

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Defence and Security Committee Meeting
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
Berlin, Germany
November 5 – 6, 2007**

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its REPORT on the Sub-committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation visit to Berlin and Postdam, Germany, held November 5-6, 2007. The Canadian delegation was represented by Mr. Claude Bachand, M.P. and Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P.

Proceedings began with an overview, provided by German officials, of the out-of-area deployments of the German Armed Forces after 1990. Noting that the Bundeswehr is a “parliamentary army” the State Secretary reminded everyone of the need to obtain the approval of the Bundestag for the participation of German Armed Forces in international operations. He went on to explain that the legal basis providing the procedure for parliamentary approval of military operations outside Germany was adopted in March of 2005.

Admiral Lange explained that the transformation of the German Armed Forces is designed to increase the Bundeswehr’s effectiveness with regard to mobility, intelligence and reconnaissance, command and control, survivability and force protection, support and sustainability, and operational effectiveness. German forces, he stressed, will be able to cover a wide spectrum of tasks, ranging from high intensity war fighting to low intensity peacekeeping.

Lange also addressed the matter of recruitment, noting that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit skilled personnel during a time of population decline and increased budget restrictions. As a consequence the Bundeswehr has improved career and promotion conditions, and has enhanced care for soldiers and their families during deployments. While the transformation of the German Armed Forces has come a long way, Admiral Lange suggested that further improvements were still necessary – especially with regard to strategic deployability.

Karl Lamers, Vice Chair of the Bundestag’s Defence Committee and Head of the German delegation to the NATO PA, reminded members that Germany has 3,250 troops deployed in Afghanistan; making it the third largest troop contributor among allies. He also pointed out that the Bundestag will soon vote on the extension of the ISAF and OEF mandates and said that he anticipated large majorities in favour of renewal.

Members were told that the task of the German troops in Afghanistan consisted of six main areas: support for Afghan authorities, protection for friendly forces, disarmament and integration, training Afghan security forces, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster assistance.

Citha D. Maass of the Independent Research Institute Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) divided Afghan’s security problems into four categories: internal Afghan power rivalries, criminal activities, drug economy and the insurgents. Noting the “harsh criticism” directed at NATO for the conduct of operations in Afghanistan, she proposed that the Alliance should refocus on the main tasks, namely providing a local security framework for civil actors who do the reconstruction. However, she cautioned that

NATO should never become engaged in reconstruction activities itself. Ms. Maass argued that a national strategy to stabilise Afghanistan is inappropriate because each province faces a different mix of security risks. Therefore, a different approach that identifies specific measures for each province is needed to improve the situation. During the ensuing conversation, all agreed that drug production remains a serious impediment to improving the situation in Afghanistan.

Several speakers stressed the positive contributions from Provincial Reconstruction Teams to the stabilization and reconstruction of the country. Discussion revealed a broad consensus that building a stable lasting peace in Afghanistan will take time and that NATO needs to be prepared to remain for the long haul.

Speakers also agreed on the importance of public diplomacy for the ongoing operation in Afghanistan. In this context, Robert Hochbaum, member of the Bundestag's Defence Committee and member of the German delegation to the NATO PA, stressed the importance of media coverage.

When discussing NATO transformation all agreed that NATO remains indispensable for Euro-Atlantic security. Mr. Pohl, from the German Foreign Ministry, also stressed the continuing importance of NATO partnerships. In this context he commended the role of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) for providing an excellent forum for exchanging views between Allies and partner countries.

Henning Riecke, of the German Association for Foreign Policy, addressed the issue of the need for a new strategic concept for the Alliance. He argued that a new strategic concept would need to fulfill different functions; including providing a "mission statement" that explains NATO's core tasks and missions, as well as setting a framework for doctrine and planning. He suggested that there are currently three schools of thought concerning a new strategic concept. The first school argues that a new strategic concept can lead to a rapprochement among Allies. The second argues that the current strategic concept is already adequate to deal with the challenges the Alliance needs to overcome. The final school cautions that Allied negotiations over a new Concept would exacerbate existing disputes among member states. According to Mr. Riecke, a new strategic concept would have to clarify the meaning of Article V in a changing security environment and enable NATO to deal with new security threats.

A visit to the Bundeswehr Operations Command in Geltow near Potsdam concluded the programme of the visit.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.
Chair
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
(NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Defence and Security Committee Meeting
DESTINATION	Berlin, Germany
DATES	November 5 – 6, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Claude Bachand, M.P. Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P.
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$15,453.87
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,021.44
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$607.06
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$17,082.37