

Executive Summary

D. A Framework for Communications

The following offers some guidance on a broad framework for communicating Canada's involvement in Afghanistan and addressing the key communications challenges noted above.

1. Framing the Issue: The Context

The issue needs to be appropriately framed for Canadians within the broader context of Canada's overall foreign policy approach. In particular, a context must be established that responds to the following basic questions:

Why Afghanistan? Why not somewhere else?

Does Afghanistan preclude other operations?

Are we redirecting monies that could be better spent addressing domestic issues?

2. Developing Key Messages

Possible key messages should be constructed around the following themes to address misperceptions and information gaps but also to initiate a "morphing" of Canadians' concept of peacekeeping into the modern era:

Canada's NATO obligation/An International Operation

We are there as part of our commitment to the UN and NATO.

We are there with 36 other nations.

Responding to and Supporting the Afghan People

The Afghan people have asked us and want us to be there.

We can make a difference. We are making a difference. We are helping to reinstate human rights for women and children. We are helping to rebuild the basic economic and social structures of society that we in Canada take for granted.

We are fighting the Taliban and terrorists in order to create a safe and peaceful environment for the Afghan people.

Continuing the Tradition of Peacekeeping and Adapting to Changing Realities

Canadians have a strong and well-respected tradition as peacekeepers. We will continue to play that role when and where we can be effective.