

Canada: Throne Speech Threatens to Extend the War

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Region: [Canada](#)

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Yesterday's Throne Speech poses a direct challenge to you and me, and everyone who wants to end Canada's war in Afghanistan.

Stephen Harper's plan to continue Canada's combat role has become crystal clear. He is trying to extend the war by another two years.

We now know that his plan is to go ahead with a parliamentary vote on extending the mission another two years until 2011, but he needs the support of another party's MPs because the Conservatives are in a minority.

So, based on advice from pollsters and strategists, Stephen Harper and General Hillier will spin the war as a humanitarian mission, all the while continuing the counter-insurgency fighting. He hopes this will help to divide the Liberal Party by convincing some Liberal MPs to support his military plan in the parliamentary vote.

You'll remember that last year Harper used the same strategy to great effect. He held a quick vote to extend the mission by two years until 2009, dividing the Liberals. He won the support of many Liberal MPs, such as Michael Ignatieff (while many more just stayed away from the vote), and managed to commit Canada to two more disastrous years of war.

Now Harper has created a terribly unbalanced "expert panel" on the future of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. The panel is led by former Liberal MP John Manley, who is a proponent of a "Fortress North America" with the United States.

Stephen Harper is counting on John Manley to lead pro-war, pro-Bush Liberals to support the Afghanistan war.

Manley is deeply worrisome. Last year, he told a conference Canada had to give up its sovereignty and create a continental security perimeter: "We've got to get away from this idea that sovereignty is an absolute that can never be compromised." He went on to say that "the most important obligation of the Canadian Prime Minister" is to improve relations with U.S. President George Bush.

The panel is filled with people who have been pushing George Bush's agenda in Canada for years, such as Pamela Wallin, who supported missile defence when she was Canada's Consul General in New York.

Two leaders of the arms industry join Manley and Wallin: Derek Burney and Paul Tellier, who

headed Canada's biggest military contractors, CAE and Bombardier, respectively. Tacked on is former Mulroney Cabinet minister Jake Epp.

The next few months will be crucial for us. We need to mount an intense lobbying and media campaign to ensure that Harper loses the vote to extend the mission. Canada's new defence minister, Peter MacKay, recently said that he will need to inform NATO before its next meeting in April 2008 of Canada's intentions. That means a vote will come before then.

I am urging you to [take action now, and send your letter](#) to Stephen Harper and all the party leaders in Parliament. Let's tell Harper that his so-called panel is biased, and in no way should the mission be extended to 2011. We want to end Canada's war in Afghanistan right away.

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