

The Politics of War

Canada's Afghanistan Mission,
2001–14

Jean-Christophe Boucher and
Kim Richard Nossal



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Preface

Canada's mission in Afghanistan began in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, when the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien joined the international military coalition led by the United States in helping to overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan. It ended in March 2014, when the Conservative government of Stephen Harper withdrew from the international coalition well in advance of its end date and refused to commit Canadian military forces to the follow-on mission, Operation Resolute Support, which began in January 2015. In those twelve and a half years, thousands of Canadian soldiers and civil servants were sent to Afghanistan to participate in a large-scale international mission. This mission was authorized by the United Nations Security Council and was legitimized by an international agreement signed by fifty-one states, including all permanent members of the UN Security Council, and ten international organizations. It was a bold and ambitious mission, designed to bring security and development to a country that had been at war since a bloody military coup in April 1978 had triggered an invasion by the Soviet Union in December 1979. But that international mission was not universally welcomed in Afghanistan. As a result, the "internationals" found themselves in a state of war with a variety of disparate forces in Afghanistan, many of them organized, financed, and controlled by the government of Pakistan and its security apparatus. Canadians, like all other members of the international community, were caught in this war. One hundred and fifty-nine members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) died while on mission in Afghanistan; a Canadian diplomat

was assassinated by the Taliban in Kandahar; a reporter embedded with the CAF was killed along with four soldiers when their light armoured vehicle (LAV) struck an improvised explosive device (IED); and two accountants working on a development assistance project for the Canadian International Development Agency were killed in a Taliban attack on a restaurant in Kabul. In addition, some two thousand Canadian soldiers were wounded in action, and hundreds suffered longer-term post-traumatic stress.

This book had its origins during that mission. Both of us were working independently, trying to unravel what we each thought was a puzzle: Canadians were fighting a war in Afghanistan with forces who regarded Canadians and other internationals in Afghanistan as enemies. Canadian soldiers were dying as a result. Yet the political elite in Ottawa was not treating this as a war; politicians were certainly not talking as though Canada was at war. More importantly, both of us were coming to the conclusion that political elites in Ottawa were using Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan as a means to score points against their political opponents back home. Why was there such a deep disconnect between what was happening on the ground in Afghanistan and how this war was being treated by politicians in Ottawa? To make some sense of that disconnect, we decided to join forces. This book is the result.

Some of the chapters began life as conference papers and journal articles written while the Afghanistan mission was still ongoing. All have been rewritten by both of us and fully updated for this book. Chapter 3 had its origins in Jean-Christophe Boucher's examination of efforts by Canadian politicians to justify the mission ("Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada's Military Intervention, 2001–08," *International Journal* 64, 3 [2009]: 717–33), and in a conference paper by Kim Richard Nossal that was given to the Association for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand in 2010 on how the Afghanistan mission was justified in Australia and Canada. A shorter version of Chapter 7, by both of us, was published as "Did Minority Government Matter? Thinking Counterfactually about the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan," in Adam Chapnick and Christopher J. Kukucha, eds., *The Harper Era in Canadian Foreign Policy: Parliament, Politics, and Canada's Global Posture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 73–88. Chapter 9 had its origins in a 2008 conference paper by Nossal that compared how Canadians and Australians commemorated those who died in Afghanistan, and in a journal article by Boucher ("Evaluating the 'Trenton Effect': Canadian Public Opinion and Military Casualties in Afghanistan [2006–2010]," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, 2 [2010]: 237–58). Parts of Chapter 10 appeared in Boucher and Nossal, "Lessons Learned? Public Opinion and the Afghanistan Mission," in Fen Osler Hampson and Stephen

M. Saideman, eds., *Canada among Nations, 2015: Elusive Pursuits* (Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2015), 73–93.

A Note on Sources

Many of the sources we used for this book are found online, but like a growing number of authors, we have chosen not to litter our notes with URLs. Not only can URLs be exceedingly long, but they also tend to become stale very quickly, a function of the tendency of organizations to periodically reorganize their websites and relocate the materials they post online. Thus, only in cases where a source cannot be readily accessed by entering its title into a search engine do we provide a URL. In the case of newspaper articles, the citation of a page number indicates we accessed the newspaper in the original print edition.

Canadian government sources pose a particular problem. We wish that all agencies of the Canadian state organized themselves online as the Parliament of Canada does. At the parliamentary website – www.parl.gc.ca – one can find every parliamentary resource since 1867, in searchable HTML form going back to the 35th Parliament in 1996, and in searchable digitized form back to Confederation. Comprehensive and easy to use, it is a magnificent resource for students of Canadian government and politics.

By contrast, the records of the executive branch are, to put it bluntly, a complete mess. The Afghanistan mission occurred during three different ministries (the 26th ministry, under Jean Chrétien; the 27th, under Paul Martin; and the 28th, under Stephen Harper). Unfortunately, unlike the legislative branch, which provides a seamless record regardless of changes in government, the records of Canadian ministries are jagged and not at all continuous. The arrival of a new government immediately renders much of the “output” of the previous government completely invisible. Because the Canadian government refuses to use stable URLs for its documents, many of the URLs used by previous governments simply disappear in a frustrating welter of 404 errors. Many websites, such as the prime minister’s website – pm.gc.ca – automatically redirect any URL with that address to the present incumbent’s splash page.

To be sure, the Privy Council Office does provide an archive of the websites of recent prime ministers, but because it is an archived site, navigation is exceedingly difficult. Unlike Parliament’s website, there is no easy search function on the former prime ministers’ site.

The situation is even worse for ministers and their departments: the statements and speeches of ministers of national defence and foreign affairs before 2015 are simply not located in a predictable place. Finding their speeches, government reports, and other written material from departments

and agencies is entirely hit-and-miss. Some material can still be found on departmental websites (via search engines rather than on a clear path from the agency's splash page); some material has been archived with Library and Archives Canada, while some documents have simply disappeared into the mist (one day, one hopes, they will eventually show up in LAC).

In the meantime, some key resources relating to Afghanistan have already been archived by Library and Archives Canada.¹ We also provide additional resources at the companion website to this book: thepoliticsofwar.com.

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Introduction:

The Domestic Politics of Canada's Afghanistan Mission

Going to war – committing the armed forces and the financial resources of the state to an armed struggle against others for political ends – is one of the gravest policy decisions that a government can make. Using force as an instrument of policy invariably and inexorably involves the purposeful killing and wounding of other human beings and the conscious destruction of property and livelihoods. Using force as an instrument of national policy puts members of the armed forces and other agents of the state in harm's way, exposing them to the possibility of death or injury. Using force often has unintended consequences, producing what is euphemistically called collateral damage,¹ catching many who are truly innocent, such as small children, in the process. In addition, going to war always involves a step into the unknown. Carl von Clausewitz, the nineteenth-century Prussian general whose strategic insights on the nature of war are still taught today, reminds us that going to war puts one in “the realm of chance.”² When a government makes the decision to use force, Clausewitz argued, nothing can be certain. If war is, as he put it, a “wondrous trinity” that consists of violent emotion, chance, and rational calculation, then these three elements will inevitably interact in inherently unstable, and highly unpredictable, ways.³

Because of the grim and uncertain consequences of using force, political leaders who make the decision to put their community in a state of war with others in the international system are assumed to have important objectives, usually conceptualized as “national interests,” at stake. Such national interests must be capable of being openly articulated and readily understood. As Clausewitz vigorously argued, war is, after all, but a means to a political

end that needs to be articulated by political leaders. Thus, for example, when a political leader telephones the family of a soldier killed in action to convey condolences and the formal gratitude of the nation, the family – and the wider community – needs to be assured that the ultimate sacrifice made by their loved one was for a worthwhile political objective.

Why do we begin our exploration of Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 with the kind of abstract and generic observations that one normally finds in textbooks on the causes and consequences of war?⁴ We do so because we believe that we cannot understand what Canada and Canadians were doing in Afghanistan unless we frame it as Canada’s *war* in Afghanistan. However, as we shall see, this is not how Canadian political leaders framed it. Rather, it was commonly called Canada’s *mission* in Afghanistan, and Canadian politicians have arranged it, as we will see, so that in the future Canadians will remember it as a mission rather than what it was – a war.

The terminology is important. As Noah Richler has argued, it matters how we speak about the use of force in global politics.⁵ It matters that for the twelve and a half years that Canadians were at war in Afghanistan, their governors back home seldom admitted that Canada was at war and instead used words like “mission” or “engagement” to characterize what the Canadian state was doing in that country. And it matters that Canadian politicians never framed Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan in the way a textbook on war does: for not only did that mean Canadian politicians were never able to make sense of the mission to Canadians, but also that Canadians never got an opportunity to discuss the mission as a war. Indeed, as we will see, Canada’s two main political parties conspired with each other to make sure that Canada’s war in Afghanistan eventually became as invisible as possible. The result was that Canadians went through four elections – in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2011 – without the war that Canada was engaged in ever being an election issue.

And yet what was happening in Afghanistan mattered to the large numbers of Canadians, both military and civilian, who were deployed there. There were approximately 40,000 deployments of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014.⁶ Of those, 2,071 were wounded, including 635 wounded in action; over 7,000 veterans qualified for disability benefits. In addition, many CAF veterans of the mission suffered from post-traumatic stress long after their return home, with so many committing suicide that it became a major issue.⁷ While on service in Afghanistan, 159 members of the CAF lost their lives, the vast majority killed in action.⁸ Glyn Berry, a diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (as it was then known⁹), was killed in a suicide

bombing attack in Kandahar in January 2006. Martin Glazer and Peter McSheffrey, two accountants working on a Canadian-funded development assistance project, were killed in a Taliban suicide attack in Kabul in January 2014. A journalist embedded with the CAF, Michelle Lang, of the *Calgary Herald*, was killed along with four Canadian soldiers when the LAV III (light armoured vehicle) in which they were riding hit a roadside bomb in Dand district in December 2009.¹⁰ In addition, five other Canadians working in Afghanistan, but not connected to the mission, lost their lives as a result of insurgent attacks.¹¹ In short, Canada was at war, regardless of what politicians in Ottawa chose to call it.

The careful avoidance of the word “war” was purposeful and deeply political, and that is our argument in this book. Because Canadian politicians refused to frame what Canada was doing there as war, they could not – and did not – talk to Canadians in the political terms necessary to sustain a fight. And when Canadians began to die as a result of being at war, Canada’s political leaders could never articulate precisely *why* those who had fallen had made the supreme sacrifice in terms that made sense to their fellow Canadians. Instead, as we will see, Canada’s politicians played politics with the engagement in Afghanistan, trying to use the mission as a political football for partisan advantage, *without really caring about what was happening in Afghanistan itself*. We acknowledge that this is a harsh indictment of Canada’s politicians, but we argue that the available evidence allows no other conclusion.

That fundamental disjuncture between the experience of Canadians on the ground in Afghanistan and how Canadian politicians were treating the mission back in Canada is what made the Afghanistan mission so political. The politics of Canada’s war in Afghanistan revolved around two very different sets of “games” being played. In the post-9/11 era, it was common to frame the “war on terror” as comprising two games – the “home game” and the “away game.” In this view, the away game is the fight against violent jihadist extremism¹² that is carried out beyond North America; the home game is the domestic response to “homegrown” terror.¹³

In this book, we adapt the metaphor to argue that Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan occurred in two comparable and largely distinct spheres: “away” in Afghanistan, and “at home” in Canada. And although the game metaphor is deeply entrenched in the national security literature as a way to portray the deadly serious business of making national security policy,¹⁴ in this book we use it ironically to stress its original non-serious meaning. We use the game metaphor to underscore the degree to which the Afghanistan mission *should* have been taken seriously by Canadian politicians but instead was treated by them just like a game. Canadian politicians played

politics with the mission, seeing it as something to be played for maximum domestic political advantage. In that sense, Canadian political elites used the war itself as a political end, making a travesty of Clausewitz's theory of war.

Our focus in this book is on the home game, the domestic politics of the Afghanistan mission, how – and why – Canada's politicians framed the mission as they did, and how – and why – they eventually tried to use the mission for political advantage. In other words, much of the policy decisionmaking surrounding Canada's war in Afghanistan was determined by domestic, internal, politically motivated factors. By extension, what happened in Afghanistan had less impact on the direction, duration, and nature of Canada's contribution to international stabilization efforts in that country.

Plan of the Book

The chapters in this book examine the interlinked nature of domestic politics and the engagement in Afghanistan. We begin with an examination of the away game. Chapter 1 provides readers with a brief survey of what Canadians were doing in Afghanistan from October 2001 to March 2014, underscoring the wide range of activities that came with the different roles that the Canadian government undertook during its commitment to the broader international mission in Afghanistan. The chapter does not seek to provide a full history of the mission, for that remains to be written. Our survey does, however, rely heavily on the existing literature on the Canadian engagement in Afghanistan.¹⁵ There is also a burgeoning literature on Canadian military operations in that country. The definitive account is the magisterial multi-volume history of the Canadian Army in Afghanistan by Sean M. Maloney, a historian at the Royal Military College of Canada.¹⁶ But there is also a substantial literature on the combat mission from 2005 to 2011.¹⁷ Our survey seeks to establish the huge disjuncture between what was going on in Afghanistan – the away game – and what was happening in Canada – the home game.

Our exploration of the home game begins with an examination of how this war was characterized by Canada's political elites. The framing efforts of Canadian politicians, we argue in Chapter 2, was crucial to the home game, for it set the stage for politicization of the mission by both the major parties in Parliament, the Liberals and the Conservatives.

In Chapter 3, we look at the justifications offered by Canadian politicians for Canada's mission in Afghanistan. As we noted at the outset, no democratic government can avoid trying to explain to its citizens why it is going to war. We thus explore how, through their public speeches, political elites attempted to legitimize Canada's war in Afghanistan. Our results show that the Canadian government's message on Afghanistan was, simply put,

chaotic. Through three prime ministers – Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper – the messaging and the rationales for the mission kept shifting as governments sought to explain to an increasingly skeptical Canadian public why Canada was in Afghanistan – but without ever levelling with that public.

Normally Parliament does not play a major role in Canadian foreign and defence policy, which is the exclusive prerogative of the executive.¹⁸ But the House of Commons continues to be an important arena where politicians confront each other on key policy issues. Moreover, Parliament's importance increases when elections result in minority governments, and in the case of the Afghanistan mission, there was a minority government for seven of the mission's twelve and a half years. These exceptional circumstances enhanced the role played by the House of Commons, where both Conservative and Liberal politicians used the institution to politicize, and then depoliticize, the mission in Afghanistan. Three chapters examine the different impacts of Parliament on the mission. Chapter 4 analyzes the debates in the House of Commons on the mission and outlines the degree to which Canadian politicians played politics with the mission, in particular, how the Conservative government sought to “launder” the combat mission through the House of Commons in order to increase its legitimacy and force the Liberal opposition to share responsibility for what was properly an executive decision.

Chapter 5 explores the relationship between Harper Conservatives and the Liberal opposition and the odd “bipartisanship” that evolved on the issue of Canada's intervention in Afghanistan – it must be rendered in quotation marks because, as we show, the bipartisanship was entirely faux. In essence, Canada's mission in Afghanistan evolved always with the threat of a federal election. In this chapter, we analyze how electoral politics prompted the two major parties to cooperate with one another to take Afghanistan off the political agenda, fashioning a policy on Afghanistan that was not driven at all by the situation in Afghanistan itself.

But the cooperation between the Liberal opposition and the Conservative government to take the Afghanistan mission off the table was quite limited. Over the course of the mission, both the opposition and the government used one relatively minor aspect of the mission – the treatment of Afghans detained by Canadian soldiers – as an issue to score political points against each other. Chapter 6 looks at the politicization of the issue and how politicians on all sides played politics with detainees.

Much of the Afghanistan mission occurred during minority governments: the Liberal government under Paul Martin (2004–06) and the two Conservative governments under Stephen Harper (2006–08 and 2008–11).

Chapter 7 examines the argument that it was the succession of minority governments that best explains the politics of the mission. Using counterfactual analysis, we show that the minority position of the government between 2004 and 2011 did not have any impact on policy outcomes, leading us to conclude that the gamesmanship of all the parties in Parliament was largely meaningless.

We then look at the key shaper of the home game: how Canadians viewed the mission. A crucial determinant of decisions on the Afghanistan mission was Canadian public opinion. Chapter 8 examines how public opinion evolved and how it affected the mission. Our examination of public opinion surveys suggests that Canadians did not believe the mission was a good idea and that their views were fairly stable over the years of the mission. However, we suggest that it is problematic to talk about the “Canadian public” in the singular. All too often, the word “Canada” is used to represent a multiplicity of views over a specific issue that often masks regional differences. In the case of the Afghanistan mission, the “Canadian perspective” was always a continuum between the views of Québec and Alberta. It would be more accurate to talk about multiple mass *publics* instead of attributing aggregated results to a fictional singular Canadian public.

One of the key drivers of public opinion on Afghanistan was the reaction to the casualties being suffered by the Canadian Armed Forces. In Chapter 9, we consider how the successive Canadian governments under Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper developed and changed their attitudes towards the commemoration of Canada’s war dead in Afghanistan. In Canada, obsequies for those killed in Afghanistan were not designed to provide the political community as a whole with opportunities to participate in the memorialization of those who died in the service of their country. With the singular exception of the four friendly fire deaths in 2002, the commemoration of Canada’s war dead in Afghanistan was structured to emphasize the private, the regimental or, on some occasions, the local. In Canada, war has historically been divisive, exposing the contradictions in a political community that has never been able to create a singular nationalism. While Canadians, both English-speaking and French-speaking, have been supportive of their armed forces, the shadow of past wars has meant that Canadian political elites are disinclined to celebrate the contribution of the armed forces with the nation.

In Chapter 9, we also analyze how casualties suffered in Afghanistan influenced the Canadian public and whether such tragedies were associated with public opposition to the mission. Results suggest the regional divide we discuss in Chapter 8 had an important impact on perceptions with respect

to casualties. Indeed, when considering opposition to the Kandahar deployment in Ontario, British Columbia, and Québec, we see that casualties were, to various degrees, a factor in determining whether respondents disagreed with the federal government's decision to participate in combat operations in Afghanistan. By contrast, the data on Alberta, the Atlantic provinces, and the Prairies suggest instead that casualties were less of a factor on public opinion in these regions. This regional particularity overlaps with the polarization of public opinion, party affiliation, and cultural factors, which could explain why some provinces were more sensitive towards casualties than others.

In Chapter 10, we look at why public opinion, despite being against a military intervention in Afghanistan, did not mobilize to oppose the mission and prompt the government to reconsider its decision. This chapter illustrates how policymakers and public opinion are integrated in a dynamic system of influences that evolves into an open causal relationship. It also demonstrates how, even when dealing with matters related to foreign and defence policy, it is imperative to understand how domestic constraints interact to produce policies that are often dissociated from actual events on the field of operation.

While each chapter in this book can stand on its own – for each examines different aspects of the politics of the Afghanistan mission between 2001 and 2014 – there is nonetheless a logical progression to our argument. We begin by looking at the mission as it unfolded in Afghanistan. We then look at how politicians sought to sell that mission to Canadians, seeking to show the profound disconnect between this political framing and what was actually happening on the ground in Afghanistan. We then examine how political elites dealt with the mission, focusing on Parliament. These chapters reveal that policymakers of all political stripes were mostly unprepared to deal with the domestic political dimension of Canada's presence in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. In this context, it is our contention that the government's actions during this time period were *mostly* responsive and adapting to internal domestic constraints. The final three chapters look at aspects of public opinion, demonstrating the degree to which the mission was not popular among Canadians. The final substantive chapter examines the role and influence of Canadian public opinion during the Afghan deployment and tries to understand the relationship between policymakers and the citizenry. In essence, these chapters close the loop of the domestic sources of Canada's policy towards Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.

We conclude the book with a brief reflection on the normative lessons offered by our examination of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. We show

that politicians in Ottawa abdicated their responsibility to the voters in two ways. First, they were unwilling to take Canadians into their confidence: politicians refused to frame the mission as a war and to explain to Canadians why committing blood and treasure to this war was the right thing to do. Second, by playing politics with the mission – using it to try to score points against other players and to maximize their own partisan advantage – Canada’s politicians broke faith not only with those whom they had sent into battle, but also with the broader political community. Eventually the governing Conservatives and the Liberal opposition, for purely partisan reasons, simply didn’t mention the war; they didn’t try to explain the war; they didn’t try to justify the war. They just agreed with each other to rag the puck until the clock ran out and the mission could be brought to an end, regardless of what was happening in Afghanistan itself. We conclude that this was ignominious behaviour, and Canadians – in particular, those who were put in harm’s way by their governors – deserved much better.

Before we move to an examination of the framing of the mission, we have four final caveats about terminology:

First, although we use the phrase “Canada’s Afghanistan mission” in the singular, in fact Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 until 2014 went through a number of different phases, as we will see in Chapter 1.

Second, we should keep in mind the wise observation of the historian Adam Chapnick that “the Canadian mission in Afghanistan” is, in fact, a myth concocted by Canadian politicians and repeated uncritically by the media – and by academics, like us – to the point where the mythology has become embedded as reality. But, as Chapnick reminds us, what Canadians were doing in Afghanistan was not *the Canadian mission in Afghanistan*, but rather *Canada’s contribution to the multinational mission in Afghanistan*,¹⁹ particularly Operation Enduring Freedom, led by the United States, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The international missions in Afghanistan were requested by the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; authorized by the UN Security Council;²⁰ and legitimized by the 2006 Afghanistan Compact, an international agreement signed by fifty-one states, including all permanent members of the UN Security Council, and ten international organizations, including the UN, NATO, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation was known before 2011).²¹

Third, it may strike some readers as odd that, although we argue that Canada was engaged in a war in Afghanistan, we use the same euphemistic term, mission, not only in our title but also throughout the book. Might it not be

argued that in so doing, we are perpetuating and entrenching what we ourselves, in the next chapter, call the “disguise”? It is true that many books on Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan use the word “war” in their title, more accurately reflecting what Canada was doing in that country.²² While we recognize the euphemism disguises reality, we decided to use the word that will be most familiar to Canadians. We hope that readers of this book will recognize that we use it ironically.

Finally, while political scientist Stephen M. Saideman explicitly uses the word “war” to refer only to those parts of Canada’s engagement in Afghanistan that involved the missions that were the most “kinetic”²³ (the military’s preferred euphemism for operations in which people are killed and injured) – in other words, the “combat mission” in Kandahar between 2005 and 2011 – we take a more Hobbesian approach to an understanding of war. Thomas Hobbes insisted that we think of war not as just observable kinetic operations or combat, but rather as the *absence of peace*:

For WARRE, consisteth not in Battel onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battel is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *Time*, is to be considered in the nature of Warre ... So the nature of War, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.²⁴

In this view, Canada was at war in Afghanistan even before Canada’s special operations forces (SOF) were secretly deployed to the country in the fall of 2001. More importantly, Canada remained at war throughout the next twelve and a half years, and not just during the combat mission in Kandahar from 2005 to 2011.

Indeed, Canada continues to be at war in Afghanistan, long after the withdrawal in March 2014, even though Canada is not one of the forty countries – both NATO allies and non-NATO countries like Australia and New Zealand – that maintain nearly thirteen thousand personnel in Afghanistan for the NATO-led Resolute Support mission that continued after the ISAF mission came to an end in December 2014. For the “known disposition” of those who consider themselves to be Canada’s enemies to fight and kill Canadians (and other “internationals”) in Afghanistan continues unabated, and there certainly remains “no assurance to the contrary.” It is why the Canadian government officials who remain in Afghanistan today live and work in heavily fortified and guarded compounds and are driven around Kabul in convoys of armoured Toyota Land Cruisers. It is why all the internationals in Afghanistan – and the security forces they employ to

guard them – continue to be targeted by insurgents, as were the Nepalese security guards who worked for the Canadian embassy in Kabul, fourteen of whom were killed by the Taliban in a suicide bombing in June 2016. It is why Canadians are strongly advised by their government not even to travel to Afghanistan. For that Hobbesian time of war extended long after the Canadian mission was brought to an end in 2014.