

Pentagon calls in British drama squad

Christina Lamb
Washington

THE world's most powerful army has called in a tiny London theatre company to educate it about Afghanistan.

The Tricycle Theatre group will perform two Pentagon com-

mand performances of its six-hour marathon, *The Great Game*, next month. Its audience will be generals, soldiers about to be deployed to Afghanistan and wounded veterans.

The theatrical masterclass comes as Washington prepares to send an extra 1,400 marines

to southern Afghanistan in a "mini-surge" to prepare for a tough spring fighting season.

With the conflict now in its 10th year and 97,000 US troops already on the ground, President Barack Obama is facing growing criticism from within his own party. Lynn Woolsey, a

Democratic congresswoman, called Afghanistan an "epic failure and a national embarrassment" last week.

While Americans may have been condescending about the role of the British troops in Helmand, as quoted in recent leaked cables on WikiLeaks,

their commanding officers have decided that British soldiers can teach them lessons.

The *Great Game* covers the troubled history of British involvement in Afghanistan from the first Anglo-Afghan war of 1839-42, and