuel came too late in the diplomatic process to be successful, he said.

Commenting on the sanctions regime imposed by the most recent UN Security Council resolution against the regime in Tehran, Mr Pollack said that the sanctions should have focused much more on human rights. He added that there are lessons to be learned from the sanctions on South Africa. He anticipated that the US Administration has “bought itself about a year to see if sanctions work”, though he cautioned that the period may actually be shorter as there are a lot of actors with their own agendas (both inside the US and internationally). If the regime in Tehran continued to defy the international community it is not clear what will happen next time. The US administration, which had put in “a monumental diplomatic effort” to reach a diplomatic agreement with Tehran might decide to spend its political capital elsewhere. Eventually, there would be three options to deal with a defiant Iranian regime, namely, regime change, military option, or containing Iran. He considered “regime change” unlikely as the Iranian regime is far too strong and the green movement is too weak.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Terrorism

Rick “Ozzie” Nelson, Director of the Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), provided an overview of the current threat posed by Al Qaeda and its affiliates. He warned that while the number of its operatives has gone down, including in Afghanistan (where a recent CIA estimate put them at 60-100), Al Qaeda continues to pose a serious threat and should receive sustained attention. The organisation has progressively muted from a centralised to a decentralised force, bringing together an ensemble of regional groups pursuing both regional goals and a shared ambition to contribute to Al Qaeda’s global agenda. Examples of these “like-minded groups” include Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan, Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabaab in Somalia, as well as the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. Another increasingly worrying phenomenon is the radicalisation of young populations in Europe and the United States and what is referred to as “homegrown terrorism”.

Given these developments, Mr Nelson argued that Western governments should focus on the following priorities:

- pursue current efforts to degrade Al Qaeda’s core;
- continue to give priority attention to, and to improve relations with, Pakistan;
- avoid letting Afghanistan and Iraq divert attention from developments elsewhere; it is significant in this regard that the most recent attempts were planned in Yemen and Nigeria;
- continue to focus on the use of the internet for radicalisation, as well as on interdicting intermediaries;
- counteract Al Qaeda’s narrative, accusing the United States and the West of being at war with Islam and killing innocent Muslims; in reality, at least 75% and probably as many as 90% of Al Qaeda’s victims are Muslims, a fact that should be emphasised more;
- understand that terrorism is here to stay and will be a long term struggle;

- recognise that co-operation and partnerships are more critical than ever, and re-embrace the law enforcement approach to terrorism.

Bart Johnson, Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security, also emphasised the challenge posed by radicalisation of young Americans. He informed the delegation that Al Qaeda had recently published an English version of its magazine, which could be used as a tool to reach out to new categories of disenfranchised youth. Detecting these individuals was extremely difficult, particularly when they are “lone wolves” coming back to the United States after receiving training abroad. It was therefore essential to work with community based organisations to detect warning signs as early as possible and try to integrate these individuals in local communities before they turn violent. A key priority of the US government is also to enhance synergies between the myriad law enforcement agencies in the country. This was the main goal assigned to the recently created “fusion centres”. Mr Johnson also stressed the need for close international co-operation, particularly among NATO member states, in tackling the threat by internationally active terrorist groups.

Biological threats

At a luncheon meeting organised by Emergent BioSolutions, a leading partner of the US Federal Government for developing, manufacturing, and supplying critical biodefence medical countermeasures, the delegation heard a briefing by Dr Robert Kadlec, Director of PRTM BioDefense and Public Health Practice, on current biological threats and the US response.

Dr Kadlec explained that biological threats encompass two aspects: natural pandemics and deliberate events. These are different threats, requiring different capabilities; however there is also a degree of convergence between them. Current US policies recognise this reality and the 2009 National Strategy for Countering Biological Threats builds upon past initiatives regarding both natural pandemics and deliberate events.

The realisation of the seriousness of the threat posed by bioterror came after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the anthrax letter attacks, Mr Kadlec reminded delegates. As early as 1999, Al Qaeda had decided to develop a bioterror effort. Today, some analysts consider that a biological attack is more likely than a nuclear attack. Terrorist groups have made their intent to acquire biological weapons clear, Mr Kadlec noted. The consequences of such an attack would be catastrophic: 1 or 2kg of agent dispersed through aerosol could cause some 450,000 illnesses and 380,000 deaths, and cost the economy over USD 1.8 trillion according to Mr Kadlec’s estimates. He regretted that funding for biodefence programmes (USD 5.4 billion in 2008) is still far below that for nuclear programmes (USD 54.4 in 2008 for offensive and defensive capacities) and cyberdefence (USD 11.4 billion in 2008, with a planned increase to USD 30 billion in 2010).

Mr Kadlec explained that a key priority for mitigating risk is speed of reaction: casualties can be avoided if the threat is detected and determined, and treatment is distributed and dispensed in the first 2 days following the event. More broadly, since catastrophic events are extremely hard to predict, the strategic goal of biodefence policies should be to build resilience, Mr Kadlec emphasised.

Cyberdefence

Mitch Komaroff and Don Davidson of the Department of Defense's Globalisation Task Force, briefed parliamentarians on current cyber-threats and the US response. The speakers stressed the national critical infrastructure's reliance on cyberspace, and therefore its vulnerability to cyber-attacks. They noted that the increasingly high level of sophistication of available malevolent tools combined with the increasingly low level of knowledge required of malevolent actors was leading to a rapidly growing number of attacks from around the world. Organised crime is also increasingly present and active in cyberspace, they warned. The attacks against Estonian sites in 2007 and Georgian sites during the conflict with Russia in 2008 had brought renewed international attention to this challenge, as well as highlighted the need for an international response.

The speakers informed the delegation that the US government's 2009 strategic plan aimed to preserve freedom of action in cyberspace, while maintaining superior information capacity and the world's best cyberdefences. It set four main goals: organise for unity of purpose and speed of action; enable secure mission-driven access to information and services; anticipate and prevent successful attacks on data and networks; and prepare for and operate through cyber-degradation or attack.

One aspect of the 2007-2008 Comprehensive Cybersecurity Initiative was also the protection of the supply chain. The speakers explained that this programme aims to develop tools to include systems assurance as one element of systems engineering with a view to mitigating risk across the entire lifecycle of IT products. The United States was currently striving to promote international standards on supply chain risk management. As 85% of the United States' critical infrastructure is privately owned, ensuring that private owners and operators also adopt best practices is essential, the speakers emphasised.

Disaster Response and the Gulf Oil Spill

Robert Fenton, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Response at the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), briefed the delegation on FEMA's mission and organisation. FEMA is one of the Department of Homeland Security's operational components. Its mission is to "support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards".

The National Response Framework (NRF) is the lead document organising federal assistance in the event of a major disaster. The NRF establishes 15 primary functions (e.g. transportation, communications, energy) and designates a lead organisation for each of them. These functions aim to bundle federal resources and capabilities to support other federal, state and local responders. Disaster relief operations are co-ordinated through the National Response Coordination Center.

Mr Fenton stressed that the NRF is only activated for significant national incidents and at the request of local authorities. Only very rarely has the President taken the decision to transfer responsibility for disaster response to the federal level. This did not even happen following Hurricane Katrina.

FEMA maintains several key assets across its 10 operational regions. These include 16 Incident Management Assistance Teams; three of which are specialised in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. Deployable within three hours of the incident and self-sufficient for 72 hours, these teams constitute the initial federal presence on the ground and support local governments with disaster planning and response. Other important support capabilities include urban search and rescue teams; disaster emergency communications detachments; and prepositioned equipment. Mr Fenton informed the delegation that FEMA is increasingly focusing on catastrophic preparedness.

57. The delegation also discussed current efforts to contain the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Jonathan Ramseur of the Congressional Research Service emphasised the scale of the disaster: the spill released 30,000 to 60,000 barrels a day, amounting to 3 to 5 million barrels or 125 to 214 million gallons of oil, in the 85 days since the initial incident. The United States had not experienced such an oil spill since the Exxon Valdez incident in 1989, the scale of which, however, was much more limited (11 million gallons of oil). The Gulf spill had forced 35% of the region's fisheries to close. The response effort involved 7,000 vessels and 600 skimmers, the largest collection of such equipment in world history.

According to Mr Ramseur, the Gulf oil spill raised several important policy issues:

- regulation of offshore activities;
- the liability and compensation framework;
- the balance of risk and reward of the exploitation of continental shelf resources;
- the limits of available technology; and
- the organisation of federal response efforts.

On the last point, Mr Fenton clarified that the US Coast Guard was the lead federal agency in charge of the Gulf oil spill response. FEMA only played a supportive role.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA, UKRAINE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Ukraine

Ambassador Steven Pifer, Senior Fellow for Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institute's Center on the United States and Europe (CUSE), presented two narratives to explain current developments in Ukraine. One was a grim scenario, pointing to a series of decisions undermining Ukraine's sovereignty, as well as concerns regarding freedom of the media in particular. A second scenario was less pessimistic, emphasising statements by Ukraine's leadership that the country wanted close co-operation with NATO (though not NATO membership) and that it would not join the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus customs union due to fears of undermining the country's prospects of accession to the World Trade Organization.

Ambassador Pifer called on Western governments to send strong messages to Ukraine regarding both the benefits of engagement and the limits of Western support in the event that the country were to take further steps to undermine fundamental freedoms or restrict its own sovereignty.

According to Ambassador Pifer, it was clear that a large majority of Ukrainians did not want NATO membership. At the same time, while 80% of Ukrainians want good relations with Moscow, only a small segment of the population wants to unite with Russia, and the Ukrainian government has made clear it does not seek to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). It is remarkable that 55 to 60% of Ukrainians support joining the European Union (EU). Although most Ukrainians do not understand what membership in the EU actually requires, this provided the EU with significant leverage. Ambassador Pifer regretted, however, that the EU had not offered the prospect of eventual membership for Ukraine.

Russia

Dr Fiona Hill, CUSE Director, stressed that the Obama Administration had inherited a very confrontational relation with Russia, and the “reset policy” was meant as an instrument to tone down the rhetoric and promote agreement on a number of key issues. However, the administration had no illusion that this was going to change Russia.

Nevertheless, Dr Hill noted that Russia had recently adopted a more co-operative tone and attitude. It was unclear, however, whether this marked a mere reaction to the global economic crisis or a deeper shift in foreign policy. Over time, Russia was evolving, particularly through exposure and adaptation to European norms. Thus, rulings by the European Court of Human Rights had had a significant impact on Russia’s judiciary system. Visa facilitation with the EU could also have a long-term positive effect on the country, Dr Hill argued.

However, it would take bigger steps to be able to talk of genuine change. Among these, Dr Hill cited:

- addressing the current opacity of Russia’s central system of governance;
- increasing transparency in the economic sector;
- real progress on elections and local governance;
- a more even-handed foreign policy, which would not single out one country at another’s expense;
- greater transparency in the Katyn plane crash inquiry; and
- a warming of relations with the United Kingdom.

Russia was also evolving as a result of changing demographics, Dr Hill and Ambassador Pifer stressed. Studies predict that, in the next 25 to 30 years, ethnic Russians will only make up 65% of the population (as opposed to 80% today). Demographic changes in Russia’s Far East and the southern regions posed particular challenges. Sustained migration to the South made the situation in this already volatile area even more fragile. It also prompted the Russian government to focus increasingly on the Caucasus and Black Sea areas, thereby raising important geopolitical questions.

Dr Hill also addressed President Medvedev’s proposed new security architecture for Europe. She argued that, while the initial proposal was a derivative of the 19th century

Concert of Europe, a model clearly unappealing to Western governments, Moscow had now adapted its proposal. In her view, what Russia really wants is a voice in European security matters or another Helsinki process.

The delegation was also briefed on the deliberations on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in the US Senate. CRS specialist Amy Wolf said that it was unclear whether the current political polarisation of the US Senate and its tight schedule would allow for ratification of the Treaty before the November mid-term elections. During hearings in the Senate, members had raised a number of issues both internal and external to the Treaty, including missile defence and the US weapons modernisation programme.

The Southern Caucasus

Dr Hill argued that US efforts to bring about an Armenian-Turkish rapprochement had been overambitious, as they had largely ignored the Azerbaijan factor. Baku had been striving to achieve a difficult balancing act between the major powers in the region, a balance that an Armenian-Turkish deal would have jeopardised. Iranian-Armenian relations were also an important factor, as the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border would likely weaken Tehran's position. Meanwhile, US attempts at reinvigorating the Minsk process on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had also proven unsuccessful, as both parties were quick to use the Minsk Group as a scapegoat for the lack of progress in negotiations.

Central Asia

Dr Hill noted that developments in Central Asia today contrasted sharply with the situation in the early 90s, when all major powers seemed keen to intervene. In contrast, it looked as though none of the key players knew how to intervene or could find a good reason to intervene following the crisis in Kyrgyzstan. Meanwhile, however, the situation there remained very fragile, Dr Hill warned, and a similar crisis could take place in Tajikistan. Both countries had suffered from the drop in remittances from migrant workers as a result of the global economic crisis. A further destabilisation of the region could have adverse consequences for NATO, given, in particular, its logistical reliance on Central Asia for operations in Afghanistan.

During the visit, the delegation also had the opportunity to meet with US Members of the NATO PA delegation and with other members of the US House of Representatives. The visit covered a large number of security issues and provided participants with significant new information about the security issues that are being covered by the Assembly in this year and next years' reports.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Senator Jane Cordy
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security (CDS) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (Political Committee)
DESTINATION	Missouri and Washington, DC
DATES	July 9-14, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Jane Cordy
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,666.90
ACCOMMODATION	\$654.99
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 294.65
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$4,616.54