

PRESS RELEASE: Feb 15, 2008 Sinclair Stevens

Newmarket, Ontario- The Government, the Opposition Parties and the Manley Report have all left the Canadian public ignorant of the actual extent of Canadian Forces activity in Kandahar. The 1 000 extra troops and six helicopters laid down as conditions for Canadian Forces continuing commitment "would help either expand the area that Canadian Forces control, or make the area they are now in safer" according to Lieut.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, commander of all Canadian forces overseas.

Kandahar Province at the present is largely in the hands of the Taliban. The Canadian government has yet to inform the Canadian public why major countries such as Germany and France have not seen fit to join us in that Province.

"Even in developed countries geographical reference can be complicated and confusing so it is not surprising that in a place like Afghanistan geographical designations can be used to confuse the public as to what is really taking place," Sinclair Stevens, Progressive Canadian Party Leader, said today. "Canadians are being misled by lack of information, we are told our Forces are doing well in Kandahar. That is only true to a degree in Kandahar City and surrounding districts but it inaccurately describes the situation in the rest of the province."

According to Gen. Gauthier "security has improved in the districts of Panjwai, Zhari, Spin Boldak and Kandahar city" but that outside these four of seventeen districts "In places just beyond the Canadians' zone of control, the Taliban have established a parallel court system, enforced curfews, and mounted road checkpoints."

"So what is currently being debated in Ottawa? Is it about obtaining the means for ending the insurgency or about maintaining tenuous control over parts of a province, the greater portion of which has and could again serve as a staging ground for attacks on border posts and Kandahar City," Mr. Stevens added.

Mr. Stevens went on to reiterate that Mr. Manley's report was not an independent panel report as claimed; instead, the report was an attempt to justify an action taken by Mr. Manley when he was Deputy Prime Minister of Canada as well as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Public Security and Anti-terrorism.

"The Afghan involvement by Canada was really 'Manley's Mission' when the Liberals were in power." Mr. Stevens added. "The Manley Report did not state the limited success the Mission has attained nor has this been brought forward by any party".

"Canadians may yet be faced with an election on the issue of Canada's continued involvement in Afghanistan. It may be NATO will fail to meet the conditions Manley set and no long term decision will need to be made. Barring this eventuality, however, while Gen. Gauthier has said 'There is a finish line somewhere down the road,' there is nothing to indicate the end of the road will come in 2011 any sooner than in 2009" Stevens concluded.

For more information or to request an interview, please contact:

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Articles from which quotes and information are cited:

Canadians 'winning' in Kandahar, general says

Top general wary of Liberal position - Combat, reconstruction 'can't be separated'