



October 17, 2007

Dear Mr. Manley:

Re: Canada's Course of Action in Afghanistan

Congratulations on your appointment as leader of a non-partisan committee to recommend a course of action for Canada's post February 2009 NATO commitment in Afghanistan. You have an excellent team, and an important mandate.

On behalf of Bridges Social Development, a Canadian not for profit working to build human capacity in Yemen and other poorer Muslim countries, may we encourage your committee to consider the complementary roles of men and women in building peace and delivering security?

As you well know, both men and women value security. Historically, men and women have worked together to co-create the conditions for security to thrive. Men and women may approach the shared objective from slightly different angles – from early hunter/gatherer times, the feminine became the archetype nurturer, the masculine the archetype protector. We encourage you to look at Canada's role in Afghanistan through a contemporary gender prism.

Many males instinctively react to the threat of terrorism by beefing up policing and military forces. This protective reaction is well intended. But, it is not comprehensive. Based on our experience in Yemen and elsewhere, we know that mothers are hopeful about the chance for peace, stability and security when they observe people thinking about "we", and not "them and us". Worldview is critical. Do people recognize our global future as shared - as one indivisible fate? For mothers, this sense of security is often dependent on the degree to which their offspring – and youth across the world - share this worldview.

Men and women today have complementary roles in peace building; we need this diversity. To co-create resilient global security, we will need more than troop surge. We will need a surge in rejuvenating maternal forces - endless patience, and inexhaustible commitment to whatever engagement is required to transform our fears into a momentum capable of rising above obstacles placed in our way by nationality, economics, culture and faith. We need to recognize women in Afghanistan and women across the world as natural allies in this war against terrorism.

As leader of this non-partisan team, how can we support you in your efforts to ensure that male and female perspectives on how to build peace and security are respectfully invited and considered? We would welcome the opportunity to support meaningful dialogue on this question.

Many thanks,

Donna Kennedy-Glans

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