

## Let Muslims take up the fight

The Leader-Post

*Wednesday, August 17, 2005*

A news report in the Aug. 9 issue of the Leader-Post stated that Maj. Gen. Andrew Leslie called Canada's military commitment to Afghanistan a "20-year commitment." This would be an expensive and ultimately disappointing endeavour.

Additionally, Hillier's recent warning to the Canadian public and to the members of the 1,500 troops now on the way to Kandahar to be prepared to take military casualties is very disturbing. Prime Minister Paul Martin's reported statement that Canada will take the fight against terrorism outside, wherever necessary, requires some rethinking.

Al-Qaida and its linked jihadist-led international terrorism is not Canada's nor the Western world's exclusive problem. Yes, we Canadians along with the U.S. and Europe are threatened and are actual targets of outfits like al-Qaida. However, the problem actually belongs to the Muslim world. It is the Muslim world and its politicians, religious leaders and armies that should be at the forefront of the fight against terrorism. At the same time, Canada and the West have a major and significant role in this struggle, but it is not a military one.

If we in the West continue to play a leading military role in Afghanistan and Iraq, then the jihadist argument that foreigners are invading and occupying Muslim countries because they are enemies of Islam, will continue to be construed as true by the ordinary Muslims masses.

Canada has a more important and constructive diplomatic role to play in Afghanistan as opposed to a military role. Since al-Qaida and its supporters are using Islam and out-of-context verses of the Qur'an -- the Muslim holy book -- to justify their terrorist activities and absurd so-called religious laws, Canada should undertake a quiet, but effective, diplomatic effort to insist that Muslim countries not only organize and implement a wide-scale Islamic educational campaign in every mosque, and every madrassa (religious seminary) to counter the jihadist religious arguments, but also raise international Muslim military contingents (excluding Pakistan and Iran) under the United Nations to replace the Canadian, U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

We in the West can provide the logistics, necessary training, and economic reconstruction support. However, Muslim soldiers should patrol the streets of Afghanistan and Muslim soldiers should hunt down the al-Qaida terrorists hiding in the deserts, hills and mountains of Afghanistan. This is a Muslim responsibility, because the majority of Muslims and their governments now acknowledge that the terrorists are misusing their Islamic religion, its sacred scripture and betraying the noble principles of jihad by killing innocent men, women and children -- Muslim and non-Muslim alike -- thus giving a bad image and name to their Islamic faith, their civilization and their honour.

Even if they stay for longer than 20 years, the Western military forces in Afghanistan that are hunting down al-Qaida terrorists and their supporters will not be able to

solve, but will rather exacerbate the jihadist and al-Qaida terrorism facing Afghanistan and the world. It will be safer, economical, and more effective if Canada designs a strategy with its NATO allies to get out of Afghanistan in nine to 12 months, and send in a well-trained and disciplined Muslim armed presence under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a program should be supported by meaningful Western economic reconstruction and development aid to pacify Afghanistan and to rid it of the remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Canada does not need to sacrifice lives and property to fight Al-Qaida and the terrorists. Some Muslims have created Al-Qaida terrorism. It is time to enable the majority of Muslims to fight against it intellectually, religiously and militarily.

**Riazuddin Ahmed**

Ahmed is president of Muslims for Peace & Justice (MPJ) and a member of the federal Cross-Cultural Roundtable on National Security.

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