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Harper's strategy seems to make good political sense

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BYLINE: CHANTAL HEBERT
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As opportunistic as it may be, there is a fundamental logic to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's election ultimatum to the opposition parties. It makes little sense for his Conservative government to survive a vote on its agenda later this month only to then have its core policies defeated on a piecemeal basis over the two remaining years in the life of the minority Parliament.

That amounts to saying that Canadians would be better served by a paralyzed government and a prolonged parliamentary blockade than by an inconvenient return trip to the polls. On the face of it, that is an unsustainable proposition.

Just as unsustainable is the notion that the prime minister could accept some of the key non-negotiable conditions put forward by the NDP and the Bloc Qu b cois. No responsible government could accept them without airing them in a general election.

The NDP demand for an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan, in breach of the commitment to serve in Kandahar until February 2009, would have undeniable consequences for NATO operations in the region as well as for Canada's reputation on the international scene.

The Bloc's call for the elimination of the federal spending power has no resonance in most provincial capitals. Past and present Quebec governments have never asked as much.

Neither are steps that could be taken lightly, just to buy a few more months for a minority government.

Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe cannot seriously have expected Harper to agree to them.

The Liberals have also drawn deep lines in the sand, in particular on the environment and the Afghan deployment. On Wednesday, Harper hinted that he is unlikely to meet St phane Dion's conditions. But while the NDP and the Bloc are both expected to bring their entire caucus to the fore of a confidence vote later this month, some Liberal strategists have been toying with a plan to keep enough MPs away from the House to oppose the speech without necessarily toppling the government.

Rather than take down the Conservatives in a frontal assault and have to fight them in an election, the Liberals would keep their powder dry until they can shoot down the government's initiatives one at a time.

By serving notice that he will not be content to simply survive an automatic vote of confidence on the Oct. 16 throne speech and that he will treat subsequent opposition attempts to prevent him from implementing its contents as life-or-death votes for his minority government, Harper has thrown a wrench in that plan.

Under his terms of engagement, the next session could turn into a game of hide and seek between the government and Dion, one that would inevitably find the Liberals springing the election trap set by the prime minister sooner rather than later.

The Harper ultimatum has also added yet another dimension to the ongoing Liberal leadership quandary. It begs the question of whether Dion — inasmuch as he may be too weak to back his words with actions — can still function as an efficient leader of the Official Opposition.

One way or another it seems that on the eve of what may be a very short second session, the 39th Parliament has reached a crossroads: if the House of Commons does not feature an impotent government this fall, then it will showcase an impotent opposition.

Chantal Hebert covers national issues.

Afghan official asks Canada's Opposition to rethink stand

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Opposition politicians threatening to vote down the throne speech unless the Harper government stands by the 2009 withdrawal date from Afghanistan were asked yesterday by the war-torn country's education minister to rethink that position.

Mohammed Haneef Atmar, in Toronto to champion the progress his country's education system has made since the fall of the Taliban, said withdrawing Canadian troops prematurely would give terrorists the upper hand and undo all the gains made.

"Pulling out from Afghanistan would mean insecurity for Afghanistan, would mean children not being able to go to school," Atmar said following his speech.

"It doesn't mean Canada is requested forever to stay in Afghanistan with its military forces. . . . It's about an interim period . . . and the Afghan nation, during that interim period, would need support."

The Bloc Qu b cois and the Liberals have indicated they will vote against the Oct. 16 throne speech if it does not contain a clear statement of withdrawal from combat in 2009. The NDP is calling for nothing short of an immediate pullout.

"I would request them to reconsider this," Atmar said.

"Afghanistan needs your support and we should not be left halfway and abandoned there."

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Parliament would have the opportunity to debate and vote on extending the combat mission past February 2009.

Military proposes letting badly injured remain in uniform

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / The coffin of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on Sept. 24, is carried yesterday into a funeral in Calgary. The 24-year-old was remembered as a good man and a hero by friends and colleagues. ;

DATELINE: OTTAWA

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 393

Soldiers badly wounded in Afghanistan and who want to stay in uniform would be given the chance to do so under a new policy drafted by the Defence Department.

The plan, drawn up in the waning days of Gordon O'Connor's tenure as defence minister, would allow the military to avoid the controversy of dismissing injured soldiers who want to continue serving and -- in some cases -- have no other vocation.

Sources within the Defence Department told The Canadian Press the policy has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since O'Connor was replaced in August by the new minister, Peter MacKay.

The chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, said recently he has some of "his brightest minds working on it," but offered few details on the proposal or a timeline.

Sources who've seen a draft of the policy say it would allow soldiers who do not meet the military's universality of service rule to apply to stay as long as they meet some criteria.

Under the current system, a soldier who becomes disabled has three years to be rehabilitated and meet the fitness standard for overseas operations. If they cannot meet the requirement, they have no choice but to face a medical discharge.

The rule, introduced by Hillier, has been a source of concern as the number of wounded from the desert battlefields of Afghanistan grows.

Hillier has steadfastly refused to make changes to the current fitness requirement, but conceded that military has been trying to find a way to take care of its wounded with some dignity.

The authority to release an injured soldier, sailor or air crew member rests solely with the defence chief and Hillier has argued that the current system is flexible enough to let him decide the future of individuals.

But defence sources say clear criteria are needed to ensure fairness and to avoid potential legal challenges.

Lt.-Col. Stephane Grenier, a spokesperson for the chief of military personnel, says the new policy will not supersede, amend or even soften the universality rule.

Its intent will be to recognize that wounded soldiers still have something to contribute to military life.

"The military is being challenged to balance the deployability factor with the gainfully employed factor," he said in an interview.

Grenier would not discuss what kind of criteria would be attached to the policy.

Liberal MP Dan McTeague, an advocate for wounded soldiers, said he wants to see the conditions and worries they will be too narrow and restrictive.

"We're talking about wounded human beings who fought for this country," he said. "A soldier's commitment is open-ended and the criteria on whether they remain in the Forces should be too."

Grenier denied there's been any foot-dragging in addressing the issue, but said he understood the urgency some people must feel.

Do Canadian troops have Taliban on the run?; Mission that killed Canadian cripples Taliban in strategic area, military says

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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 468

It is a dry, dusty patch of blowing sand and fledgling vineyards tended by villagers who have not yet fled.

But for Canadians soldiers in Afghanistan, the regions west of Kandahar city known as Zhari and Panjwaii are the heart of their battle against Taliban insurgents.

Now military officials hope they have the enemy on the run following Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier — their most recent battle in Kandahar province and one that cost the life of a Canadian soldier.

"Those operations have considerably disrupted the Taliban freedom of movement and their command and control nodes," Maj. Eric Landry, chief of operations for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, said yesterday.

"Right now, they're completely ineffective against our forces and the Afghan National Army."

Landry said Canadian and Afghan forces have encircled the insurgent stronghold in the Sangasar area, their operational and logistical base in the Zhari district.

It is from this area that Taliban have launched attacks on Canada's forward operating bases and ventured out to plant deadly roadside bombs that have exacted a heavy toll on Canadian troops.

"This is where the Taliban movement was born and this is where a lot of key leaders are still staying," Landry said. "This is from where they command some of their operations."

The mission to take back control began in August with Operation Keeping Goodwill in the Zhari district, where Canadians have re-established four police substations.

They tightened the noose with Honest Soldier, which started early last week when Charlie Company rolled into northern Panjwaii, southeast of Sangasar, and wrapped up on the weekend.

Fighting was fierce and Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was killed in a mortar attack on the first day of the mission.

Heavy fighting continued through the week as Canadians established another police substation in Panjwaii, along the Arghandab River.

"They were surprised," said Maj. Stephane Masson, operations co-ordinator for the Canadian military in Afghanistan.

"We tightened the circle and they had to fight. We saw signs of panic."

The hope is that hardline Taliban, cut off from easy movement and resupply, will move out of the area.

"It separates the hard-core fighters, who are there fighting for the cause, from the tier-two and tier-three fighters, who are there because they have to and because they're forced into the Taliban movement," Landry said.

"Because the Taliban cannot operate freely in the district of Zhari, they have a hard time organizing different activities, different attacks against coalition forces and the Afghan National Army."

Canadians fought and died to take control of these districts last year in Operation Medusa, the largest Canadian combat offensive since the Korean War.

But insurgents regained control this past summer during the changeover of Canadian troops, when Afghan national security forces were left alone to defend the territory.

Military officials now admit the Afghan forces weren't ready.

They have undertaken a rigorous mentoring program for Afghan National Police. A similar program has been underway for the Afghan army for about a year.

The police substations are now manned by Afghan police and teams of Canadian military police and infantry who will stay with them around the clock, as well as additional infantry.

Landry said there has already been a marked difference in the area.

"We have local nationals who are coming to the police substation, reporting crimes, reporting insurgent activities and this helps us a lot with our intelligence gathering," he said.

Do Canadian troops have Taliban on the run?; Mission that killed Canadian cripples Taliban in strategic area

Release of 'Kite Runner' delayed over fears for young actors safety

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DATELINE: New York

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The release of "The Kite Runner" has been delayed six weeks because of fears for the safety of three of the movie's Afghan child actors, Paramount Vantage, which is distributing the film, said Thursday.

As violence has escalated in Kabul, Afghanistan, concerns have mounted that the sexual nature of some scenes in "The Kite Runner" could prompt violence against three of the young boys starring in the film. In the film, based on the 2003 bestselling novel by Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini, the story's main character witnesses the rape of his friend but does nothing to stop it.

"The Kite Runner," originally scheduled to come out Nov. 2, will now be released Dec. 14 while the three boys – Zekiria Ebrahimi, Ahmad Khan Mahmidzada and Ali Danish Bakhty Ari – are removed from Kabul. It's feared that when the film is released, pirated DVDs could spread in Kabul, where those culturally offended could react violently to seeing such a rape scene.

Ahmad Khan is 12. Though the ages for Ali Danish and Zekiria weren't immediately available, they are of a similar age.

"The kids have been offered to come to the United States and stay out of the country for an extended period of time," Megan Colligan, head of marketing at Paramount Vantage, told The Associated Press on Thursday.

When exactly the boys will be relocated and for how long has not yet been determined, but Colligan said it would be temporary. They may remain in Kabul until the end of their school year on Dec. 6. They could potentially return home in March at the end of their summer vacation, once the release of "The Kite Runner" has come and gone.

Paramount Vantage was aware of the possibility of trouble for the young actors, and has in recent months sought advice from regional experts and also dispatched an expert to the area to conduct interviews.

"Our position is, we're not going to do anything that jeopardizes the kids and we are going to make sure that they're safe throughout this process," said Colligan, who added that the studio had been eyeing the situation as "The Kite Runner" played at fall film festivals.

The New York Times first reported the decision by Paramount Vantage, the art-house label of Paramount Pictures, which is owned by Viacom Inc.

Ahmad Jaan Mahmidzada, the father of Ahmad Khan, told the AP on Thursday that he was relieved the studio was taking action.

"I am happy that at least they realized our problem here and made a decision about my son," he said. "I still do not know what will happen next, but at least I am less concerned about this issue then I was in the past."

Fallen Cdn. soldier remembered as 'good man, a hero'; Reservist Nathan Hornburg killed in Afghan mortar attack

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Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was remembered as a good man and a hero by friends and colleagues at a celebration of his life yesterday.

The 24-year-old reservist, a member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, died Sept. 24 while attempting to repair a tank that was under mortar attack. He became the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

"The time we spent with Nathan Hornburg was time spent in the presence of a hero," said fellow reservist Sgt. Pablo Fernandez. "He did what only someone with an iron will could do. In death, as he did in life, Nathan is setting an example."

Padre Will Hubbard told mourners the name Nathaniel means "gift" in Hebrew. He said Hornburg had the gift of good humour and of being supportive to both his friends and military comrades.

"You will hear good things about him, because Nathan Hornburg was a good man," said Hubbard.

The Calgary Roundup Centre was filled to capacity with more than a thousand mourners.

Many stopped at a memory table where a photo of Hornburg with members of his troop was offset by one of him posing with a tricycle at age 3. Hornburg's work as a budding artist was also featured, including three colourful landscapes and sculptures of an eagle and a polar bear.

The military declined to comment officially on the day.

"Not today. Today belongs to his family," said Maj. Gen. Tim Grant, the former head of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Afghan army 'has come a long way'; Canadian team mentors 3,000 members of the Afghan National Army

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Canadian soldiers look on as members of the Afghan National Army crouch behind barriers at Camp Hero and lob grenades overhead.

There is no big bang. These are fake grenades, and Camp Hero is a practice range just outside the international military base at Kandahar Airfield.

And that's a good thing because not all of the grenades land on target.

When they first took to the firing range a few weeks ago, the mostly young and inexperienced soldiers of the 201st Brigade fired wildly toward their targets – if they could get their weapons to fire at all.

"They were shooting from the hip and leaving Allah to guide the bullets," says Capt. Sylvain Caron, who is in charge of the Canadian team mentoring 3,000 members of the Afghan National Army.

"We had to explain that's not exactly how it works."

But the Canadians who have taken on the task, the 140 members of the Operational Mentoring Liaison Team, are patient and determined.

For Sgt. Dave Querry, it's a matter of honour.

"I have friends who died here. Their families are in mourning," says Querry, who is training Afghan infantrymen.

"I don't want to leave this country thinking my friends died for nothing."

Querry says Canada has a job to do.

"We can't leave with the job half done," he says. "It wouldn't be right."

Regardless of the insurgent death tolls and the ground won or lost, the Taliban will likely remain in Afghanistan for a long time. Aside from the unlikely prospect of insurgents putting down their weapons to join the Afghan government, the only hope for long-term peace in this war-battered country is an effective national security force.

The Afghan army is not up to the job but they've come a long way.

Afghan army 'has come a long way'; Canadian team mentors 3,000 members of the Afghan National Army

A year ago, when Canadians took on the mentoring program, it seemed an impossible task.

Although made up of many seasoned fighters, the Afghan army was short-handed, undisciplined and out-manoeuvred by Taliban insurgents. Their death toll was staggering.

Col. Mohammad Anbia, commander of the 5th Company, 1st Kandak of the 205th Brigade, has been a soldier for over two decades.

A regal man with a salt-and-pepper beard, 43-year-old Anbia fought the mujahedeen when he was with Afghan government forces that were allied with the Russians in the 1980s. Later on, he fought the Taliban.

He is a proud fighter and reluctant to admit the Afghans needed help. But he says he sees day-to-day changes as his men work closely with the Canadians.

"We're getting their soldiers' experience," he says through an interpreter.

His company is on active duty, supplying their own forces in place at forward operating bases throughout Kandahar province.

The Afghan army is holding its own in some areas already and they are poised to undertake an operation of their own.

Yet Anbia, who is the commander of the logistical company – a new idea to the Afghan army – says the Canadians and international forces must stay a long while yet.

"If they leave Afghanistan, maybe it will be a civil war again," he says.

"The Afghan people are very good at killing each other," he says with a wry laugh.

Hornburg comes home

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(Fredericton)
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FINAL SALUTE: Cpl. Cade Seely salutes as the coffin of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in Afghanistan on Sept. 24, is carried into a funeral service in Calgary on Thursday.

Letter | Many ways for people to stand on guard

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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 287

Michael Bellemare is "shocked" by the Fredericton Peace Coalition's opposition to yellow ribbons.

He suggests that the yellow ribbon represents the longing for reunion with sons and daughters who have been ordered to go to war in Afghanistan. Not a surprising longing considering the substantial harm which has taken its toll as Canadian foreign policy pursues militaristic strategies.

Tracy Glynn, with the Fredericton Peace Coalition, calls our attention to another interpretation of the yellow ribbon. It serves well as an emotive lever to draw us into an uninformed support of military enterprise. The symbol is a powerful, even if unintended, public relations device supporting one political option.

Calling it into question leaves some of us vulnerable to the charge of callous indifference to the cost being paid by soldiers and those who love them. This even while we have that cost clearly in view as the motive for our resistance of the war.

A democratic society is based on the free consent of citizens. Michael Bellemare and Tracy Glynn represent differing perspectives on a common symbol. Bellemare wonders about the implications if groups such as the Fredericton Peace Coalition had been active when Nazism threatened the security of the world.

Such groups did exist and did just what the Fredericton Peace Coalition is now doing. German youth, academics, theologians and others spoke out against right-wing militaristic policies that led incrementally to the implementation of Hitler's final solution. They represented a minority voice as the majority was seduced by slogans and symbols cultivating unquestioning allegiance to a very questionable political agenda.

Glynn calls us to think carefully about our personal and political commitments. In this she brings our focus back to what Bellemare calls "really important."

Rev. George Feenstra

Fredericton

Peace coalition changes tack

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BYLINE: ADAM BOWIE bowie.adam@dailygleaner.com
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 305

The Fredericton Peace Coalition has decided to take a softer stance in its campaign to change the way people support Canada's troops in Afghanistan after a wave of criticism.

Rather than ask people to remove the popular yellow ribbons with the words "Support Our Troops" from the windows in their house and from the bumpers of their vehicles, the group will ask them to add a new sticker that reads, "Bring Them Home!"

Coalition spokesman Matthew Abbott said his group isn't bothered by the negative feedback. He said it's just a misunderstanding.

"What we are saying is that what the yellow-ribbon campaign does is stifle debate on this very important issue," he said.

"The yellow ribbon is a political statement. It's not a neutral stance."

The coalition plans to ask businesses and residences to consider this new way to support Canada's troops.

"If what your ribbon means is 'Support the Troops, Not the War,' we've created a sticker that you can add to your yellow ribbon that says 'Bring Them Home!' " he said.

"And it also says 'Question War', so that's a way to support the troops but not the war."

Coalition member Julie Michaud said she understands why many people have reacted angrily to the group's campaign.

"I think that people are really concerned about the lives of their loved ones, so I think it's natural to feel a little bit threatened by the idea of taking down the yellow ribbon," she said.

"But what we're saying is that for those who really are concerned about the lives of their loved ones, the most effective action is to call for an end to the war so that they can come home and be safe."

Cathy DeLong, the organizer behind the yellow-ribbon campaign in the city, said she's happy to hear about the coalition's new strategy.

"I like that, bring the guys home," she said. "I think that's a much better strategy. I didn't like the idea of them going around trying to put down what we're trying to do."

DeLong said she's always been open about what the yellow ribbon means to her.

"Since Day 1 when I started this project and wanted to get these ribbons out, I said that I'm not supporting the war, I'm supporting the troops and their families," she said.

"You can't get any simpler than that."

Afghan education improves: UN; UNICEF reports 40,000 females among 133,000 new teachers

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SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: TORONTO

WORD COUNT: 263

UNICEF says Canada's military role in Afghanistan is overshadowing the substantial progress made in educating the country's youth.

Nigel Fisher of UNICEF says the two-thirds of Afghanistan not besieged by Taliban insurgents is witnessing real advances.

Fisher's comments come as he prepares to greet Afghanistan's Minister of Education Mohammed Haneef Atmar, who was to speak today in Toronto.

Canada's troops are stationed mainly in the volatile south, where Taliban forces often destroy infrastructure, such as schools, built by reconstruction teams.

Fisher says the relative stability in the other parts of the country has allowed some five million children to enrol in school.

He says under Taliban rule the education system fell apart and children lucky enough to be educated at home, in secret, numbered only in the tens of thousands.

"For natural reasons, with our military there, Canada tends to focus on insecurity and it tends, obviously, to focus on the impact of the deaths of our soldiers," said Fisher.

"I really believe that if you look back over the last five years, there's been substantial progress in the country."

UNICEF reports the number of teachers in Afghanistan has increased from 20,000 five years ago to 133,000 today – and 40,000 of those teachers are women.

Still, infrastructure challenges remain. While there are 8,300 schools registered within the education system, only 2,200 have usable buildings, the agency reports.

"The military equation is an important part today, but equally important ... is that the international community stays with Afghanistan long enough to help invest in social and economic infrastructure," said Fisher.

"Without that, Afghans are not going to see any change and it's going to be that more difficult to get rid of the Taliban."

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called for Canada's continued involvement in Afghanistan and signalled he'll push for an extension of the mission when Parliament resumes in a few weeks.

Last Goodbye

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PAGE: B1

PHOTO: The Canadian Press

ILLUSTRATION: Linda Hornburg holds back tears as the coffin of her son, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on Sept. 24, is put into a hearse following a funeral service yesterday in Calgary.

Cab stickers a fitting tribute

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.05

SECTION: Editorial page

PAGE: 8

COLUMN: Our View

WORD COUNT: 221

The small, black–and–yellow sticker appearing on the bumpers of Kingston taxi cabs is a fitting tribute to David Krick.

Mr. Krick was stabbed to death nearly four months ago while driving his cab – the victim of a murderer who has continued to elude city police.

Such memorials and tributes have become commonplace in our troubled and violent world, moreso since Canada joined the war in Afghanistan and soldiers started returning home in coffins – more than 70 to date.

Mr. Krick was not a war hero. But he performed a public service that most of us who have day jobs in comfortable, air–conditioned offices will never understand or appreciate.

Driving taxi – especially overnight in a city the size of Kingston – can be dangerous business.

The epitaph at the bottom of the sticker, which was designed by Mr. Krick's family, reads: "Let his spirit ride with you."

Mr. Krick was 50 years old, loved by his family and popular at work. Yet he was left bleeding and dying on a city sidewalk the morning of June 17, the victim of a cowardly and despicable act.

Since then, Kingston Police have had four officers assigned full–time to the case. Tips from the public have dried up. Yet their resolve remains strong.

They suspect the killer had at least one accomplice that morning who helped him elude the police chase – someone who is now withholding information that would see justice done.

We hope that person or persons takes note of the memorial sticker that bears David Krick's name and his car number – No. 71.

We hope it moves them to do the right thing and report Mr. Krick's killer to Kingston Police.

Paramount delays Kite Runner release

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.10.05
SECTION: Entertainment
PAGE: F3
BYLINE: David Halbfinger The New York Times
WORD COUNT: 853

LOS ANGELES – The studio distributing *The Kite Runner*, a tale of childhood betrayal, sexual predation and ethnic tension in Afghanistan, is delaying the film's release to get its three schoolboy stars out of Kabul – perhaps permanently – in response to fears that they could be attacked for their enactment of a culturally inflammatory rape scene.

Executives at the distributor, Paramount Vantage, are contending with issues stemming from the rising lawlessness in Kabul in the year since the boys were cast.

The boys and their relatives are now accusing the filmmakers of mistreatment, and warnings have been relayed to the studio from Afghan and American officials and aid workers that the movie could aggravate simmering enmities between the politically dominant Pashtun and the long-oppressed Hazara.

In an effort to prevent not only a public-relations disaster but also possible violence, studio lawyers and marketing bosses have employed a stranger-than-fiction team of consultants. In August they sent a retired CIA counterterrorism operative in the region to Kabul to assess the dangers facing the child actors. And on Sunday a Washington-based political adviser flew to the United Arab Emirates to arrange a safe haven for the boys and their relatives.

"If we're being overly cautious, that's OK," Karen Magid, a lawyer for Paramount, said. "We're in uncharted territory."

In interviews, more than a dozen people involved in the studio's response described grappling with vexing questions: testing the limits of corporate responsibility, wondering who was exploiting whom and pondering the price of on-screen authenticity.

The Kite Runner, like the best-selling 2003 novel by Khaled Hosseini on which it is based, spans three decades of Afghan strife, from before the Soviet invasion through the rise of the Taliban. At its heart is a friendship between Amir, a wealthy Pashtun boy, and Hassan, the Hazara son of Amir's father's servant. In a pivotal scene Hassan is raped in an alley by a Pashtun bully. Later, Sohrab, another Hazara boy, is preyed on by a corrupt Taliban official.

Though the book is admired in Afghanistan by many in the elite, its narrative remains unfamiliar to the broader population, for whom oral storytelling and rumour communication carry far greater weight. The Taliban destroyed nearly all movie theaters in Afghanistan, but pirated DVDs often arrive soon after a major film's release in the West. As a result, Paramount Vantage, the art-house and specialty label of Paramount Pictures, has pushed back the release of the \$18 million movie by six weeks, to Dec. 14, when the young stars' school year will have ended.

In January in Afghanistan, DVDs of *Kabul Express* – an Indian film in which a character hurls insults at Hazara – led to protests, government denunciations and calls for the execution of the offending actor, who

fled the country.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the Kite Runner actor who plays Hassan, Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada, 12, told reporters at that time that he feared for his life because his fellow Hazara might feel humiliated by his rape scene. His father said he himself was misled by the film's producers, insisting that they never told him of the scene until it was about to be shot and that they had promised to cut it. Hangama Anwari, the child-rights commissioner for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, said Monday that she had urged Paramount's counterterrorism consultant to get Ahmad Khan out of the country, at least until after the movie is released. "They should not play around with the lives and security of people," she said of the filmmakers. "The Hazara people will take it as an insult."

The film's director, Marc Forster, whose credits include Finding Neverland (2004), another film starring child actors, said he saw The Kite Runner as "giving a voice and a face to people who've been voiceless and faceless for the last 30 years." Striving for authenticity, he said, he chose to make the film in Dari, an Afghan language, and his casting agent, Kate Dowd, held open calls in cities with sizable Afghan communities, including Fremont, Calif., Toronto and The Hague. But to no avail: Forster said he "just wasn't connecting with anybody."

Finally, when Dowd went to Kabul in May 2006, she discovered her stars. "There was such innocence to them, despite all they'd lived through," she said.

Forster emphasized that casting Afghan boys did not seem risky at the time; local filmmakers even encouraged him, he said: "You really felt it was safe there, a democratic process was happening, and stability, and a new beginning."

In late July, with violence worsening in Kabul, studio executives looked for experts who could help them chart a safe course. Aided by lobbyists for Viacom, Paramount's parent company, they found John Kiriakou, the retired CIA operative with experience in the region, and had him conduct interviews in Washington and Kabul.

"They wanted to do the right thing, but they wanted to understand what the right thing was," Kiriakou said.

There was one absolute: "Nothing will be done if it puts any kid at risk," Megan Colligan, head of marketing at Paramount Vantage, said.

Operation Honest Soldier cripples Taliban

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.10.05
SECTION: World
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Dene Moore
WORD COUNT: 354

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – It is a dry, dusty patch of blowing sand and fledgling vineyards tended by villagers who have not yet fled.

But for Canadians soldiers in Afghanistan, the regions west of Kandahar city known as Zhari and Panjwaii are the heart of their battle against Taliban insurgents.

Now military officials hope they have the enemy on the run following Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier – their most recent battle in Kandahar province and one that cost the life of a Canadian soldier.

"Those operations have considerably disrupted the Taliban freedom of movement and their command and control nodes," Maj. Eric Landry, chief of operations for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, said Thursday.

"Right now, they're completely ineffective against our forces and the Afghan National Army."

Landry said Canadian and Afghan forces have encircled the insurgent stronghold in the Sangasar area, their operational and logistical base in the Zhari district.

It is from this area that Taliban have launched attacks on Canada's forward operating bases and ventured out to plant deadly roadside bombs that have exacted a heavy toll on Canadian troops.

"This is where the Taliban movement was born and this is where a lot of key leaders are still staying," Landry said. "This is from where they command some of their operations."

The mission to take back control began in August with Operation Keeping Goodwill in the Zhari district, where Canadians have re-established four police substations.

They tightened the noose with Honest Soldier, which started early last week when Charlie Company rolled into northern Panjwaii, southeast of Sangasar, and wrapped up on the weekend.

Fighting was fierce and Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was killed in a mortar attack on the first day of the mission.

Heavy fighting continued through the week as Canadians established another police substation in Panjwaii, along the Arghandab River.

"They were surprised," said Maj. Stephane Masson, operations co-ordinator for the Canadian military in Afghanistan.

"We tightened the circle and they had to fight. We saw signs of panic."

The hope is that hardline Taliban, cut off from easy movement and resupply, will move out of the area.

"It separates the hard-core fighters, who are there fighting for the cause, from the tier-two and tier-three fighters, who are there because they have to and because they're forced into the Taliban movement," Landry said.

"Because the Taliban cannot operate freely in the district of Zhari, they have a hard time organizing different activities, different attacks against coalition forces and the Afghan National Army."

Opposition parties asked to rethink withdrawal date

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.10.05
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Gregory Bonnell
WORD COUNT: 325

TORONTO – Opposition politicians threatening to vote down the throne speech unless the Harper government stands by the 2009 withdrawal date from Afghanistan were asked Thursday by the war-torn country's education minister to rethink that position.

Mohammed Haneef Atmar, in Toronto to champion the progress his country's education system has made since the fall of the Taliban, said withdrawing Canadian troops prematurely would give terrorists the upper hand and undo all the gains made.

"Pulling out from Afghanistan would mean insecurity for Afghanistan, would mean children not being able to go to school," Atmar said following his speech.

The Bloc Quebecois and the Liberals have indicated they will vote against the Oct. 16 throne speech if it does not contain a clear statement of withdrawal from combat in 2009. The NDP is calling for nothing short of an immediate pullout.

"I would request them to reconsider this," Atmar said. "Afghanistan needs your support and we should not be left halfway and abandoned there.

"This will not have any positive outcome for Afghanistan. So, staying the course in Afghanistan and honouring that international commitment to Afghanistan is our request to every nation, including Canada."

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Parliament would have the opportunity to debate and vote on extending the combat mission past February 2009. But the prime minister has also vowed to aggressively campaign to convince a majority of MPs that Canada has a moral responsibility to stick it out.

Harper said he is prepared to fight an election campaign on Afghanistan if necessary.

Atmar's plea came following a speech during which he highlighted the progress Afghanistan's education system has made since 2002, when only 900,000 children – all of them boys – were enrolled in school. There are now some six million Afghan youths going to school – roughly half the country's school-aged children – and two million of them are girls, Atmar said.

'Pulling out from Afghanistan would mean insecurity for Afghanistan, would mean children not being able to go to school.'

Policy gives wounded soldiers chance to stay in uniform

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Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.10.05
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
WORD COUNT: 287

OTTAWA – Soldiers badly wounded in Afghanistan and who want to stay in uniform would be given the chance to do so under a new policy drafted by the Defence Department.

The plan, drawn up in the waning days of Gordon O'Connor's tenure as defence minister, would allow the military to avoid the controversy of dismissing injured soldiers who want to continue serving and – in some cases – have no other vocation.

Sources within the Defence Department told The Canadian Press that the policy has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since O'Connor was replaced in August by the new minister, Peter MacKay.

The chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, said recently that he has some of "his brightest minds working on it," but offered few details on the proposal or a timeline.

Sources who've seen a draft of the policy say it would allow soldiers who do not meet the military's universality of service rule to apply to stay as long as they meet some criteria.

Under the current system, a soldier who becomes disabled has three years to be rehabilitated and meet the fitness standard for overseas operations. If they cannot meet the requirement, they have no choice but to face a medical discharge.

The rule, introduced by Hillier, has been a source of concern as the number of wounded from the desert battlefields of Afghanistan grows. Hillier has steadfastly refused to make changes to the current fitness requirement, but conceded that military has been trying to find a way to take care of its wounded with some dignity.

The authority to release an injured soldier, sailor or air crew member rests solely with the defence chief and Hillier has argued that the current system is flexible enough to let him decide the future of individuals.

But defence sources say clear criteria are needed to ensure fairness and to avoid potential legal challenges.

Slain soldier 'good man,' 'hero'

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.10.05

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A4

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Bill Graveland

ILLUSTRATION: Linda Hornburg holds back tears as the coffin of her son, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, is loaded into a hearse after a funeral service in Calgary on Thursday. Hornburg was killed in action in Afghanistan on Sept. 24. (JEFF MCINTOSH / CP)

WORD COUNT: 411

CALGARY – Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was remembered as a good man and a hero by friends and colleagues at a celebration of his life Thursday.

The 24-year-old reservist, a member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, died Sept. 24 while trying to put a track back on a tank while under mortar fire. He is the first member of the regiment to be killed in action since the Second World War and is the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since the Canadian mission began in 2002.

"The time we spent with Nathan Hornburg was time spent in the presence of a hero," said fellow reservist and friend Sgt. Pablo Fernandez. "He did what only someone with an iron will could do. In death, as he did in life, Nathan is setting an example."

"The army trains us to be precise, it trains us to push beyond comfort, it trains us to be lethal, but it cannot teach us to cope with the loss of a friend," he said.

"The agony of losing one of our own young soldiers has forced upon each and everyone of us in the King's Own a shroud of sorrow that is not easily discarded."

Fernandez's grief was echoed by Hornburg's friends and family.

"We're going to miss you buddy. See you, Nate," said an emotional Dominic Lavesque, a friend of Hornburg's from high school.

"How do I begin to summarize 24 years of memories? I am afraid it will only be a raindrop in an ocean," added a tearful Sara Leishman. His sister Rachel Herbert, two years older than Nathan, said it simply.

"My sweet Nathan, just as I wrote you every week you were away, I'm missing you something fierce," Herbert said softly. "Keep your head, be fast and strong. We will do the same. Onward."

Padre Will Hubbard told mourners the name Nathaniel means "gift" in Hebrew. He said Hornburg had the gift of good humour and of being supportive to both his friends and military comrades.

"You will hear good things about him, because Nathan Hornburg was a good man," said Hubbard as he stood in front of Hornburg's casket, draped with a Canadian flag.

The Calgary Roundup Centre was filled to capacity with more than a thousand mourners.

Many stopped at a memory table where a photo of Hornburg with members of his troop was offset by one of him posing with a tricycle at age 3. Hornburg's work as a budding artist was also featured, including three colourful landscapes and sculptures of an eagle and a polar bear.

The card of condolence handed out included a personal verse that was written for Nathan by his fourth grade teacher:

"Praise to the might men, Born in the days of old, Mighty were their deeds, Strong they were and bold,
Climbed the rocky crag, Sailed the stormy seas, Leaped the farthest leap, Mighty men were these."

Grit pit bull Coderre stonewalled

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DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
COLUMN: Calgary's Eye on National Politics
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 736

Our Afghanistan military operation was authorized by the federal Liberals, the base built by the Liberals and the mission may yet be voted into packing crates by the Liberals. But, for the time being, the Kandahar Air Field flies under a heavily protected Conservative flag.

And that's why a troublesome pit bull of a Liberal defence critic will show up at the front gates of the base next week to find his way blocked by soldiers bearing semi-automatic weapons.

Contrast Denis Coderre's expected cold-shoulder unwelcome with the red-carpeted runway greeting for Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, who will land in Kandahar in the next few days if he's not there already.

Coderre has tried for two months to secure government permission to make a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan ahead of Parliament's return in two weeks. Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has his application in the system for a visit in November.

But Coderre was stonewalled and his calls to the defence minister unreturned until he was finally told to buy his own ticket and catch a commercial flight.

Why not?, he decided. Coderre's solo adventure started on Thursday, although he called from London to say he'd been officially warned the military base is off limits and he'll be denied Canadian soldier protection.

Gosh. What a difference a party makes.

While Coderre wanders in the wilderness, Bernier will land aboard a military plane loaded with support staff and a few media tagalongs. He will be given top-level military briefings, access to convoys backed by heavily armed escorts and sleep in the VIP quarters. No tents or porta potties for this Quebec rookie.

Now before getting all indignant at this attempt by control freak Conservatives to preserve Kandahar as their own private photo-op, let the record show Denis Coderre has been a serious pain in the government's butt.

He's fiercely anti-Tory and was so solidly behind Michael Ignatieff's bid for Liberal leadership last fall, one suspects even Stephane Dion is relieved to have Coderre in a faraway war zone while he tries to quell his Quebec uprising.

It should also be noted Coderre is among the greatest of all parliamentary publicity hogs, a man who would walk through Taliban headquarters wrapped in an American flag if there was a media scrum on the other side.

But he does serve as Official Opposition defence critic and is a member of the Privy Council. As such, Coderre has a lot to learn about our greatest military conflict in 50 years which, in my view, legitimizes a first-hand look at a mission his party hopes to disband in just 16 months.

The official line from a National Defence flack is that members of the all-party National Defence committee have already voted to go there. Once the committee gathers anew in the next parliamentary sitting, a trip will be organized. Eventually.

But Coderre suspects — probably correctly — he's being shunted aside for political reasons lest his trek be wrapped up in time to launch an informed attack on the government. As proof the government is being selective in helping MPs, he points out Foreign Affairs offered to assist him during a side trip to Pakistan.

It seems only fair Bernier find a seat for his Official Opposition critic on the government plane. The Afghanistan deployment is clearly the defence decision of the decade, if not the past 50 years, and non-partisan eyewitness input can be useful.

Sure it's an organizational headache. But officers tell me the cabinet ministers are the mother of all migraines. In the case of former defence minister Gordon O'Connor, officers confide his final visit ended with his flacks ripping into military brass for failing to set up suitable camera backgrounds for media scrums. The Taliban would crack up if they knew how petty things can get in Canadian politics.

Coderre says he'll piggyback on charitable and humanitarian groups to ensure he sees the wilds of Kandahar up close. If it's done safely, he may well leave with a greater appreciation of the situation than any cocooned minister or parliamentary secretary. Being confined to the airfield gives you no more insight into southern Afghanistan reality than studying the situation from Bay Street.

But it will be very dangerous outside the base and the optics of Coderre getting hurt or worse for the want of a military babysitter would make the partisan protectionism of the Conservatives appear unforgivably petty.

Lest we forget, Canada's enemy in Afghanistan is extremists trying to stifle free speech and deny women basic human rights — not Liberals trying to have an informed debate.

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Canadians gung-ho on training Afghan troops; Dutch mentors poised to take over role

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A14

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service / Canadianmentor Sgt. Dave Querry, left, with Lieut. Balyali, who says: "I am glad to work with the Canadians. It has been good training." And Querry likes his assignment. "Seriously," he says, "this is the best job I have ever had in the army." ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

DATELINE: CAMP HERO, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 654

It's 10 o'clock in the morning and a battalion of fresh recruits from the Afghan National Army is already calling it a day.

It being Ramadan, they cannot drink or eat and they're tired.

Of the 100 new soldiers being mentored by Canadian troops, only 35 had actually shown up for work that morning. The missing infantrymen had been paid the day before and, this month being the Afghan equivalent of Christmas, they had gone to spend their time and money with their families.

For all that, Canadian mentors to several Afghan National Army battalions are excited about the prospects for the raw recruits they were helping to transform into soldiers at a base not far from NATO's Kandahar Airfield.

"Seriously, this is the best job I have ever had in the army," says Sgt. Dave Querry, on his sixth overseas tour with the Royal 22nd Regiment. "My chums in the Van Doo are in Masum Ghar for combat and I am here in the culture of these people. The other Van Doo do their job, but they do not meet Afghans. I see the people here from when they wake up in the morning."

Cpl. Alain Courturier of Edmundston, N.B., is also a strong fan of the mentoring program.

"All the soldiers stop talking and listen to us when we come around," Courturier said. "These guys didn't go to school, but they are really intelligent. If you tell them something, you realize a week or two later that they remember."

The Harper government has sent mixed signals about Canada's military contribution in Afghanistan after the current mission, which involves a lot of fighters and a small number of mentors to the army and the police, expires in early 2009. One of the options being considered is a much larger military teaching presence so that Afghan government forces can learn to defend themselves.

"My idea is that we should invest more in this kind of thing, rather than in the battle," said Querry, 35, of Trois Rivieres, Que. "I am proud of what I do with this group. It isn't easy, but I can see the evolution."

In Querry's group, four Canadians mentor 150 Afghan soldiers.

Lieut. Balyali, a 28-year-old platoon commander who, like many Afghans, only has one name, is disappointed Dutch mentors are about to take over, with the Canadians being shifted to another, more experienced battalion.

"I am glad to work with the Canadians," Balyali said. "It has been good training."

Relatively well paid by Afghan standards and housed in U.S.-designed barracks superior to the ones the Red Army left behind, Balyali's recruits receive about \$100 a month while senior officers can earn as much as 10 times that.

Balyali, however, expressed two concerns. He's disappointed the Afghan army did not allow his men to take the month of Ramadan off. And he's angry at the poor quality of his men's weapons.

"We have good training and good troops, but without good weapons we can't fight," he says.

Lt.-Col. Muhammad Anbia, a 25-year veteran of the old and new Afghan armies who now heads a logistics battalion, expresses similar disappointment in a particularly Afghan way.

"We are happy, but not too happy," said the colonel, whose family remained behind in a northern province when he was assigned to Camp Hero, leaving him to actively seek a second wife in Kandahar. "It is clear to everyone that we have light weapons, not heavy weapons. We and the enemy both have RPGs and AK-47s. We need help from the coalition who all have modern weapons and armour."

While the Afghans have fought the Red Army and each other for decades, they have never developed a logistics capability that would allow them to sustain operations in the field.

"It's the weakest part of their army," said Maj. Regis Bellemare, 32, who oversees a small team mentoring Anbia's new logistics battalion. "Logistics aren't sexy, but without them you cannot finish anything."

Sgt. Maj. Guy Suttonwood, 48, of 31 Canadian Brigade Group's battle school in London, Ont., teaches leadership skills to senior Afghan non-commissioned officers. His Afghan opposite number, he says, is "academically inclined and highly respected, with all his ducks in a row," but Afghan army sergeants major and sergeants are "not allowed to initiate anything without permission from an officer."

Retired soldiers pay their respects

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PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / A flag at the Stampede grounds flies at half-mast Thursday to pay tribute to Cpl. Nathan Hornburg. His funeral was at the Roundup Centre. ;
KEYWORDS: FUNERAL INDUSTRY
BYLINE: Jamie Komarnicki
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 209

After 26 years in the Canadian Forces, retired major Chris Wallace has attended more than one military funeral honouring a comrade fallen in battle.

But the importance of showing respect to those who died serving their country has never lessened, he said.

That's why he and several retired soldiers donned their military medals and attended the funeral for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg on Thursday — though they had never met the young soldier.

"It's all part of the mourning process. It's also a process to show respect," said Wallace.

"It's one of the few gestures that you can make."

Hornburg's family is coping with the private grief of losing a loved one.

But the soldier who was killed by mortar shell fragments on Sept. 24 in Afghanistan has garnered recognition from thousands back home who never knew the young man but call him a hero.

"For such a young kid, to go through the things he's gone through — I came just out of respect," said mechanic Morris Groves, waiting outside the Roundup Centre before the funeral began.

"It's a tribute he deserves," said family friend Linda George, who took the day off work and drove from Nanton for the funeral.

"It shows his mother exactly how valued his sacrifice was."

Former schoolmates of Hornburg from Calgary Waldorf School were pallbearers at the funeral for their old classmate.

"Obviously he died for a cause he believed in; something that was important to him," said Caitlin Archer, 23.

Before the funeral began, class members posed for a photograph made sombre by the loss of one of the 18 members of their tight-knit class.

"We know (the funeral) is going to be sad, but it's nice there are so many people that care," said Archer.

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A city mourns a young life; Treasuring the 'gift' that was Nathan Hornburg

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

COLUMN: Robert Remington

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / The funeral program for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, who was killed by mortar fire Sept. 24 in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald / Police escort the hearse along 17th Ave. S.E. to the funeral. ; Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / Pallbearers carry the casket of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg into the Roundup Centre for the Calgarian's funeral Thursday. ; Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / Military members salute as Hornburg's casket is placed in the hearse after the funeral. ; Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / Family members and other mourners watch as the casket of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg is placed in the hearse following the service at the Roundup Centre on Thursday. ;

BYLINE: Robert Remington

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 596

"My boy came home from the war today, draped in the Maple Leaf."

— John Wort Hannam

On the day Cpl. Nathan Hornburg died, family friend Deborah Bobrow sat up with Nathan's mother, Linda Loree, long into the night.

Feeling his presence, they walked over to a bookshelf and took down a copy of the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying. In it was a bookmark placed there by Nathan on a page with a passage that read, in part: "No death is meaningless if it alleviates the suffering of others."

That story, recounted by Bobrow at Hornburg's funeral Thursday, was just one of the many heartwrenching moments at a moving farewell attended by 1,000 mourners for the 24-year-old Calgarian killed by mortar fire Sept. 24 in Afghanistan.

For me, the most difficult part was seeing Hornburg's young friends, hugging and comforting each other as they gathered for the service. War has always been this way. It takes the young and inflicts scars on a generation who idealistically hope they never have to experience such things.

It happened to me more than 30 years ago when a high school friend was killed in Vietnam, and his death stays with me just as Hornburg's will, with the people in their 20s who came to pay tribute and eulogize their friend.

Among them was Sgt. Pablo Fernandez, a military colleague of Hornburg's from King's Own Calgary Regiment. The military, Fernandez said in one of several tributes at the service, trains soldiers to be

disciplined and strong. But it does not train them how to mourn the loss of a brother. For that, soldiers rely on ceremony — the slow march of the casket, the folding of the flag, the presentation of medals, the salute of guns, the playing of the Last Post.

These are important traditions that have been played out three times now for Calgarians killed in Afghanistan — Capt. Nichola Goddard, Pte. Kevin Dallaire and now Hornburg, whom Fernandez called "a beacon of hope in a world gone mad."

The most emotional moment at the ceremony, though, came when John Wort Hannam, the brilliant singer-songwriter from Fort Macleod, performed Infantry Man, a song he wrote and released this year.

To some, it is an antiwar song; to others, a tribute to young Canadian heroes. It is a good song, and so typically Canadian in that it succeeds on so many conflicting levels. We've linked to it from our Calgaryherald.com website, so you can decide for yourself.

When Hannam performed it, people all around sobbed. It was that moment that occurs at every funeral when everyone lets go, and feels better that they did.

But Hornburg's service would not be all sadness, as promised at the outset by officiant Will Hubbard, the padre for Lord Strathcona's Horse, the squadron Hornburg was attached to in Afghanistan.

The lightest moment came when family friend Sara Leishman, flanked by Hornburg's older sister, Rachel Herbert, told how two-year-old Rachel walked over to Nathan when he was brought home from the hospital. Miffed at the new addition to the family, Rachel promptly kicked her little brother — "and the two have been best friends ever since."

Nathan — the name means "gift" in Hebrew — went to the Calgary Waldorf School. It must be a special place, judging by the unnamed fourth grade teacher who wrote a prophetic verse about Hornburg that was printed on a memorial card handed out at the funeral.

The teacher wrote verses for each student as a kind of mantra they could use throughout their school career, based on what she thought was the student's particular inner qualities.

Hornburg's verse read:

"Praise to the mighty men born in the days of old. Mighty were their deeds, strong they were and bold. Climbed the rocky crag, sailed the stormy seas. Leaped the farthest leap, mighty men were these."

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Hero's farewell; City salutes nathan Hornburg. Comrade praises soldier's iron will

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COLUMN: See ceremony, Page A3

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CPL. Nathan Hornburg; Colour Photo: Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald / A funeral for Calgary soldier Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was held Thursday in Calgary. Hornburg was killed while repairing a tank tread on Sept. 24 in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / Two friends at the public funeral Thursday for fallen soldier Nathan Hornburg share an emotional embrace at the Roundup Centre. Hornburg is the third Calgary soldier to be killed in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald / The procession escorting the body of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg makes its way through city streets to the Roundup Centre on Thursday for a public funeral. ; Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / Linda Loree, the mother of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, holds the flag that draped his casket at Thursday's ceremony. ;

KEYWORDS: CANADIANS

BYLINE: Deborah Tetley and Jamie Komarnicki

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 667

When he was five, Nathan Hornburg set up squadrons of battling green plastic toy soldiers across the living room floor and made up war stories.

On Thursday, veteran soldiers with their own, real war stories to tell, joined Cpl. Hornburg's family and friends in honouring the 24-year-old reservist from Calgary, killed fighting a prolonged battle against insurgents in Afghanistan.

A sombre fellow reservist told the more than 1,000 mourners gathered at his funeral that Hornburg died a hero.

"Under heavy enemy fire he did what only those with an iron will can do," said Sgt. Pablo Fernandez, who trained with Hornburg at the King's Own Calgary Regiment. "He charged forward."

Hornburg, killed on Sept. 24, is the 71st Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

"We didn't know it then, but the time we spent with Cpl. Nathan Hornburg we spent in the presence of a hero," said Fernandez.

Men and women in uniform joined boys and girls in jeans at the Roundup Centre in the heart of Calgary on Thursday afternoon for an emotional funeral, rich with military tradition.

Korean War vets, with poppies pinned to their breast pockets, sat not far from Hornburg's high school friends.

Decorated soldiers with watery eyes held their berets tight to their hearts, while mothers and fathers, many wearing yellow ribbons, hugged their young children.

Calgary police, firefighters and paramedics joined local and provincial dignitaries, including Lt.-Gov. Norman Kwong, in paying respects.

Abram Neustater, who as a young man served three tours with the Canadian Forces in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, felt lucky to be there.

"The missions were as important, but we, as soldiers, were a lot safer then," said Neustater, now 73. "If there were suicide bombers in my day, I might not have come home, either."

Hornburg was killed by mortar fragments after dismounting from the armoured recovery vehicle he was driving to repair a tread that had fallen off the tank.

He was less than a month into a six-month tour.

"He lived and died like few people dare," said Fernandez.

Hornburg's funeral honoured his love of the military, but also recognized his life outside the Canadian Forces.

A photo tribute set to music showed images of a smiling Hornburg hanging out with friends, and as a toddler playing with his older sister, Rachel, she dressed like a princess, complete with a sparkling tiara.

The last picture showed the soldier dressed in his camouflage fatigues waving goodbye, moving many in the crowd to tears.

Growing up, all Hornburg ever wanted to do was join the army, said his longtime friend, Sara Leishman.

He formed toy guns from tree branches and played war with his friends.

In late August, before he left for Afghanistan, Hornburg told friends he was fulfilling his duty.

He wanted girls in Afghanistan to be able to go to school, Leishman said.

"I am protecting my country and I am protecting the citizens of Afghanistan," said Hornburg.

Rachel — who kicked her brother the day the newborn came home from the hospital — read from Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*.

"He chose to go down the road that not many in the nation do," she said.

Earlier, hundreds of mourners clasped hands and wiped away tears as Hornburg's casket, topped with the soldier's beret and bayonet, was shouldered by eight military pallbearers and slow marched across the Stampede grounds and into the Roundup Centre.

Debora Lloyd, who taught Hornburg at the private Waldorf school in Calgary, was among those who arrived early to greet the procession.

"He died not only for our country, but for another country to make the world a better place," she said.

"There's a need for everyone that's been touched by this to be present and find their own way to accept what

happened."

His family, including mother Linda Loree and father Michael Hornburg, sat in the front row during the service, surrounded by family.

Loree wore a Memorial Cross on her left lapel and a red poppy on the other.

Hornburg's father also wore a Memorial Cross, an honour given to parents of fallen soldiers.

Before her son's casket was taken from the Roundup Centre, a soldier presented the grieving mother with the Canadian flag that had draped her son's casket since it left Afghanistan more than a week ago.

Cpl. Cade Seely, who is also part of the Edmonton-based Lord Strathcona's Horse squadron Hornburg was attached to while overseas, has spent every day with his comrade's casket.

As per military protocol, the reservist was assigned to guard the casket from Khandahar to Calgary, until the fallen soldier is safely laid to rest in Nanton on Saturday.

Seely, who was the only person at the funeral dressed in the full military fatigues worn by soldiers in Afghanistan, was emotional when asked how overwhelming the duty has been.

"It's been such an honour and a privilege," he said.

As Loree stoically followed her son's casket from the hall, she gripped his black beret and a service medal.

Hornburg's best friend Michael Pederson held her arm as they headed toward the waiting hearse.

Gunshots filled the silent afternoon air as a dozen Calgary soldiers fired three rifle volleys into the air to honour their fallen comrade.

A lone trumpeter played the Last Post.

Soldiers gave a final salute as a police motorcade led the procession away.

It's the third time Calgarians have said goodbye to a soldier killed serving in Afghanistan since 2002.

Strangers like Fonda Yang, who had never met the soldier, felt saddened by his death.

"I really appreciate his sacrifice; because of soldiers like him, we can live this life."

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Hero's farewell; City salutes nathan Hornburg. Comrade praises soldier's iron will

IDNUMBER 200710050001
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Cpl. Nathan Hornburg; Colour Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / Michael Hornburg, father of Nathan Hornburg, receives a hug as he arrives at the funeral for his son on Thursday. ; Colour Photo: Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald / Members of the King's Own Calgary Regiment carry the casket of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg to a waiting hearse Thursday following his funeral at the Roundup Centre. ; Photo: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald / Linda Loree, the mother of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, holds the flag that draped his casket at Thursday's ceremony. ; Photo: Jenelle Schneider, Calgary Herald / Two friends at the public funeral Thursday for fallen soldier Nathan Hornburg share an emotional embrace at the Roundup Centre. Hornburg is the third Calgary soldier to be killed in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald / The procession escorting the body of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg makes its way through city streets to the Roundup Centre on Thursday for a public funeral. ;

KEYWORDS: CANADIANS
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SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 664

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Mission that killed Canadian cripples Taliban in strategic area: military

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 484

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ It is a dry, dusty patch of blowing sand and fledgling vineyards tended by villagers who have not yet fled.

But for Canadians soldiers in Afghanistan, the regions west of Kandahar city known as Zhari and Panjwaii are the heart of their battle against Taliban insurgents.

Now military officials hope they have the enemy on the run following Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier _ their most recent battle in Kandahar province and one that cost the life of a Canadian soldier.

“Those operations have considerably disrupted the Taliban freedom of movement and their command and control nodes,” Maj. Eric Landry, chief of operations for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, said Thursday.

“Right now, they're completely ineffective against our forces and the Afghan National Army.”

Landry said Canadian and Afghan forces have encircled the insurgent stronghold in the Sangasar area, their operational and logistical base in the Zhari district.

It is from this area that Taliban have launched attacks on Canada's forward operating bases and ventured out to plant deadly roadside bombs that have exacted a heavy toll on Canadian troops.

“This is where the Taliban movement was born and this is where a lot of key leaders are still staying,” Landry said. “This is from where they command some of their operations.”

The mission to take back control began in August with Operation Keeping Goodwill in the Zhari district, where Canadians have re-established four police substations.

They tightened the noose with Honest Soldier, which started early last week when Charlie Company rolled into northern Panjwaii, southeast of Sangasar, and wrapped up on the weekend.

Fighting was fierce and Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was killed in a mortar attack on the first day of the mission.

Heavy fighting continued through the week as Canadians established another police substation in Panjwaii, along the Arghandab River.

“They were surprised,” said Maj. Stephane Masson, operations co-ordinator for the Canadian military in Afghanistan.

“We tightened the circle and they had to fight. We saw signs of panic.”

The hope is that hardline Taliban, cut off from easy movement and resupply, will move out of the area.

“It separates the hard-core fighters, who are there fighting for the cause, from the tier-two and tier-three fighters, who are there because they have to and because they're forced into the Taliban movement,” Landry said.

“Because the Taliban cannot operate freely in the district of Zhari, they have a hard time organizing different activities, different attacks against coalition forces and the Afghan National Army.”

Canadians fought and died to take control of these districts last year in Operation Medusa, the largest Canadian combat offensive since the Korean War.

But insurgents regained control this past summer during the changeover of Canadian troops, when Afghan national security forces were left alone to defend the territory.

Military officials now admit the Afghan forces weren't ready.

They have undertaken a rigorous mentoring program for Afghan National Police. A similar program has been underway for the Afghan army for about a year.

The police substations are now manned by Afghan police and teams of Canadian military police and infantry who will stay with them around the clock, as well as additional infantry.

Landry said there has already been a marked difference in the area.

“We have local nationals who are coming to the police substation, reporting crimes, reporting insurgent activities and this helps us a lot with our intelligence gathering,” he said.

20 suspected Taliban killed in southern Afghanistan clash: police official

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 236

KANDAHAR Afghanistan _ Afghan troops backed by NATO-led forces clashed with suspected Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan, leaving 20 militants dead, a provincial police chief said Thursday.

The authorities recovered three bodies of the militants alongside numerous weapons after the clash in Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar province late Wednesday, said Kandahar police chief Sayed Agha Saqib. There were no injuries among Afghan and NATO troops.

Retreating militants took 17 bodies off the battlefield, Saqib said.

NATO officials could not immediately confirm Saqib's account, and said they were checking the report. The clash could not be independently verified due to the remoteness of the area where it took place.

In a separate incident, militants attacked a police checkpoint in Arghistan district, also in Kandahar province, wounding three officers on Wednesday, Saqib said. There were no report of militant casualties from that clash.

Violence in Afghanistan has peaked this year, with nearly 5,100 people killed in suicide bombings, gun battles, airstrikes, and roadside bombs around the country through the first nine months of the year, according to an AP count based on figures from Afghan, U.S. and NATO officials.

The number represents a 55 per cent increase over the first nine months of 2006, when the AP count recorded 3,288 insurgency-related deaths. The AP count recorded 4,019 deaths in all of 2006.

Most of the violence occurred in the country's south, the centre of the resurgent Taliban movement that was ousted from power in the U.S.-led invasion in late 2001.

DATE: 2007.10.04

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 334

^Canada Increases Support for Education in Afghanistan@<

October 04, 2007

MONTREAL, QUEBEC--(Marketwire – Oct. 4, 2007) – The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, today joined the Afghanistan Minister of Education, His Excellency Haneef Atmar, to announce that Canada's New Government is taking a leadership role to increase the access to and quality of education in Afghanistan, by providing a significant investment to Afghanistan's largest education program, the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP).

"While there has been a significant leap in their school enrolment in the past few years, Afghanistan still has some of the lowest education indicators in the world – including large gender gaps and alarmingly high rates of illiteracy for women and girls," said Minister Oda. "Increasing access to education for young Afghan children, especially girls, is crucial for the future of this country, which is why our Government is pleased to be taking a leadership role with this investment today."

Canada is contributing \$60 million over four years to EQUIP, which is managed by the World Bank. Canada's investment to EQUIP is the largest investment made by any donor in the world to date.

EQUIP supports activities that strengthen the capacity of schools and communities to manage teaching and learning activities. It also invests in educational facilities and human resources, while placing a special emphasis on the promotion of education for girls.

Today's announcement is part of Canada's total contribution of more than \$1 billion over 10 years aimed at governance, security and development in Afghanistan. It builds on the commitment made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper last February, when he announced substantive funds to enhance the reconstruction and development process.

For more information on Canada's programming in Afghanistan, please refer to CIDA's website at <http://www.cida.gc.ca/afghanistan-e>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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INDUSTRY: Government – International, Government – Local,
Government – National, Government – Security (law enforcement,
homeland etc), Government – State

SUBJECT: FNC

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

Afghan deaths up 55 per cent compared with 2006: AP analysis

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
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WORD COUNT: 503

KABUL _ Insurgency-related deaths in Afghanistan were 55 per cent higher in the first nine months of 2007, compared with last year, as violence since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion surpassed all previous highs, by an Associated Press analysis.

Almost 5,100 people have died in suicide bombings, gun battles, air strikes and roadside bombs around Afghanistan through the first nine months of the year, by an AP count based on figures from Afghan, U.S. and NATO officials.

The number represents a 55-per-cent increase over the first nine months of 2006, when the AP count recorded 3,288 insurgency-related deaths. The AP count recorded 4,019 deaths in all of 2006.

“Suicide attacks have risen sharply this year and roadside bomb attacks have increased. We launched more operations against the enemy this year but they have launched operations as well,” said Defence Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, explaining the rise in violence.

“They’ve used their maximum power this year. As well, and this is my personal view, there was an increase in the number of enemy this year,” he said.

Almost 180 international soldiers have died in Afghanistan so far this year, including 27 Canadians.

The majority of deaths so far this year _ 3,544, or 70 per cent of the total _ have been militants killed by U.S. and NATO military action or by Afghan forces. And those numbers are likely low. The U.S.-led coalition and Afghan authorities publicize death estimates after battles but the separate NATO-led International Security Assistance Force does not.

The AP count is based on figures given by western and Afghan figures but does not purport to record all deaths in the country, many of which occur in remote locations and are never reported publicly.

Some 650 Afghan civilians have died, by the AP count _ 13 per cent of the overall deaths.

That number includes 309 civilians killed by Taliban violence but also 314 killed by U.S. or NATO action, figures from western and Afghan officials show _ assertions the United States and NATO sometimes dispute. Twenty-nine civilians in the count were killed during crossfires.

Azimi said Pakistan last spring expelled foreigners _ such as fighters from Uzbekistan _ from its tribal region, a move that has had a negative impact on Afghanistan.

“When they said that all foreigners must leave Pakistan, where did they go? They came to Afghanistan,” Azimi said.

“They joined with the enemy and started fighting against Afghan forces here.”

Afghanistan's security forces have also been hit hard, with more than 600 police killed already this year, said Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary, a higher figure than the AP count, which shows a total of 600 police and army soldiers killed this year.

“This is a result of a tactical change by the enemy,” Bashary said.

“In the past, the enemy launched most of their attacks against international forces, but now they are carrying out ambushes and suicide attacks on both.”

Afghanistan's southern provinces, the country's opium poppy-growing belt, is the most violent region in the country. The area, and particularly Helmand province, has seen a large influx of fighters this year. Helmand alone has seen 1,591 deaths, mostly militants. The province to its east, Kandahar, is the second deadliest region at 743 deaths.

June was the deadliest month, with 1,017 deaths, almost 20 per cent of the year's total so far.

INDEX:International, Defence

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 131

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The Canadian military hopes it has finally chased Taliban insurgents from their stronghold with their latest offensive in Kandahar province.

Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, or Honest Soldier, began early last week in the dangerous Panjwaii district.

It cost the life of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a reservist from the King's Own Calgary Regiment, who was killed in a mortar attack on the first day of the mission.

But Maj. Eric Landry says Canadians have been able to isolate insurgents in their stronghold, cutting off their freedom of movement and resupply.

He says the hope is that Taliban hardliners will be forced to leave and re-organize elsewhere, freeing those locals who were forced to take up arms for insurgents.

The Canadian military has built five police substations in the Zhari and Panjwaii districts, which will be manned around the clock by Afghan National Police, with mentoring teams of Canadian soldiers.

INDEX:International,Defence,Politics

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 130

BRUSSELS, Belgium — NATO is reporting progress in securing the main highway in Afghanistan.

Brigadier General Pavel Macko says NATO troops have succeeded in lowering the number of Taliban raids on the 25-hundred kilometre long Highway One that links Kabul to the rest of the country.

Highway One has been the preferred route for opium traders to move their illicit crops from fields to selling points and security has been notoriously bad, especially the southern stretch between Kabul and Kandahar.

Aid groups routinely suspended food shipments because of attacks on their vehicles.

The highway has also been the site of numerous kidnappings, including 23 South Koreans taken hostage by militants in July.

The Afghan government, seeking to boost its influence and control in the regions, agreed with NATO last year to make securing and upgrading the ring road a priority this year.

The mission was named Operation Now Ruz, or New Year in English.

(The Associated Press)

mcw

INDEX:International

DATE: 2007.10.04
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 126

KANDAHAR Afghanistan -- A police official says 20 suspected Taliban fighters have been killed in a clash in Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan.

The official say the retreating militants took 17 bodies with them, but that Afghan troops backed by NATO-led forces recovered the bodies of three others, along with numerous weapons.

The clash is reported to have taken place in Shah Wali Kot district.

In a separate incident, also in Kandahar province, three Afghan police officers were wounded when militants attacked a police checkpoint in Arghistan district.

Violence in Afghanistan has peaked this year, with nearly 51-hundred people killed in suicide bombings, gun battles, airstrikes, and roadside bombs around the country.

Most of the violence occurred in the country's south, the centre of the resurgent Taliban movement that was ousted from power in the American-led invasion in late 2001.

(The Associated Press)

mcw

Pakistan politics and our troops: Too few degrees of separation

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BYLINE: Jonathan Manthorpe
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 627

Canadians should be watching with care the unseemly bartering going on to try to create an ersatz democratic government in Pakistan.

The kind of opposition from Taliban insurgents Canadian forces are likely to encounter in Afghanistan's Kandahar province in coming months will be influenced by the political deal between Pakistan's military dictator, President Pervez Musharraf, and exiled former prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

The immediate prospects do not look good. A period of uncertainty around coming elections in Pakistan will most likely mean a relaxation of military action in the frontier tribal areas where the Taliban has its training areas and base camps.

There are reports coming from Pakistan that the Taliban already has thousands of freshly trained men ready to cross through the mountain passes into southern Afghanistan, where Canadian forces and North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies are trying to create enough security to facilitate reconstruction.

A Taliban offensive is expected after the end of the Muslim religious festival of Ramadan on Oct. 12 and before winter ends the fighting season.

Longer-term implications of the new political deal in Pakistan are more difficult to judge.

There is no doubt that the fix, brokered by Washington, is in by which Musharraf will step down as military chief after being re-selected president by parliament on Saturday.

Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party will not embarrass Musharraf by voting against his re-selection. In return, the way will be cleared for her to become prime minister.

Charges that she and her husband corruptly obtained \$1.5 billion in her second term as prime minister in the early 1990s will be dropped. A constitutional restriction on anyone becoming prime minister for three terms will also be removed.

Bhutto also wants ended the president's constitutional right to fire incompetent prime ministers, a rule she's fallen foul of in the past.

And to cap the deal, Nawaz Sharif, leader of the Pakistan Muslim League which trounced Bhutto and the PPP in 1997 elections, is being kept out of the country.

Sharif was ousted in Musharraf's 1999 coup and exiled to the Gulf States. He returned to Pakistan last month after the Supreme Court ruled he should be readmitted, but Musharraf's officials put Sharif straight back on the plane to Saudi Arabia.

With her main political adversary out of the way, Bhutto should be able to win parliamentary elections expected in January.

But why The United States administration of George W. Bush has been so keen on the Musharraf-Bhutto deal is hard to understand.

It is true that Washington has been somewhat embarrassed that one of its main allies in the conflict against terrorism and the drive to bring democracy to Afghanistan is a military dictator. But Musharraf is a fairly presentable face of military rule when compared with some of the allies with whom Washington has been happy to cohabit in the past.

And has no one reminded the Bush administration what a disaster Bhutto was as prime minister? Her government not only put the economy into a tailspin, but it was on her watch that Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) agency created the Taliban from among young radicalized Muslim Afghans refugees and dispatched them to capture their homeland.

The relationship between the Taliban and ISI is now hazy, but still important. ISI created the Taliban to overcome the influence of regional rival India in Afghanistan after the Soviet Union withdrew in 1989. But current Afghan President Hamid Kharzai and his administration, such as it is, is much closer to India than Islamabad.

That said, the immediate reaction in Pakistan to Musharraf's appointment this week of the current head of ISI, Lt.-Gen. Ashfaq Kiyani, to be his successor as head of the military is seen as continuing the country's pro-western stance.

Kiyani will take over, though, when Pakistani forces have had little success in destroying hard-line Taliban bases in the frontier provinces.

Islamabad's military has lost more than 1,000 men in battles with the Taliban in the past few weeks.

The Taliban and its al-Qaida allies have also adopted a tactic of abducting and often executing Pakistani forces. Over 500 Pakistani troops have been abducted and many are still missing.

Sun International Affairs Columnist

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Progress made in Afghan schools; Education minister, attending Toronto forum, says 'second rung' Taliban don't oppose classes for girls

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PAGE: AA01
BYLINE: Olivia Ward
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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WORD COUNT: 707

Afghanistan's education minister – imprisoned several times by the Taliban – says that the "second rung" of militants can be brought to the negotiating table.

But Mohammed Haneef Atmar warned that those who take orders from Al Qaeda– inspired hardliners are unlikely to join any political process that includes changing their fanatical beliefs. Nor could those with "blood on their hands" be allowed to join negotiations.

"All of the Taliban can't be dealt with," he said in Toronto yesterday, where he attended a public forum on education in Afghanistan hosted by UNICEF. "There are those who have committed war crimes. Nobody has the right to give them amnesty."

Atmar, 39, who worked for two international aid organizations before the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, said although some in the former Taliban regime were unyielding extremists, others secretly held softer views.

"The Taliban minister of education threw me out of his office 10 times because I wanted to establish schools for girls," Atmar said.

But, he added, "most of their second–rung officials had their daughters going to school in Pakistan. They would even tell us about supporting Afghan schools for girls in Pakistan so their daughters could be educated."

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has begun a reconciliation process to disarm hundreds of former Taliban and bring some into the political sphere. But violence has escalated in the unstable provinces near the Pakistani border, including Kandahar, where Canadian troops are stationed.

There, Taliban attacks have killed 115 students and teachers and shut down more than 380 of the country's 9,000 schools.

If Canada and other Western countries pulled their troops out of those areas too soon, Atmar said, gains made in vital services like education could be lost.

"What was the purpose of sending them there in the first place?" he asked. "The idea is for our state to develop its own security apparatus. But our army is young and small, and there is a long way to go with the police. Once the two are properly developed, the international forces will be there to provide support for Afghans, and (Afghans) will provide security and law and order."

In spite of the bad news, Afghan schools have burgeoned since the militants were driven out of power, Atmar pointed out. From 900,000 boys enrolled before the war, there are now 6 million students, 35 per cent of them girls.

"This is the highest number in the history of Afghanistan," he said. "It is absolutely wrong to think that because of the Taliban, Afghans don't value education. Most people understand that it is the key to their future survival."

Nigel Fisher, head of UNICEF Canada and a former UN assistant secretary general dealing with aid to Afghanistan, said the country has made "astonishing progress" in educating its impoverished people.

Only a year after the Taliban fell, Fisher said, "I was able to stand with Karzai in a school in Kabul as he launched a new school year. Three million kids were going back to school. It was the only time I ever saw him with a tear in his eye."

Atmar, who was born in the small eastern province of Laghman, said the government has started a new protection program that is helping to reduce the violence against the schools.

Community councils have formed to guard the students and teachers, and parents are also invited to join in the administration of local schools, giving them a stake in their children's education. Some of the shut-down schools are beginning to reopen.

But, Atmar admitted, thousands are painfully under-equipped, without basic facilities like toilets and running water, and educational materials are thin on the ground.

Although primary schools are a relative success, there are fewer teachers qualified to teach secondary school, and fewer still for universities. Education for older students is still in a primitive stage.

"In about 80 per cent of rural districts there are no girls' high schools," Atmar said.

Even as gains are made, parents are reluctant to send their adolescent daughters to school in violent areas where rape and kidnapping are rife. In calmer areas too, many insist on girls being taught only by female teachers, who are in short supply. And they also refuse to send them to schools that are little more than shacks or tents.

"It's a vicious circle," Atmar said. "If girls can't go through secondary school they can't be trained to teach. If there are no teachers, girls won't be educated."

He said teacher-training schemes were underway with incentives to women to upgrade their skills.

"We have to succeed in education if we want peace and stability in our country. Children of educated mothers will not send their children to be terrorists."

Schools, youth a part of future success

IDNUMBER 200710050004
PUBLICATION: The Leader–Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
COLUMN: David Ramsay
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: David Ramsay, Leader–Post / Niaknaz Band, the caretaker of a school in Kandahar, says because of lingering cultural and tribal traditions, only about one–sixth of the students are girls and the oldest is no more than 10–years–old. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR PROVINCE
BYLINE: David Ramsay
SOURCE: The Leader–Post
WORD COUNT: 631

KANDAHAR PROVINCE — It has taken more than half a day, along with the help of dozens of soldiers and some very sophisticated and expensive military hardware, to travel to a small school northwest of Kandahar City from Kandahar Air Field.

The trip takes six Canadian journalists visiting Afghanistan this week as guests of the Department of National Defence about one hour to complete. We spend the first part of the day in briefings, learning about security threats and how to respond in case of an attack.

We are then transported in a convoy of LAV–3 armoured vehicles, each manned by at least four soldiers, most of whom are equipped with massive firepower.

They are there to protect us in one of the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan.

The trip is uneventful in an area where suicide bombs and improvised explosive devices remain a constant fear.

The only incoming objects faced by the soldiers in our convoy this day are rocks thrown by Afghani children.

For us, the worst part is the dust. It is like a mist and covers everything in the close confines of the LAVs. Picture a hot, dry and windy day in Saskatchewan when there seems to be more soil in the air than in the fields. That would be a good day in this part of Afghanistan.

But in many respects, our trip is much easier than the one made daily by the more than 500 students who attend a modest school in a small village near Kandahar City. The Baba Wali Sahbb school, the only one in the area not damaged by the Taliban, is an example of how a very small amount of money can pay big dividends.

The key to the school's success: A non–descript concrete wall, built with Canadian money and designed by Canadian soldiers with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, at the bargain–basement price of \$24,000. The team is helping to rebuild Kandahar province, taking on a variety of projects, large and small, including the construction of much–needed police stations.

When the wall at the school was completed earlier this year, attendance took a big jump. Many parents had been refusing to send their children, worried about their safety in an area where the Taliban's influence is still felt. Better to have them alive, well and uneducated at home than in danger at a school that doesn't provide any level of security or privacy.

Villagers had requested a wall for two reasons: To make the building a little safer for students and teachers alike, and to keep the students, especially the 70 girls, out of sight, and hopefully, out of mind of Taliban supporters.

But even with the wall in place, the school — like Afghanistan itself — is a work in progress. Paint peels from the walls, and there is nothing in the classrooms but old desks and small chalkboards. There are too few teachers, too many kids for too few classrooms (as many as 70 are scrambled into each room), and an uneven gender balance.

Niaknazar Band, the school's caretaker, says because of lingering cultural and tribal traditions, only about one-sixth of the students are girls and the oldest is no more than 10 years old. He adds many more students could be attending, estimating there are about 1,000 children within walking distance of the school.

As we walk around the grounds, we are followed by a throng of Afghani students. Like the children we saw earlier in the week in Kabul, they are very friendly and seem to genuinely like Canadians. Their day is made when soldiers begin handing out dozens of colourful hand-made cards created by students in Canada.

On many occasions during our trip, we are reminded that Afghanistan's future rests with its children. How they will turn out will depend very much on whether they have an opportunity to attend school.

By building a wall, a major barrier to a better future has been reduced for the students at a small school near Kandahar City.

– David Ramsay is the Leader-Post's Deputy Editor (nights)

Sendoff for gallant hero Calgarians turn out to celebrate fallen corporal's life

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PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.05
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PAGE: 12
ILLUSTRATION: photo of NATHAN HORNBURG Killed in Afghanistan
BYLINE: BILL GRAVELAND, THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: CALGARY
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 208

Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was remembered as a good man and a hero by friends and colleagues at a celebration of his life yesterday.

The 24-year-old reservist, a member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, died Sept. 24 while attempting to repair a tank that was under mortar attack. He became the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

"The time we spent with Nathan Hornburg was time spent in the presence of a hero," said fellow reservist Sgt. Pablo Fernandez. "He did what only someone with an iron will could do. In death, as he did in life, Nathan is setting an example."

Padre Will Hubbard told mourners the name Nathaniel means "gift" in Hebrew. He said Hornburg had the gift of good humour and of being supportive to both his friends and military comrades.

"You will hear good things about him, because Nathan Hornburg was a good man," said Hubbard.

The Calgary Roundup Centre was filled to capacity with more than a thousand mourners. Many stopped at a memory table where a photo of Hornburg with members of his troop was offset by one of him posing with a tricycle at age 3. Hornburg's work as a budding artist was also featured, including three colourful landscapes and sculptures of an eagle and a polar bear.

The military declined to comment on the day.

"Not today. Today belongs to his family," said Maj. Gen. Tim Grant, the ex-head of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

Afghan minister urges Canadians to support mission

SOURCETAG 0710050496
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg
Sun
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 9
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 303

Opposition politicians threatening to vote down the throne speech unless the Harper government stands by the 2009 withdrawal date from Afghanistan were asked yesterday by the war-torn country's education minister to rethink that position.

Mohammed Haneef Atmar, in Toronto to champion the progress his country's education system has made since the fall of the Taliban, said withdrawing Canadian troops prematurely would give terrorists the upper hand and undo all the gains made.

"Pulling out from Afghanistan would mean insecurity for Afghanistan, would mean children not being able to go to school," Atmar said following his speech.

"It doesn't mean Canada is requested forever to stay in Afghanistan with its military forces. ... It's about an interim period ... and the Afghan nation, during that interim period, would need support."

The Bloc Quebecois and the Liberals have indicated they will vote against the Oct. 16 throne speech if it does not contain a clear statement of withdrawal from combat in 2009. The NDP is calling for an immediate pullout.

"I would request them to reconsider this," Atmar said. "Afghanistan needs your support and we should not be left halfway and abandoned there."

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Parliament would have the opportunity to debate and vote on extending the combat mission past February 2009. But the prime minister has also vowed to aggressively campaign to convince a majority of MPs that Canada has a moral responsibility to stick it out. He said he is prepared to fight an election campaign on Afghanistan if necessary.

Atmar's plea came following a speech during which he highlighted the progress Afghanistan's education system has made since 2002, when only 900,000 children — all boys — were enrolled in school. There are now some six million Afghan youths going to school — roughly half the country's school-aged children — and two million of them are girls, Atmar said. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

Better deal for wounded

SOURCETAG 0710050492
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg
Sun
DATE: 2007.10.05
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SECTION: News
PAGE: 9
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 212

Soldiers badly wounded in Afghanistan and who want to stay in uniform would be given the chance to do so under a new policy drafted by the Defence Department.

The plan, drawn up in the waning days of Gordon O'Connor's tenure as defence minister, would allow the military to avoid the controversy of dismissing injured soldiers who want to continue serving and — in some cases — have no other vocation.

Sources within the Defence Department told The Canadian Press that the policy has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since O'Connor was replaced in August by the new minister, Peter MacKay.

The chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, said recently that he has some of "his brightest minds working on it," but offered few details on the proposal or a timeline.

Sources who've seen a draft of the policy say it would allow soldiers who do not meet the military's universality of service rule to apply to stay as long as they meet some criteria.

Currently, a soldier who becomes disabled has three years to be rehabilitated and meet the fitness standard for overseas operations. If they cannot meet the requirement, they have no choice but to face a medical discharge.

Hillier has steadfastly refused to make changes to the current fitness requirement, but conceded that military has been trying to find a way to take care of its wounded with some dignity. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Sendoff for gallant hero Calgarians turn out to celebrate fallen corporal's life

SOURCETAG: 0710050378
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 11
ILLUSTRATION: photo of NATHAN HORNBURG Killed in Afghanistan
BYLINE: BILL GRAVELAND, THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: CALGARY
WORD COUNT: 208

Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was remembered as a good man and a hero by friends and colleagues at a celebration of his life yesterday.

The 24-year-old reservist, a member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, died Sept. 24 while attempting to repair a tank that was under mortar attack. He became the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

"The time we spent with Nathan Hornburg was time spent in the presence of a hero," said fellow reservist Sgt. Pablo Fernandez. "He did what only someone with an iron will could do. In death, as he did in life, Nathan is setting an example."

Padre Will Hubbard told mourners the name Nathaniel means "gift" in Hebrew. He said Hornburg had the gift of good humour and of being supportive to both his friends and military comrades.

"You will hear good things about him, because Nathan Hornburg was a good man," said Hubbard.

The Calgary Roundup Centre was filled to capacity with more than a thousand mourners. Many stopped at a memory table where a photo of Hornburg with members of his troop was offset by one of him posing with a tricycle at age 3. Hornburg's work as a budding artist was also featured, including three colourful landscapes and sculptures of an eagle and a polar bear.

The military declined to comment on the day.

"Not today. Today belongs to his family," said Maj. Gen. Tim Grant, the ex-head of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Sendoff for gallant hero Calgarians turn out to celebrate fallen corporal's life

SOURCETAG: 0710050294
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
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SECTION: News
PAGE: 9
ILLUSTRATION: photo of NATHAN HORNBERG Killed in Afghanistan
BYLINE: BILL GRAVELAND, CP
DATELINE: CALGARY
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 208

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Soldier had 'heart of a warrior' – longtime friend

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DATE: 2007.10.05

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 31

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Jim Wells, Sun Media Memorial cards are seen at the funeral for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg at the Stampede Ground's Roundup Centre in Calgary yesterday. 2. photo by Darren Mkowichuk, Sun Media Pallbearers enter the hall with his casket.

BYLINE: BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA

DATELINE: CALGARY

WORD COUNT: 275

The night before he left for his fatal Afghanistan deployment, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg expressed his passion for the mission, a longtime friend told an overflow crowd of mourners at the soldier's funeral yesterday.

Amid the sombre pageantry of the two-hour military service, Sara Leishman recalled an evening of late-night Chinese food and words from the 24-year-old reservist about a month before his death that convinced her Hornburg was the right man for the dangerous mission.

"He said, 'I'm protecting our country, I'm protecting the citizens of Afghanistan, to make it a safe place for people there, so girls can go to school,' " Leishman told about 1,000 people at the Stampede Ground's Roundup Centre.

"Nathan, you made a journey to the other side of the world with knowledge, the heart of a warrior and a sense of adventure."

Hornburg's sister, Rachel Herbert said her brother had made the world a better place by "choosing to go down the road not many people do."

Eight pallbearers from his King's Own Calgary Regiment had carried in his coffin, draped in the Maple Leaf flag and crowned with his black beret and bayonet.

Inside, mourners and dignitaries, including Mayor Dave Bronconnier, city aldermen and MLAs, milled about near a table bearing Hornburg's youthful ceramic art and landscape paintings, bookended by photos of him as a toddler and as a soldier with colleagues atop a Leopard tank last July.

The last photo of a slideshow showed Hornburg in desert fatigues waving goodbye before departing for war.

The reservist was killed Sept. 24 while he worked on a disabled tank during a firefight near Kandahar.

Fellow-reservist Sgt. Pablo Fernandez said Hornburg's death was a selfless act typical of the man.

"Under heavy enemy fire, Nathan did what only those with an iron will can do – he went forward and tried to help friends in need," Fernandez, a Calgary Sun reporter, said in his eulogy. "He lived and died like few dare."
KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

MEMORIES OF OUR HERO LIVE ON 'He lived and died like few people dare'

SOURCETAG: 0710050845

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.10.05

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SECTION: News

PAGE: 20

7 photos 1. 4 photos by Darren Makowichuk, Sun Media A soldier wipes away tears at the funeral service for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg yesterday. 2. Fellow— soldiers carry Hornburg's casket at the service. Hornburg, 24, of Calgary, is the first member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment to be killed in action since the Second World War. 3. Cpl. Nathan Hornburg's King's Own badge and bayonet rest at his funeral service at the Roundup Centre yesterday. 4. Soldiers take the flag off his coffin as a police motorcade travels together. Hornburg was killed in action in Afghanistan on Sept. 24 and was remembered by family and friends at a funeral service in Calgary yesterday. 5. photo by Jim Wells, Sun Media In the eulogy, Sgt. Pablo Fernandez described Cpl. Nathan Hornburg as a hero. 6. photo by Al Charest, Sun Media 7 photo by Brett Gundlock, Sun Media Loved ones of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg embrace at the reservist's funeral service yesterday. He was remembered as a good man by friends and colleagues at a celebration of his life.

WORD COUNT: 763

Sun reporter Pablo Fernandez, a sergeant in the King's Own Calgary Regiment, served for two years with Cpl. Nathan Hornburg. He delivered the military eulogy at yesterday's funeral:

— — —

We didn't know it then but the time we spent with Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, we spent in the presence of a hero.

Nathan was the kind of soldier you could go to when you needed something done now and done well.

Those who played with Nathan in the King's Own hockey team said they feared no corner because they knew Nathan would risk all to watch their backs.

Nathan's dedication to the regiment and to the army was unparalleled, his demeanour and professionalism unquestionable.

For the young troops of the King's Own Calgary Regiment — and even for some of his superiors — Nathan exemplified what a soldier of the regiment should be.

But apart from his loyalty to the regiment and his love of soldiering, Nathan was also a friend.

When those around him were down, he would lift them up.

When others hurt, he would be their rock.

And he was also funny.

He was never overly loud or boisterous, but he had the uncanny ability to make everyone laugh when no one felt like laughing.

Nathan could find humour in the most obscure places under the most unlikely circumstances.

Ironically, it is now, in his absence, that we need his comfort and easy smile more than ever.

It's hard now to put on the uniform and not feel his absence.

You see, Nathan never missed a game, parade or training exercise — he was always there and he was there 100%.

He wanted to learn, improve and be challenged, because for him doing enough was never enough.

At first, he wanted to go to Bosnia, but that mission closed down before he got a chance to deploy.

So when the B.C. forest fires started to carve up the mountainsides, Nathan was one of the first ones on the truck.

Thus, it came as no surprise when we heard he was deploying to Afghanistan in a tank squadron, the highest honour for anyone serving under the armoured corps' black beret.

Many of us here were there when Nathan joined the King's Own — a young kid, kind of clumsy and in search of an aim.

But we watched him grow, find direction and character and mature into an adult with great inner strength and a soldier with a heart of gold.

The army and the regiment were more because of him and are now much less without him.

The magnitude of the part that Nathan played in our lives became painfully obvious when phones started ringing in every home in the regiment one quiet morning and we awoke to a world where Cpl. Nathan Hornburg was no longer a resident.

Suddenly, the universe was not as it had been.

The small, menial worries that clutter our lives finally found their rightful place in the back of our minds or discarded on the floor.

Suddenly, family, friends, love, the regiment and those of us who are still fighting in Afghanistan became the only things that mattered.

How important he was to us and how shocked we were to have lost him became evident by the giant hole we found right through the middle of our hearts and the unrelenting knot that had found a home in our guts — placed there by the sudden and violent absence of a friend.

Although, in the last five years, many Canadian units have had to bury their own brothers in arms, the agony of losing one of our own young soldiers has forced upon each and every one of us in the King's Own a shroud of sorrow that's not easily discarded.

Members of the regiment, soldiers and officers who are trained and equipped for combat, have had to reach out to one another and find comfort in Nathan's memory and in their shared and unexpected loss.

We all understand that it is our job to do our country's bidding and that that may entail laying down our lives — that is something we're all prepared to do.

But that our friends may be the ones called upon to make that sacrifice is much harder to accept.

The army trains us to be precise, it trains us to push beyond all comfort, it trains us to be lethal.

But it cannot train us to cope with the loss of a friend whose ideals and desire to do good were a beacon in a world gone mad.

There is a girl in this world who fell in love with Nathan, but who will never again hold his hand.

There is a mother and a father who are being forced to bury a child and a sister who's left without a brother.

In the King's Own, we are now left with only memories of a good friend and a sorrow that will continue to call on us for a long time to come.

Nathan left us before his time — his light burning out too soon, but only because he lived so fully.

He lived and died like few people dare.

But in his passing, Nathan has bestowed upon us a great deal of responsibility.

Nathan died during an intense 12-hour battle in which one of the tanks in his squadron became disabled.

Under heavy enemy fire, Nathan did what only those with an iron will can do — he went forward and tried to help friends in need.

In death, as he did in life, Nathan is setting an example.

We have no choice but to honour his memory every time we train, every time we serve, every time we deploy, by staying true to our oath, our motto and by continuing to work — at home and abroad — for what Nathan believed in.

The regiment owes Nathan that much, the army owes Nathan that much.

But that debt, although slowly, is already being repaid.

Within hours of his death, members of the King's Own and the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) were back in the fray continuing the battle that Nathan died fighting.

Later, those same fellow-soldiers climbed a mountain near Kandahar, and upon its peak placed a rock with Nathan's name engraved on it.

Our debt to Nathan is a heavy one, but as we do our best to go onward and repay what Nathan has done for our regiment, our corps and our country, let us not forget how fortunate we were to have trained, served and fought alongside Nathan.

In years to come, when today only lives in saddened corners of our hearts and in the pages of history, proclaim proudly:

"I knew Cpl. Nathan Hornburg and I am honoured to have had the privilege to have called him a friend."

Nathan, to your family, we say thank-you.

Thank-you for Nathan and thank-you for allowing us into his life and for allowing us to take him in as one of our own.

Nathan, rest easy, for you have done your duty and look around you, for you are now in good company.

Those who blazed this path before you, the path that you so wilfully followed, they are all there.

The heroes of Vimy, Dieppe and Ortona, they are with you now.

We didn't know it then but we do know now, that the time we spent with Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, we spent in the presence of a hero.

Nathan we love you, we miss you and you will never be forgotten.

ONWARD. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

From the man in the blazer to the high school friend, Nathan embodied the word 'hero'

SOURCETAG 0710050825
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.05
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PAGE: 5
BYLINE: RICK BELL
COLUMN: Page Five
WORD COUNT: 507

To the man in the King's Own Calgary Regiment blazer, it will be no surprise to hear that back in junior high school, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg chose to memorize Robert Frost's famous poem, The Road Not Taken.

"Two roads diverged in a wood and I — I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference," wrote Frost.

After all, not long after those junior high days, Nathan, a 24-year-old corporal in the King's Own Regiment — the KOCR — took a road far less travelled, far from the confines of Civvy Street, as soldiers call the civilian world.

He took it so far, the road led to a disabled tank in Afghanistan and a call for help Nathan was willing to answer, even if he died in the process.

"He was one of my soldiers, an excellent soldier," says the man in the blazer, Ken Vivian, who retired in April as the KOCR's Regimental Sergeant-Major, the RSM for short.

He speaks of Nathan as always approachable, always seeking advice and always trying to improve — "an all-around good guy with all the qualities you want — loyalty, integrity, trust, initiative."

"He wasn't afraid to do things on his own. He knew when you've got to do it, you go do it. In the face of adversity, you've got to do your job," says the soldier, who pauses before continuing.

"He jumped out to help a tank under fire — that's what you do. You may lose your life but you try, for the betterment of all, for your regiment, for your buddies. I know the regiment has lost an excellent soldier." Another pause.

"And Canada has lost a fine citizen. The attendance here speaks for itself."

The uniforms of all types are here at the Roundup Centre.

There are crisp salutes and solemn ceremonies, the sound of piper, band and bugle and the firing of the rifles; the sight of the flag-draped coffin and Nathan's black beret.

One side of the hall fills with civilians — Nathan's friends, many shedding tears, some holding young children.

Some are from the Calgary Waldorf School, others from Bishop Carroll High.

You hear the recollections of long-time friend Sara Leishman.

How Nathan was always the responsible "voice of reason."

How, as a young boy, he didn't mind being a "hair model" or playing pharmacist for their dolls while secretly wanting to set up his green plastic soldiers or build a fort.

How, as a man and a soldier, he found he truly fit with the KOCR; how he read about Afghanistan, couldn't wait to get there and really wanted to make that faraway land safe.

The word "hero" is spoken.

"That definition is now Nathan Hornburg," says Sara.

Those assembled hear the music and see the photos pass by on the screen — of horses and horsing around.

Nathan as a small child; more grown-up snapshots with pals, at birthday parties, playing baseball and hockey, and going fishing.

Smiles with family and, yes, Nathan with his other family — the regiment.

A final picture shows Nathan waving good-bye.

Even the little ones are silent now.

We see Nathan, the complete person, the citizen and the soldier — all in one very special individual who stood up to the highest standard and met it.

He humbles the rest of us who, even on our best day, may not be able to say as much.

A Soldier's Reading is read alongside the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, mentioning a protector for those in need of protection.

A song about a soldier in war is followed by one about the great Porcupine Hills Nathan loved so well.

Nathan's fourth-grade teacher wrote a personal verse for each of her students, a poem to stay with them throughout their school years. These words come before Nathan's memorizing of The Road Not Taken:

"Praise to the mighty men, born in the days of old. Mighty were their deeds, strong they were and bold. Climbed the rocky crag, sailed the stormy seas, leaped the farthest leap, mighty men were these."

The old RSM has few words to add.

"People don't realize the price paid for the freedom they have; just go to some countries and see what it's like," says the soldier.

When asked how he feels in his heart about this day, the answer is direct, as one would expect from an RSM with 41 years in the ranks.

"It's tough. Tough," he says, walking away in his blazer with the regimental badge bearing that well-loved

From the man in the blazer to the high school friend, Nathan embodied the word 'hero'

motto of the King's Own Calgary Regiment: Onward. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

Passion not in vain Soldier remembered as one who never gave up

SOURCETAG: 0710050823

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.10.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Darren Makowichuk, Sun Media The mother of slain Cpl. Nathan Hornburg left her son's funeral holding a traditional Maple Leaf flag, used to honour Hornburg during the full military service at the Roundup Centre. 2. photo by Jim Wells, Sun Media

BYLINE: BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 394

The night before he left for his fatal Afghanistan deployment, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg expressed his passion for the mission, a long-time friend told an overflow crowd of mourners at the soldier's funeral yesterday.

Amid the sombre pageantry of the two-hour military service, Sara Leishman recalled an evening of late-night Chinese food and words from the 24-year reservist about a month before his death that convinced her Hornburg was the right man for the dangerous mission.

"He said 'I'm protecting our country, I'm protecting the citizens of Afghanistan, to make it a safe place for people there so girls can go to school,' " Leishman told about 1,000 people gathered at the Roundup Centre.

"Nathan, you made a journey to the other side of the world with knowledge, the heart of a warrior and a sense of adventure ... it's clear to everyone in this place you truly fit, you never gave up."

Hornburg's sister, Rachel Herbert, said her brother had made the world a better place by "choosing to go down the road not many people do."

Earlier, a silver hearse bearing the body of Hornburg, 24, drew up to the Roundup Centre where eight pallbearers from his King's Own Calgary Regiment (KOCR) carried a coffin draped in the Maple Leaf flag and crowned with the fallen soldier's black beret and bayonet.

Inside the venue, mourners and dignitaries, including Mayor Dave Bronconnier and various aldermen and MLAs, milled about near a table bearing Hornburg's youthful ceramic art and landscape paintings, bookended by photos of him as a toddler and as a soldier with colleagues atop a Leopard tank last July.

The last photo of a slideshow collage depicted Hornburg in his desert camouflage fatigues waving goodbye before departing for war.

The reservist was killed Sept. 24 by a Taliban recoil-less rifle or mortar shell while he toiled to retrieve a disabled tank during a firefight near Kandahar.

Sgt. Pablo Fernandez of the KOCR said Hornburg's death was a selfless act typical of the man.

"Under heavy enemy fire, Nathan did what only those with an iron will can do — he went forward and tried to help friends in need," Fernandez, a Calgary Sun reporter, said in his eulogy.

"He lived and died like few dare."

Childhood friend Leishman noted Nathaniel in Hebrew means 'gift' "and that's exactly what you were to those who knew you."

Even as a five-year-old playing with toy soldiers, Hornburg voiced an awareness of war's darkness he'd express before leaving Canada for the last time, said Leishman.

"His mother asked him 'why are do you always want to play war?' " And Nathan replied, 'because it scares me.'

Following the indoor service, a dozen soldiers fired three volleys of tribute from their C-7s rifles while Hornburg's mother clasped a folded flag from her son's casket.

A musician played a mournful Last Post for the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Hundreds bid farewell to fallen soldier

IDNUMBER 200710050026

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.10.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A9

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Todd Korol, Reuters / Family and friends watch as the casket of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a member of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, is carried out after his funeral in Calgary yesterday. ; Colour Photo: Cpl. Hornburg: 71st soldier killed in Afghanistan. ;

DATELINE: CALGARY

BYLINE: Jamie Komarnicki and Deborah Tetley

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

NOTE: Obituary of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg.

WORD COUNT: 238

CALGARY -- Solemnly walking past hundreds of teary-eyed mourners, eight military pallbearers carried the casket of Canada's latest fallen soldier into a public funeral yesterday, as his hometown said an emotional farewell.

Hundreds attended a service for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, the 24-year-old reservist who was killed in Afghanistan last month.

"You made the journey to the other side of the world, with knowledge, the heart of a warrior, humility and the spirit of adventure," friend Sara Leishman told an overflow crowd of mourners during the ceremony at Calgary's Roundup Centre.

Hornburg, who trained with the King's Own Calgary

Regiment for more than six years, is the third Calgary-area soldier to die in Afghanistan. He was struck by mortar fragments on Sept. 24 during an insurgency attack.

When Hornburg joined the reservists, Leishman said, "it was clear to everyone, in this place he naturally fit."

A projected photo montage set to music showed images of Hornburg's school days, family trips, outings with friends and his unit in Afghanistan moving some in the audience to tears.

"He chose to go down the road that not many in the nation do," said his sister Rachel Herbert, who read from Robert Frost's poem The Road Not Taken, one of three tributes given during the service.

A police motorcade led the single hearse carrying Hornburg's body along the processional route.

A military band played as the hearse, travelling with a guard of honour marching in unison behind, made its way to the Roundup Centre.

Hornburg, who was born and raised in Calgary and spent much of his spare time at his family's cattle ranch in Nanton, Alta., south of Calgary, was the 71st Canadian soldier to be killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS Afghan minister pleads for continued assistance

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072780283

DATE: 2007.10.05

PAGE: A21

BYLINE: OMAR EL AKKAD

SECTION: Toronto News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 624

WORD COUNT: 579

OMAR EL AKKAD Afghanistan's Minister of Education arrived in Toronto yesterday to make an impassioned plea for Canadians to continue supporting his country's fledgling social programs.

Mohammed Haneef Atmar presented his audience with an ambitious plan to revolutionize Afghanistan's small but growing educational system, firmly tying the system's future – as well as the security of his nation – to the fortunes of Afghanistan's women.

"Children of an educated mother would never become terrorists," he said. "At least not in our context." In a frank half-hour speech, Mr. Atmar described the country's madrassas, or Islamic religious schools, as the biggest threat to educating girls in Afghanistan. However, he proposed reforming and integrating such schools, rather than excluding them from Afghanistan's new education system.

"The old policy of exclusion is what led to this disaster," he said.

Mr. Atmar's visit to drum up support for his government's programs comes at a time when Canadian attention is largely focused on the military side of this country's involvement in Afghanistan, something the minister was quick to praise as vital to his nation's security.

"This is something we deeply appreciate," Mr. Atmar told an audience during a speech at Toronto's Westin Harbour Castle hotel. "It will be written in golden scripts in our history books." But Mr. Atmar was also quick to point out that war rages in only six of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and that a solid educational infrastructure is vital if the country is ever to become independently functional.

With just over a year on the job, Mr. Atmar is charged with reforming a part of Afghan society that was decimated under Taliban rule.

Yesterday afternoon, he presented his Toronto audience with a slew of statistics, initiatives and challenges that outline his mandate.

Mr. Atmar's appearance in Toronto was organized by Unicef Canada, whose president and CEO, Nigel Fisher, also spoke, describing Mr.

Atmar as "a man, to say the least, with a difficult job." The meeting was moderated by Raymond Theberge, director general of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education.

Both Mr. Fisher and Mr. Atmar repeatedly stressed that while the Afghan education system has a long way to go, it is far better than it was after two decades of war followed by six years of Taliban control.

Six years ago, there were fewer than one million Afghan children in school, Mr. Atmar said, and most of those were learning in secret.

Today, six million children are in school – two million of them girls. Where there once were virtually no female teachers in the country under the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law, there are now 40,000.

However, the shortage of female teachers is still the biggest obstacle to getting more girls in school, Mr. Atmar added. In primary school, he said, there are roughly two boys for every girl. In secondary school, that ratio rises to four boys for every girl. As Afghan girls grow older, he said, their families prefer they be taught by women. But because more girls are being taken out of school at the secondary level, fewer of them end up becoming teachers.

"That creates a vicious circle that needs to be broken," Mr. Atmar said.

After his speech, Mr. Atmar took a number of questions from audience members, including Afghan Canadians. One audience member asked whether his plan to have individual parent councils take full responsibility for their own schools could lead to ethnic discrimination among Afghanistan's various tribes. Mr. Atmar replied that he saw more of such discrimination among Afghan politicians than he did among local population.

"If we get rid of the politicians," he said, "this country would be much better."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Toronto; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: education; women; strife; visits; foreign policy; foreign relations; social services

PERSONAL NAME: Mohammed Haneef Atmar

Make the case for Afghanistan; Because public opinion has soured on our mission in Afghanistan, the opposition parties could waste the efforts of our soldiers. It's up to Harper now.

IDNUMBER 200710050066
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper tours forward operating base Ma'Sum Ghar in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, in May ;
BYLINE: J.L. Granatstein
SOURCE: Citizen Special
WORD COUNT: 951

Paul Martin's Liberals put us into a combat and development role in Afghanistan, the decision shaped by then-defence minister Bill Graham and Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier. Everyone in government knew there would be killing and Canadian casualties and, to his credit, Mr. Graham made speeches in 2005 telling Canadians precisely that. So too did Gen. Hillier.

The Harper Conservative government then made the war its own when it came to power in January 2006 and soon extended Canada's commitment in Kandahar two years more to February 2009. Moreover, it did so with the support of a vote in Parliament, a move almost unprecedented in a country that since 1945 has almost always sent its troops overseas without the benefit of approval from the House of Commons.

But now as the feared casualties continue to mount, the media are divided and public opinion shaky on what Canada should do. Get out? Continue to fight the Taliban? Concentrate more on development?

Polls done by the big survey companies continue to show Quebec opinion least supportive of the mission and even more so after recent casualties in the Royal 22nd Regiment battle group now carrying the load in Kandahar. Opinion across the rest of the country seems to be holding relatively steady, the polls say. But a self-selected and very large Internet poll in the Globe and Mail on Labour Day was striking: 85 per cent (or 22,673 individuals who registered their view) said that Canada should not extend its Afghan mission past February 2009. Only six per cent believed that Canadian troops should remain until the Taliban were defeated, while nine per cent believed that a decision should be put off until nearer the February 2009 date. That last option is all but impossible given Canada's responsibility to notify NATO of its plans so that some other nation's troops (if they can be found) can take over in Kandahar.

Now, it may be that the vast majority of those calling for Canada to get out of Kandahar in 2009 have been affected by signs that the Harper government itself is looking for a way out of the commitment or, at the most, a change to a different role in a safer part of the country. There needs to be a consensus among the political parties on the Canadian role, the prime minister said, sounding only slightly different than Mackenzie King's dictum of the 1930s, "Parliament will decide."

But consensus looks difficult to achieve. NDP leader Jack Layton wants to pull out now, never mind in 2009 and never mind concerns over abandoning the Afghans. (His successful candidate in the Sept. 17 Outremont by-election even slanderously called the United Nations-authorized mission Harper's "war of aggression," arguably the vilest comment of the political season.) The Bloc Québécois, hitherto a supporter of the Canadian role, wants it to end in 2009. The Liberals, who, it needs to be repeated again and again, first put us into Kandahar, say they too want the mission to end in 2009 but leader Stéphane Dion suggests he might not vote non-confidence in the government on this issue.

Nothing much is clear from the parties' professed positions except a distaste for Canadian casualties suffered in an "American" war. Certainly there's nothing to give solace to those who believe that Afghanistan is a crucial test for Canada and NATO, although the Harper government's by-election win in Roberval may indicate that Québécois are willing to vote bleu notwithstanding the war.

Still, there is not much comfort in the opinion soundings. To me, the Labour Day poll is the key one, far more so than the balanced hedging in most national opinion polls with their small samples. A conservative national newspaper asks its readers, usually believed to be opinion-makers, a simple and direct question on-line, and more than 22,000 reply: Get out of Afghanistan in February 2009. Enough, they're saying, no more killed soldiers.

In my view, this is a shortsighted position that neglects the impact a pull-out will have on Canada's standing with our NATO friends and the potentially devastating impact it could have on the ground in Kandahar. It is the wrong position, but it certainly seems to be where opinion is driving the government.

Why? Because Canadians still haven't grasped why Canada is involved. What must be said is that the Harper government has singularly failed to "sell" the Afghan war it made its own. Ministers have not tried to explain why we are there or the differences Canada has made — and can make — to the lives of Afghans.

The prime minister and his key francophone colleagues have not gone into Quebec to try to bolster support for the mission in a traditionally anti-military society. It's no wonder the polls there are so defeatist. Only in September did the first regular briefings of the media begin in Ottawa; only this month did the new foreign affairs minister speak in Montreal on the war.

If the prime minister wants to preserve his and his government's credibility and a shred or two of Canada's honour, if he wants to keep alive the idea that Canada isn't getting ready to cut and run, he needs to mount a major political and media campaign on the reasons for Canada's presence and role in Afghanistan. Now. Today. Right away.

J.L. Granatstein writes on behalf of the Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century (www.ccs21.org).

Make the case for Afghanistan; Because public opinion has soured on our mission in Afghanistan, the oppos

Harper's unhidden agenda

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PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
COLUMN: Susan Riley
BYLINE: Susan Riley
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 821

In a rare formal sit-down with the national media this week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper repeated that he doesn't want an election now, that Canadians don't want one and that his priority is to continue governing. Naturally, this has touched off a renewed frenzy of election speculation.

It isn't just that journalists are incapable of accepting a straight answer (although, to be fair, we are not accustomed to straight answers from political leaders.) Harper planted a seed of doubt when he argued that if the opposition parties pass his Oct. 16 Throne Speech because they haven't finished packing, or their leader is distracted, or they just aren't ready for an election, they forgo the right to vote against any legislation that flows from the speech. "They have to fish or cut bait," was how he put it. "You can't pass the Throne Speech one day and the next day say 'we didn't actually mean to do it.'"

In theory, that means confidence votes on every new bit of Conservative legislation — a challenge to the opposition to vote yes, or take it to the street. It means a parliamentary session that could be more tiresome than the last, with more bluster, double-dares and time-wasting distractions — nothing like the low-key, incremental progress toward Conservative goals that the prime minister claims to want. That, in fact, he probably does want.

Indeed, this could part of Harper's "hidden agenda," hinted in recent weeks by his long-time friend and former advisor, Tom Flanagan. In his new book, *Harper's Team*, Flanagan concedes there is no natural conservative majority in Canada, and that a right-wing government will only win total power incrementally. The idea, according to Flanagan, is to offer cautious, moderate-sounding initiatives that nudge the country in a conservative direction, rather than frightening everyone with a lusty moral crusade for fundamental reform.

We've already seen this strategy in Harper's retooled rhetoric on climate change, symbolic concessions to Quebec nationalism at the risk of annoying his western base, his populist posturing on economic and tax issues. Yesterday's \$64-million anti-drug strategy is another example of mixed messaging: along with muscular "get-tough-on-dealers" provisions, it includes money for treatment and education.

It is not "a simple war on drugs," said Harper, but neither is it an endorsement of "harm reduction" — needle exchanges and injection sites for addicts. The new Conservative watchword is "balance." This so-called "balanced" approach isn't likely to curb drug use any more than existing programs do, but it could be a successful political ploy: a rebuke to those who would decriminalize or legalize soft drugs, reassurance for worried parents, "compassion and help" for users.

Indeed, to avoid coming across like a latter-day J. Edgar Hoover, Harper reached out to boomer parents who "romanticized" soft drug culture in their youth, but now worry about what, and how much, their adolescents

are taking.

Even on Afghanistan, Harper is tempering his language. While his reluctance to withdraw troops, even after the February 2009 deadline, remains firm, he avoided abusing the mission's critics this week. "Can I say that we're ready to leave cold turkey in 2009? I think it's hard to imagine, but I do recognize that the Canadian population, the Canadian people, expect that we will leave in a responsible manner over an understandable period of time."

In the end, the brake on Harper is not the opposition, scattered and disunited as they are, but the voters. He insists, for instance, that his government's anti-crime measures, stalled in the last Parliament, must pass this time — or else.

He points to past support from his rivals for tougher measures against gun crimes, and tighter parole provisions. Although many criminologists, and the example of other countries, suggest tougher penalties don't reduce gun crime — and statistics show the so-called crime wave is wildly exaggerated — it will be a brave opposition leader who provokes an election over so emotional a subject.

The only issue, apart from Afghanistan, that might justify an election is the one on which Harper is most vulnerable: climate change. But he won't give the opposition a chance to defeat him. Environment Minister John Baird says he has no intention of re-introducing his widely disparaged clean air bill. Instead, the government will implement its green policies administratively.

This doesn't mean there won't be a fall election: a careless head count before a vote, a provocative remark, an unexpected catastrophe could present an opportunity, to Harper or to his rivals.

But the prime minister says he doesn't want an election, neither Gilles Duceppe, nor Stéphane Dion, can afford one, and Canadians don't want one. For the time being, maybe we (myself included) should find something more important to write about.

Susan Riley writes Friday, Monday and Wednesday. She can be reached at sriley@thecitizen.canwest.com

Canada pledges \$60M to Afghan education; Afghanistan grateful; critics skeptical

IDNUMBER 200710050042

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.10.05

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A11

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen / Afghan Education Minister Mohammed Haneef Atmar told Nepean High School students that six million Afghans are being educated thanks to Canada's efforts. Two million of those students are girls, he said. ;

BYLINE: Sarah Boesveld

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 416

Canada pledged \$60 million over four years to education development in Afghanistan yesterday, but critics have raised questions on whether the money will be properly tracked.

The millions will go to Afghanistan's Education Quality Improvement Project, one of nine programs managed by the World Bank's Afghanistan Redevelopment Trust Fund. It will buy textbooks, fund teacher training and help build schools, Afghan Education Minister Mohammed Haneef Atmar said.

But the Senlis Council, an international think-tank that tracks government distribution of humanitarian aid, recently found CIDA hasn't put its money where its mouth is nor have its commitments been clearly tracked.

Senlis followed \$39 million CIDA transferred to Kandahar last year to see where it was spent. In August, Senlis officials visited the site of a hospital maternity unit CIDA said was to receive \$35,000 through UNICEF. When Senlis arrived, they found nothing, not even a tent.

This is just one example of CIDA's untraceable tracks, said Senlis president Norine MacDonald.

"We have not seen even a minimal level of effectiveness in CIDA projects in Southern Afghanistan, so we would hope, of course, that they would do a better job on this project," she said.

When reached yesterday, CIDA spokesmen said the World Bank's trust fund is audited by PriceWaterHouseCoopers, which routinely reports to the World Bank, though it wasn't specify how often.

It was not confirmed who specifically will ensure Canada's \$60 million will be spent on books and school building. Nor was it specified how often CIDA contacts its organizations to track its finances.

This isn't good enough, says Almas Bawar, director of Canada's Senlis chapter.

"There's no clarity in where they're heading and what they're doing. They give money, but they're not sure where it's going," he said. And while Ms. MacDonald admits education funding will help Afghan redevelop, she said CIDA still has much to be accountable for.

"There's no way anybody could criticize the government for supporting education in Afghanistan," she said.

"But that doesn't let them off the hook from the absolute necessity of doing food aid and medical assistance."

According to Senlis, CIDA has spent 10 times more on the military than on development aid.

Though Mr. Atmar said he is grateful for the funding, he said four years of funding just isn't enough.

"Education needs at least a 10-year commitment. CIDA, if you're going to be our friend, be our friend at least for 10 years," he said.

Mr. Atmar will end his four-day trip to Canada today. He said he came not only to champion Canada's support for Afghan education, but to say thank you.

"The first reason (for visiting) was to thank Canadians on behalf of our people and government, and at the same time say they are making a difference in Afghanistan," he said. "We are very grateful."

Afghan kids go to school thanks to Canadian wall

IDNUMBER 200710050107
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
DATELINE: KANDAHAR PROVINCE
BYLINE: David Ramsay
SOURCE: Saskatchewan News Network; Regina
Leader-Post
WORD COUNT: 403

David Ramsay of the Regina Leader-Post is one of five journalists from newspapers across Canada invited to Afghanistan to see first-hand what is happening in the country.

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KANDAHAR PROVINCE -- It has taken more than half a day, along with the help of dozens of soldiers and some very sophisticated and expensive military hardware, to travel to a small school northwest of Kandahar City from Kandahar Air Field.

The trip takes six Canadian journalists visiting Afghanistan this week as guests of the Department of National Defence about one hour to complete. We spend the first part of the day in briefings, learning about security threats and how to respond in case of an attack.

We are then transported in a convoy of LAV-3 armoured vehicles, each manned by at least four soldiers, most of whom are equipped with massive firepower. They are there to protect us in one of the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan.

The trip is uneventful in an area where suicide bombs and improvised explosive devices remain a constant fear. The only incoming objects faced this day are rocks thrown by Afghani children.

But in many respects, our trip is much easier than the one made daily by the more than 500 students who attend a modest school in a small village near Kandahar City. The Baba Wali Sahbb school, the only one in the area not damaged by the Taliban, is an example of how a very small amount of money can pay big dividends.

The key to the school's success: A non-descript concrete wall, built with Canadian money and designed by Canadian soldiers with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, at the bargain-basement price of \$24,000. The team is helping to rebuild Kandahar province, taking on a variety of projects, large and small, including the construction of much-needed police stations.

When the wall at the school was completed earlier this year, attendance took a big jump. Many parents had been refusing to send their children, worried about their safety in an area where the Taliban's influence is still felt. Better to have them alive, well and uneducated at home than in danger at a school that doesn't provide any level of security or privacy.

Villagers had requested a wall for two reasons: To make the building a little safer for students and teachers alike, and to keep the students, especially the 70 girls, out of sight, and hopefully, out of mind of Taliban supporters.

'Trigger-happy tot' still in artillery '88 photo caption proved prophetic

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.05

PAGE: A1

SECTION: City

WORD COUNT: 344

Lindsey Wiebe **Lindsey Wiebe KABUL** — Maj. David Preaux still remembers the controversy that erupted nearly 20 years ago when his son Patrick made the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press as a machine-gun-toting four-year-old at a family event at CFB Shilo, where Preaux was posted.

The boy was dubbed a "trigger-happy tot," said Preaux with a laugh, and local talk-radio stations were abuzz over the picture, captured while his son gave the weapon a try — shooting blanks — during a military demonstration.

Nearly two decades have passed and now Preaux has an update for readers: The gun-wielding toddler has grown into a 23-year-old captain in the Quebec-based Regiment D'Artilerie Legere du Canada, the same regiment as his father.

As for the elder Preaux, he's a liaison officer these days for Task Force Kandahar, helping arrange meetings and travel plans for military and diplomatic visits to Afghanistan.

The major was also in charge of security for a regional media group visiting Kabul, a group that included this reporter.

Preaux, who headed the security detachment that escorted us through Kabul, said he doesn't know if that photo back in 1988 led to his son's decision to become a soldier. Neither his two other sons nor his daughter joined the military.

"Did it have anything to do with him joining the regular forces?" Preaux said. "I don't know, but he's a captain now. If he'd joined earlier, we could be serving together." Preaux is more amused than bothered when he recalls the strong opinions that flared up after the photo of his son became news.

In his opinion, that machine-gun demonstration was no different than a carpenter letting his son use a hammer, a sentiment he said friends shared.

When he's not serving overseas, Preaux lives in Levis, Que., where he'll return next May after completing his second tour in Afghanistan.

His son, who switched from the reserves to the regular forces this past January, is currently on standby for his own tour in the war-stricken country where his father is now based.

Patrick may not remember his brief fame long ago, but his dad said he still smiles when he hears the story and keeps a framed copy of the once-controversial photo.

"He thinks that it's probably destiny," Preaux said.

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Reconstruction is a delicatebalancing act

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.05

PAGE: A7

SECTION: City

WORD COUNT: 549

Lindsey Wiebe KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN – "See all the stacks of rocks out there?" Captain Barbara Honig points out the window of our armoured truck to a rugged, barren hill, dotted with clusters of large stones.

"It's a minefield," says the specialist engineer commander for Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, as the hulking RG 31 Nyala, a vehicle typically used to clear mines, lumbers through the Arghandab District of Kandahar.

The mines in this field — relics of mujahadeen fighters, Soviets and the Taliban — are marked with stone piles. But most risks in Kandahar aren't so clearly defined, and that makes redevelopment in the volatile province a careful balancing act for the roughly 350 Canadian soldiers and civilians in the PRT.

Canada has run the province's reconstruction team since taking over from American troops in 2005, and on this trip we're visiting a development project at Mazara School in the district, specifically, a concrete wall around the school. The wall was designed by Honig's team of engineers, and aimed at offering better security and more privacy, so Afghan parents would let their daughters attend the schools, and teachers would feel safe enough to show up.

The wall itself is a humble offering, as showpieces go. But the \$24,000 structure was built by Afghan contractors after discussions with numerous community leaders, and 560 students now take morning classes at the school. Although it's already afternoon when we arrive, a throng of young children surrounds us, smiling and poking at our digital recorders, experienced enough to know that foreigners often come bearing gifts.

The PRT has been steadily plugging away at other projects around the province. There are five community police stations either completed or in progress in Kandahar, each worth between \$200,000 and \$400,000, and 23 temporary vehicle checkpoints have been set up for added security in Kandahar City and Arghandab. These are solid signs of progress, however tentative, and for now at least, they're still standing.

But then there's the matter of safety, and in Kandahar it's inextricably linked to any new development. Suicide bombings and improved explosive devices, or IEDs, are routine here, and just getting to the PRT camp required the protection of a Light Armoured Vehicle, or LAV, with two gunners sticking out the top, weapons at the ready.

For PRT workers, the constant threat of violence means reconstruction efforts are tied heavily to the group's Force Protection Company, a unit of armed soldiers who secure the camp and make it possible to safely get to meetings and project locations.

With opposition leaders calling for an end to Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan in 2009, and Canadians generally preferring humanitarian projects over battlefields, I can't help but question whether anyone would have been willing to design and build Mazara's security wall without security of their own.

And as we drove back to camp in a convoy of LAVs and armoured trucks, I wondered whether I'd have felt anywhere near as safe on the grounds of Mazara School without the reliable protection I've so far taken for granted.

lindsey.wiebe@freepress.mb.ca Lindsey Wiebe is on assignment in Afghanistan this week. Check back for further reports, or visit her blog for updates at www.winnipegfreepress.com.

{ Kandahar AFGHANISTAN }

Canada: Stay the course

IDNUMBER 200710050045
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.05
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A9
COLUMN: Letter of the Day
Photo: Andrew Mayeda, CanWest News Service / RECONSTRUCTION: Canadian
ILLUSTRATION: soldiers build a new security outpost this week in the remote Afghan village of
Howz-e-Madad. ;
BYLINE: Steve Peters
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 287

Re: Windsor Star editorial, Afghanistan — The Politics of War.

The Canadian people just don't seem to comprehend what is at stake in the counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan. Without a secure environment, re-construction is virtually impossible. As quickly as medical clinics and schools are built and staffed, the Taliban destroy them and murder their staff.

The Taliban is made up of young, uneducated youth recruited from refugee camps and schools. They seized power after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and immediately implemented a reign of terror. Thousands of innocent people were slaughtered. Implementation of Shariah law forced women to wear burqas and veils.

Bin Laden's recent al-Qaida videos are reminders you cannot negotiate with Islamic zealots whose sworn duty is world domination in the name of Allah. Al-Qaida and the Taliban are close allies.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper should stand firm in our nation's commitment in Afghanistan. His fears that further Canadian casualties will deny his party crucial seats are speculative.

Since 2002, the Canadian death toll is 72. I am saddened at the death of even one of our brave service men and women. When a nation is at war, the reality is that casualties are inevitable.

We should, however, resent the fact that there are 37 countries (26 NATO and 11 other) deployed and only four countries — Canada, U.K., U.S. and Holland are doing the heavy lifting. Our government is vigorously addressing this issue. Prime Minister Harper should demand that a condition for our continued presence in Afghanistan should be a redeployment of our forces from a combat to a reconstruction role on a rotation basis.

We should not and must not cut and run. This action would be a national disgrace for Canada, a major victory for radical Islamic extremists and a national tragedy for the Afghan people.

STEVE PETERS

Windsor

Yellow ribbons 'emotional blackmail'?

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EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A8
COLUMN: National Report
DATELINE: FREDERICTON
SOURCE: Global News
WORD COUNT: 152

FREDERICTON –Despite an overwhelming backlash, a New Brunswick peace group launched a campaign against yellow ribbons, calling the symbol in support of Canadian troops "emotional blackmail." The Fredericton Peace Coalition said displaying the "Support our troops" ribbons makes a political statement of support for the mission in Afghanistan. "If what your ribbon means is 'Support the troops' and not the war, then we've created this sticker that you can add to your yellow ribbon that says 'bring them home' and it also says 'question war,' " said Matthew Abbott, who belongs to the group. The group is launching its campaign to coincide with the sixth anniversary of the war in Afghanistan. It is unpopular with military families from the nearby base of Gaagetown in Oromocto, N.B.

Defence critic out in the cold in Kandahar

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BYLINE: Don Martin
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OTTAWA –Canada's Afghanistan military operation was authorized by the federal Liberals, the base built by the Liberals and the mission may yet be voted into packing crates by the Liberals. But, for the time being, the Kandahar Air Field flies under a heavily protected Conservative flag.

And that's why a troublesome pit bull of a Liberal defence critic will show up at the front gates of the base next week to find his way blocked by soldiers bearing semi-automatic weapons.

Contrast Denis Coderre's expected cold-shoulder unwelcome with the red-carpeted runway greeting for Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, who will land in Kandahar in the next few days if he's not there already.

Mr. Coderre has tried for two months to secure government permission to make a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan ahead of Parliament's return in two weeks. Liberal leader Stephane Dion has his application in the system for a visit in November.

But Mr. Coderre was stonewalled and his calls to the Defence Minister unreturned until he was finally told to buy his own ticket and catch a commercial flight.

Why not, he decided. Mr. Coderre's solo adventure started on Thursday, although he called from London to say he'd been officially warned the military base is off limits and that he will be denied protection by the troops.

Gosh. What a difference a party makes.

While Mr. Coderre wanders in the wilderness, Mr. Bernier will land aboard a military plane loaded with support staff and a few media tagalongs. He will be given top-level military briefings, access to convoys backed by heavily armed escorts and sleep in the VIP quarters. No tents or porta-potties for this Quebec rookie.

Now before getting all indignant at this attempt by control-freak Conservatives to preserve Kandahar as their own private photo-op, let the record show Denis Coderre has been a serious pain in the government's butt.

He's fiercely anti-Tory and was so solidly behind Michael Ignatieff's bid for Liberal leader last fall, one suspects even Stephane Dion is relieved to have Mr. Coderre in a faraway war zone while he tries to quell his Quebec uprising.

It should also be noted Mr. Coderre is among the greatest of all parliamentary publicity hogs, a man who would walk through Taliban headquarters wrapped in an American flag if there was a media scrum on the other side.

But he does serve as official Opposition defence critic and is a member of the Privy Council. As such, Mr. Coderre has a lot to learn about Canada's most important military mission in 50 years which, in my view, legitimizes a first-hand look at a mission his party hopes to disband in just 16 months.

The official line from a National Defence flack is that members of an all-party defence committee have already voted to visit Kandahar.

Once the committee gathers anew in the next parliamentary sitting, a trip will be organized. Eventually.

But Mr. Coderre suspects — probably correctly — that he's being shunted aside for political reasons lest his trek be wrapped up in time to launch an informed attack on the government. As proof the government is being selective in helping MPs, he points out that Foreign Affairs offered to assist him during a side trip to Pakistan.

It seems only fair that Mr. Bernier find a seat for his official critic on the government plane. The Afghanistan deployment is clearly the defence decision of the decade, if not the last 50 years, and nonpartisan eyewitness input can be useful.

Sure, it's an organizational headache. But officers tell me Cabinet ministers are the mother of all migraines. In the case of former defence minister Gordon O'Connor, officers confide his final visit ended with his flacks ripping into military brass for failing to set up suitable camera backgrounds for media scrums. The Taliban would crack up if they knew how petty things can get in Canadian politics.

Mr. Coderre says he will piggyback on charitable and humanitarian groups to ensure he sees the wilds of Kandahar up close. If it's done safely, he may well leave with a greater appreciation of the situation than any cocooned minister or parliamentary secretary. Being confined to the airfield gives you no more insight into southern Afghanistan reality than studying the situation from Bay Street.

But it will be very dangerous outside the base and the optics of Mr. Coderre getting hurt or worse for the want of a military babysitter would make the partisan protectionism of the Conservatives appear unforgivably petty.

Lest we forget, Canada's enemy in Afghanistan are extremists trying to stifle free speech and deny women basic human rights — not Liberals trying to have an informed debate.

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Afghan education chief thanks Canadians; ' You are our greatest ally,' minister tells UNICEF forum

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BYLINE: Peter Goodspeed

SOURCE: National Post

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In a soft voice that quivered with emotion, Afghanistan's Education Minister Mohammed Atmar yesterday told a Toronto audience that his countrymen want to thank "every Canadian citizen for what you have been doing in Afghanistan."

"You protect our people and advance the basic rights of our people," he said. "Our government is so proud to convey to you that you are our greatest ally -- an ally that we depend upon, an ally to be appreciated, an ally that we will long be grateful to."

He paid particular tribute to "the brave Canadian men and women in uniform who are literally protecting my kids as they go to school."

What Canada has done in Afghanistan is "something that will be written in golden script in our history books," he said.

Speaking at a public forum sponsored by UNICEF, Mr. Atmar insisted that the focus of the public debate on Afghanistan in Canada is naturally on security issues and the Canadian military's fight with elements of the outlawed Taliban.

But he insisted that while the security situation is challenging, there is a great deal of real progress taking place all over Afghanistan.

"What is happening in terms of education is a strategic transformation of society," he said, noting that more than six times as many children are going to school now than when the Taliban ruled the country from 1996 to 2001.

There are now nearly six million children going to school and 40% of those—more than two million—are girls.

When the Taliban were in power it was illegal for girls to go to school, and fewer than 10,000 got an education in secret schools in private homes.

Schools are a visible sign of reconstruction and progress and are frequently attacked by insurgents in Afghanistan. But in spite of the recent upsurge in attacks by the Taliban, only about 3% of Afghanistan's more than 9,000 schools are threatened, he said.

"Canadians need to know this and not give up on Afghanistan," said Nigel Fisher, president of UNICEF Canada.

"Our presence in Afghanistan has to be long-term," Mr. Fisher added, "because development is a long-term issue. And when you look at the chaos that Afghanistan came out of in 2002 — 25 years of predatory leadership, of foreign invasion and civil war — you don't turn that around in a couple of years."

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For more on Canada's role in Afghanistan go to nationalpost.com/afghanistan

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Hundreds say their goodbyes to fallen soldier; 24-year-old reservist killed in Afghanistan

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: GAVIN YOUNG, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE /Twelve-year-old Tyler watches the start of Cpl. Nathan Hornberg's funeral procession in Calgary yesterday after asking his grandmother to let him skip school and pay his respects. ;

KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=CALGARY

BYLINE: JAMIE KOMARNICKI and DEBORAH TETLEY

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 489

Solemnly walking past hundreds of teary-eyed mourners, eight military pallbearers carried the casket of Canada's latest fallen soldier in a public funeral yesterday, as his hometown said an emotional farewell.

Hundreds attended a service for Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, the 24-year-old reservist who was killed in Afghanistan last month.

"You made the journey to the other side of the world, with knowledge, the heart of a warrior, humility and the spirit of adventure," friend Sara Leishman told an overflow crowd of mourners during the ceremony at Calgary's Roundup Centre.

Hornburg, who trained with the King's Own Calgary Regiment for more than six years, is the third Calgary-area soldier to die in Afghanistan. He was struck by mortar fragments on Sept. 24 during an insurgency attack.

When Hornburg joined the reservists, Leishman said, "it was clear to everyone, in this place he naturally fit."

A projected photo montage set to music showed images of Hornburg's school days, family trips, outings with friends and his unit in Afghanistan, moving some in the audience to tears.

"He chose to go down the road that not many in the nation do," said his sister, Rachel Herbert, who read from Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*, one of three tributes given during the service.

Debora Lloyd, who taught Hornburg at the Waldorf school in Calgary, was among those who arrived early to watch the funeral procession.

"He died not only for our country but for another country, to make the world a better place," she said. "People want to honour him and acknowledge what he did. There's a need for everyone that's been touched by this to be present and find their own way to accept what happened."

A police motorcade led the single hearse carrying Hornburg's body along the processional route. A military band played as the hearse, travelling with an honor guard marching in unison behind, made its way to the

Roundup Centre.

"Obviously, he died for a cause he believed in, something that was important to him. We know it's going to be sad, but it's nice there's so many people that care," said honorary pallbearer Caitlin Archer, 23.

Hornburg, who was born and raised in Calgary and spent much of his spare time at his family's cattle ranch in Nanton, Alta., south of Calgary, was the 71st Canadian soldier to be killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

During a prolonged firefight with insurgents, Hornburg dismounted from the armoured recovery vehicle he was driving to repair a tread that had fallen off the tank. He was killed by mortar shell fragments.

The man his family calls a "warrior" had been in the country roughly one month of a planned six-month tour.

Before leaving for Afghanistan near the end of August Hornburg told his mother, Linda Loree, that he loved his life, and that no matter what happened during his mission he would have no regrets.

"Nathan decided to go to that country fully informed and aware of the danger," the family said in a statement last week.

"He went because he felt it was right, and that he could help those in need. He went to support his fellow troops and friends, he went because his country asked him to, and he went because he felt, from the bottom of his heart, that it was the right thing to do."

A private internment is planned for tomorrow in Nanton.

Calgary Herald