

OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)

Friday, April 27, 2007

Afghanistan

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, this has been a week of chaos, confusion and cover-up for the Conservatives, a political gong show at the expense of our international reputation and the Canadian military.

The Prime Minister and his ministers have all stated that Afghan detainees were not abused. The international community has stated otherwise. Evidence of torture is undeniable.

The government is in utter disarray. When will the Prime Minister stop misleading Canadians, tell the truth, do the right thing, and fire his Minister of National Defence?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I am stunned that the opposition continues to repeat false accusations and undermine our troops.

I reference the following CBC report. Responding to news that Canadians have a new arrangement to inspect detention facilities, Dutch Major General Ton van Loon said he has not heard of any specific cases of abuse in the six months he has been in charge of NATO troops. "I have not been given any reason to think that they would take place," van Loon said". He and his officials talk regularly with Afghan police and the country's intelligence service, and with a name like van Loon, I have to respect him.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the government must realize that it is in complete chaos. It is a disgrace.

The Conservatives do not know how many detainees have been turned over to the Afghans. They do not know where they are. They do not know who is holding them. They do not even know what prisons they are in. How can they claim that these detainees were not abused?

When will the Prime Minister show some leadership, take some action, and fire Canada's version of Donald Rumsfeld?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, in the Sarpoza prison facility just west of Kandahar city there are 838 detainees, alleged terrorists, and 138 of them are kept in what is called the national security component of that particular facility.

There are 40 alleged terrorists and other suspects in the national directory security facility, which is a separate one, and in the third facility, which is run by the Afghan police, there are 35. We have had access to those three facilities.

The opposition should cease making these false allegations and should cease carrying these allegations that are brought forward by Taliban suspects because they are hurting our troops.

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