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## New general in command of Canadian troops in Afghanistan

*The Canadian Press*

*Updated: Thu. Nov. 19 2009 7:47 AM ET*

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The incoming commander of Canadian Forces in Afghanistan is preparing to change the focus of counter-insurgency efforts as he deals with the possibility NATO will once again enlarge the area under Canadian control.

Brig.-Gen. Daniel Menard said Thursday he plans to increase troop levels in the province's dangerous capital, marking a shift from existing strategy concerned largely with rural areas southwest of the city.

"We will be putting a lot of emphasis on Kandahar city," Menard said. "Kandahar city, for me, remains centre of gravity. It is certainly key terrain and it needs to be taken care of."

Menard's efforts in Kandahar city are expected to be bolstered by further additions of U.S. troops, who are likely to fall under Canadian command.

The NATO general in charge of southern Afghanistan, Nick Carter, is slated to issue orders by Monday that could significantly change the territory and resources under Menard's control.

According to Menard, up to four more U.S. units could come under Canadian command.

"This is critical for me in order to move forward," he said. "Number of troops does make a difference."

Menard took over Thursday as commander of Task Force Kandahar from Brig.-Gen. Jonathan Vance, whose so-called "model-village approach" had won praise from Canada's NATO allies.

"There is much that others can learn from what the Canadian Task Force has achieved in the last nine months," Carter said at the transfer of command ceremony.

"Canada had provided a model of how modern counter-insurgency should be prosecuted."

Under Vance, Canada's area of responsibility shrunk by more than half last summer with a surge in U.S. troops.

He took the opportunity to concentrate Canadian efforts in a series of villages in Dand district, which saw a drop in insurgent activity during his tenure.

But Menard acknowledged the possibility that ISAF headquarters could once again enlarge Canada's area of operation.

"I am expecting some orders over the next two days," he said.

Menard also promised to help Kandahar Gov. Tooryalai Wesa deal with corruption in the province.

This comes as Hamid Karzai was sworn in for a second term as president of Afghanistan following a scandal-plagued election.

Menard is the sixth commanders of the Canadian task force in Kandahar. There are close to 2,800 troops under his command.

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# Top general says coalition likely to provide extra forces for Kandahar surge

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Canada's top general in Afghanistan says he plans to continue the model-village approach pioneered by his predecessor.

Brig. Gen. Daniel Menard says coalition forces are likely to provide Canada with enough additional resources to focus both on Kandahar city and rural areas of the province.

Menard took over last week from Brig. Gen. Jonathan Vance, who experimented with concentrating Canadian troops in districts southwest of the city.

Vance's strategy had met with much praise from Canada's NATO allies.

Menard announced last week he wanted to increase force levels in Kandahar city, raising concerns he would not have enough resources to sustain operations in rural Kandahar.

Canada has 2,800 troops based in Afghanistan.

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Brig. Gen. Daniel Menard, speaks with local Afghan journalists, in Kandahar Afghanistan, on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ Jonathan Montpetit

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