

Panel airs plan for Canada's Afghan role

by UPI

OTTAWA - Canada must emphasize diplomacy and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and its military must move from combat to training Afghan forces, a panel recommended. "We are recommending a Canadian commitment to Afghanistan that is neither open-ended nor faint-hearted," the report released by the advisory panel Tuesday said. The panel, led by former Cabinet minister John Manley, was established to offer recommendations on Canada's future role in Afghanistan once its current military commitment ends in February 2009, the Toronto Star reported. Manley said Canada's objective "is to enable the Afghans to manage their own security." The panel recommends Canada's military mission be extended past February 2009, provided two key conditions are met: One, that a new international military group is deployed to Kandahar Province so Canadian forces can step up their training of the Afghan National Army. Two, that medium-lift helicopters and high-performance unmanned aerial vehicles be available by February 2009. If these conditions aren't met, the panel recommends Canada alert NATO and the Afghan government that it intends to leave its security detail in Kandahar.

Â© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Panel airs plan for Canada's Afghan role by UPI