

Canada's achievements in Afghanistan worthy of pride

By TIM DUNNE

Miles Tompkins' response ("No such convention," Nov. 27) to my Nov. 25 letter to the editor ("Illogical leap") makes several illogical leaps of its own.

His comment that NATO's Article 5 is subservient to Article 51 of the UN Charter is simply incorrect. The UN Charter's Article 51 states, in part: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of the individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."

The day after 9-11, the UN Security Council condemned the attacks. In the next three months, it passed another five resolutions condemning the Taliban for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for the export of terrorism, and authorized the establishment of the NATO-led, UN-approved International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Mr. Tompkins asks, "What kind of mutual-support organization is NATO ... [when it] cannot make even a simple gesture to support Turkey when it was recently attacked by a non-member?"

Did Turkey bring this matter to the alliance for a response? For NATO to bring its military forces uninvited into Turkey, or any other allied nation, is, very simply, a military invasion, a situation which stretches the limits of improbability.

When Turkey requested NATO assistance under Article 4 in 2003, in response to a possible Iraqi attack, it did receive NATO support — AWACS aircraft, Patriot air defence missile batteries, and stand-by forces. I was a member of that NATO preventive force at the Turkish military bases at Konya and Diyarbakir.

NATO's assistance must be requested by a member nation.

Mr. Tompkins incorrectly attributes to me that Canada has a longstanding practice of "pre-emptive engagement."

Military pre-emption would have us strike militarily at an adversary before that adversary can strike at us. Canada has never used military pre-emption.

Afghanistan's Taliban government sheltered and supported al-Qaida, making the attack on the Pentagon, the destruction of the World Trade Center, and the hijacking and crashing of three passenger airliners, with the resulting 2,977 fatalities, a classic case study in state-sponsored terrorism.

My comment was that Canada practised "projected defence." This was the nature of our involvement in the Second World War, Korean War, first Gulf War and Afghanistan.

The effect of "projected defence" is to engage our terrorist adversaries in Afghanistan and deal with the matter there, rather than allow them the opportunity to engage us here, in Canada, on Canadian soil, putting Canadian lives in jeopardy.

Canada responded to an attack on an ally; Canada is helping the Afghan people cope with the aftermath of the fall of an unspeakably cruel government that was medieval in its treatment of its own people; and Canada is helping to bring Afghans into the modern age.

I trust that Mr. Tompkins sees the achievements in Afghanistan of our Canadian Forces, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canadian International Development Agency, RCMP and police services, and Corrections Canada with

the same pride as I do.

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