

PACKET & TIMES

Printed from www.orilliapacket.com web site Monday, May 14, 2007 - © 2007 Orillia Packet & Times

We owe it to our children to change

Saturday, May 12, 2007 - 09:00

Editorial - I support our troops, unequivocally. That should go without saying, but anyone who "dares" to express concern about the Harper government's handling of the mission in Afghanistan will have their patriotism questioned, and with "Bush-like" logic will be accused of disloyalty to our troops.

It is evident that I am not alone in having serious doubts about the leadership of the prime minister, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, his Minister of Public Safety and his Minister of Defence. According to a recently released SES Research-Sun Media poll, more Canadians disapprove of the Conservatives' handling of the mission than approve, and an astounding 67 per cent feel that our presence in Afghanistan is making us less safe from terrorist attacks here at home.

Our soldiers are working hard in Afghanistan. No one is questioning their skills, their professionalism or their integrity. What is being questioned is the terrible position they have been forced into by the abject failure of leadership of the Conservative government. Canadian soldiers have been facing the likelihood of contravening international law under the Geneva Convention just for following orders. The men and women of our armed forces protect us through their selfless work at home and abroad, and they put their lives on the line for us. They need to trust that they have the protection of the Geneva Convention.

Not only does the government not have a clear plan, but it is resisting every effort to formulate one. When asked to commit to a 2009 withdrawal, they voted against it, leaving the mission with no end in sight.

So, important questions still need to be asked. What is Gordon O'Connor's strategy for success in Afghanistan? Can the government begin being honest with Canadians about this critical mission? Demanding these answers is one of the most important ways we can show our support for our troops and protect Canada's international reputation.

John Waite

Federal Liberal candidate for Simcoe North

ID- 526126

© 2007 , Osprey Media. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.