

Putting it into Practice

With the installation of the interim administration, Afghanistan rejoined the world community, and Canada had an opportunity to put its new policies into action. An administration committed to peaceful coexistence, national reconstruction and democratic elections clearly deserved support, and Canada re-established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan in January 2002.

Real action followed soon after. Although the Taliban regime that supported the terrorists was no longer in power, the military situation remained far from secure. As part of Operation Apollo, a Canadian Forces battle group of

850 soldiers was dispatched to Afghanistan in February 2002. Working with the U.S. military, the Canadians deployed to the southern Kandahar region for six months to conduct offensive operations against remaining Taliban forces, the first time that Canadian ground forces had been involved in combat since the Korean War.

At the same time, Canada moved quickly to respond to the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the Afghan people. At the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction in Afghanistan in January 2002, Canada pledged \$100 million in assistance. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, much of the funding was allocated to organizations providing humanitarian relief, including UNICEF, Care Canada, the Red Cross, the World Food Programme and Aga Khan Foundation Canada. Other support was devoted to policing, legal reform and the demobilization and reintegration of combatants.

The 3D Approach

These contributions to Afghanistan were significant. But with increased defence, diplomatic and development efforts—a total Canadian investment expected to top \$1 billion

over the next two years alone—came the need for a more comprehensive strategy. The result was what Canada calls its “3D Approach,” involving unprecedented levels of coordination among government departments and agencies.

photo: Pedram Pirnia



Kabul street: responding to the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the Afghan people is critical.

Afghanistan at a Glance

Capital: Kabul

Area: 647,500 sq. km. (roughly the size of Manitoba)

Terrain: mostly rugged mountains; plains in north and southwest

Climate: arid to semiarid; cold winters and hot summers

Population: 28,717,213 (July 2003)

Age structure: 0-14 years: 41.8%; 15-64 years: 55.4%; 65 years and over: 2.8%

Ethnic groups: Pashtun 44%, Tajik 25%, Hazara 10%, minor ethnic groups (Aimaks, Turkmen, Baloch, and others) 13%, Uzbek 8%

Life expectancy at birth: 46.97 years

Religions: Sunni Muslim 84%, Shi'a Muslim 15%, other 1%

Literacy rate: overall 36%; male 51%

Labour force by occupation: agriculture 80%, industry 10%, services 10% (1990)

Natural resources: natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barite, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones

GDP: purchasing power parity, US\$19 billion (2002)

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), for example, has provided the Department of National Defence (DND) with financial support to assist in the implementation of joint civil-military cooperation efforts. These include the Deh-e Punbah Bridge reconstruction as well as projects to provide fresh water, power and shelter and to rebuild schools and hospitals, thus promoting closer ties with the Afghan communities they serve. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade provides diplomatic and logistic support for DND's security mission and CIDA's aid programs.

Defence: Security and Reconstruction

In Afghanistan's war-torn capital of Kabul, the key focus is on keeping the peace. If the country is to be successful in its rebuilding efforts, the transitional government and the many relief agencies must be able to function in a secure environment. To help ensure this, the UN mandated the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to help the Afghan authorities maintain security in Kabul and surrounding areas.

Since August 2003, the 5,000 troops of the NATO-led ISAF mission have provided the Karzai government with greater stability. Canada plays a major role in NATO's first ever out-of-area operation. Indeed, with a contingent of more than 1,900 soldiers, including a battalion group, a brigade headquarters and an airlift detachment, Canada is the largest single contributor to ISAF. Canada is also assuming important command responsibilities, as Major General Andrew Leslie is currently the Deputy Commander of ISAF and Lieutenant General Rick Hillier will become the Commander of ISAF in February 2004.

Diplomacy: A New Embassy

Since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in January, ties between Canada and Afghanistan have grown stronger at a rapid pace, underlining how seriously Ottawa takes the relationship. The opening of a Canadian embassy in