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# Retired commander shares TV insights

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**BYLINE:** RAVEENA AULAKH  
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**WORD COUNT:** 303

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Television sound bites grab the attention that conflict deserves, but it's the subsequent reporting and comment in newspapers and radio that do justice to the stories, says Lewis MacKenzie, the retired major-general.

MacKenzie, known for leading peacekeeping troops in the former Yugoslavia, gave the keynote address Saturday night at the University of Waterloo's homecoming celebration.

He commanded soldiers in the Gaza Strip, Cyprus, Vietnam and shot into the limelight in 1992, when he took command of the Sarajevo sector during the Balkans conflict.

In his UW lecture, MacKenzie tried to answer the question: Is the media a weapon?

And during a talk that drew on MacKenzie's personal experiences, the audience listened in rapt attention.

While appreciating TV's role in war reporting, MacKenzie looked back with appreciation at a time when news was sent back home, carefully read and understood before experts were brought in for discussion.

"Now, it's all about live reporting," MacKenzie said.

"It's painful that people make decisions on what is being reported from one place even though hundreds of other things may be going on simultaneously."

He said TV coverage often lacks depth because of the lack of time.

Radio, on the other hand, can be a brilliant medium that invests time in programming, he said.

MacKenzie also marvelled at the impact of TV.

He recalled he was once chewing gum while the UN flag was being hoisted. CNN used a three-second clip of the event, and the next day, MacKenzie received bags of letters, mostly ripping him for chewing gum.

"That's when I started to understand the impact of TV."

He was critical of the media's practice of leading with tragic news.

"If it bleeds, it leads for sure," he said, adding that international development is not "a sexy story, which is why not many positive stories are being reported out of Afghanistan."

MacKenzie frequently drew laughs from the audience of more than 200 during an hour-long lecture that was, was eloquent, witty and humorous, drawing.

He peppered the lecture with anecdotes from his peacekeeping missions, some funny, some serious.

"CNN was an outstanding, reliable news organization till Fox came along," he said. "Then, it had to compete."

Earlier, MacKenzie was introduced by UW president David Johnston, who said Canada took up peacekeeping 50 years ago, so it was fitting the country's best-known peacekeeper speak at the university's 50th homecoming.

raulakh@therecord.com

# Afghanistan must talk with Taliban, official says

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**PAGE:** A2  
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Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the security situation has not improved for ordinary Afghans and negotiation with the insurgents is the best, and maybe the only option to make it better, says the head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province.

Abdul Qadar Noorzai also said over the weekend that he will be investigating the shootings of a religious scholar and his brother, whose deaths prompted a demonstration against foreign troops last week.

But Noorzai said the civilian death toll will continue to climb until the government and foreign troops improve security — something they've failed to do so far.

"The government does not have control," Noorzai said in an interview. "They (civilians) are not safe at all."

Foreign forces, including Canada, are also responsible, he said.

"They have said they came here to improve security for Afghans," Noorzai said. "If it is insecure, they also are very much responsible."

President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a suicide bomber in an army uniform killed 30 Afghan soldiers on board a military bus in Kabul.

Karzai said he wants to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and put government positions on the table.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister . . . and we don't want to fight anymore. . . . If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

A Taliban spokesperson responded Sunday, saying the group will "never" negotiate with the government until all foreign forces leave the country.

Yet negotiation is the best option, Noorzai said.

"The Taliban were a part of this country," Noorzai said. "They must be brought back for there to be peace."

Canadian military officials say they have made progress despite the fact that they are battling over the same ground this fall that they fought for last year.

There are few face-to-face battles with insurgents, compared to years past. Taliban numbers are waning.

But the pockets of insurgents who remain have waged a deadly guerrilla campaign of roadside bombs and suicide attacks that have killed 22 Canadian soldiers and many civilians in Kandahar province this year.

Two members of Afghan National Police were killed yesterday as they tried to defuse a roadside bomb in Kandahar City.

Although the Canadians have changed strategy, from large-scale battles to targeted attacks aimed at isolating Taliban hardliners in the Zhari and Panjwaii districts where they are concentrated, thousands of Afghans have fled those areas.

"These people have lived in that area for generations. Their forefathers lived in that area," Noorzai said.

Now they have taken up refuge in Kandahar City, with relatives if they're lucky or in abandoned buildings or refugee camps if they're not.

And they're losing faith in the Afghan government and its international allies, he warned.

"The people do not trust the government any more," he said. "They cannot have the trust of the civilians because they cannot fulfil their promise of security."

However, Noorzai did say that he does not believe the majority of Afghans support demonstrators who chanted "Death to Canada" during the protest in Senjaray, on the outskirts of Kandahar City, last week.

"Most of the people do not agree," he said.

# Letter | Some cannot see distinction

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In my opinion, whether one supports the war or not is irrelevant when talking about the Support our Troops ribbons.

Unfortunately, a few are unable to see the distinction between our democratically elected government sending Canadian troops to, or keeping Canadian troops in Afghanistan, and our soldiers who have a duty in their service to Canada.

Lobby your Member of Parliament; make your choice for whom you vote, but targeting soldiers with anti-war opposition is probably misguided.

Also, don't forget that our troops have contributed greatly to success in the World Wars, peacekeeping and peacemaking missions, have helped with natural disasters (ice storms in Quebec, hurricane in Nova Scotia) and much more.

As a very proud military spouse, whose husband has been on three different tours, I cannot tell you how heartwarming it is to see our community show its support in the form of yellow ribbons.

Not only are military families thinking about our soldiers and praying their safe return, but to know the community is doing the same for all of the soldiers means so much.

When one's loved one is in a place where there is danger and there is a chance they will come into harms way, it is very stressful, scary, nerve-wracking and lonely.

When my husband was away it would lift my spirits each and every time I saw a Support our Troops ribbon.

The ribbons are about the hope for a safe return of our soldiers.

I encourage everyone who is showing their support to continue to do so, and thank you for it, as it does make a difference in the lives of many.

And for those who do not wish to do so, that is your right.

Thanks to the military for helping to ensure you have that freedom.

Lindsay Manuel

Oromocto, N.B.



# Afghanistan mission is not the issue; In our view: Yellow ribbons support sacrifice of soldiers

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Yellow ribbons urging people to "support our troops" are not offensive.

At least, they shouldn't be.

But to members of the Fredericton Peace Coalition, they represent support of the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

And because of that, the organization plans to launch a campaign next month designed to encourage businesses and churches to remove yellow ribbons from windows and doors.

"We just see it as part of selling the war," organizer Tracy Glynn said. "We hope to put together a package to bring to local businesses, churches asking that they reconsider and take down their yellow ribbons."

While we want to reinforce the fact that this organization, or those of similar temperament, have a right to launch such a campaign, we think they have missed the point about what the yellow ribbon really represents.

We believe Jennifer Chiarotto, Outreach and Deployment Co-ordinator with the Military Family Resource Centre in Shilo, Manitoba, accurately portrayed the significance of the ribbons when, last December, she wrote that the yellow ribbon was a symbol of humanity.

As Chiarotto pointed out, such ribbons first appeared during the Indian Wars that dominated the United States Cavalry in the latter half of the 19th century. The wives of cavalrymen began wearing a yellow ribbon as a sign of the hopeful safe return of their husbands.

Today, it is a statement of support for the individual soldier, airman, or sailor.

"Displaying a yellow ribbon does not align someone with the decisions made in Ottawa," Chiarotto wrote. "It aligns them with the men and women on the frontlines. The yellow ribbon acts as a visual symbol of their sacrifice. It signifies hope for the safe return of all members of the Canadian Forces."

We believe this is where the message has been lost.

Whether most Canadians support the Afghan mission is not the issue.

Our soldiers have been given a task by the Canadian government in the NATO- led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission to improve the security situation in Afghanistan and to assist in rebuilding the country.

Wearing or displaying a yellow ribbon simply means people are telling the troops they are behind them, not the government, and that they have our support.

It's pretty simple and straight forward.

We believe the peace coalition will run into another obstacle if they go ahead with this campaign — an angry population which will take their actions as a show of disrespect for the individuals called to duty in Afghanistan.

# Canadian exit won't make Afghanistan better off

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**BYLINE:** Richard Gwyn

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The meeting on Afghanistan organized by the United Nations last week of representatives from 18 countries, produced, as UN meetings usually do, fine words but precious little action.

Those taking part, including Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, agreed on a communiqué that condemned "terrorism ... which hindered the establishment of the rule of law and the provision of basic services to the Afghan people."

There was one reason for paying any attention. This meeting served as a reminder that military intervention in Afghanistan, including Canada's, is sanctioned by the UN.

According to the latest poll by Ipsos-Reid, two in three Canadians polled (68 per cent) want us to pull out when our mission there reaches its agreed deadline of February 2009 but a majority (56 per cent) wants our troops out even earlier.

At a glance, those results seem to make it certain we will be gone from Afghanistan relatively soon.

The stage for this has been set already by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He has declared the decision to stay or go will have to be made by Parliament, rather than just by his government alone.

How MPs actually vote will be influenced by what Canadians say they want done – most especially since an early election is so likely.

Except that none of these feelings showed in recent byelection results in Quebec, the most strongly anti-war region in the country. Although the New Democrats, who favour an immediate withdrawal, did win the Montreal riding of Outremont, the Conservatives, overall, were the big winners.

Also noteworthy is the fact that one principal reason why many Canadians today oppose our involvement in Afghanistan will have vanished by the February departure date.

By then, George W. Bush will no longer be president of the United States. Ever-increasing media attention to the U.S. presidential contest will cause more and more Canadians to realize global power decisions will soon be made by someone else –perhaps by a President Hillary Clinton, but certainly not Bush.

Though it's relatively easy to argue that it's best for us to leave Afghanistan, it's difficult, if not impossible, to argue that our doing so would leave Afghans better off.

"Afghanistan will fall back into anarchy," Afghan President Hamid Karzai told a group of Canadian journalists recently. "Leaving Afghanistan alone now will bring back all the evils that were here" under the Taliban.

Karzai put his finger on perhaps the most painful aspect of the decision. This is that our exit won't just leave the way open for "anarchy" to return to the area of our military operations in Kandahar; anarchy and old evils will return to all of Afghanistan.

Troops from more than 20 nations are in Afghanistan, but fewer than half a dozen of these contingents fight directly against the Taliban – the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the Dutch and the Australians.

If we go, it's virtually certain the Dutch will go. If the Dutch go, the Australians have already said they will go.

In the words of a spokesperson for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, that has "consequences for the whole alliance and for the whole western world."

The solution, of course, would be a real contribution – a fighting one – by the major NATO nations like Germany, France, Spain and Italy.

A precondition for that solution to be possible would be for Canada to stay. No less so a precondition for Canada to stay would have to be for those nations, at last, to make serious contributions.

It's not about cutting and running. It's about standing back – we've more than contributed our share – and then watching, as the gap we'll leave behind turns into a huge hole into which the entire country eventually tumbles.

To say that's not the Canadian way is obvious. No less obvious, therefore, is that today's polls tell us nothing about what Canadians will decide they want.

# 'Wear it with pride'; Two cadets given swords etched with name of fallen captains

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**SECTION:** Front

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**BYLINE:** Jordan Press

**PHOTO:** Mark Bergin/The Whig–Standard Mark Bergin/The Whig–Standard

**ILLUSTRATION:** The Royal Military College band marches to the Memorial Arch for a ceremony honouring former cadets who died over the past year. The ceremonial swords inscribed with the names of fallen captains Matthew Dawe and Nichola Goddard were presented to fourth–year cadets during yesterday's ceremonies.; (From left) Reine Dawe, Tara Dawe and Lucas Dawe prepare to present a ceremonial sword engraved with fallen Capt. Matthew Dawe's name to Officer Cadet Matthew Michael Tompkins in the Royal Military College parade square yesterday. Officer Cadet Alexandre Lessard was also presented with a sword engraved with fallen Capt. Nichola Goddard's name.

**WORD COUNT:** 440

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Cadets present and past lined the perimeter of the parade square at Royal Military College yesterday afternoon and all stared inward at the future.

Across the square marched one of the fourth–year cadets, Matthew Michael Tompkins, dressed in navy blue and walking with the sound of applause around him.

In the centre of the square clapped little Lucas Dawe, the son of Capt. Matthew Dawe, who lost his life in Afghanistan on July 4.

Lucas, his mother, Tara Dawe, and his grandmother, Reine Dawe, handed the sword etched with Matthew Dawe's name to Tompkins, honouring him as the most deserving infantry cadet in the graduating class.

Then, the rest of the Dawe family in attendance stood up and shook hands with Tompkins.

"Wear it with pride," retired lieutenant–colonel Peter Dawe told him.

Afterwards, Peter Dawe said the ceremony was a reminder that at RMC, cadets are trained and know they may have to make the ultimate sacrifice.

"It makes us different than anywhere else," he told the Whig–Standard. "That's what this college is all about."

Yesterday, hundreds of former cadets and their families joined current cadets around the Memorial Arch at the eastern edge of the Lasalle Causeway to remember those in their ranks who had died over the past year.

This year, they remembered Matthew Dawe, who died in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan along with five other Canadian soldiers. He was a member of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The college also remembered others, including retired major Duncan Smith, who was the oldest living RMC alumnus when he died at the age of 95 on Jan. 14 of this year.

Smith entered and graduated from the college more than 80 years ago with the class of 1923.

His name led the list of remembrance with Matthew Dawe coming near the end. Matthew Dawe was the only one to have three words tacked on: "killed in action."

His name will also be etched on a plaque on the arch with all other RMC cadets killed in battle.

After the reading of the list of names came to a close, everyone in attendance stopped in silence. The only sound was the breeze swimming through the autumn leaves.

Despite being a remembrance ceremony, there was a mixture of laughter from the aging veterans as they marched in unison with members of their graduating class during this year's reunion.

The light mood carried over on the march to the parade square.

Retired colonel John Matheson, who was influential in the design and acceptance of the modern Canadian flag, presented the first of the two memorial swords in front of the wall of cadets old and young.

On it was etched the name of Capt. Nichola Goddard, who died May 17, 2006 in Afghanistan as an artillery officer with the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. The 26-year-old Goddard was the first female to die in combat since the Second World War.

Matheson handed the sword to Alexandre Lessard for being the most deserving artillery cadet in the graduating class.

Tompkins and Lessard will now be able to wear the swords with their top dress uniforms, known as Scarlets or Number One Order of dress. For the families of the fallen soldiers, the swords mean something else.

"It's a legacy for Matt," Peter Dawe said.

# Conflict must be seen as more than way to pay NATO dues

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**BYLINE:** Scott Taylor  
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OVER THE PAST few weeks, our battle group in Kandahar has continued to suffer casualties at an alarming rate. The death of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg on Sept. 24 brought the total number of soldiers killed to 71. In addition to the fatalities, there have been 550 soldiers injured as a result of their deployment to Kandahar.

What was most alarming about the Hornburg incident was that in this instance the Taliban insurgents were bold enough to engage our forces with conventional tactics. This wasn't just a remotely detonated roadside explosive device or suicide bomb ambush: Cpl. Hornburg was killed by a mortar blast as he and his comrades attempted to repair a disabled Leopard tank. Another soldier was wounded by the mortar and when additional Canadian troops began a Medevac, they were engaged by small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. The result was that three more soldiers were wounded.

Last fall, when the Taliban had begun using improvised explosive devices almost exclusively, senior military officials told us that such desperate tactics were evidence of a severely depleted and demoralized insurgency. Now it would appear that the Taliban are flexing their renewed military muscle.

Even more distressing is that these latest attacks have been mounted in the northern Panjwai district. It was in this very same region last year that NATO launched the major offensive known as Operation Medusa. At the successful conclusion of that battle, NATO claimed to have "broken the back of the Taliban" and the Panjwai was considered a secure sector. For our troops to be once again fighting and dying to retake the same territory certainly makes one question the measure of our success.

Of course the climbing casualties and déjà-vu battlefield have refuelled the ongoing domestic debate concerning Canada's role in Afghanistan. The tub-thumpers are running around in circles trying to find the elusive military solution to the problem. "Choppers, old boy. That's what we need is choppers. Get our boys off the roads and then we'll sort out these insurgents," runs the current Colonel Blimp reasoning.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Senator Colin Kenny have jumped on this theme and are currently beating each other up in print over which choppers would be best for the mission. MacKay says we need the heavy-lift Chinooks (which we have just purchased but will not receive until 2010), while Kenny says we could use our Griffin utility helicopters in the interim. MacKay replied that the Griffins are not heavy-lifting choppers, to which Kenny replied that he understands that point. The debate has now devolved into the playground equivalent of each participant claiming, "I told you so." What makes the entire argument moot is that the Soviet occupation force tried that tactic. When their armoured columns were repeatedly ambushed, they took to their helicopters. The result was that the mujahedeen simply acquired ground-to-air missiles and shot down close to 1,000 choppers.

Unfortunately, there is no magical piece of military hardware that will defeat the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the reluctant coalition of some 37 nations currently committing troops to the

International Security Assistance Force is doomed to fail. As an allied force with modern weaponry we certainly enjoy an overwhelming technological superiority over the Afghans, but as an allied force without a common cause we have the inherent weakness of wide-ranging and diverse national interests.

If Canada does withdraw our ground troops from Kandahar in February 2009, other NATO members or countries looking to join the organization will simply be strong-armed by the U.S. State Department to make up the difference in manpower. The heavy lifting and leading combat role that we will have undertaken for nearly three years will promptly be forgotten.

Unfortunately, as long as the contributing countries view their participation in the Afghan mission as merely a must-pay due for NATO membership, the necessary foundation upon which Afghanistan can be rebuilt will not be established.

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# Talks with Taliban best option rights official; Government, foreign forces not protecting people, Noorzai says

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**PUBLICATION:** The  
Chronicle-Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**SECTION:** World  
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**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**BYLINE:** Dene Moore  
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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the security situation has not improved for ordinary Afghans and negotiation with the insurgents is the best, and maybe the only option to make it better, says the head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province.

Abdul Qadar Noorzai also said over the weekend that he will be investigating the shootings of a religious scholar and his brother, whose deaths prompted a demonstration against foreign troops last week.

But Noorzai said the civilian death toll will continue to climb until the government and foreign troops improve security – something they've failed to do so far.

"The government does not have control," Noorzai told The Canadian Press. "They (civilians) are not safe at all."

Foreign forces, including Canada, are also responsible, he said.

"They have said they came here to improve security for Afghans," Noorzai said. "If it is insecure, they also are very much responsible."

President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a suicide bomber in an army uniform killed 30 Afghan soldiers on board a military bus in Kabul.

Karzai said he wants to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and put government positions on the table.

"If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, 'President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister . . . and we don't want to fight anymore. . . .' If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

A Taliban spokesman responded Sunday, saying the group will "never" negotiate with the government until all foreign forces leave the country.

Yet negotiation is the best option, Noorzai said.

"The Taliban were a part of this country," Noorzai said. "They must be brought back for there to be peace."

Talks with Taliban best option rights official; Government, foreign forces not protecting people, Noorzai says

Canadian military officials say they have made progress despite the fact that they are battling over the same ground this fall that they fought for last year.

There are few face-to-face battles with insurgents, compared to years past. Taliban numbers are waning.

But the pockets of insurgents who remain have waged a deadly guerrilla campaign of roadside bombs and suicide attacks that have killed 22 Canadian soldiers and many civilians in Kandahar province this year.

Two members of Afghan National Police were killed Sunday as they tried to defuse a roadside bomb in Kandahar City.

# Local soldiers get warm homecoming in capital

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**SECTION:** Front

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** Teresa Wright Constable

**ILLUSTRATION:** The Eeyore Exchange went off without a hitch Saturday in Charlottetown during the welcome home ceremony for Island troops recently returned from Afghanistan. Master Corporal Mary Jean Murphy, right, gave her friend Lily Campbell her stuffed Eeyore to look after while she served her tour and Lily gave Murphy a number of her stuffed toys to give to an orphanage in Afghanistan. During the service she returned Eeyore to Murphy. The service was organized by the P.E.I. Military Family Services Centre. Guardian photo by Brian McInnis

**WORD COUNT:** 411

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When Captain Kent MacRae was serving on a tour of duty in Afghanistan a few months ago, his wife and two teenaged daughters were left to wait at home and hope for the best.

Deborah MacRae said each day was a struggle.

"From one phone call or from one e-mail to the next, you really have to take it one day at a time and have an awful lot of blind faith that everyone is safe."

Family members at home have no idea what their loved ones go through, she said. And that makes doing regular household things hard.

"It's always there in the back of your mind as you go on with your day to day – when you're going to work, when you're caring for your children and those kinds of things. There's somebody missing."

But MacRae did make it home and now the family is celebrating.

They attended a welcome home event on Saturday, held for the Island reservist troops of Task Force 1-07 Afghanistan who recently returned from active duty in the war-torn country.

Hundreds came out in support of the troops on Saturday afternoon at the shipyard warehouse on the Charlottetown waterfront, including dignitaries and entertainers.

Everyone in attendance was there to thank the men and women for their brave service.

Charlene McInnis is the co-ordinator for P.E.I. Military Family Services and she organized the day's activities.

She said it was an event held as much for families like MacRae's as it was for the troops themselves.

She said military families go through a lot of emotional trauma when their loved ones are away on active duty.

"It's very scary," McInnis said.

"From the moment their eyes are awake, every second they're thinking about their loved ones – they ask themselves, 'Are they OK? Have they hit a mine? Has somebody shot them?' It's a lot to go through." McInnis, a self-proclaimed "military brat," said she tries hard to be a support for the families in her role with P.E.I. MFS.

"I just want to be able to comfort the children, tell them mommy or daddy will be coming home and if something untoward happens and they don't, we're there for them."

As she made her way through the crowds of troops and their families on Saturday, she knew everyone by name, and made a point to stop and chat with each person she knew.

"I take looking after them very personally," she said. "It's more than a job, it's truly a calling when it comes down to it."

Captain MacRae said he was happy a support group like P.E.I. MFS was available to support his family when he was in Afghanistan and was happy to have the recognition offered at Saturday's event.

"It's heartwarming and unexpected," he said. "It's nice to know that people can focus on the families and the successes."

During the festivities, a welcome home video was presented, where photos sent home from Afghanistan were displayed to the song Hero.

A young girl sang songs like Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree, lending an air of wartime nostalgia to the afternoon.

But the emotions at this event were very present.

"Through this event, they're all getting public acknowledgement," McInnis said.

"They went through something extraordinary for the greater good. That's what it boils down to.

"And let's not forget the families – they're wearing uniforms too."

# Canadian air drops 'save lives,' avoid risky roads

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010022

**PUBLICATION:** The Leader–Post (Regina)

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A6

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: CanWest / Sgt. Rob Gearns (left), loadmaster, and Capt. Aidan Costelloe, pilot, of the Hercules CC–130 air–drop mission. ; Colour Photo: Charlene and Ryan Adamus, along with their families, were kept under umbrellas while photographer Grant Romancia set up their wedding picture Saturday in a Saskatoon park in the rain. ;

**DATELINE:** ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 736

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ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan — Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC–130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four–engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacularly beautiful mountain range before making a dramatic rock–and–roll lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below.

Seemingly defying gravity, the 33–year–old pilot, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door. Several parachutes that were attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

Except for a few cases of water, which had ruptured, the cargo had landed on target, in good condition and, quite literally, at the exact second it was supposed to.

The rationale for sometimes using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is clear.

More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.–Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' immensely complicated logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar.

"Every time we have an air drop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way."

Sgt. Rob Gearn, who as loadmaster ran the air drop at the back of the Hercules, agreed.

"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their doorstep," said the 43-year-old from Hamilton, Ont. "We will do this for any NATO nation that asks, but there is extra meaning when we do it for the Canadians because they can see the Maple Leaf on our tail when we fly past."

The air drops are not, however, without risks.

The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Costelloe, who is also from Hamilton, said after the flight.

"Everything is about limiting our exposure to ground fire as much as we can."

Surprisingly, the air crew and those waiting on the ground seldom speak with each other.

"They know the game plan. We know the game plan. So there is no need for us to talk with each other," Gearn said.

"We saw the smoke they threw and that was enough. We try to keep everything as simple as we can."

In order to keep the enemy guessing, the flight profiles and drop points always vary, as do the timings for such runs, which can also be conducted at night.

Although Canada made a few such air drops to troops here last year, doing so regularly only became possible last month when several Canadian Hercules were based at Kandahar for the first time.

Before that they were located at an airfield several hours away in the Middle East.

The move has been welcomed by the Van Doos battle group, which has already placed several emergency resupply orders with the air force. It has also been a boon to NATO which, with 36,000 troops here, has many pressing in-theatre transport requirements in what is a complex, crowded flying environment that includes duststorms, fast air (fighters and bombers) and slow air (transport planes, drones and helicopters).

Canadian, British and American Hercules aircraft now run a regular passenger and cargo service from Kandahar to International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul.

They also make frequent, sometimes hairy, landings at remote dirt strips to resupply combat troops from half a dozen countries.

"This is all part of the job, but for us air drops are special and, from an air crew standpoint, we would like to do as many as we can. That's our bread-and-butter and the need out there is sometimes critical," said Costelloe, who like Gearn has already served several 56-day tours in support of Canadian operations in Afghanistan.

"For us, it means a chance to live and breathe the mission over here. It is the most challenging and energizing flying I've done in my career."

The Kandahar air detachment's boss, Capt. Stephen McLean, 38, of Ottawa, who is also a Hercules pilot, said

basing Canadian aircraft in Afghanistan had already produced many benefits.

"We are now much more involved in ISAF operations," McLean said. "Whenever we do anything it means they can free up a helicopter to do something else.

I have the feeling we will be getting a lot more calls, not just from the Canadians but from ISAF."

# Taliban refuse Karzai peace talks offer until foreign troops leave Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 954

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KABUL \_ The Taliban will ``never" negotiate with Afghan authorities until U.S. and NATO forces leave the country, a spokesman for the group said Sunday, again rebuffing an overture for peace talks from President Hamid Karzai.

Karzai offered Saturday to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government in exchange for peace.

But Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi repeated a position he announced earlier this month, saying there would be no negotiations until U.S. and NATO troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

``The Taliban will never negotiate with the Afghan government in the presence of foreign forces," Ahmadi told The Associated Press. ``Even if Karzai gives up his presidency, it's not possible that Mullah Omar would agree to negotiations. The foreign forces don't have the authority to talk about Afghanistan."

Karzai's offer came hours after a suicide bomber in army disguise attacked a military bus in Kabul, killing 30 people.

Strengthening a call for negotiations he has made with increasing frequency in recent weeks, Karzai said he was willing to meet the reclusive Omar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and factional warlord leader.

``If I find their address, there is no need for them to come to me, I'll personally go there and get in touch with them," Karzai said. ``Esteemed Mullah, sir, and esteemed Hekmatyar, sir, why are you destroying the country?"

Karzai said he has contacts with Taliban militants through tribal elders but that there are no direct and open government communication channels with the fighters. Omar's whereabouts are not known, though Karzai has claimed he is in Quetta, Pakistan, a militant hotbed across the border from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

``If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, `President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore ... . If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

``I wish there would be a demand as easy as this. I wish that they would want a position in the government. I will give them a position," he said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has said it does not support negotiations with Taliban fighters, labelling them as terrorists, though the United Nations and NATO have said an increasing number of Taliban are interested in laying down their arms. NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, Daan Everts, said this month that NATO would look into the possibility of talks.



U.S. President George W. Bush met Karzai on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday where the two discussed the battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, though it has not been made public whether the two talked about the possibility of peace talks with militants.

A State Department duty officer said he couldn't immediately comment on Karzai's offer to meet Omar, noting that most policy makers were still in New York.

Canada's defence minister said the Taliban would have to renounce violence and accept the NATO mission if it wants to work with the Afghan government.

"There must be a renouncing of the violence, there must be an acceptance that NATO forces are not going to leave the country, that these preconditions that the Taliban have laid out in the past will not be part of the occasion," said Peter MacKay.

Speaking in Halifax, MacKay also said that any co-operation must lead to peace in the war-torn country.

Saturday's explosion \_ the second deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 \_ ripped off the roof of the bus and tore out its sides, leaving a charred hull of burnt metal. It was reminiscent of the deadliest ever attack, when a bomber boarded a police academy bus at Kabul's busiest transportation hub in June, killing 35 people.

Police and soldiers climbed trees to retrieve some body parts. Nearby businesses also were damaged.

"For 10 or 15 seconds, it was like an atom bomb \_ fire, smoke and dust everywhere," said Mohammad Azim, a police officer who witnessed the explosion.

Karzai said 30 people were killed \_ 28 soldiers and two civilians. The Health Ministry said another 30 were wounded. Two women were among the dead, and 11 people whose bodies were ripped apart so badly had yet to be identified.

"It was a terrible tragedy, no doubt an act of extreme cowardice," Karzai said. "Whoever did this was against people, against humanity, definitely against Islam. A man who calls himself Muslim will not blow up innocent people in the middle of Ramadan," the Muslim holy month.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed the militant group was responsible for the blast in a text message to The Associated Press. Mujahid said the bomber was a Kabul resident named Azizullah.

The bus had stopped in front of a movie theatre to pick up soldiers when a bomber wearing a military uniform tried to board around 6:45 a.m. local time, army spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"Typically there are people checking the IDs of soldiers who want to board the bus," Azimi said. "While they were checking the IDs the bomber tried to get on the bus and blew himself up there."

NATO's International Security Assistance Force, meanwhile, said one of its soldiers was killed in eastern Afghanistan during combat operations Saturday. ISAF did not release the soldier's nationality, but most in the east are American.

Four employees with the International Committee of the Red Cross, kidnapped earlier this week while negotiating the release of a German hostage, were freed in good health Saturday, the ICRC said.

The number of kidnappings in Afghanistan has spiked in recent months after the Taliban secured the release of five insurgent prisoners in exchange for a captive Italian journalist in March \_ a heavily criticized swap that many feared would encourage abductions.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans in July, a hostage crisis that scored the militants face-to-face talks with South Korean government delegates. Two of the Koreans were killed; 21 were eventually released.

# Alta. minister says Canada making progress in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 134

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EDMONTON \_ Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Rona Ambrose says Canada is making progress in Afghanistan, but helping to stabilize and rebuild the war-ravaged country will take a long time.

Ambrose made the comments Sunday at a town hall meeting.

Canada's commitment of 2,500 troops is scheduled to end February 2009.

The Conservative government says any further extension of the mission must be approved by Parliament.

Ambrose said a vote could happen right up until 2009 but only after Canada negotiates further with its NATO allies.

Ambrose also said it's not too early to promote an informed debate on the controversial subject of Afghanistan, where 71 Canadian soldiers have died.

Edmonton Centre MP Laurie Hawn, representatives of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign and International Affairs also took part in the meeting.

CIDA development agent Adrian Walraven explained that Canada's \$1 billion-investment in Afghanistan goes toward projects ranging from health and education to agriculture and micro-financing.

(Edmonton Sun)

# By Dene Moore

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 500

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan \_ Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the security situation has not improved for ordinary Afghans and negotiation with the insurgents is the best, and maybe the only option to make it better, says the head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province.

Abdul Qadar Noorzai also said over the weekend that he will be investigating the shootings of a religious scholar and his brother, whose deaths prompted a demonstration against foreign troops last week.

But Noorzai said the civilian death toll will continue to climb until the government and foreign troops improve security \_ something they've failed to do so far.

``The government does not have control," Noorzai told The Canadian Press. ``They (civilians) are not safe at all."

Foreign forces, including Canada, are also responsible, he said.

``They have said they came here to improve security for Afghans," Noorzai said. ``If it is insecure, they also are very much responsible."

President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a suicide bomber in an army uniform killed 30 Afghan soldiers on board a military bus in Kabul.

Karzai said he wants to meet Taliban leader Mullah Omar and warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and put government positions on the table.

``If a group of Taliban or a number of Taliban come to me and say, `President, we want a department in this or in that ministry or we want a position as deputy minister ... and we don't want to fight anymore. ... If there will be a demand and a request like that to me, I will accept it because I want conflicts and fighting to end in Afghanistan," Karzai said.

A Taliban spokesman responded Sunday, saying the group will ``never" negotiate with the government until all foreign forces leave the country.

Yet negotiation is the best option, Noorzai said.

``The Taliban were a part of this country," Noorzai said. ``They must be brought back for there to be peace."

Canadian military officials say they have made progress despite the fact that they are battling over the same ground this fall that they fought for last year.

There are few face-to-face battles with insurgents, compared to years past. Taliban numbers are waning.

But the pockets of insurgents who remain have waged a deadly guerrilla campaign of roadside bombs and suicide attacks that have killed 22 Canadian soldiers and many civilians in Kandahar province this year. Two

members of Afghan National Police were killed Sunday as they tried to defuse a roadside bomb in Kandahar City.

Although the Canadians have changed strategy, from large-scale battles to targeted attacks aimed at isolating Taliban hardliners in the Zhari and Panjwai districts where they are concentrated, thousands of Afghans have fled those areas.

“These people have lived in that area for generations. Their forefathers lived in that area,” Noorzai said.

Now they have taken up refuge in Kandahar City, with relatives if they're lucky or in abandoned buildings or refugee camps if they're not.

And they're losing faith in the Afghan government and its international allies, he warned.

“The people do not trust the government any more,” he said. “They cannot have the trust of the civilians because they cannot fulfil their promise of security.”

However, Noorzai did say that he does not believe the majority of Afghans support demonstrators who chanted “Death to Canada” during the protest in Senjaray, on the outskirts of Kandahar City, last week.

“Most of the people do not agree,” he said.

# INDEX:International,Defence,Politics

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 154

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Substitute the following for the item moved 10:00 ET.

Adds dropped word "insurgents" in paragraph seven.

KABUL, Afghanistan — The office of Afghan President Hamid Karzai suggests there is "serious debate" among some Taliban fighters about laying down arms.

Karzai said yesterday that he would be willing to meet personally with Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government in exchange for peace.

A Taliban spokesman rejected the offer, saying there would be no negotiations until U–S and NATO troops withdraw from the country.

But Karzai's spokesman says the government has information of a serious debate within the ranks of the Taliban about how long militants want to continue fighting.

The United Nations and NATO have also said they see similar indications.

Karzai's latest peace overture comes as insurgency–related violence continue to climb.

More than 270 have died in violence since last Sunday — 180 of them insurgents according to Afghan and Western officials.

Thirty people were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a military bus yesterday in Kabul, and insurgents ambushed a convoy of foreign troops in eastern Paktia province.

A provincial police official says airstrikes were called in that killed 11 militants.

The U–S coalition says it was not involved in the battle, and NATO is looking into the report.

# Afghan–Cda–Negotiation

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 138

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan \_ The death toll among Afghan civilians will continue to climb until the government and foreign troops improve security.

That, from the head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province.

Abdul Qadar Noorzai tells The Canadian Press that negotiations with the Taliban may be the only option to make conditions better.

However, a Taliban spokesman said today the group will ``never" negotiate with the government until all foreign forces leave the country.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai had renewed his offer yesterday to meet with Taliban leader Mullah Omar in the wake of the most recent suicide bomber attack.

A man in an army uniform killed 30 Afghan soldiers when he boarded a military bus in Kabul and detonated his device.

Noorzai says many Afghans have lost faith in the government and its international allies.

However, he says he doesn't believe the majority of Afghans support demonstrators who chanted ``Death to Canada" during the protest in Senjaray, on the outskirts of Kandahar City, last week.

(The Canadian Press)

# Afghanistan–Taliban

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 105

---

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A Taliban spokesman says the militants will never negotiate with Afghan authorities until U–S and NATO forces leave the country.

The statement came after an overture for peace talks from President Hamid Karzai.

Karzai said yesterday that he would be willing to meet personally with Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government in exchange for peace.

But Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi repeated a position he announced earlier this month, saying there would be no negotiations until U–S and NATO troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

Ahmadi said that even if Karzai gives up his presidency, it will not be possible for Mullah Omar to agree to negotiations.

He said the foreign forces don't have the authority to talk about Afghanistan.

(The Associated Press)

mei



# Alta. minister says Canada making progress in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 84

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EDMONTON – Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Rona Ambrose says Canada is making progress in Afghanistan, but helping to stabilize and rebuild the war-ravaged country will take a long time.

Ambrose made the comments Sunday at a town hall meeting.

Canada's commitment of 2,500 troops is scheduled to end February 2009.

The Conservative government says any further extension of the mission must be approved by Parliament.

Ambrose said a vote could happen right up until 2009 but only after Canada negotiates further with its NATO allies.

Ambrose also said it's not too early to promote an informed debate on the controversial subject of Afghanistan, where 71 Canadian soldiers have died.

(Edmonton Sun)

# INDEX:International,Defence,Politics

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 154

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KABUL, Afghanistan — The office of Afghan President Hamid Karzai suggests there is "serious debate" among some Taliban fighters about laying down arms.

Karzai said yesterday that he would be willing to meet personally with Taliban leader Mullah Omar and give militants a position in government in exchange for peace.

A Taliban spokesman rejected the offer, saying there would be no negotiations until U–S and NATO troops withdraw from the country.

But Karzai's spokesman says the government has information of a serious debate within the ranks of the Taliban about how long militants want to continue fighting.

The United Nations and NATO have also said they see similar indications.

Karzai's latest peace overture comes as insurgency–related violence continue to climb.

More than 270 have died in violence since last Sunday — 180 of them according to Afghan and Western officials.

Thirty people were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a military bus yesterday in Kabul, and insurgents ambushed a convoy of foreign troops in eastern Paktia province.

A provincial police official says airstrikes were called in that killed 11 militants.

The U–S coalition says it was not involved in the battle, and NATO is looking into the report.

(The Associated Press)

mcw

# Terrorism–Intelligence

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**DATE:** 2007.09.30

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

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CALGARY -- A former naval commander is worried that the eyes of the Canadian intelligence community are focused almost exclusively on operations in Afghanistan.

Retired Rear Admiral Roger Girourard, former commander of Maritime Forces Pacific for the Canadian Forces, told a conference of security and intelligence officials in Calgary that it might be time to consider the threats within Canada's borders.

Girourard told delegates he worries about radical environmentalism and eco–terrorism.

He said there hasn't been much talk about that topic.

Girourard charged that Canada has not had a strategic global vision on matters of security intelligence and has expected the Department of National Defence to provide more than the government has been willing to pay for.

Up until now, he said, the Canadian Forces have done that, but he's not sure how much longer that can continue.

Girourard also said there needs to be more of a role for the military when it comes to security here at home.

(The Canadian Press)

bjk

# UN to hear Canada's envoy pitch; Bernier to urge tomorrow that high-level UN post be created to co-ordinate Afghanistan aid, security

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010091  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Met  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A17  
**BYLINE:** Allan Woods  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 451

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Canada is expected this week to back the creation of a high-level envoy position on Afghanistan to better co-ordinate aid and security efforts, lend support to the Afghan president and speak on behalf of the international community in the country.

Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier will make the proposal in a speech tomorrow before the United Nations General Assembly.

His envisioned envoy position is based on that of former British prime minister Tony Blair, who is working to negotiate peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Upon resigning from 10 Downing St., Blair was appointed Mideast peace envoy by the so-called quartet of the UN, European Union, United States and Russia. His job involves working with the Palestinians to prepare them for talks with Israel on matters of security, governance and economic development.

The pitch from Canada's rookie foreign minister for a similar Afghan envoy comes after a hectic start to his job.

Last week, he held more than 30 meetings with world leaders and other foreign ministers in New York, where countries are gathered for the opening of the 62nd session of the UN.

A ministry statement sent out last week said Bernier "strengthened international commitment for security and development in Afghanistan" at a high-level meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, as well as other governments and agencies on the ground in Afghanistan.

The statement came despite word Friday from the Dutch government that it would send an additional 80 soldiers to the country because no other nations are willing to support it in the southern province of Uruzgan.

Canada and the Netherlands are both staring down the end of their military mandates in the country's more violent southern provinces.

Both countries are facing considerable domestic pressure to pull out of the fighting role and hand off to another country, but none has stepped forward.

UN to hear Canada's envoy pitch; Bernier to urge tomorrow that high-level UN post be created to co-ordin

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said last week Canada has until April 2008 to inform NATO of its intentions when the current Afghanistan mission expires in February 2009. Parliament will hold a vote on the matter sometime before then.

Bernier's talk of a high-level point person for Afghanistan emerged more than a week ago after the UN meeting called by the secretary general.

Diplomats at the meeting told Reuters that U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had proposed the idea of naming an international figure to head up the difficult job of co-ordinating efforts.

Some countries in the meeting pressed for a UN envoy with extra powers to assist Afghan President Hamid Karzai make peace with warring factions.

Karzai has been trying to lure Taliban insurgents into a peace settlement, even offering them government posts.

Bernier's UN address is expected to be "Afghanistan heavy" in keeping with the fact that the military and aid mission there is Canada's No. 1 foreign policy issue.

But it will also touch on other issues including Iran's nuclear ambitions. The international community fears Iran is developing nuclear weapons and has endorsed sanctions to try to stop the Islamic regime, which insists its nuclear capabilities are for peaceful purposes.

# Afghanistan conflict deserves accuracy

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**PAGE:** AA07  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 106

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Canadians won't pay 'bribe'

after slaying of Afghan cleric

Sept. 28

I commend the Toronto Star for its coverage on Canada's efforts to help Afghanistan. However, this front-page story uses a headline that would have clearly misled your readers to believe Canadians were responsible for the death of a religious leader and his brother. The story itself correctly cited the fact that Canadians were not involved in the incident. My assumption was that the objectionable headline was unintentional. The Canadian effort in Afghanistan deserves accuracy in reportage, which includes the way headlines are written.

Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Robertson, Spokesperson, Department of National Defence, Ottawa

# Not just Taliban have blood on hands

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010017  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A02  
**BYLINE:** Rosie DiManno  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 562

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The most ravaged district of Kabul is a ghostly testament to the folly of war, waged without pity.

There is nothing left intact, just the detritus of siege: Jagged bits of masonry, husks of buildings, crumbling walls pockmarked with artillery fire.

The Soviets didn't do this. The Taliban didn't do this.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar did this.

With his militia entrenched in the southern quadrant of the capital, unwilling to share power with other mujahideen leaders – offered the prime minister's job, he demanded the presidency – Hekmatyar rained rockets on Kabul. An alliance that had successfully and improbably driven Soviet might off Afghanistan soil shattered, as the squabbling warlords fell on each other.

But the continuous bombardment of Kabul in the early '90s was very nearly all Hekmatyar's doing. In one single rocket attack, 1,800 civilians were killed. In the first year of civil war, 30,000 Kabulis died under Hekmatyar's shelling, 100,000 wounded.

Hekmatyar is not a foreigner, not an infidel, not part of an invading imperialist army. He's an Afghan and he has more blood on his hands, arguably, than even the Taliban, with which he has variously fought against and yoked himself to, depending on strategic ambitions. And he's always been a most ambitious man.

These days, apart from embracing Al Qaeda – he took credit for spiriting Osama bin Laden out of Tora Bora in 2001 – Hekmatyar's shock troops comprise the largest band of hardened gunmen that fight alongside the neo-Taliban.

He belongs in front of a war-crimes tribunal, not in Afghanistan's parliament. Yet this is the man – an unyielding terrorist by any definition of the word, the embodiment of treachery – that Afghan President Hamid Karzai says he would welcome in peace talks. Hekmatyar says sure, let's parley – once foreign troops are removed and the new Afghan constitution is dissolved.

Nuts to that, Karzai counters, knowing full well that Hekmatyar covets the presidency and an ultrafundamentalist Afghanistan no different than what the ousted Taliban had imposed. Leery of what comes after NATO forces depart, however, Karzai is welcoming all fugitives into the negotiating tent as pre-emptive gambit.

This is deranged detente, testament to the few options Karzai has left to avert another calamitous civil war in the absence of foreign troops, as NATO countries – most critically, Canada – deliberate exit scenarios.

A worst-case scenario: Rumours that Hekmatyar might join forces with another unhappy warlord, Rashid Dostum. The ethnic Uzbek thug is a founding member of the United National Front, an anti-government alliance established this year that has pulled together senior veterans from the fight against the Soviets.

Though detesting each other, they've been fleeting allies before, Hekmatyar and Dostum, during the change-lobsters-and-dance chaos of the civil war era.

Last year, coalition forces found a cache of arms belonging to Dostum's forces. There is an escalating worry that Dostum, perhaps in co-ordination with Hekmatyar, would unleash heavy artillery on ill-prepared NATO troops in the northern part of Afghanistan, soldier contributions from countries that have kept them out of combat zones.

All these factional groups just won't let Afghanistan be, the fanatically anti-West Hekmatyar most especially. Yet there are elements within NATO, even in the U.S. State Department, urging accommodation with Hekmatyar, such is the yearning for a political resolution to end the insurgency.

In Afghanistan, though, internecine politics always devolves to war. And if new Afghanistan is destined to become once more old Afghanistan, Canadian troops have been wasting their time, their sweat, their blood.

Rosie DiManno usually appears Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.



# Friendly fire may have killed Danish soldiers

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010085  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** D8  
**COLUMN:** World in Brief  
**DATELINE:** COPENHAGEN  
**SOURCE:** Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 97

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COPENHAGEN (Reuters) — Two Danish soldiers killed earlier this week in Afghanistan in fighting with Taliban insurgents may have been the victims of friendly fire, the Danish Army Central Command said on Sunday.

The soldiers were killed Wednesday in the Helmand province in southern Afghanistan when Taliban forces attacked Danish positions several times.

"In connection with the action on Sept. 26 . . . there is a suspicion that the Danish unit during the fight with the Taliban was also under fire from another ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) unit," the army said in a statement on its website.

# Tories tried to block Afghan trip: Liberals

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010024  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** National  
**PAGE:** A9  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 90

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OTTAWA (CNS) — Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre says the Harper government deliberately tried to block his upcoming trip to visit Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The MP from Montreal and former Liberal minister said he was forced to make his own travel arrangements after the government refused to arrange a trip for him to the Kandahar province.

"It's been a lot of months and a lot of weeks that we sent messages . . . Every time they had a reason." Coderre said.

Coderre refused to give the exact date of his departure for security reasons, but he expects the military will co-operate upon his arrival.

# Canadian air drops potential lifesaver; Airborne resupply flights keep convoys from driving dangerous Afghan roads

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010002  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: CanWest News Photo / Capt. Aidan Costelloepilots a CC-130 Hercules during an airdrop mission in Afghanistan ;  
**DATELINE:** ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 815

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ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan — Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory, potentially sparing the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four-engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacularly beautiful mountain range before making a dramatic rock-and-roll lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below. Capt. Aidan Costelloe, 33, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammunition rolled out the back door. Several parachutes attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

Except for a few cases of water, which had ruptured, the cargo had landed on target, in good condition and, quite literally, at the exact second it was supposed to.

The rationale for sometimes using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is clear. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar. "Every time we have an air drop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way."

Sgt. Rob Gearn, the loadmaster who ran the air drop from the back of the Hercules, agreed.

"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their (the ground forces') doorstep," he said. "We will do this for any NATO nation that asks, but there is extra meaning when we do it for the Canadians because they can see the Maple Leaf on our tail when we fly past."

Canadian air drops potential lifesaver; Airborne resupply flights keep convoys from driving dangerous Afghan roads

The air drops are not, however, without risks. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Costelloe said after the flight. "Everything is about limiting our exposure to ground fire as much as we can."

The air crew and those waiting on the ground seldom speak with each other.

"They know the game plan. We know the game plan. So there is no need for us to talk with each other," Gearns said. "We saw the smoke they threw and that was enough. We try to keep everything as simple as we can."

In order to keep the enemy guessing, the flight profiles and drop points always vary, as do the timings for such runs, which can also be conducted at night. Although Canada made a few such air drops to troops here last year, doing so regularly only became possible last month when several Canadian Hercules were based at Kandahar for the first time. Before that they were located at an airfield several hours away in the Middle East.

The move has been welcomed by the Van Doos battle group, which has already placed several emergency resupply orders with the air force. It has also been a boon to NATO which, with 36,000 troops here, has many pressing in-theatre transport requirements in what is a complex, crowded flying environment that includes dust storms, fast air (fighters and bombers) and slow air (transport planes, drones and helicopters).

Canadian, British and American Hercules aircraft now run a regular passenger and cargo service from Kandahar to International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul. They also make frequent, sometimes hairy, landings at remote dirt strips to resupply combat troops from half a dozen countries.

"This is all part of the job, but for us air drops are special and, from an air crew standpoint, we would like to do as many as we can. That's our bread-and-butter and the need out there is sometimes critical," said Costelloe, who has already served several 56-day tours in support of Canadian operations in Afghanistan. "For us, it means a chance to live and breathe the mission over here. It is the most challenging and energizing flying I've done in my career."

The Kandahar air detachment's boss, Capt. Stephen McLean, said basing Canadian aircraft in Afghanistan had already produced many benefits.

"We are now much more involved in ISAF operations," McLean said. "Whenever we do anything it means they can free up a helicopter to do something else."

"I have the feeling we will be getting a lot more calls, not just from the Canadians but from ISAF."

# Air drops mean fewer troops on Afghanistan's deadly roads

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010032  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 210

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ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan – Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from C-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, 33, forced the nose of his Hercules turboprop up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door, parachutes unfurling, as it headed down to the purple smoke marker below.

Back at the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

The rationale for using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is compelling. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles, many on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud.

The air drops carry risk, however. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules present quite a big target for ground fire.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Costelloe said.

# Maybe NATO isn't chicken after all

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010041  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Letters  
**PAGE:** A11  
**SOURCE:** Times Colonist  
**WORD COUNT:** 104

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With his chicken cartoon of Sept. 27, Raeside continues to imply that NATO countries are afraid to join Canadian troops in Afghanistan. Were we also among the chickens by staying out of Iraq in spite of George W. Bush's strong urging, or were we just smarter then?

Let's not be too critical of our NATO allies for expressing a reluctance to comply with the American administration's request to help support them in one of their wars. Polls show that this reluctance is, after all, shared by most Canadians, and we're not chickens.

Jim Bisakowski,

Langford.

# Suicide bomber in burqa kills at least 13 in Pakistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010018  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A8  
**COLUMN:** World Briefing  
**DATELINE:** PESHAWAR, Pakistan  
**SOURCE:** AFP  
**WORD COUNT:** 71

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A suicide bomber wearing a burqa struck at a police checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan today, killing at least 13 people and wounding 20 others, officials said.

The blast happened on the outskirts of Bannu, a key garrison town near Pakistan's troubled tribal areas bordering Afghanistan where the army is battling al-Qaeda and Taliban militants.

It was the latest in a string of attacks in Pakistan since government troops stormed the al-Qaeda-linked Red Mosque in Islamabad in July.

# Tories trying to block Afghan trip: Coderre

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010010  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A6  
**COLUMN:** Canada Briefing  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Denis Coderre: Expects military to co-operate;  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 152

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OTTAWA / Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre says the Harper government deliberately tried to block his planned trip to visit Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The MP from Montreal and former Liberal minister said he was forced to make his own travel arrangements after the government refused to arrange a trip for him to the Kandahar province, where the Canadian Forces are engaged in a combat mission to drive back the Taliban regime and help rebuild the country.

"I didn't plan [this trip] in a jiffy," Coderre said yesterday.

"It's been a lot of months and a lot of weeks that we sent messages. ... Every time they had a reason."

Coderre explained the trip would help prepare the Liberals to learn more about the situation before Parliament debates the future of the mission at the end of Canada's current commitment in February 2009.

Coderre refused to give the date of his departure for security reasons, but he said he expects the military will co-operate upon his arrival and give him a briefing on its progress in Afghanistan.



# Harper obstructing trip, says Coderre

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010066  
**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Denis Coderre;  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 123

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Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre says the Harper government deliberately tried to block his upcoming trip to visit Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The MP from Montreal and former Liberal minister said he was forced to make his own travel arrangements after the government refused to arrange a trip for him to the Kandahar province, where the Canadian Forces are engaged in a combat mission to drive back the Taliban regime and help rebuild the country.

"I didn't plan (this trip) in a jiffy," Coderre said Sunday.

"It's been a lot of months and a lot of weeks that we sent messages... Every time they had a reason."

Coderre explained the trip would help prepare the Liberals to learn more about the situation before Parliament debates on the future of the mission at the end of Canada's current commitment in February 2009.

# Afghan air drops saving lives; Canadians supply troops by air, eliminating need for dangerous convoys

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010065

**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** B4

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: CanWest News photo: Matthew Fisher / PREPARING FORTAKEOFF: Capt. Aidan Costelloe briefs his C-130 Hercules crew before an airdrop. His loadmaster, Sgt. Rob Gearn, is on his left. ;

**DATELINE:** GHORAK, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 552

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GHORAK, Afghanistan – Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four-engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacularly beautiful mountain range before making a dramatic rock-and-roll lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below. Seemingly defying gravity, the 33-year old pilot, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door. Several parachutes that were attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

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The rationale for sometimes using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is clear. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' immensely complicated logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar. "Every time we have an air drop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way."

Sgt. Rob Gearn, who as loadmaster ran the air drop at the back of the Hercules, agreed.

"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their doorstep," the 43-year-old Hamiltonian said.

"We will do this for any NATO nation that asks, but there is extra meaning when do it for the Canadians because they can see the Maple Leaf on our tail when we fly past."

The air drops are not, however, without risks. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Capt. Costelloe, who is also from Hamilton, said after the flight. "Everything is about limiting our exposure to ground fire as much as we can."

Surprisingly, the air crew and those waiting on the ground seldom speak with each other.

"They know the game plan. We know the game plan. So there is no need for us to talk with each other," Gearns said. "We saw the smoke they threw and that was enough. We try to keep everything as simple as we can."

In order to keep the enemy guessing, the flight profiles and drop points always vary, as do the timings for such runs, which can also be conducted at night. Although Canada made a few such air drops to troops here last year, doing so regularly only became possible last month when several Canadian Hercules were based at Kandahar.

# Opposing war isn't part of a class struggle

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010026  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A6  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 261

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Re: Peace Arch message: Bring the troops home, Soundoff, Sept. 28

Jim Sinclair's and Rick Bender's call to arms is just another attempt to force feed us a divisive issue that Sinclair can then, conveniently, take a stand on. Everyone is opposed to war and Sinclair knows that. The problem is he thinks this will blind us to the rest of his agenda.

First, Canada's mission in Afghanistan is completely different from America's war in Iraq. Our Canadian "sons and daughters" did not make a unilateral attack on a sovereign nation. They are in Afghanistan, as many nations are, under the auspices of the world community. Trying to conjure up a controversial Canadian issue by piggybacking it on America's vast anti-war movement is simply wrong. The square peg doesn't fit in the round hole.

Second, exploiting Canadians' natural distaste for coffins and bodybags in a feeble attempt to turn this sordid mess into a labour issue is beyond contempt. Canadians of all kinds are working hard for clean water, schools and safe streets in a harsh environment. This is not a 19th-century class struggle. It's a difficult job that we Canadians have done many times in our history.

A march for peace is seldom wrong, although this one will do more good south of the border than here. What is wrong, and it's very wrong, is trying to artificially create issues and animosity by making political points off the difficulties of ordinary people, both here, and in Afghanistan.

W.D. Fyfe

Vancouver

# Afghans' death chants show it's time to bail out

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010025  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A6  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 122

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For the first time in my life, last week I heard news reports of foreigners in a faraway land gathering in angry protest, shouting, "Death to Canada!"

I would like to direct those complaints from Afghanistan directly to Jean Chretien, Paul Martin and Stephen Harper. I don't recall any hustings speeches that promised to transform our armed forces into a gang of lackeys for our friends to the south.

With the former Liberal government and the Conservative "new government" equally complicit, I hope that Canadians will be offered some viable alternatives at the ballot box in the next election, so that we can return to our formerly enviable position as a middle power.

Taivo Evard

Vancouver

# 'We can't give in to terrorists'; Having regained his voice, the soldier who suffered a brutal axe attack in Afghanistan wants Canadians to know he would go back in a heartbeat, Lena Sin writes.

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010020  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Capt. Trevor Greene is making a slow but steady recovery at an Alberta health centre. ;  
**BYLINE:** Lena Sin  
**SOURCE:** The Vancouver Province  
**WORD COUNT:** 409

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The flutter in Capt. Trevor Greene's legs last week may seem infinitesimal, but it's the first sign that the B.C. soldier and former journalist, author and entrepreneur may one day walk again.

"He is so determined," says Debbie Lepore, Capt. Greene's fiancée. "His main goal is walking. We're a long, long, long way off from that, but that's his main goal."

A year and a half ago, Capt. Greene, who grew up in Orléans, was at a meeting with Afghan village elders when he took off his helmet and laid down his weapon out of respect.

Moments later, a crazed teen leapt out of the crowd and buried an axe deep into Capt. Greene's head. His fellow soldiers shot the attacker dead.

The brutal blow left Capt. Greene immobile and unable to speak, but his cognitive capacity remained intact. Now, sheer determination is seeing him through his mission of recovery.

Remarkably, Capt. Greene, 42, wants Canadians to know that he'd go back overseas.

"We cannot give in to terrorists," he says in a barely audible whisper. He staunchly believes that success is possible in Afghanistan, that Canada needs to stay the course, but adds: "It's time for another NATO country to step up and take the lead."

Capt. Greene was speaking from his sun-drenched clinic room in Ponoka, Alta., with a Superman blanket, a gift from Ms. Lepore, pulled over his bed.

In July, the couple and their two-year-old daughter, Grace, left Vancouver for the small town 95 kilometres south of Edmonton so that Capt. Greene can receive the best brain-injury care in the country at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury.

For the military reservist who has had a varied career as a journalist, business consultant and author of three books, the victories do not come easily.

'We can't give in to terrorists'; Having regained his voice, the soldier who suffered a brutal axe attack in Afghanistan

But already, there's progress. Last October, after months of silence, Capt. Greene whispered his first words. Today, his voice is back to normal at least 20 per cent of the time. In December, his feeding tube was taken out and, as of March, he no longer needed a tracheostomy tube.

He has regained some promising movement in his left arm and, as of last week, some tiny — but definite — movement in his legs and torso muscles.

"It's so slow," Ms. Lepore says, but it's progress.

The man who was confined to a bed 24 hours a day had worked as a reporter in Japan for seven years while writing a book on the homeless and another on the women missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

"If he could stand up and walk out of that hospital, the first thing he'd do is put on his army gear and head back to Afghanistan," Capt. Greene's friend Rob Gibbs said. "He's just a humanitarian. It's always about somebody else, he's always trying to help somebody else."

# War improves prostheses

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**SOURCETAG** 0710010504

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Lifestyle

**PAGE:** D6

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by CP NEW MODEL: Adele Fifield shows off her high-tech prosthetic leg and foot at her Ottawa home.

**BYLINE:** CHRIS MORRIS, CP

**DATELINE:** FREDERICTON

**WORD COUNT:** 384

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As she grew up, Adele Fifield was keenly aware that her artificial leg was more than a few steps behind the bionic marvels portrayed in popular science fiction shows.

The old hydraulic version she used in earlier years worked fine at a slow, steady stroll, but got balky if she changed her speed.

"The knee had pistons or cylinders, like the pistons in a car," says Fifield, 41, head of the National Amputee Centre for the War Amps in Ottawa.

"They would compress and help swing the leg forward. But . . . anytime I would change my speed, I would have to wait for the leg to catch up to me."

Fifield lost most of her left leg when she was 13 years old to the same kind of bone cancer that claimed the life of Canadian hero, Terry Fox.

She has spent the past 28 years as an advocate for Canada's amputees and she has experienced first-hand the technological revolution that is making the loss of a limb, or limbs, much less difficult for an individual to bear.

Fifield was one of the first amputees in Canada to be fitted with a so-called C-leg, referring to the computerized microprocessor in the knee which makes the leg much more responsive and natural.

"The microprocessor has a sensor down into the shin and at the knee and 50 times a second it is sending messages back to the hydraulic unit to open and close the valves instantly to reflect whether I'm speeding up or slowing down," Fifield says.

"It's a significant change. You don't have to think about how you're walking."

Welcome to the brave new world of cybernetics.

The technology of artificial limbs has come a long way from the peg leg and the hook and, thanks to the cruel reality of modern warfare, there's growing impetus for even more advancements.

In the United States and Canada, government interest in developing better prosthetic limbs has grown as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Improvements in body armour and in battlefield medical practices have helped lower the number of casualties from those conflicts, but the side effect has been a significant increase in the number of amputees.

Prosthetic advancements range from complex, thought-controlled devices to the simple, yet elegant design that has allowed sprinter Oscar Pistorius of South Africa to become famous as the fastest man on no legs.

The carbon-fibre blades that Pistorius uses to run on have forced Olympic officials to consider his qualification for the games, and they worry the technology of his prosthetics may give him an unfair advantage over sprinters using their natural legs.

"It's a very exciting time," says Fifield, adding the War Amps has about 18,000 Canadians registered for its services.

"In my job here, I speak to hundreds of amputees every year. It is very encouraging to be able to say to the parents of a child born without a limb . . . 'The sky is the limit.' "

# Bring our troops home

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**SOURCETAG** 0710010451  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** A9  
**BYLINE:** MIKE PENDER, LONDON  
**COLUMN:** Letters to the Editor  
**WORD COUNT:** 147

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The featured letters to the editor section (Sept. 22) was very much one-sided opinions on Afghanistan.

The "support our troops" brayers are truly beating the drums of war, muting out any voices of peace. It is equally distressing how the Free Press's Christian columnists are apparently comfortable in ignoring biblical instruction to love your enemies in the whole Afghan situation.

The realities in today's Western democracies are frighteningly close to the world George Orwell saw in his 1984 — a world of perpetual war, constantly changing alliances and a steady erosion of human rights. Some pro-war supporters apparently believe that those who oppose Canada's action in Afghanistan are, in Councillor Susan Eagle's reported words, "somewhat less Canadian". Or, as expressed by the pro-war faction in the US, "If you are not for us, you are against us".

I support our troops and the best way to do this is to bring them home from this unwinnable war.

# Afghans' lack of security assailed

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**SOURCETAG** 0710010693  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 32  
**BYLINE:** DENE MOORE, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 253

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Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the security situation has not improved for ordinary Afghans and negotiation with the insurgents is the best, and maybe the only option to make it better, says the head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province.

Abdul Qadar Noorzai also said that he will be investigating the shootings of a religious scholar and his brother, whose deaths prompted a demonstration against foreign troops last week.

But Noorzai said the civilian death toll will continue to climb until the government and foreign troops improve security – something they've failed to do so far.

"The government does not have control," Noorzai told The Canadian Press. "They (civilians) are not safe at all."

Foreign forces, including Canada, are also responsible, he said.

President Hamid Karzai renewed his call Saturday for talks with the Taliban after a suicide bomber killed 30 Afghan soldiers on board a military bus in Kabul.

A Taliban spokesman responded yesterday, saying the group will "never" negotiate with the government until all foreign forces leave the country. Yet negotiation is the best option, Noorzai said.

"The Taliban were a part of this country," Noorzai said. "They must be brought back for there to be peace."

Although the Canadians have changed strategy, from large-scale battles to targeted attacks aimed at isolating Taliban hardliners in the Zhari and Panjwai districts where they are concentrated, thousands of Afghans have fled those areas.

Now they have taken up refuge in Kandahar City, with relatives if they're lucky, or in abandoned buildings or refugee camps if they're not.

And they're losing faith in the Afghan government and its allies, Noorzai warned.

However, Noorzai did say that he does not believe the majority of Afghans support demonstrators who chanted "Death to Canada" during the protest in Senjaray, on the outskirts of Kandahar City, last week.

"Most of the people do not agree," he said. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Rebuilding Afghanistan to take lots of time: Ambrose

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**SOURCETAG** 0710010666  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 5  
**BYLINE:** DANIEL MACISAAC, SUN MEDIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 216

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Canada is making progress in Afghanistan – but helping stabilize and rebuild the war-ravaged country will take a long time.

That was the message of a town hall meeting hosted in Edmonton yesterday by Edmonton–Spruce Grove MP Rona Ambrose.

"Canada is already committed to providing development aid to Afghanistan until 2011," Ambrose said.

"But rebuilding the country is a long, long process – and now we have to decide if we want to extend the military mission, too."

Canada's commitment of 2,500 troops is slated to end in February 2009.

And the Conservative government says any further extension of the mission must be approved by Parliament.

Ambrose said such a vote could take place right up until 2009 – but only after Canada negotiates further with its NATO allies.

But Ambrose, the Conservative minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, also said it's not too early to promote an informed debate on the controversial subject of Afghanistan, where more than 70 Canadian soldiers have died.

She took the opportunity of a visit to her constituency to stage the town hall meeting, featuring a panel made up of Edmonton Centre MP Laurie Hawn and representatives of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign and International Affairs.

"I thought it was fitting to have all of them there, so that people could see all of the pieces of Canada's contribution – and how they work together," Ambrose said.

That military contribution includes battling Taliban troops, removing landmines, training soldiers of the Afghan National Army and carrying out reconstruction projects.

CIDA development agent Adrian Walraven explained that Canada's \$1 billion investment in Afghanistan goes toward projects ranging from health and education to agriculture and micro-financing.

**KEYWORDS=EDMONTON**

# Coderre says Tories tried to block his trip; Forced to make his own travel arrangements

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010013  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** IMMIGRATION; DRUG TESTING; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 212

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Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre says the Harper government deliberately tried to block his coming visit to Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The MP from Montreal and former Liberal minister said he was forced to make his own travel arrangements after the government refused to arrange a trip for him to Kandahar province, where the Canadian Forces are engaged in a combat mission to drive back the Taliban regime and help rebuild the country.

"I didn't plan (this trip) in a jiffy," Coderre said yesterday.

"It's been a lot of months and a lot of weeks that we sent messages. ... Every time they had a reason."

Coderre explained that the trip would help prepare the Liberals to learn more about the situation before Parliament debates the future of the mission at the end of Canada's current commitment in February 2009.

"When we were talking about the mission (the Conservatives) were calling us names like Taliban lovers and we don't believe in the mission and all that," he said.

"It's important for us to send a clear message that we are all unconditional supporters of the troops doing a magnificent job and that they're putting their lives at stake for a noble cause and we are with them."

Coderre refused to give the exact date of his departure for security reasons, but he said he expects the military will co-operate upon his arrival and give him a briefing on its progress in Afghanistan.

# Envoy says we have to learn from our mistakes

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010012  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / De Salaberry: Rare Interview.;  
**KEYWORDS:** BILINGUALISM; FRANCOPHONES  
**DATELINE:** MONTREAL  
**BYLINE:** MIKE BLANCHFIELD  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 500

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For Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, success means learning from past mistakes and hanging on to ground taken – and then retaken – from the Taliban.

But gains in Afghanistan could also have an important sociopolitical spinoff back home: making the rest of Canada proud of Quebec's contribution to greater world stability.

So says Quebec-born Michel de Salaberry, Canada's new senior civilian co-ordinator for Kandahar. In a rare interview since the Foreign Affairs Department appointed him Canada's top diplomat in Kandahar, de Salaberry says he is proud of his Quebec roots and the opportunity to serve alongside his home province's Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doos.

"It's our chance – it's the francophones' chance – to show good service to Canada," de Salaberry explained. "In many ways, French Canada has been a source of stress for the whole of the country. This is one opportunity for the whole of the country to be proud of its French-speaking element."

A cousin, he says, was a co-founder of the famed Valcartier-based regiment, while his great-great-grandfather was a founder of another regiment that was folded into the Van Doos.

Any noticeable increase in support in Quebec for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan would be welcome news to a minority Conservative government determined to carry on with the NATO mission in the face of an increasingly skeptical public – especially in Quebec – and an emboldened political opposition posturing to topple the government, perhaps in weeks.

At 61, de Salaberry wasn't coaxed out of retirement last summer to do the Conservatives any political favours. After a distinguished string of ambassadorships in Iran, Jordan and Egypt, he says he was flattered, but also bound by a deeply held conviction to fight the roots of fanaticism that threaten the world.

"In Afghanistan, a number of critical cleavages intersect," he says. "These are planetary strategic issues that are going to require considerable resources from Canada, whatever happens in Afghanistan."

De Salaberry's primary function is to elevate the non-military aspects of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan, and do so from the dangerous southern terrain around Kandahar. He reports to Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, Kabul-based Arif Lalani, but he is responsible for six fellow diplomats in the violence-racked southern province of Kandahar.

His job is to better co-ordinate the development and diplomatic efforts with the military mission, whose focus is to strengthen security in the region and eventually stamp out the insurgency.

He's careful not to criticize the past efforts of the handful of diplomats and Canadian International Development Agency representatives who preceded him in the region. But his insights into his current role harbour an underlying criticism: that despite the best efforts of bureaucrats and government officials in Ottawa to play up the importance of the diplomatic and development efforts, there has not, until recently, been enough co-ordination with the military.

De Salaberry says Canadians must adjust their perspectives on Afghanistan.

"If we want the new product to be a new Switzerland in Asia, that's a very high ambition," he says. "A more realistic one might be Bangladesh."

Ottawa Citizen

# Canadian airdrops are saving lives; Hercules aircraft supply ground forces, avoiding trips on risky Afghan roads

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010011  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / Capt. Aidan Costelloe in the cockpit during a recent airdrop mission in Afghanistan. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** MATTHEW FISHER  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 777

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Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four-engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacularly beautiful mountain range before making a dramatic rock-and-roll lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below. Seemingly defying gravity, the 33-year old pilot, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door. Several parachutes that were attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak – a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces – that the drop had been a success.

Except for a few cases of water, which had ruptured, the cargo had landed on target, in good condition and at the exact second it was supposed to.

The rationale for sometimes using airdrops to supply troops in remote locations is clear. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' immensely complicated logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar. "Every time we have an airdrop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way."

Sgt. Rob Gearn, who as loadmaster ran the airdrop at the back of the Hercules, agreed.

Canadian airdrops are saving lives; Hercules aircraft supply ground forces, avoiding trips on risky Afghan roads



"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their doorstep," the 43-year-old Hamiltonian said. "We will do this for any NATO nation that asks, but there is extra meaning when we do it for the Canadians because they can see the Maple Leaf on our tail when we fly past."

The airdrops are not, however, without risks. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Costelloe, who is also from Hamilton, said after the flight. "Everything is about limiting our exposure to ground fire as much as we can."

Surprisingly, the air crew and those waiting on the ground seldom speak with each other.

"They know the game plan. We know the game plan. So there is no need for us to talk with each other," Gearn said. "We saw the smoke they threw and that was enough. We try to keep everything as simple as we can."

In order to keep the enemy guessing, the flight profiles and drop points always vary, as do the timings for such runs, which can also be conducted at night. Although Canada made a few such airdrops to troops here last year, doing so regularly only became possible last month when several Canadian Hercules were based at Kandahar for the first time. Before that they were at an airfield several hours away in the Middle East.

The move has been welcomed by the Van Doos battle group, which has already placed several emergency resupply orders with the air force. It has also been a boon to NATO, which, with 36,000 troops here, has many pressing in-theatre transport requirements in what is a complex, crowded flying environment that includes dust storms, fast air (fighters and bombers) and slow air (transport planes, drones and helicopters).

Canadian, British and U.S. Hercules aircraft now run a regular passenger and cargo service from Kandahar to International Security and Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul. They also make frequent, sometimes hairy landings at remote dirt strips to resupply combat troops from half a dozen countries.

"This is all part of the job, but for us air drops are special and, from an air crew standpoint, we would like to do as many as we can. That's our bread-and-butter and the need out there is sometimes critical," said Costelloe, who like Gearn has already served several 56-day tours in support of Canadian operations in Afghanistan. "It means a chance to live and breathe the mission over here. It is the most challenging and energizing flying I've done in my career."

# Taliban want foreign troops out; Reject new offer of peace talks. Say they will not negotiate unless international soldiers leave country

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010010  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** NASRAT SHOAIB  
**SOURCE:** AFP  
**WORD COUNT:** 449

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As violence continued unabated, Afghanistan's Taliban rejected President Hamid Karzai's new offer of peace talks yesterday, insisting foreign troops leave the country first.

Karzai made his offer on Saturday, hours after one of the worst attacks in the Taliban's near six-year insurgency killed 30 people in the capital.

It was flatly turned down, as was an offer of government posts if the rebels renounced violence. They said they would "never talk" unless the tens of thousands of international troops here leave.

"Taliban are not interested in government posts – ministries or anything. We want the withdrawal of foreign forces and we stand by our position," Taliban spokesperson Yousuf Ahmadi said, echoing a demand made two weeks ago.

"As long as they have not withdrawn, we'll never talk with the Kabul administration."

Despite the rejection, Karzai's spokesperson Hodayun Hamidzada said yesterday that the government "knew" there was debate developing among some factions in the amorphous Taliban – although not the Al-Qa'ida-linked ones – about talks.

"Not all of them, not Al-Qa'ida, but there's serious debate among some Taliban groups," he said. "We don't expect something to happen now. This is a process that will take time."

Karzai has already refused the Taliban demand that the nearly 50,000 foreign soldiers leave.

He told reporters again Saturday, hours after the second-most deadly blast in the city since the Taliban fled in 2001, that he would not let them go before his war-ravaged nation stood on its own feet.

"We won't let the foreigners leave until our roads are built, our schools, electricity are built, until our police and army are better," he said.

Besides military operations, the foreign soldiers are also helping to build the Afghan security forces, extend Kabul's authority and facilitate reconstruction in a land ruined by war.

Taliban want foreign troops out; Reject new offer of peace talks. Say they will not negotiate unless international

Karzai is desperate to end the insurgency, which has claimed around 5,000 lives so far this year, most of them of rebels, compared with about 4,000 last year.

The violence is undercutting costly efforts to rebuild and is eroding public confidence in an administration that has been supported by the world's leading nations for nearly six years and is still faltering.

In new bloodshed, two Afghan women and a child were killed when Taliban attacked an Afghan army patrol in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, Paktia province spokesperson Din Mohammad Darvish told AFP.

International soldiers were called to repel the attack. "Seven Taliban were killed in raids," Darvish said.

The NATO force here announced Saturday that a foreign soldier was killed in the same area, but it would not confirm whether it was the same incident.

Civilian casualties caused by international soldiers in Afghanistan are deeply sensitive, causing outrage inside and outside the country. About 300 civilians are estimated to have been killed in military action this year.

In another incident, two police officers were killed Sunday trying to defuse a bomb outside the troubled southern city of Kandahar, police said.

Two more security officers were wounded, deputy police chief Abdul Hakim Angar told AFP at the site of the blast. An Afghan television journalist filming there was badly hurt.

# Media sensitivity a two-way street

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010028  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** The Editorial Page  
**PAGE:** A10  
**KEYWORDS:** BROADCASTING INDUSTRY; RADIO BROADCASTING  
**BYLINE:** Terry Field  
**SOURCE:** For The Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 794

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The death of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg is a sad circumstance, devastating to family and friends, and significant to a community that respects the efforts of the country's soldiers, while being divided on whether they should even be in Afghanistan.

This national ambivalence makes a soldier's death news, and demands that newsrooms recognize his sacrifice while also reporting on the more difficult questions we face in the so-called "war on terror."

There has been substantial news attention focused on Hornburg, but coverage by a CBC Radio reporter created a small storm of protest. A number of listeners called the CBC feedback line to chastise the reporter for contacting the soldier's family only hours after the information became public, and for "sitting outside the parents' house" while reporting his findings on the air.

I received a number of complaints during 20 years of daily journalism centred around the notion that the media shouldn't contact grieving families, and that reporters are somehow callous or indifferent. These people are both right and wrong.

Reporters need to go places the rest of us can't or won't go to shed light on events and issues, and this is a job good reporters take seriously. The conflict in Afghanistan makes the death of any soldier there an issue, and that makes the reaction of his/her parents, among others in the community, an issue. It would be irresponsible to ignore this imperative, especially in the context of newsroom decision-making, which places a premium on stories that are relevant, local and about people.

News is based on research and on first-hand accounts. As Herald crime reporter Jason van Rassel suggested during a panel discussion on CBC Radio, reporters strive to provide accurate information, and the only guaranteed way to know the views of the parents of the deceased soldier is to ask them.

If they decline the invitation to speak, or would rather wait to do so, reporters need to respect that decision, and in my experience, they almost always do. I have known reporters who aggressively pursued sources under similar circumstances, but they numbered very few, and that was mostly a long time ago.

These days, reporters might wait in front of a courthouse for comments or pictures of a notorious criminal, or gather at a crime scene, or scrum (sort of a journalistic ganging up on someone) an elusive or recalcitrant public figure, but most major news organizations have written rules that don't allow for or encourage the mistreatment of citizens involved in a significant event. Nor do reporters relish contacting next of kin. I still after many years vividly recall a colleague sobbing at the end of a long day of interviewing the relatives of a number of elderly women killed in a bus crash.

It is useful in these circumstances to understand that the media play a necessary and important role in how democratic society comes to terms with its problems. The environmental movement, the victims' rights movement, the women's movement, tougher action on drunk driving, and calls for more action to counter domestic violence are just a few issues people today take more seriously than in the past.

The media play a part in that process by reporting on the efforts of advocacy groups, agencies, politicians and others, and creating a public space of sorts for new ideas and arguments. Discussion of the war on terror and our involvement in Afghanistan need similar treatment, including interviews with soldiers' families.

However, reporters aren't fallible. They do make mistakes, and listeners/readers/viewers need to call and write when they see one.

It is also important that audiences remind editors and producers that they are informed, concerned, and occasionally angry. News editors and producers take such calls seriously, and best-practice boundaries are drawn and revised based in part on that feedback.

In the case of the CBC coverage, the reporter might have chosen a different way to present his information that demonstrated more clearly, from an audience point of view, that he understood the event's seriousness, and it is certain those discussions have taken place in the radio newsroom.

Newsrooms in general have great debates over placement of graphic photos or use of graphic videotape. Community sensibilities and issues around good taste are considered. The relevance and handling of a given news story is discussed, and rarely have I heard a journalist say a story should be done exclusively because it was shocking or horrifying.

The nasty nature of the news often places reporters at odds with their audiences. But audiences and reporters need to acknowledge this and take every chance to talk about it, to encourage a deeper understanding as to how news is organized, gathered and shaped.

Terry Field is chair of the journalism degree program at Mount Royal College, and a former TV and radio news producer with the CBC.

# Canadian air drops saving troops' lives

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010020

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A6

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: CanWest News Service Archive / The use of Hercules planes to air lift supplies to Canadian troops in Afghanistan is cutting the need for risky ground convoys. ; Colour Photo: CanWest News Service / Capt. Aidan Costelloe briefs his C-130 Hercules crew before an air drop. His loadmaster, Sgt. Rob Gearn, is on his left. ;

**KEYWORDS:** !@DATELINE=ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 366

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Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews that would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four-engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacular mountain range before making a dramatic lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below. Seemingly defying gravity, the 33-year-old pilot, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door. Several parachutes that were attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

Except for a few cases of water, which had ruptured, the cargo had landed on target, in good condition and, quite literally, at the exact second it was supposed to.

The rationale for using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is clear. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' immensely complicated logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar. "Every time we have an air drop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way."

Sgt. Rob Gearn, who as loadmaster ran the air drop at the back of the Hercules, agreed.

"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their doorstep," the 43-year-old Hamiltonian said.

The air drops are not, however, without risks. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

# Afghanistan foes ready to tango?; Taliban, Karzai edge toward peace talks

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**IDNUMBER** 200710010031  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.10.01  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A15  
**COLUMN:** Matthew Fisher  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 732

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan –It is unlikely to make any difference to Canadian troops on the ground for a very long time, but the Afghan government and the Taliban have begun an awkward dance that may eventually lead to peace talks.

The latest olive branch came on Saturday when President Hamid Karzai offered to meet with Mullah Omar, the one-eyed spiritual leader of the Taliban and close ally of Osama bin Laden, and Gulbuddin Hemyatyar, a warlord and former prime minister who Canada believes was involved in the deaths of the first two Canadian soldiers to die in Afghanistan in 2003 in a huge explosion near Kabul.

If such talks were ever held, they might well lead to a peace of sorts in Afghanistan. But the price, which Mr. Karzai suggested on Saturday he might be willing to pay, would involve bringing Mullah Omar and Hemyatyar and their medieval ideas back into government.

Mr. Karzai was responding to a mysterious Taliban overture earlier in September that carried with it a demand that such talks could only begin after NATO and U.S. forces left Afghanistan. In a meeting with Canadian journalists in Kabul on Sept. 18, Mr. Karzai categorically rejected that demand and made no mention of Omar or Hemyatyar.

After yet another suicide bomber wearing an army uniform interrupted the holy month of Ramadan two days ago, killing 30 bus passengers in Kabul, and the Taliban claimed credit, the president repeated that he wanted NATO to stay. But he also called both Omar and Hemyatyar "esteemed" and earnestly wondered to which addresses he might make his peace entreaties.

There are three reasons why both sides are edging toward negotiations. Both sides know that most Afghans are fed up with war. But it is also because Mr. Karzai and the Taliban are each weak and perceive weakness in their enemy.

Mr. Karzai's tenuous hold on his government has been badly shaken by a widespread perception that many of his ministers and other senior officials are corrupt and by the Keystone Kops performance of his police, who are far better known for taking bribes than for maintaining order.

The Taliban has been reeling from huge losses since serious fighting between its forces and mostly U.S., British and Canadian troops started in the spring of 2006. Every time it has tried to achieve any strategic



militarily gain, it has been seriously whacked.

But Mr. Karzai and the Taliban have had their successes, too.

Mr. Karzai's greatest triumph has been to simply stay in power, avoiding several assassination attempts and endless intriguing by competing tribes and clans who seek his job. The Taliban may have lost badly on the field of battle but it has still managed to undermine support for NATO's military mission with an insidious campaign of suicide bombings and bombings using buried improvised explosives.

These attacks have made a lot of voters in countries such as Canada and the Netherlands forget that it was the Taliban's Islamic fanatics who gave al-Qaeda a home and turned Afghanistan into an incubator for terrorists.

Also disregarded in the current enthusiasm for troop withdrawals and peace talks is that the Taliban has never renounced its ideological or political connection to al-Qaeda, which threatens the West with every kind of violence and would surely try to return to Afghanistan if the Taliban ever was given much of a say in the government again.

NATO's position is that it is not opposed to peace talks, but has not been holding its breath. Despite the tentative enthusiasm for peace expressed by Mr. Karzai and the Taliban, insurgents have just launched what may be their last major offensive of the year before they return for the winter to the mountain redoubts in Pakistan that they share with al-Qaeda, which also still contributes foreign fighters to the Taliban cause.

Only last week, hundreds of fighters flooded the Panjwai/ Zhari district where Canada's Van Doos battle group mostly operates. There has not been a hint of peace at the Kandahar Airfield, either.

Around-the-clock operations involving many of NATO's 36,000 troops in Afghanistan continue amid the screams of fighter jets and the clatter of attack, troop-carrying and medevac helicopters departing for or arriving from the battlefield.

Most Afghans probably have had enough of Mr. Karzai, the Taliban and the warlords, but from here it looks doubtful that their president will find the address of Mullah Omar or Gulbuddin Hematyar any time soon.

**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; WAR; FOREIGN AID; BOMBINGS; AFGHANISTAN

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Taliban split by offer of peace talks from Karzai Negotiations would have to overcome U.S. designation of top mullah as terrorist

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072740172

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** GRAEME SMITH

**SECTION:** International News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 569

**WORD COUNT:** 556

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GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN The Taliban were struggling for agreement among their leadership yesterday, after Hamid Karzai made his most brazen offer yet for negotiations with the insurgents.

Returning from meetings at the United Nations, the Afghan President suggested this weekend that he would like to meet with insurgent leaders and personally offer them spots in government.

His words were initially greeted with skepticism by the Taliban, who pointed out the first of many logistical hurdles: The United States still considers the top Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, one of the world's most-wanted terrorists.

"It's a joke," Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi told Reuters early yesterday. But the insurgents' spokesman sounded less confident about dismissing the idea of negotiations hours later, when contacted by The Globe and Mail.

"My bosses have not decided on a policy about this," Mr. Ahmadi said by telephone from an undisclosed location. "They will think about it, and when the Taliban has a decision, I will call you right away." The fact that the Taliban's main spokesman could shift his position on such a crucial matter so quickly is an indicator of a larger conflict within the insurgent ranks about the idea of negotiations.

A member of the Taliban's ruling council recently told one of his guests in Quetta, Pakistan, that the council is divided about how to respond to Mr. Karzai's increasingly urgent calls for talks.

A majority of senior Taliban oppose negotiations, the council member said, but they're having difficulty persuading the minority.

Gauging the attitudes of Taliban leaders is notoriously difficult, not least because the precise membership of the insurgents' council, or shura, isn't publicly known. One notorious member, Mullah Obaidullah Akhund, the Taliban's former defence minister, was declared captured by Pakistani forces in March, but his name is still mentioned as a participant in the Taliban's top decision-making group. He is rumoured to favour negotiations.

Similarly, Afghan military officials announced the death of insurgent leader Mullah Berader, also known as Mullah Abdul Ghani, in Helmand province last month, but his name has surfaced as another player in the

THE AFGHAN MISSION Taliban split by offer of peace talks from Karzai Negotiations would have to overcome

discussions.

A Taliban leader whose death is not disputed, Mullah Dadullah, also figures into the negotiation talks because his absence is so powerfully felt; described by Western analysts as a sadist, the aggressive Mr. Dadullah stood as a major obstacle to any negotiations until he was killed in May.

Even now, the publicly declared positions of the Afghan government and the insurgents leave the impression that Mr. Karzai does not have much to discuss with Mr. Omar. Spokesmen for the Taliban and their allied militias have repeatedly said that the insurgents demand the withdrawal of foreign soldiers as a condition for talks.

Mr. Karzai has predicted that pulling back the international troops would plunge his country into the darkest days Afghanistan has witnessed since the civil wars of the early 1990s, in which tens of thousands of people died.

The Afghan President has also stood firm against the other demand often cited by the insurgents, who call for a hazily defined rewrite of the country's constitution to make the document more strictly Islamist.

Still, Mr. Karzai appears to sense political gain in pressing an issue that divides the insurgents.

"There is serious debate within their ranks," Mr. Karzai's spokesman, Humayun Hamidzada, told the Associated Press. "But this is a process that takes time."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; strife; peace; terrorism; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

THE AFGHAN MISSION Taliban split by offer of peace talks from Karzai Negotiations would have 70 overco

# AFGHANISTAN: NEGOTIATIONS Human rights must be respected, leaders say

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072740171

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**PAGE:** A4

**BYLINE:** BERTRAND MAROTTE

**SECTION:** National News

**SOURCE:** STAFF CP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** Montreal PQ

**WORDS:** 346

**WORD COUNT:** 344

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BERTRAND MAROTTE With a report from Canadian Press MONTREAL Afghan authorities should negotiate only with those who respect human rights and set aside violence, Canadian government and opposition leaders agreed yesterday in a cautious response to efforts by Afghan President Hamid Karzai to open a dialogue with the Taliban.

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Bernier, said it is up to the Afghan government to decide "how and with whom to engage in order to bring sustainable peace" to the country.

But, he added, "We hope that negotiations will only be conducted with individuals and organizations that will respect human rights and renounce violence." The Afghan President said this weekend that he would like to meet with leaders of the insurgency. He also said he was open to offering them positions in a future government.

A Taliban spokesman rejected the idea of negotiations while the United States and NATO soldiers remain in the country, but sources told The Globe and Mail's Graeme Smith that leaders of the insurgency are divided on the idea of talks.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said in an interview yesterday that negotiating with the Taliban at this stage would be counterproductive.

"It's out of the question to even envisage the possibility of negotiations with the Taliban so long as they continue to talk about terrorism against NATO troops," he said.

A more productive avenue to pursue, said Mr. Coderre, would be for the Canadian government to put diplomatic pressure on neighbouring Pakistan to harden its notoriously porous border with Afghanistan.

The situation in Afghanistan – with a mission involving 2,500 Canadian troops in Kandahar – is a key divisive issue among the major Canadian political parties.

The three opposition parties have made threats to vote down the Throne Speech expected on Oct. 16, with one of the most contentious items being what the agenda-setting speech has to say about the future of Canada's role in Afghanistan.

Mr. Coderre also said yesterday that he plans to proceed with an unauthorized fact-finding visit to Afghanistan, after requests to travel there officially went unheeded by the Conservative government.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: government; statements; prisoners; strife; peace; human rights

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai; Maxime Bernier

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# AFGHAN DETAINEES Charges weighed against military police

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072740132

**DATE:** 2007.10.01

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** PAUL KORING

**SECTION:** International News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 792

**WORD COUNT:** 774

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PAUL KORING Several military police officers may face charges or disciplinary action for failing to call a full investigation into how Afghan prisoners were injured while in Canadian custody, according to sources close to the multiple investigations into allegations of detainee abuse.

But the Canadian Special Forces soldiers who captured and transported the Afghans suspected of being Taliban insurgents are expected to be cleared of using abusive or excessive force, the sources said.

Although the criminal investigation into allegations of abuse and military police conduct is continuing, The Globe and Mail has learned that no evidence points to unwarranted beatings or abuse of the three Afghans who suffered suspicious injuries, including facial cuts and bruises.

Sources familiar with the multiple (and in some cases parallel) investigations spoke on condition that they not be identified.

Nearly eight months after the probes were launched, soon after The Globe published articles about suspicious and unexplained injuries suffered by Afghan detainees while they were in the custody of Canadian soldiers, none of the inquiries are complete.

But the key criminal probe by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, created to be sufficiently independent that it can examine military police conduct and other sensitive issues, is nearing completion.

"They are looking at whether the MPs failed to launch an investigation despite knowing that detainees had been injured by other MPs," one source said.

A similar although apparently far less serious instance did result in a full-blown CFNIS investigation only two weeks after the incident involving the three Afghans captured by Canadian special forces.

In the second incident, military police ordered a CFNIS probe after it "was alleged that some Military Police had firmly grabbed the arms of one detainee while taking him to a military transport vehicle" on April 23, 2006. "The investigation was conducted by two senior members of the CFNIS" and included questioning of "all personnel involved in the transfer as well as with independent witnesses who confirmed that the detainee was handled in a highly professional manner," the Canadian Forces said last spring in describing the only investigation into an allegation of detainee abuse.

The glaring disparity between that careful and immediate investigation and the apparent absence of any inquiry into the far more serious incident two weeks before now lies at the centre of the current CFNIS probe into the conduct of military police.

The circumstances surrounding how the detainees came to suffer facial cuts and bruises have yet to be fully explained.

What is known is that Canadian Special Forces soldiers captured the three Taliban suspects near the village of Dukah on April 6, 2006. One escaped and was recaptured the next day. They were then bound and flown in a U.S. Chinook helicopter – although still guarded by Canadian Special Forces soldiers – to Kandahar airbase. According to the Canadian Forces account, it was as the suspects were being handed over to Canadian military police after disembarking from the helicopter that the fracas that resulted in injuries occurred.

Although "already restrained by nylon straps to his wrists, .

. . the detainee used his legs to leverage himself off the back of a vehicle in an effort to generate resistance against the Military Police escorting him. In accordance with proper use of force procedures, Military Police used appropriate physical control techniques to restrain," according to the official version of the incident released last spring in response to questions from The Globe.

Whether the current NIS probe will come to the same conclusion – that the MPs used only appropriate force to subdue the prisoner – won't be known until the criminal inquiry is complete.

That issue is separate from whether senior military police in Kandahar should have called in the CFNIS to investigate at the time, not nine months later when the high command in Ottawa reacted to published reports detailing the injuries.

The CFNIS won't comment on the progress of its inquiry. Nor will it say whether it ever managed to track down the detainees who were released by the Afghan police after being handed over by Canadian troops.

"That matter is still part of the ongoing investigation," Captain Cindy Tessier said. She declined to confirm or deny that the former detainees had ever given their side of the story to CFNIS investigators.

Meanwhile, two other investigations are on hold waiting for the CFNIS probe to finish its questioning of several key figures, believed to be senior military police officers who were in a position to order an investigation into the detainee injuries at the time but didn't.

"Witnesses must first be interviewed by the CFNIS and then released by them," said Lieutenant-Commander Philip Anido, a spokesman for the Board of Inquiry established to look into Canadian Forces policies and practices regarding detainees.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: prisoners; abuse; inquiries; human rights

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

# Troops' supplies dropped from Hercs Lives of convoy crews spared by tactic

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CNS Matthew Fisher ABOVE GHORAK, Afghanistan — Canada has begun making dramatic air drops from CC-130 Hercules aircraft to troops in hostile territory to spare the lives of convoy crews who would otherwise face a long and perilous land journey to carry out the same mission.

During one such flight last week, a four-engine Hercules turboprop popped over the crest of a spectacularly beautiful mountain range before making a dramatic rock-and-roll lunge down toward a purple smoke marker on the desert floor below. Seemingly defying gravity, the 33-year old pilot, Capt. Aidan Costelloe, forced the nose of his aircraft up at the last possible moment and seven tonnes of urgently needed food, water, fuel and ammo rolled out the back door.

Several parachutes that were attached quickly opened and the load floated to the ground.

Not long after getting back to the home airfield at Kandahar, the air crew received word from those on the ground at Ghorak — a small group of Canadian troops mentoring Afghan security forces — that the drop had been a success.

Except for a few cases of water, which had ruptured, the cargo had landed on target, in good condition and, quite literally, at the exact second it was supposed to.

The rationale for sometimes using air drops to supply troops in remote locations is clear. More than half of the 71 Canadian deaths in Afghanistan have been caused by suicide bombers or improvised explosive devices that have struck Canadian vehicles. Many of those deaths have occurred on resupply convoys.

"This saves lives, big time. To not use this resource if it is available would be a crime," said Lt.-Col. Nicolas Eldaoud, who oversees the Canadian Forces' immensely complicated logistics chain in Central Asia from the main base at Kandahar. "Every time we have an air drop, it means we don't need to send out a combat logistics patrol that puts my soldiers in harm's way." Sgt. Rob Gearn, who as loadmaster ran the air drop at the back of the Hercules, agreed.

"What the convoys do is very dangerous and we can eliminate that by delivering cargo right to their doorstep," the 43-year-old Hamiltonian said. "We will do this for any NATO nation that asks, but there is extra meaning when we do it for the Canadians because they can see the Maple Leaf on our tail when we fly past." The air drops are not, however, without risks. The relatively slow and awkward Hercules are purpose-built for such tactical missions but they present quite a big target, no matter how well they are flown.

"Essentially we establish a run-in track, come in as quick as we can, slow down suddenly to drop the cargo and then get out fast," Capt. Costelloe, who is also from Hamilton, said after the flight.

"Everything is about limiting our exposure to ground fire as much as we can." Surprisingly, the air crew and those waiting on the ground seldom speak with each other.



"They know the game plan. We know the game plan. So there is no need for us to talk with each other," Gears said. "We saw the smoke they threw and that was enough. We try to keep everything as simple as we can." In order to keep the enemy guessing, the flight profiles and drop points always vary.

— CanWest News Service