

An Atlantic Council of Canada Roundtable with;

Major Peter St. Denis

Commander, Civil-Military (CIMIC) Company with
Task Force 3-08 Operation Athena in Afghanistan

‘Civilian Military Operation: Accomplishing Aid in Afghanistan’

March 17, 2010. The Atlantic Council of Canada

The Atlantic Council of Canada, its members and guests were privileged to hear the valuable insights of Major Peter St. Denis of the CIMIC Company and his views on the civilian military operations in Afghanistan.

Prior to his posting as commander of CIMIC with Task Force 3-08 Operation Athena, Major St. Denis has served as a UN Peacekeeper in Cyprus, where he was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross for his actions during an armed stand-off on the Green Line, transferred to the Army Reserve in 1990 and had a full-time career in policing with the Peel Regional Police Service. After 15 years of policing, Major St. Denis became a college professor with Mohawk College and was a visiting instructor at several police schools, including the FBI Academy in Virginia. Following a range of regimental appointments, Major St. Denis volunteered to deploy as the commander of the CIMIC Company, and in August, 2008, led the first elements of his CIMIC Company to Afghanistan to work for the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (KPRT).

Major St. Denis spoke to ACC members and guests about his reflections on reconstruction in Afghanistan, particularly in the province of Kandahar. He offered his perspectives on the different facets of the reconstruction process in Kandahar, and the logistical and tactical aspects of the operations he was involved in. He spoke about capacity building, and the importance of working with the Afghan National Development Strategy, which comprised of governance, reconstruction and security. By supporting the Afghans, Major St. Denis validated their willingness in cooperating and collaborating with CIMIC operations. With 8 CIMIC teams throughout Kandahar province, Major St. Denis was instrumental in the mitigation between military forces on the ground and the local Afghan communities. He explained the role of CIMIC as predominantly a liaison between the military force and the civilian population, and active in the coordination of military support to the civilian population, as well as the coordination of civilian support to the military force.

Major St. Denis' presentation provided ACC members and guests an insider's perspective on the reconstruction efforts in Kandahar, a strategic region that shares a border with Pakistan. His contributions to Canadian reconstruction efforts in Kandahar have been significant, and he promoted the work of the CIMIC teams as an integral part of the reconstruction and rebuilding process of Kandahar. Major St. Denis' experiences in Afghanistan have given him a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the impact of the conflict on the civilian population, which will be a vital part of the reconstruction process and towards building a sustainable peace in Afghanistan.