

Afghanistan: Canada's Iraq?

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PEJ News: Defence Minister, Bill Graham says the plan to re-deploy Canadian operations currently in and around the northern capital city of Kabul are to go ahead. He also announced, an [additional 1250 troops](#) by early next year. [-{lex}](#)

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C. L. Cook

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Last week, in a speech to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, [National Defence Minister Graham reiterated](#) how Canada will face its "new" role in global military affairs. He cited the completion of a new [Defence Policy Statement](#) and its central document, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*.

According to Graham, that pride and influence will be expanded in Afghanistan first, then on to other "failed and failing states" around the globe. How those "failed and failing" will be chosen, or by whom, was left unsaid, but the minister did make it clear, Canada will move towards a "more sophisticated" operational integration with the U.S. military. Presumably, enhanced sophistication isn't necessary on the [diplomatic front](#) .

Graham informed the assembled worthies, Canada recognizes, "security at home often begins with security abroad," adding the [new policy means](#) his government will be "enhancing Canada's contribution to global security and peace building." The new direction is, in Graham's view, "informed by the rich operational experience of the Canadian Forces, both in Canada and locations ranging from Afghanistan to the Balkans, [to Haiti](#)

That that "rich operational experience" includes the [death and maiming of Canadian soldiers](#) , as in Afghanistan; providing assistance to murderous thugs in the overthrow of a democratically elected government in Haiti; allowing the world's fastest growing human trafficking region in the Balkans; uselessly witnessing the explosion of [heroin production](#) , again in Afghanistan, and the of course, Somalia; or Rwanda. Minister Graham will excuse a lack of enthusiasm for his proudly announced new initiatives.

Never mind the more than \$600 million cdn price tag for Afghanistan alone that comes with Mr. Graham's new found muscularity. Never mind that what the minister and his government recognize as splendid achievements are less charitably described in the countries where his largesse is experienced. The problem with Mr. Bill Graham's *Role of Pride and Influence in the World* is the precise diminishment of Canada and Canadians it will bring. Unleashing well-heeled

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, in accompaniment with military logistic support, a la the U.S.A., will undoubtedly put Canada in the sights of the very terror groups he so sonorously warns against. But, there is a more immediate problem with Graham's thinking: Afghanistan.

After four years of occupation, the coalition occupiers have little "influence" beyond the city limits of Kabul. Hamid Karzai is in Washington, D.C. at this very hour, readying to break the news to George Bush. But Bush's knows this. His pre-emptive jab at Karzai for allowing the heroin trade to flourish, designed to take some of the steam out of [Karzai's "demands"](#) that justice be brought against American soldiers involved in Afghanistan's Abu Ghraib-like abuses against prisoners at

[U.S. air-base/detention centre Bagram](#)

, tacitly acknowledges as much. Now, Bill Graham will preside over the relocation of the Canadians from their secure base, Camp Julien, to the south and west of the country, both areas seeing a resurgence of

[Taliban rebel activity](#)

; activity bearing more resemblance to Baghdad than the relatively calm Kabul.

Though Graham may like to believe all's well in Afghanistan, and Haiti for that matter, due to Canada's foreign adventurism, the fact is: things are not rosy in Afghanistan, and they're poised to get worse. Canadians are being marched into the mouth of the lion, while the puffed Bill Graham pipes merrily away.

Chris Cook hosts [Gorilla Radio](#), a weekly public affairs program, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. He also serves as a contributing editor to PEJ.org. You can check out his [blog here.](#)

Addendum: M25-- Now too, I hear, the Israeli Defense Force will send pilots to "train" Canada's pilots to better bomb cities.-- ***Proud and Influentially yours - ape***