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Anti-war demonstrators target local weapons plant; 40 protesters call on federal government to withdraw troops from Afghanistan

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: ROBERT WILSON, RECORD STAFF / Two protesters climbed onto the roof of the Colt Canada plant on Wilson Avenue in Kitchener yesterday and unfurled an anti-war banner. Other protesters below blocked the company parking lot. ;

DATELINE: KITCHENER

BYLINE: ROSE SIMONE

SOURCE: RECORD STAFF

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WORD COUNT: 379

Jonathan Parrott, 23, decided yesterday to raise his voice against something happening just behind his backyard.

Parrott, a Conestoga College student, lives in the subdivision behind Wilson Avenue in Kitchener, where Colt Canada Corp. is making weapons used by the military.

So he decided to join the 40 antiwar activists who showed up at the plant for an early-morning protest organized by AntiWar@Laurier or AW@L, a Rainforest Action Network group based at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

"It is disturbing when they are making guns in your own backyard," Parrott said.

The protest was staged to make Kitchener residents aware that Colt Canada, a subsidiary of the large U.S.-based gunmaker, Colt Defence, is making weapons in the community, said Kendra Foord, a 19-year-old Laurier student who helped organize the protest.

Foord said this was her first antiwar protest.

The protesters said Colt Defence supplies guns for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and is part of a military-industrial complex that is feeding the West's addiction to oil, as well as causing further damage to the environment.

They chanted in favour of immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan.

Security at the plant was not tight. Two protesters managed to get on the roof of the factory, with a giant banner that said "Stop the War Machine."

Others blocked the parking lot at the plant.

Anti-war demonstrators target local weapons plant; 40 protesters call on federal government to withdraw troops

But workers parked along the street and walked into the plant. There was no disruption of the work inside.

Frances Vegh, human resources manager for Colt Canada Corp., said no one was harassed, and not being able to get into the parking lot was mainly "an annoyance" for the plant's 98 workers.

"But these are just 98 people in our community who want a job," Vegh said.

"Somebody is going to supply the government, and so if these people (the protesters) want to make a statement, they should lobby the government."

The protesters have a right to give out their information and express their opinions, she said.

"But the thing we disagree with is that they are blocking our driveway, and when they are crawling up on our roof, that is trespassing."

Several Waterloo regional police officers were at the scene, speaking with the activists to get them to move off the company property peacefully.

Although most of the protesters were in their 20s, a few older activists got involved too.

"This is unusual for Laurier, so we want to encourage it," said Laurier Professor Peter Eglin, who was there to lend the students his support.

Terrence Gibson, 50, who is back in school as a religion student, "doing what I have always wanted to do" at the University of Waterloo, said he decided to join the protesters because it is important for his generation to show solidarity with the young antiwar activists.

"I have been encouraging friends of my age by saying that instead of complaining, we should be getting involved," he said.

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Air Force shops for pilotless planes

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WORD COUNT: 376

Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100 million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet. The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles.

The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

"For a while there, we flirted with technology," Watt said in a recent interview.

"We have walked back from that flirtation. That doesn't mean we are not going to pursue UAVs, but I think we have a little more realistic view of the capabilities of the UAVs."

Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kilogram bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us," Watt said.

"The reason being is: we in Canada like to have a man in the loop dropping weapons and shooting weapons at people.

"We generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively. So it would be a bit of a stretch for us."

The Americans have been routinely criticized by human rights groups over misdirected air strikes involving Predators since the drones first started firing missiles in the spring of 2002.

In a letter of interest that asks industry for proposals, Canada's air force says it wants a pilotless aircraft that can carry out mostly surveillance, but also use laser pointers to direct precision-guided munitions to targets. Those bombs and missiles would come from manned aircraft or ground-based artillery.

"It's a simpler, somewhat less expensive program, one that we are trying to fast-track in order to deliver capability for our mission as soon as we can obtain it," said Watt.

The original timeline for the program had the air force taking delivering of the new aircraft in mid-2009, just as the Afghan mission possibly winds down.

But Lt.-Col. Wade Williams, who's in charge of the UAV program, says officials hope to get the first aircraft into Afghanistan "within months" of the contract being signed next year.

Issues take priority this time?

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BYLINE: W.E. (Bill) Belliveau IN
DEPTH
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Ontario is nearing the end of its provincial election campaign. Prior to the election, Premier Dalton McGuinty's government was hounded with questions on fraudulent lottery winnings and the lingering concern that he had broken his 2003 election promises.

John Tory, the Conservative leader, a highly respected Toronto businessman and former staffer of Conservative Premier Bill Davis was given an excellent chance of unseating McGuinty, but something happened on the Road to Damascus. John Tory promised to extend funding for "faith-based" schools in Ontario.

In 1841, the Act of Union combined Ontario and Quebec into the United Province of Canada, with one legislative assembly. Half the members were French-speaking Catholics. With their support, two acts were passed in 1855 and 1863, creating the basis for today's separate school system in Ontario. They gave the province's Catholic minority the right to direct property taxes to separate schools.

In 1936, Ontario's Liberal Premier Mitch Hepburn, introduced a bill, compelling corporations and public utilities to direct 40 per cent of their taxes to separate schools. In a December byelection that year, anti-Catholic protests cost the Liberals a seat. The following year, Hepburn repealed the bill. In 1964 Catholic schools from K-10, became government-funded under then Minister of Education Bill Davis. In 1984, Premier Davis extended the funding to secondary schools creating more controversy.

In 1999, the United Nations Human Rights Commission decreed that Ontario's separate school system is discriminatory and called for the issue to be addressed within 90 days. Conservative Premier Mike Harris refused. John Tory has run head-first into the issue. When he promised to extend "faith-based" school-funding in Ontario, he unleashed concerns about Muslim (code for terrorist) school funding, re-energized long-standing conservative opposition to separate school funding and hardened the determination of Catholics (about 35 per cent of the vote) to preserve separate school funding. Islamists and others who might support the extension have been lost in the shuffle.

Ontario pundits point to faith-based school funding as the defining issue in the Ontario election (Oct. 10) and many predict that McGuinty will win the election as a result; even though some of them believe that John Tory is the best leader. Regardless of the outcome, this election proves that issues matter, that issues can be more important than the person.

Speaking of issues, Stephen Harper's Minister of the Environment, John Baird was upset with my column last week, so upset that he responded with a letter to the editor on Thursday. Sadly, his response was full of vitriolic inaccuracies. For example, he maintains that his "Turning the Corner" climate change plan will result in absolute reductions of 20 per cent greenhouse gases by 2020. He fails to mention that his plan is based on

intensity targets, not absolute reductions.

He says that he is going to regulate big industrial emitters so they reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. He makes no mention of Alberta's oil sand producers, the biggest single emitters of greenhouse gases in Canada. He says that no country in the world will do more than Canada to fight climate change in the next five years. A more factual statement might have been that few countries in the world will do less than Canada to fight climate change if we continue down the Ambrose/Baird path.

Fact: Prime Minister Harper told an assembly of 80 countries at the United Nations nearly two weeks ago that Canada is vigorously campaigning for an international deal that would reject the central foundation of the Kyoto Protocol that is based on absolute reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. He wants to link results of climate change actions to "intensity targets" (intensity refers to the amount of greenhouse gases produced per unit of economic activity, not absolute reductions in gas emissions).

Mr. Baird misquotes me when he says that I claimed that the Asia Pacific Partnership is an "anti-Kyoto rival". Here is what I did say: "After addressing the United Nations on Monday, Harper announced that Canada would join a rival climate change pact becoming the seventh member of the Asia-Pacific Partnership, a group nicknamed as the anti-Kyoto partnership by some environmentalists".

Canada's Chief Executive Officers have declared climate change as "the most pressing and daunting issue" of the day. Recent polls suggest that climate change is twice as important to Canadian voters as the war in Afghanistan. The world's scientists tell us that we are running out of time to fix the problem.

In my view, the reason Harper pulled Canada out of the Kyoto Accord was because of Alberta's production of heavy oil from the tar sands. It takes two tons of tar-laced sand to produce a barrel of oil. It takes an average of three and a half barrels of fresh water to steam the oil out of the sand. It requires the energy of one barrel of oil to produce an average of two barrels of oil from tar sands. It only takes one barrel of oil to produce 30 barrels of oil from a conventional reservoir.

Every barrel of oil extracted from the tar sands produces 80 kg of carbon emissions, more than the average car produces in a round trip from Vancouver to Whistler. Alberta is producing about 1.2 million barrels a day from the oil sands. It hopes to increase production to two or three million barrels a day. Intensity-based reduction targets of 20 per cent will mean nothing if production from oil sands increases by 100 per cent or more.

If, as I suspect, the next election is fought on the issue of climate change, party leaders, as personalities will matter less than their position on the issue of climate change and their willingness to do something (in real terms) about it.

* W.E. (Bill) Belliveau is a Shediac resident and Moncton business consultant. His column appears on this page every Saturday. He can be contacted at bill.bellstrategic@nb.aibn.com

Cdn. Air Force aims to fast-track drones; Pilotless planes pegged to protect troops in Afghanistan

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The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

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"We generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively. So it would be a bit of a stretch for us."

The Americans have been routinely criticized by human rights groups over misdirected air strikes involving Predators since the drones first started firing missiles in the spring of 2002.

Sesame Street DVD helps vets discuss injuries; Children trust the familiar characters to explain the consequences of war, expert says

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SOURCE: AP

BYLINE: Nancy Zuckerbrod

ILLUSTRATION: ELMO

WORD COUNT: 656

It's not your typical Sesame Street episode. There are no lessons in letters or numbers but there are plenty of hugs and lots of talk about feelings.

Sesame Workshop, the non–profit organization that produces the hit kids' show, is working on a DVD to be distributed to military families. It's designed to help injured veterans talk about their disabilities with their children.

Gary E. Knell, president and CEO of Sesame Workshop in New York, said some of those veterans and their families are looking for help from Sesame Street because the workshop produced a popular DVD last year aimed at helping military families discuss the strain of deployments.

More than a million children have parents who are in the military and have been deployed in the past six years. And roughly 18,000 military personnel in Iraq or Afghanistan have been wounded or injured seriously enough to be evacuated.

In the new production, Rosita, a fluffy blue mop–headed muppet, is upset because her father has returned home in a wheelchair.

Rosita angrily refers to the wheelchair as "that thing" and reminisces about the days when she could dance to salsa music and kick a ball with her dad.

With encouragement from Elmo, Rosita musters the nerve to talk with her parents about how she is feeling.

"Sometimes I feel a little sad, because things are so different now," Rosita says during a family outing to the park. "I wish your legs were OK, Papi, and I wish you didn't have to go to the doctor so much. And I just wish things could go back to the way they were!" Rosita's father tells her that although he may have changed, his love for her hasn't. And he persuades her to hop on the back of his wheelchair so the two can try a new kind of dancing.

Retired Army 1st Lt. Ed Salau said it's important for families to find new activities to do together after a parent is injured.

Salau lost a leg in a rocket attack while serving in Iraq. He said when it happened, he immediately thought of his young children.

Sesame Street DVD helps vets discuss injuries; Children trust the familiar characters to explain the consequences

"I got my leg blown off," he said. "All I was thinking about was, 'Am I going to be able to dance with my daughter or play soccer with my son?' "

Back home, Salau said he worked quickly to re-establish a physical closeness with his children, which sometimes can be difficult for families. "Hugging still means everything it did before you were hurt," Salau says.

Knell said Sesame Street is trying to model behaviour and provide the vocabulary for parents who need extra help. "In many cases, Mommy and Daddy or caregivers may not have the tools necessary to deal with these very tough-to-teach issues," Knell said.

Psychiatry professor Stephen Cozza of Uniformed Services University, which trains military doctors, said a parent's injury or emotional problem is often "a big white elephant in the room that nobody's talking about."

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Lammey and his wife, Rose, can relate to that. Michael was badly burned in an explosion while serving in Guam last year.

The burns almost killed him and left him disfigured. Rose said she and her husband initially had a lot of trouble discussing what happened with the couple's three young daughters.

"We didn't know how to handle that sensitive issue. We just put it aside for a little bit until we could sit down as a family and talk it out," Rose said in a telephone interview from San Antonio, where her husband is still receiving treatment.

On the other hand, there can be a tendency to give young children more information than they can handle, said Cozza, who also is an adviser to Sesame Street. He said the new DVD seeks to strike the right balance by showing families how to talk openly about the changed situation they face without frightening young viewers.

While the program doesn't directly address emotional disorders faced by an estimated 20 per cent of returning veterans, the DVD can help frame family conversations around that too, Cozza said.

Leslye Arsht, deputy undersecretary of defence for military community and family policy, said Sesame Street is doing something that isn't easy for the military to tackle alone.

"There is no more credible voice for three- to five-year-olds than the voices of Elmo ... and parents trust him too," Arsht said.

Learning to dream; Women, girls pin hopes for future on free schooling

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BYLINE: Dene Moore

PHOTO: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

ILLUSTRATION: Afghan women weave a carpet in the Aqcha district of Jawzjan province, north of Kabul, Afghanistan. Since the ouster of the Taliban, more girls and women are getting educated, but they still face many barriers.

WORD COUNT: 637

Sofia Nawabi studies hard and dreams of running her own business one day.

Not so long ago, the 21-year-old Afghan woman couldn't even show her face outside her home, as she does today. To go to school, let alone run a business, was unthinkable under the strict Islamic rule of the Taliban.

The classes are free but in this conservative Islamic province – an insurgent stronghold where the Taliban continue to hold much influence despite being ousted from power in late 2001 – there could well be a price to pay for the women who dare to school.

Ehsan Ullah is the founder of the centre, which opened in March, and its predecessor the Sherzai Institute, and the recipient of one of the Taliban's notorious "night letters," dropped on the doorstep of the institute.

"We will bleed you," it warned.

Teachers have been assassinated and students threatened but Ullah says the doors will remain open.

"We try to keep a low profile but we have not gone underground," he says. "We can't go underground. Here, men and women need education. Education is the only light that can make Afghanistan bright again." A slight man of powerful words, 36-year-old Ullah blames illiteracy for the troubles that plague the nation.

"The warlords, the drug lords, the extremist elements; they are imposed on us because we are uneducated," he says, slapping his hands together in exasperation.

Opened with a private donation from a Canadian citizen and money from Ullah's own pocket, the community centre survives on private donations and matching funds from the Calgary-based CADMUS Foundation. They operate on a shoe-string budget of \$3,000 a month and are ever fishing for international funding. The Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar has donated computer equipment and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology offers online courses via the Internet.

There are English classes for students' children, as well as an Internet cafe for students where they write to Canadian pen pals and find the world at their fingertips.

When students started dropping out because they couldn't afford even the bus fare, Ullah arranged a minibus to pick them up.

"Women doctors and nurses and doctor's assistants are terribly needed," Ullah says.

With all the international funding flowing into Afghanistan, he wants the students ready to benefit by having computer and business skills and fluency in English.

The women pay rapt attention to the lessons, burkas draped over the back of their chairs. Although their presence here is proof that much has changed in Afghanistan, it has not changed enough for many. Nawabi agrees to speak to The Canadian Press on the condition that her face not be shown.

"For a woman, it's still really hard," she says. "A lot of families don't allow their girls to go outside."

More than 90 per cent of Afghan women are illiterate and 60 per cent of Afghan men, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Under the Taliban, even boys could only attend Islamic studies at mosques. Today, the Taliban campaign against education continues.

Since 2005, 36 schools have been burned down and 17 teachers killed in Kandahar province alone, according to the Afghan ministry of education. Fourteen schools were torched by insurgents in April and May.

In June, gunmen executed two schoolgirls as they left school in the central Afghan province of Logar. A female passer-by was also killed and four other girls wounded.

More than six million students, 38 per cent of them girls, had been registered for school across the Afghanistan but hundreds of schools have closed because of the threat of violence.

Three hundred schools did not reopen this fall in the volatile southern region alone, including Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces, according to the education ministry.

"In most of the districts, there is no school," Abdul Qadar Noorzai, head of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kandahar province, told The Canadian Press. "Where there are schools, the teachers cannot go there."

It's a problem that should be a priority for the Afghan government, he says.

Nawabi's family would have preferred she go to school in Kabul, a safer city. But the university has only a handful of female students and it is not free.

"Most families can't afford for their daughters to study," she says. When asked what she will do when classes end, a defiant smile raises the edges of Nawabi's lips. "I just want to run my own business," she says.

Canadian pride; In our view: A group that challenged the yellow ribbon campaign finds common ground in a Canadian way

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Kudos to the Fredericton Peace Coalition for finding a truly Canadian solution to the turmoil that broke out after members announced their campaign against yellow ribbons.

Last week, the peace coalition asked people to remove the popular yellow ribbon emblems that sport the words "Support Our Troops" from their homes and vehicles because the yellow ribbon campaign, the group says, supports an unjust war and stifles debate on the Canadian government's foreign policy.

It was like tossing a grenade smack dab into the middle of Canadian pride in the country's military.

Letters to the editor and comments on The Daily Gleaner's website exploded with fury at the coalition. Some comments were unfair, personal attacks on the coalition's spokeswoman, Tracy Glynn.

A second wave of letters pointed out Glynn and peace coalition members were celebrating their right to free speech, a right Canadian soldiers have died defending.

Late this week, in a very conciliatory, very Canadian gesture, the coalition softened its approach. Organizers said members were not backing down in the face of criticism but wanted to correct the misunderstanding that had developed between those who say the yellow ribbons support the troops not war and those who want to encourage debate over Canada's role in Afghanistan.

Rather than let the fight continue, the coalition opted instead to start a yellow ribbon sticker campaign of its own, one that adds to the existing campaign and finds common ground between the two sides. That common ground is a desire to have Canadian troops return safely to home turf — even if both sides envision that in different ways.

The coalition stickers say, "Bring them home," and include a picture of a yellow ribbon. It also says, "Question war," so it's clearly a way to support the troops while keeping the door open to discussion of Canada's role in the war on terror.

The stickers can be added to existing yellow ribbon campaign icons.

It's an ingenious step, a very Canadian step.

The world had not heard of peacekeeping until future Canadian prime minister Lester B. Pearson stepped up in 1957 and suggested it as a way protect a cease fire in the war over the Suez Canal.

Canadian pride; In our view: A group that challenged the yellow ribbon campaign finds common ground in a

Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize. And the fact he's considered the father of modern peacekeeping is a point of national pride for Canadians.

This act of peace by the Fredericton Peace Coalition is yet another act worthy of Canadian pride.

Air force shops for pilotless troop cover

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BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER The Canadian Press
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Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to provide cover for troops in Afghanistan.

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The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

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"We generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively. So it would be a bit of a stretch for us."

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In a letter of interest that asks industry for proposals, Canada's air force says it wants a pilotless aircraft that can carry out mostly surveillance, but also use laser pointers to direct precision-guided munitions to targets.

Those bombs and missiles would come from manned aircraft or ground-based artillery.

"It's a simpler, somewhat less expensive program, one that we are trying to fast-track in order to deliver capability for our mission as soon as we can obtain it," said Watt.

The original timeline for the program had the air force taking delivering of the new aircraft in mid-2009, just as the Afghan mission possibly winds down.

But Lt.-Col. Wade Williams, who's in charge of the UAV program, says officials hope to get the first aircraft into Afghanistan "within months" of the contract being signed next year.

The debate also comes at a time when there are concerns about the availability and endurance of the Sperwer, a pilotless aircraft Canada has used extensively in Afghanistan but which has been unable to fly in some extreme weather.

Watt, said the air force stands behind the Sperwer, but is anxious to introduce a slightly more sophisticated UAV but not something as complicated and expensive as the Predator.

Afghan drug lord gets more than 15 years in prison

IDNUMBER 200710060058
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.10.06
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: The Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner
(Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 192

An Afghan drug lord accused of plotting to poison U.S. neighbourhoods with heroin was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison Friday.

Haji Baz Mohammad, 51, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Denny Chin after he admitted violating drug laws from 1990 to 2005 by shipping heroin from Afghanistan and leading a drug ring that stretched into neighbouring Pakistan.

He was the first Afghan heroin kingpin extradited from Afghanistan, authorities said.

Mohammad pleaded guilty in July to a charge of conspiring to violate drug laws.

Without the plea, Mohammad could have faced up to life in prison.

Drug Enforcement Administration administrator Karen Tandy said in a news release that the sentencing demonstrated U.S. resolve "to destroy the hold opium lords have on Afghanistan."

She added: "This drug kingpin bragged that he waged jihad against Americans by poisoning them with his heroin. His attack was unconventional, and his massive drug profits funded the Taliban and other extremist organizations dedicated to destroying freedom and justice."

Mohammad has been in custody since his 2005 arrest in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He was accused of smuggling more than \$25 million in heroin into the United States and elsewhere.

According to the indictment, he told associates in 1990 that selling heroin was a form of holy war because they were taking the money of Americans while giving them something that was killing them.

Air force looking to fast-track drones

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle-Herald
DATE: 2007.10.06
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
WORD COUNT: 341

OTTAWA – Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100 million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet. The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles.

The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently. "For a while there, we flirted with technology," Watt said in a recent interview.

"We have walked back from that flirtation. That doesn't mean we are not going to pursue UAVs, but I think we have a little more realistic view of the capabilities of the UAVs."

Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kilogram bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us," Watt said.

"The reason being is: we in Canada like to have a man in the loop dropping weapons and shooting weapons at people.

"We generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively. So it would be a bit of a stretch for us."

The Americans have been routinely criticized by human rights groups over misdirected air strikes involving Predators since the drones first started firing missiles in the spring of 2002.

In a letter of interest that asks industry for proposals, Canada's air force says it wants a pilotless aircraft that can carry out mostly surveillance, but also use laser pointers to direct precision-guided munitions to targets.

Those bombs and missiles would come from manned aircraft or ground-based artillery.

The original timeline for the program had the air force taking delivering of the new aircraft in mid-2009, just as the Afghan mission possibly winds down.

Who leaked the Rambo Rick rumor . . . and why?

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.10.06

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: The Meddler

BYLINE: Holman, Alan

WORD COUNT: 741

CTV News carried a strange, and surprising, story this week. It reported that the Prime Minister's Office was thinking about putting the head of Canada's Armed Forces, Gen. 'Rambo' Rick Hillier, out to pasture, retiring the media-savvy general.

Stories of this nature often percolate slightly below the radar for awhile and may be alluded to in gossip columns or in political blogs on the Internet before getting reported in the mainstream media. It was strange that this story first appeared on CTV's national news broadcast.

CTV cited unidentified sources that Prime Minister Harper was preparing to dump the general who is a staunch and enthusiastic proponent of Canada's role in the 'war on terrorism' being conducted in Afghanistan.

According to the report, the prime minister, or people in his office, have grown tired of Gen. Hillier's high profile and his ability to attract media attention, often more attention than his political superiors.

The fact that there was no buildup to the story, that it came seemingly out of the blue, makes it probable that it was leaked to CTV. Which leads to the questions of who leaked it, and why? And why now?

If the leak was politically motivated, there's been some speculation it came from someone in the prime minister's entourage, that the prime minister is getting tired of the headline-grabbing general receiving better coverage than his ministers, that it was payback time for the way Gen. Hillier publicly disagreed with the former minister of defence, Gordon O'Connor.

In this scenario, the leak came when it did because the prime minister is heading into a political debate, possibly an election, on Afghanistan and he wanted to be able to publicly remind the general that the politicians are the important players in this debate, not the generals. Also Mr. Harper may have wanted to remind the public that he is the one who chooses the chief of the defence staff, not the army.

Then there's the possibility the leak came from the Defence minister's office. Peter MacKay may have been firing a warning shot across 'Rambo' Rick's bow to show the general that he is not the naive politician that Gordon O'Connor was. In political wars, leaks to the press are arrows in the quiver of an astute politician. Mr. MacKay may have been subtly sending the message that he is no pushover, that he can play the media as well as the general.

As an aside, it's been said that Gen. Hillier's troubles with Gordon O'Connor stem from the fact that Mr. O'Connor is a retired major-general and that 'Rambo' Rick would occasionally forget who was minister because he didn't like taking orders from someone he out-ranked. But, as a senior aide to the minister said recently, there were also times when Mr. O'Connor forgot he was minister and acted more like he was the chief of the defence staff (Gen. Hillier's official title).

There is also speculation that the leak didn't come from a politician, but from Gen. Hillier, or someone working on his behalf. The speculation is that Gen. Hillier learned he has detractors in the Prime Minister's Office, or in the minister's office, maybe even the defence minister himself.

With a \$25 million public relations budget and 500 public relations officers, Gen. Hillier understands the media and knows how it operates. If he thinks there are people plotting against him, he can't very well go whining to the prime minister about it. But a well-placed leak could send the message that he knows what's going on and maybe nip the problem in the bud before it gets out of control.

On Wednesday, after the CTV story, the prime minister described Gen. Hillier as "an outstanding soldier who's bringing strong leadership to the Canadian Forces."

He also said, "there has been no discussion in my office, or with me or any senior officials about the possibility of changing the chief of the defence staff."

So no matter who leaked the story, Gen. Hillier has been publicly assured by the prime minister that 'he's the man', and that he is still hugely popular. Or is he?

When the story ran on the Globe and Mail website, people were invited to indicate if Gen. Hillier is doing a good job. Of the nearly 25,000 people who responded only 24 per cent (5,880) said he was and a surprising 76 per cent (18,816) felt he wasn't.

Another indication the Afghanistan incursion isn't popular with Canadians?

Alan Holman is a freelance journalist living in Charlottetown. He can be reached at: acholman@pei.eastlink.ca

Military police investigating two shooting incidents involving Canadian convoy

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.10.06

SECTION: National/International

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: Brief

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: Kandahar, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 143

Canadian military police are investigating two shooting incidents involving a Canadian convoy. The convoy from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city was heading to Kandahar Airfield at approximately 6:30 p.m. Thursday night when a Toyota pick-up truck approached. The convoy fired on the truck, which turned out to be a patrol of the Afghan National Police. It appears the truck may not have had its headlights on as it drove through the dark toward the Canadian convoy.

Nobody was injured in the incident. The convoy was on its way back to the reconstruction team base at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar city two hours later when it fired upon another vehicle, which belonged to a private security company employed by other coalition countries based at Kandahar Airfield.

RCMP trying to bring order to a lawless land

IDNUMBER 200710060002
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
COLUMN: David Ramsay
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: David Ramsay, Leader-Post / Leader-Post deputyeditor (nights) David Ramsay as he rides across Afghanistan in a Blackhawk helicopter. ; Photo: David Ramsay, Leader-Post / Const. Charles Reddick, a police adviser at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, standing in front of an armoured vehicle on Friday. ;
DATELINE: CAMP NATHAN SMITH, Afghanistan
BYLINE: David Ramsay
SOURCE: The Leader-Post
WORD COUNT: 618

CAMP NATHAN SMITH, Afghanistan — Regina is known just about everywhere as the home of the RCMP.

But in this barren stretch of land in one of the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan, the RCMP has a second home that is developing its own reputation.

At the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team headquarters near Kandahar City, 10 police officers, nine of them members of the RCMP, work at a training centre for area police forces.

It lacks most of the amenities of the RCMP academy in Regina, but it is nevertheless doing important work.

The officers — including Cst. Charles Reddick, whose official title is police advisor with Task Force Orion — are attempting to turn the Afghan National Police in this province into a more professional police force.

Reddick says the force is in its infancy, but its officers are getting better with mentoring and monitoring by their Canadian counterparts.

It is a process that, in some ways, is not dissimilar to what occurs at the training academy in Regina. Police work is police work, whether it is in Kandahar City or Kandahar, Sask.

The caveat here is that the Afghan police needs a lot of help.

In a series of briefings during my four-day stay in Afghanistan, I hear time and again that one of the most important public policy objectives for the Canadian government in Afghanistan is to help build a functioning police force.

The argument is that Afghanistan cannot be a civil and democratic society unless there is law and order. Since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, the police force has been one of the least successful aspects of the reconstruction efforts. Officers here are generally undertrained, underpaid, underequipped and just about any other "under" you can name.

Corruption is a problem, as is the high mortality rate for officers. Hundreds have been killed in the last year, including 10 on the same day I was in Kabul earlier in the week. Suicide bombers now specifically target police officers because they are such a key element in rebuilding a country where lawlessness is common.

But the force also has many more mundane issues. For instance, not every officer has a uniform. Because it's hard to tell whether you are a peace officer or a gun-toting terrorist if you're not dressed right, Canadian funds were used to hire a local tailor to produce 1,000 uniforms. Canadian money had also been used to buy boots, flashlights and other police essentials.

Reddick, who graduated from the RCMP academy in 1999 and now lives in Liverpool, N.S., brings some special skills to the job.

A 10-year veteran of the military, he served with the Canadian Airborne in Somalia in 1992–93. He uses his military background to help train Afghan officers, an important consideration for a police force that is sometimes asked to do more than what one would normally expect. Sometimes they are the last line of defence as insurgents make their way into an area; sometimes they have to deal with suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices.

They also man checkpoints, which in Afghanistan is a serious and potentially deadly business.

Reddick says by teaching an Afghani officer to properly conduct a checkpoint stop, he might well save his life some day.

"These are small things, but big at the same time," he says, adding each trainer — they range from an RCMP officer who has made a career of working in Canada's north to a Medicine Hat municipal force member — brings an important skill set to the training centre.

Canada, through the KRTC, has made a major investment in the province, not only training officers but also building police stations. The Canadian Armed Forces also employs military police and soldiers to mentor Afghani police officers.

I talked to Reddick on Friday morning, shortly before he hopped onto a Blackhawk helicopter for the first leg of a trip back to Canada to visit with his family in Nova Scotia. I am on the next Blackhawk flight to Kandahar Air Field, my final stop in this fascinating country before I make my own trip home.

Canadians fire at trucks, injuring civilians

IDNUMBER 200710060031
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 213

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A Canadian convoy was involved in two shooting incidents late Thursday as it drove to and from a Canadian base in Kandahar City and the airfield that is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The convoy, which was part of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, first shot at an Afghan truck that had driven too close, a military spokesman said. There were no casualties.

On the return journey, the same convoy shot at a second vehicle that also drove too close, wounding an unknown number of Afghan civilians.

The shootings highlighted the confusing and dangerous world that the Canadians enter whenever they leave their fortified bases and take to the roads of Afghanistan where suicide bombers and buried improvised explosive devices often await them. More than 40 of the 71 Canadians who had died in Afghanistan have been killed in such attacks.

The first vehicle that was hit belonged to their allies in the Afghan National Police. The second vehicle belonged to Compass, a private company that provides security for a number of countries with troops and civilians living and working at the Kandahar Airfield.

Four of the Afghans wounded were admitted to NATO's multi-national hospital for treatment. Three were quickly released. The fourth patient's condition was listed as stable.

Both incidents were being investigated by military police.

Afghan drug lord sentenced to more than 15 years in prison

DATE: 2007.10.05
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 309

NEW YORK _ An Afghan drug lord accused of plotting to poison U.S. neighbourhoods with heroin was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison Friday.

Haji Baz Mohammad, 51, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Denny Chin after he admitted violating drug laws from 1990 to 2005 by shipping heroin from Afghanistan and leading a drug ring that stretched into neighbouring Pakistan. He was the first Afghan heroin kingpin extradited from Afghanistan, authorities said.

Mohammad pleaded guilty in July to a charge of conspiring to violate drug laws. Without the plea, Mohammad could have faced up to life in prison.

Drug Enforcement Administration administrator Karen Tandy said in a news release that the sentencing demonstrated U.S. resolve ``to destroy the hold opium lords have on Afghanistan."

She added: ``This drug kingpin bragged that he waged jihad against Americans by poisoning them with his heroin. His attack was unconventional, and his massive drug profits funded the Taliban and other extremist organizations dedicated to destroying freedom and justice."

Mohammad has been in custody since his 2005 arrest in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He was accused of smuggling more than \$25 million in heroin into the United States and elsewhere.

According to the indictment, he told associates in 1990 that selling heroin was a form of holy war because they were taking the money of Americans while giving them something that was killing them.

U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia said the drug organization led by Mohammad was closely aligned with the Taliban in Afghanistan, providing it with financial support in exchange for protection for its opium crops, heroin laboratories and drug transportation routes.

The organization shipped heroin to the United States hidden in suitcases and collected heroin proceeds in the United States for the Taliban between 1994 and 2000, he said.

On June 1, 2005, U.S. President George W. Bush designated Mohammad a foreign narcotics kingpin, an action taken when the president determines that a foreign narcotics trafficker threatens national security.

Military police investigating two shooting incidents involving Canadian convoy

DATE: 2007.10.05
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 289

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Canadian military police are investigating two shooting incidents involving a Canadian convoy.

The convoy from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city was heading to Kandahar Airfield at approximately 6:30 p.m. Thursday night when a Toyota pick-up truck approached.

The convoy fired on the truck, which turned out to be a patrol of the Afghan National Police. It appears the truck may not have had its headlights on as it drove through the dark toward the Canadian convoy.

Nobody was injured in the incident.

The convoy was on its way back to the reconstruction team base at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar city two hours later when it fired upon another vehicle, which belonged to a private security company employed by other coalition countries based at Kandahar Airfield.

Later that night seven Afghan locals showed up at the gate at the base, saying they were victims of the second incident.

Three were transported to the hospital in Kandahar city for treatment and four were taken to the military hospital on base. Three of those treated at the military facility were released a short time later.

“One (person) remains here at the hospital,” said Capt. Josee Bilodeau, spokeswoman for Canada's Joint Task Force Afghanistan. “He is in stable condition.”

Bilodeau said the investigation is ongoing. It has not been confirmed whether the seven civilians were injured in the incident.

Last week an Afghan civilian was killed and a 12-year-old boy injured in what military officials called an accidental shooting after the motorcycle they were riding approached another Canadian logistical convoy in Kandahar city.

At the family's request, the boy was brought to the military hospital for treatment. He is in stable condition following surgery for a gunshot wound to the head.

Canadian convoys in Kandahar province have been regularly targetted by suicide attacks and roadside bombs.

Bilodeau said measures are in place to avoid such incidents.

“We were in contact with the Afghan National Police and Compass Security to review our measures and procedures to ensure this type of incident will not happen again,” she said Friday.

BC–Afghan–Education–Progress

DATE: 2007.10.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 108

Mohammed Haneef Atmar, in Toronto yesterday to tout progress in his country's education system, said withdrawing Canadian troops prematurely would give the Taliban the upper hand and undo all the gains made.

Atmar says Canada isn't being asked to stay in Afghanistan indefinitely, but only for "an interim period."

The Bloc Quebecois and the Liberals say they'll vote against the October 16th throne speech and trigger an election if it does not contain a clear statement of withdrawal from combat in 2009.

The N–D–P has called for an immediate pullout.

Atmar said he "would request them to reconsider this."

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

(The Canadian Press)

RvA

INDEX:International, Defence

DATE: 2007.10.05
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 168

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian military police are investigating two shooting incidents involving a Canadian convoy.

The convoy from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city was heading to Kandahar Airfield at about 6:30 p.m. Thursday night when a Toyota pick-up truck approached.

The convoy fired on the truck, which turned out to be a patrol of the Afghan National Police. The truck may not have had its headlights on as it drove through the dark toward the Canadian convoy. Nobody was injured in the incident.

The convoy was on its way back to the reconstruction team base in Kandahar city two hours later when it fired upon another vehicle, which turned out belong to a private security company employed by other coalition nations based at Kandahar Airfield.

Later on, seven Afghan locals showed up at the gate at the base claiming to be victims of the second incident.

Three were transported to the hospital in Kandahar city for treatment and four taken to the military hospital on base for treatment. Three were released a short time later and one person remains in the hospital in stable condition.

(The Canadian Press)

Afghan–Cda–Wounded

DATE: 2007.10.05

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 132

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

The plan would allow the military to avoid the controversy of dismissing injured soldiers who want to continue serving.

The new policy was drawn up in the waning days of Gordon O'Connor's tenure as defence minister.

Sources tell The Canadian Press the policy has been stuck in bureaucratic limbo since O'Connor was replaced in August by Peter MacKay.

Sources who have 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 Canadian Press)

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Amid ancient Afghan rubble, strides the bionic Canuck

IDNUMBER 200710060198

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.10.06

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: Ideas

PAGE: ID07

ILLUSTRATION: Canadian troops can now use a device called a Ferret, right, seen mounted on a tank to determine the origin of a sniper shot. The Ferret can also be mounted on armoured vehicles. ;

BYLINE: Rick Westhead

SOURCE: Toronto Star

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 720

Before patrolling the dirt roads that snake around their base near Kandahar, Canadian soldiers grab uniforms that feature special dyes and fibres designed to help them blend into the night. They also pack QuikClot, a chemical powder that can be poured into seeping wounds to staunch blood loss.

Troops may soon be able to add yet another high-tech gadget to their growing arsenal: X-ray vision.

Later this month, Canadian Forces officials are scheduled to review a device that promises to allow soldiers to literally see through concrete walls.

"It's a radar for finding people," says Robert Judd, president of Virginia-based Camero Inc.

The device is called Xaver and it sends and receives radio signals through walls up to a foot thick. Those signals are then converted into rough images on a small video monitor.

In another era, Judd might have had trouble coaxing Canadian Forces personnel to even meet with him.

These days, however, the military's doors are wide open to defence contractors. In 2005-06, the most recent fiscal year for which statistics are available, Canada's defence-related spending was \$14.7 billion, 44 per cent more than the \$10.2 billion spent in 1997-98.

"The war may not be good for innocent Afghans, but it's been a bonanza for companies," says John Pike, an analyst with GlobalSecurity.org, a non-profit research centre in Washington.

It's also meant a bonanza of new gear for Canadian soldiers, but some fret the rapid spending increase may be leading to rushed, ill-advised buys.

Purchases are approved so quickly that there's little long-term consideration, says Scott Taylor, editor of Esprit de Corps, a military magazine.

Canada already has some 66 Leopard tanks, Taylor says, yet has agreed to buy more from the Dutch, some of which require major retrofits, and lease still more from Germany.

"Our troops may be out of Afghanistan by the time we finish retrofitting some of the German tanks," Taylor says. "What do we do then? Send them down the streets of Haiti or pay for them to be sent back to Germany, if they'll take them back?"

The list of the Forces' recent acquisitions is lengthy and, by military standards, impressive.

Late last month, officers in Kandahar were showing off the Husky, an oversized tractor-like vehicle with electronic and metal detectors designed to find and blow up deadly roadside bombs.

Some Canadian troops have assault rifles equipped with so-called "holographic sights" that allow soldiers to shoot on the run with improved accuracy thanks to a video screen the size of a cellphone display atop the rifle.

"They don't have to shut their eyes and squint to see their target," says Major Pierre Caron, a Canadian Forces weapons expert.

Ottawa's Dew Engineering is refurbishing LAV 3 vehicles with improved armour plating and designing a new seat that promises to better absorb the crippling shock wave created by detonating roadside bombs.

"When a bomb goes off, it's not just the shrapnel that kills, the percussion of the blast moves the organ around," says Tim Page, president of the Canadian Association of Defence and Securities Industries, a trade group. "The seat absorbs that percussion."

But some of the recent purchases are not working exactly as hoped.

Canada bought four unmanned aerial vehicles for \$33.8 million in August 2003, through Oerlikon Contraves Inc.

The four-metre-long, French-made Sperwer aircraft were equipped with cameras, parachutes, inflatable crash bags and computer circuit boards.

But it had never been flown in extreme heat or in altitudes as high as Afghanistan. There were immediate concerns the new units would fail. Those worries were dismissed by an Oerlikon spokesperson.

Yet, four years on, Canadian soldiers now complain the Sperwer units have limited range and endurance and are struggling to cope with the Afghan heat.

The defence department is now planning to spend as much as \$100 million to buy improved unmanned aerial vehicles.

A string of emails in April 2003 shows that some officers at the Canadian Forces Experimentation Centre – it tests new equipment before purchase – were concerned that Canada's first UAV purchase was being done hastily.

In an April 28, 2003 email to two colleagues obtained under the Access to Information Act, Lt.-Col. Stephen Newton wrote that he was worried about the fast tracking of the UAV purchase.

"It does not appear that anyone is quarterbacking this event and what is worse is that whoever is doing it is basing all their efforts on outdated procedures and criteria," Newton wrote. "At this stage of the game I am beginning to believe that the request for a tactical UAV is coming from the two staff instead of the operators. That is the only way I can explain such a lack of thought..."

Despite such misgivings, Dan Ross, the assistant deputy minister for materiel and the person in charge of

major military purchases, said in an interview he wants to make the approval process faster still.

"Before I was hired in May 2005 it was not uncommon for (documents outlining) new project requirements to be 60,000 pages long," Ross said.

In 2004, an internal report suggested it took 107 months to procure equipment. Ross said he wants to pare that to 48 months.

Canada's man about Panjwail district; Captain fights influence of the Taliban with cash for projects, foot patrols, meetings with leaders

IDNUMBER 200710060182
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA03
ILLUSTRATION: BRUCE CAMPION–SMITH Toronto star Capt. Michel Larocque, a member of Canada's provincial reconstruction team, bids farewell to Haji Agha Lalai, who heads the shura council for the Panjwail district. They had met for about three hours discussing local concerns. ;
BYLINE: Bruce Campion–Smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 744

The Afghan contractor arrived at the Canadian compound, intimidated, even a little scared.

In his hand he held two "threat" letters, one found on his door, the other posted in the community mosque. Penned in red ink, the letters were from the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan, the name given the country by the Taliban.

The notes delivered a grim message to the young Afghan who had done work for the Canadians in this Panjwail district town.

"Respected brother are being informed for the last time that you take your hands back from any kind of government job and salaries," said a translated copy of the letter.

"Those who do intelligence for Americans who work in (forward operating bases) should take back soon. We know everybody."

It's no idle warning. Two weeks earlier, an Afghan interpreter with the Canadian provincial reconstruction team in Kandahar city was killed by a suicide bomber.

"He was intimidated," said Capt. Michel Larocque, who met with the contractor and reassured him.

"It gives you an idea of what we're up against," he said.

In the battle for hearts and minds of Afghans, this is Larocque's enemy, the shadowy, influential sway of insurgents. And in this rural district west of Kandahar, insurgents still have a hold over a population that is largely illiterate and easily influenced.

But Larocque is fighting back. Not with guns but by meeting with local leaders, foot patrols and a kitty of cash to fund improvement projects around town.

Larocque, a member of the provincial reconstruction team, is part diplomat, goodwill ambassador, contractor, and, yes, soldier. But most important, he's trying to be the man-about-town, winning over the local opinion in Panjwahi.

Larocque spends his weeks here, in a mud-wall compound in the shadow of Ma'sum Ghar, a tall rocky outpost where the Canadians have a base.

He holds court with local Afghans who pitch their own projects and offer tidbits of intelligence on the mood of the rural district. On a busy day, it can resemble the waiting room of a walk-in clinic, with residents waiting to meet one-on-one with Larocque inside.

This agricultural area has been a key battleground for the Canadians ever since they moved into Kandahar. Even now, Larocque says security threats keep him from getting to more than two-thirds of the district.

But he's trying to make inroads. For example, he had a female doctor give a course in emergency childbirth assistance to 15 women. And he's reviewing a proposal, worth just over \$5,000, to give 20 women a month-long sewing course.

He dishes out cash for small projects, like wells, and works with residents to set priorities for bigger, more costly projects.

Taliban threats aside, he said he's had no trouble getting local contractors to do work.

Larocque sets up a meeting with two local leaders, including Haji Agha Lalai, who heads the local shura council.

He's trying to enlist their help in persuading local landowners to allow construction of a new road in Sperwan, west of here, to improve security.

When the two leaders arrive, Larocque begins his pitch.

"My intent is to put no pressure. It will be an Afghan decision," he said.

"But everyone asks for more security. This road would bring more security. It would bring more patrols," he tells the two Afghans.

He notes how the local community is clamouring for new infrastructure, such as electricity and new schools. But the companies needed to build the projects "will not come until we bring security."

He has an ally in Lalai, who endorses the need for the road.

"We need a new road. It bring peace and change the thinking of the local people," Lalai said.

But he responds with a few demands of his own. He's not happy with the pace of development and asks for "mega projects." He cites a school that needs broken windows fixed, needs tables and chairs, paint and toilets. He wants bridges and improvements to village roads.

The next day, Larocque goes for a walk through town. Of course, nothing is simple – he's surrounded by a cordon of soldiers from the Royal 22nd Regiment, the Van Doos. It's a sobering reminder of the uncertain security situation.

"When you patrol in your vehicles, there's a presence but it's not like walking and shaking hands. Us being out

Canada's man about Panjwahi district; Captain fights influence of the Taliban with cash for projects, foot patrol

here helps show them that it's secure," Larocque said.

He strolls down the main street, bidding "assalaamu alaikum" – Afghan for "Peace be upon you" – to pedestrians and shopkeepers. The greeting is returned politely, even warily.

Larocque stops at a school, telling the headmaster that he has notebooks for the children that he will drop off later in the week.

Next stop is the butcher, where clouds of flies buzz around the sheep carcasses hanging on steel hooks. The men there are not happy that Canadians have moved into the compound, as well as Ma'sum Ghar, for their own use. And they complain they've seen none of the promised aid packages, filled with wheat, cooking oil and seeds.

"I haven't seen the help," one man tells Larocque.

Further down the street though, the talk is more encouraging.

"Security is very good. Day-by-day it is going well," one shopkeeper says.

Even with his endless patience and optimism, Larocque is the first to admit that reconstruction in Panjwaii is slow work.

"I see improvements but it's baby steps. In (Kandahar city) there have been big improvements but it's slower in Zhari and Panjwaii districts," he said.

He says the job will be far from done in February 2009, when Canadian troops are due to withdraw.

"If you ask me, 2009 is too early. The fruits of our labour will be lost. But will we have to leave here some day? Absolutely. We just don't want to leave the job half-done."

Guantanamo prosecutor quits, cites interference; Colonel's decision to resign won't affect terrorism case against Canadian Omar Khadr, Pentagon says

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DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA02
BYLINE: Michelle Shephard
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 304

The blunt-speaking prosecutor who once called Omar Khadr a "terrorist" has resigned.

U.S. Air Force Col. Morris Davis's decision to quit will not affect the case of Canadian Khadr, the Pentagon said.

But the loss of one of the most vocal supporters of Guantanamo's war crimes trials is viewed as another embarrassing setback for the Bush administration.

Davis stepped down as Guantanamo's chief prosecutor Thursday evening, alleging a legal adviser to the administrator overseeing the cases was interfering in his work.

Davis could not comment yesterday due to an order issued by his superiors, media reports said.

Davis was known for his often-flamboyant quotes. He once called Khadr a "terrorist" and described the media's sympathetic coverage of his case as "nauseating."

On the eve of Khadr's first hearing at the military commission in January 2006, Davis chided the media for referring to Khadr as a fresh-faced teenager.

"You'll see evidence when we get into the courtroom of the smiling face of Omar Khadr as he builds bombs to kill Americans," he said at the press conference in Guantanamo Bay.

"I don't think it's a great leap to figure out why we're holding him accountable," added Davis.

"When these guys went to camp, they weren't making s'mores and learning how to tie knots."

In late 2001, President George W. Bush announced plans to try foreign terror suspects before a military commission system.

But the legal process, which has already been revised once after the U.S. Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional, has been hampered by a series of legal setbacks.

Davis was the second prosecutor to lead the beleaguered military commission system. In an email sent to the Star before his resignation, Davis said he was looking forward to getting back to court to try Khadr and publicly release the video they have that allegedly shows him making bombs.

The Pentagon is poised to make Khadr's case the first war crimes trial held by the U.S. since Nazi commanders were tried after World War II. The former Toronto resident faces five charges, including murder for the death of Sgt. Christopher Speer during a 2002 firefight in Afghanistan.

Khadr was was 15 at the time.

He turned 21 in Guantanamo Bay last month and remains the only Western prisoner at the U.S. Navy detention centre in Cuba.

Canadian soldiers fire at two Afghan vehicles

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PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: C18
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 361

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A Canadian convoy was involved in two shooting incidents late Thursday as it drove to and from a Canadian base in Kandahar City and the airfield that is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The convoy, which was part of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, first shot at an Afghan truck that had driven too close, a military spokesperson said. There were no casualties.

On the return journey, the same convoy shot at a second vehicle that also drove too close, wounding an unknown number of Afghan civilians.

The shootings, which the military described as "escalation of force" incidents, highlighted the confusing and dangerous world that Canadians enter whenever they leave their heavily fortified bases and take to the roads of Afghanistan where suicide bombers and buried improvised explosive devices often await them. More than 40 of the 71 Canadians who have died in Afghanistan have been killed in such attacks.

The first vehicle that was hit belonged to their allies in the Afghan National Police. The second vehicle belonged to Compass, a private company that provides security for a number of countries with troops and civilians living and working at the Kandahar Airfield.

Seven Afghans later turned up at the main gate to the Kandahar Airfield saying they had been wounded in the second shooting. Four of the seven were admitted to NATO's multi-national hospital for treatment.

Three were quickly released. The fourth patient's condition was listed as stable.

Both incidents were being investigated by military police, including how many Afghans had been injured, said Capt. Josee Bilodeau. "We are to review all our measures to make sure that such sad incidents do not happen again," she said.

The Canadian convoy was escorting vehicles from NATO's International Security and Assistance Force. They were returning from Helmand province, which is the responsibility of British troops. Canada has responsibility for Kandahar Province.

Earlier this week, another Canadian convoy based at Kandahar Airfield shot at a motorcycle, killing the driver and wounding his brother, a 12-year-old boy. The boy, who was struck in the head by a bullet, is in stable condition in an induced coma after surgery at the NATO hospital.

That incident also remains under investigation by military police.

Dion not likely to meekly hand Harper victory

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DATE: 2007.10.06
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SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A16
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 777

There's no doubt that a fumbling and bumbling Stéphane Dion presents a tempting target.

How else to explain Prime Minister Stephen Harper's relaxed press conference this week to "chat" with reporters and challenge opposition parties either to back his government's program or take the nation to the polls?

In nearly a year at the helm of the once-mighty Liberal party, Dion has proven himself remarkably unremarkable.

His performance in the House of Commons has been stilted and erratic, he's been absent when the party needs him most and, even when he's been on hand, he has been unable to control events.

Meanwhile, since Parliament recessed for the summer, Harper has used the down time to cultivate an image of himself as a confident, relaxed but determined leader well able to represent Canada on the international stage and stay on top of events at home.

Despite the contrasting performances of the two, however, Canadians don't seem ready either to give Harper the nod or Dion the boot.

In a recent Canadian Press Harris-Decima national poll, the Tories were the chosen party of 33 per cent of respondents, while 31 per cent backed the Liberals.

Clearly, neither party has inspired great voter confidence.

Harper, no doubt, hopes that if he were to push the evidently unprepared Liberals onto the campaign trail, the weaknesses of his main rivals would be exposed and their divisions would magnify.

However, election campaigns have an ability to distort time and space.

Dion may not have proven an inspiring leader outside of a campaign and may not have been very successful at getting the rank and file on-side when it comes to acting as an opposition party, but his Liberals have a lot of experience with winning elections.

They have squabbled in the past under weak leaders, but won when it seemed the party was about to come apart at the seams.

One need only remember the interview given to the Ottawa Citizen in the late summer of 2000 by a relaxed Jean Chrétien. At the time, the Canadian Alliance party, under its then new and charismatic leader Stockwell Day, was climbing in the polls while the Paul Martin camp was agitating for Chrétien's removal so that a new

stamp could be put on the Liberal party to avert a likely defeat.

Chrétien called those who feared an election "nervous Nellies," commanded fidelity among his ranks and promptly marched them off to campaign. And he did it without a vision for Canada a game plan for what came after a victory. The Liberals were swept to a rare, third consecutive majority government.

As an opposition leader without a firm grasp on when and why an election could come, Dion faces challenges that Chrétien never endured. But the Liberals have some tricks up their sleeves that could make Harper's boastful challenge that his opponents must "fish or cut bait," sound like a cry from the deep.

For example, if the Conservatives turn too far to the right when drafting the Speech from the Throne — something that seems increasingly likely — they could find themselves alienating a big mass of Canadian voters, especially in Central Canada, who are uncomfortable about seeing their country swing the way of America.

Harper has been out of step with Central Canada in four of the five areas he promises to highlight in the speech.

Ontarians and Quebecers are more concerned about the high dollar and lost manufacturing jobs than about having Ottawa cut taxes — a move often equated with giving to the rich (read the West) at the expense of the disadvantaged.

Although Ontarians worried about violent crime two years ago, the media focus has been elsewhere of late.

Experience from the U.S. shows that such moves as mandatory sentencing and the war on drugs have a disproportionate impact on visible minorities, meaning Harper's attempt to make inroads with immigrant communities could be short-circuited.

Canadians also consistently express doubt at Harper's ability to address their environmental concerns, so the PM's decision to cancel all the work to improve the Clean Air Act only will make an already cynical electorate more distrustful.

And while keeping our soldiers in Afghanistan is critical not only to NATO and Canada's reputation as well as the ultimate success of the mission, many Canadians would just as soon see their country extricate itself from the conflict as support the goals Harper has set.

Dion has one more thing going for him.

Although Harper has demonstrated himself to be a strong and confident leader — something the Liberal could never do — Dion has a much stronger team of candidates he can put forward.

He could ask Canadians whether they would rather be ruled by just one strong but dictatorial leader, or a Liberal team with a broad range of skills and a social agenda that more closely reflects traditional Canadian values.

Harper may have the inside track today, but it's worthwhile to remember the race doesn't really start until the writ is dropped.

— — —

"Democracy cannot be maintained without its foundation: free public opinion and free discussion throughout the nation of all matters affecting the state within the limits set by the criminal code and the common law." —

Canadian troops shoot Afghan civilians

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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SECTION: News
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COLUMN: World Digest
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR AIRFIELD,
Afghanistan
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 92

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A Canadian convoy was involved in two shooting incidents late Thursday as it drove to and from a Canadian base in Kandahar City and the airfield that is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The convoy, which was part of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, first shot at an Afghan truck that had driven too close, a military spokesman said. There were no casualties.

On the return journey, the same convoy shot at a second vehicle that also drove too close, wounding an unknown number of Afghan civilians.

Lots to give thanks for

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DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 5
BYLINE: MIKE STROBEL
WORD COUNT: 366

A cornucopia of reasons I am thankful this weekend:

- The Leafs are still in the playoff hunt. The magic number is, what, 41 years?
- The Jays at last are out of their misery. Fans, too.
- David Miller cannot spend any of our money. The banks are closed.
- Paris Hilton has her mouth full of turkey.
- Howard Hampton will not walk naked down Yonge St., despite his threat.
- Global warming. Ain't this weather grand?
- Our friend Dave Ellis is finally talking in ICU after a horrible bicycle crash.
- Judith, Jackson, Dolly, mom.
- Democracy. Yahoo. The referendum on appointed MPPs will surely fail. Not just because the idea sucks. No one understands it.
- The provincial election is nearly over.
- The DVP and Gardiner are open. Jeez, I hope.
- Scarborough. There's no 'hood like it.
- Our troops in Afghanistan, or wherever danger lurks. And their families.
- The Highway of Heroes, though I wish we didn't need one.
- The Grey Cup is in Toronto. You knew that, right? See you there.
- I am not a turkey, despite what some readers write.
- The pressure is off the CN Tower. Now, like a loverboy, it can concentrate on being the best, not the biggest.
- The Green Party. About time our politics got a new colour.

- The Shaky Lady. What the hell, if you see her this weekend, toss a loonie in her cup for me.
- An excuse to forget my diet. No one will bitch if I have another mountain of stuffing. Might as well start smoking and drinking again, too.
- Viagra. It seems to make many of my older Sun colleagues much less cranky.
- The steady, ready streetcar. It's slow, hot and sticky and takes up the whole road. It squeals like a pig and turns like a cow. How can you not love it?
- Lake Ontario. We try so hard to soil it, nuke it, landfill it, fish it out, drink it dry and generally abuse it. Yet, like a good neighbour, it's always there.
- Hockey. Cherry and MacLean. Andy Frost. Johnny Bower, God bless his rickety old knees and the twinkle in his rheumy eyes.
- His Honour, the Honourable David C. Onley, Order of Ontario, Knight of Justice of the Order of St. John, lieutenant-governor of Ontario, etc, etc. And a swell guy.
- Donato and Dewar.
- The constant stench around Ashbridge's Bay. This may not seem like a blessing. But it teaches us how long City Hall takes to fix things that are not diamond lanes or mayoral offices. And every day, it reassures us that our nose and bowels are working just fine.
- Metamucil.
- Rick Mercer.
- Bank machines, the Internet, cellphones. How on earth did we survive without them? Oh, right, we talked face to face.
- Hi-definition TV. Wow. Why bother going to the game? And who knew Britney Spears had so much cellulite?
- Velcro. Heaven-sent. Not just for shoes and backpacks. Your car is practically held together with it. And all because a Swiss fellow noticed how cockleburs stuck to his dog.
- Also, duct tape, indoor plumbing, the DustBuster and twist-tops on beer bottles.
- The smoking ban in bars.
- Paramedics, cops and firefighters.
- Our metropolis. Its parks. Few cities are so green. The Rouge to the Islands to Kortright. Its many villages. Four Chinatowns, even. Take your pick of food. We bitch, but this is a great town.
- Angelina Jolie. And all the other beautiful people who sometimes grace us with their presence.
- Sun photographers. The hard-working, often beleaguered newsroom.
- The new ROM. It's weird. But it will grow on us, like a colourful cousin. In fact, our architecture is getting a

lot livelier.

– Pinball Clemons. Shania Twain. John Derringer. Paul Godfrey. Avril Lavigne. Bill Carroll. Cate Blanchett. Belinda Stronach. My neighbours. Hazel McCallion ...

– You. KEYWORDS=OTHER NEWS

CHILD MORTALITY: THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

Ottawa to re-evaluate foreign-aid priorities Fewer countries will be getting lion's share of spending

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DATE: 2007.10.06

PAGE: A21 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 959

WORD COUNT: 960

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Big changes are coming to Canada's annual \$4.1-billion foreign aid budget that will see a significant reduction in the number of countries receiving Canadian assistance.

The new policy, expected by the end of the year, has been quietly under discussion within government for at least six months but non-profit groups working in foreign aid complain that they have been excluded from consultations.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper signalled plans for the new policy during a question and answer session in New York recently, telling foreign policy analysts that a review of foreign aid has "concluded that it's not nearly as effective as it could be" and that an announcement would be made "in the coming weeks." "We will be announcing a number of measures to make it more effective in terms of promoting a range of Canadian interests and values," he added.

Although details are still being worked on, it's believed that the goal is to drastically shrink the number of countries receiving the bulk of bilateral aid from more than 75 currently to fewer than 25.

At the same time, the new focus will highlight assistance to Afghanistan, which emerged as Canada's largest aid recipient over Haiti three years ago, and to the Americas, which Mr. Harper has promised to make a priority for Canadian foreign policy.

Foreign aid groups admit that the Canadian International Development Agency needs reform and that a concentration on fewer countries may be desirable, but they're angry about being left out of the loop and worried that the new focus may take the emphasis away from helping the poor, particularly in Africa.

"We're perplexed because we haven't been consulted on this," said Robert Fox, executive director of Oxfam Canada. "As recently as two weeks ago, senior CIDA officials said there was no foreign aid review planned. This is coming as a surprise to us and as a surprise to some people at CIDA." "They haven't spoken with us," said Roy Culpeper, president of the North-South Institute. "It's not their style." The government outlined its main goals in the March budget, saying that concentration on fewer countries was needed. "Canada is among the least focused of all the countries that give aid," the budget said.

As part of focusing on fewer countries, the government said it intends to be among the five largest donors in each of its core countries and to move more of its employees to the field and away from CIDA headquarters.

It's the same message included in the international policy statement published by the former Liberal government of Paul Martin.

"We will narrow our focus to maximize our impact," the Martin document said. "We will be realistic about Canada's ability to help others, but we will be resolute in ensuring that our aid money is targeted so that it does as much good as possible." "CIDA doesn't have a good track record of getting out and doing things," said John Richards, a professor of public policy at Simon Fraser University and author of an influential study on Canada's aid effectiveness for the C. D. Howe Institute. "Eighty-five per cent of its personnel is in Hull." "There's a sense that CIDA does need to rethink its strategies and policies that it hasn't changed for two decades," he said in an interview.

Mr. Richards believes that Canada should not only concentrate its actions on fewer countries but in more limited sectors, notably primary health care and basic education.

While agreeing to narrow most aid to just a couple of dozen countries, the government has so far not taken the tough decisions on which countries will be cut off.

"There are lots of small ethnic communities in Canada who will not be happy to see countries fall off the list," Mr. Richards said.

Striking off a series of countries from Canada's aid largesse could also prove embarrassing for Mr. Harper when he meets leaders of these nations in November at the Commonwealth summit in Uganda or when Canada plays host to the Francophone Summit in Quebec City next year. Afghanistan, which now is the leading recipient of aid, as well Latin America and the Caribbean will be essential parts of the new policy. Mr. Harper made that clear in his week-long visit to the Americas this summer and Bev Oda, the new international development minister, is just back from her inaugural foreign trip – to Haiti and Jamaica.

A spokeswoman for Ms. Oda was tightlipped when asked about the foreign aid review. "At this point, we have nothing to announce.

When we'll announce it, we'll announce it." Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council on International Co-operation, an umbrella group of foreign-aid NGOs, is concerned that the emphasis on the Americas and Afghanistan could come at a heavy cost.

"Does this impinge on the priority currently accorded to Africa? If that is the case, that would be a very bad thing." And he's worried that development aid could simply become an extension of Canada's foreign policy rather than dedicated to alleviating the suffering of the world's poorest people. "That would be really alarming." Mr. Barr also would like to see Canada's performance on foreign aid improved. Mr. Harper has promised that Canada would work to increase Canada's effort as a percentage to the average of advanced economies – which was 0.42 per cent of gross domestic product last year. Canada's effort was a meagre 0.33 of a percentage point.

This weak performance is "especially poignant when the country is looking at better than a \$14-billion surplus" this year, Mr.

Barr said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; foreign aid; government finance; budget; political

CHILD MORTALITY: THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT Ottawa to re-evaluate foreign-aid priorities48 Fewer o

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

READ LONELY AFGHANISTAN

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072790257
DATE: 2007.10.06
PAGE: T4
BYLINE: MELISSA WHETSTONE
SECTION: Travel
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE:
WORDS: 89
WORD COUNT: 110

Melissa Whetstone Next time you're browsing the travel guides at your local bookstore, you may come across an unusual selection: Lonely Planet's guide to Afghanistan. As usual, the country's weather, geography and history are outlined. But certain details sprinkled throughout – extreme caution should be taken when venturing into areas that may be mined – indicate this isn't your typical guidebook. Author Paul Clammer says it is intended more for employees of aid organizations, not backpackers looking for a road less travelled.

For more information, visit www.lonelyplanet.com.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: travel; books

ORGANIZATION NAME: Lonely Planet

MILITARY: UAV PROGRAM FAST-TRACKED Air force seeks pilotless planes

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BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER

SECTION: National News

SOURCE: CP

EDITION: National

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 401

WORD COUNT: 376

MURRAY BREWSTER The Canadian Press OTTAWA Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lieutenant-General Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100-million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet. The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles. The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

Lt.-Gen. Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kilogram bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us. The reason being is, we . . . generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively.

. . ." The Americans have been routinely criticized by human-rights groups over misdirected air strikes involving Predators since the drones first started firing missiles early in 2002.

In a letter of interest that asks industry for proposals, Canada's air force says it wants a pilotless aircraft that can carry out mostly surveillance, but also use laser pointers to direct precision-guided munitions to targets.

Those bombs and missiles would come from manned aircraft or ground-based artillery.

"It's a simpler, somewhat less expensive program, one that we are trying to fast-track in order to deliver capability for our mission as soon as we can obtain it," Lt.-Gen. Watt said.

The original timeline for the program had the air force taking delivering of the new aircraft in mid-2009, just as the Afghan mission possibly winds down. But Lt.-Col. Wade Williams, who is in charge of the UAV program, says officials hope to get the first aircraft into Afghanistan "within months" of the contract being signed next year.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: aircraft; defence; technology

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

OTTAWA NOTEBOOK 'Big Cod' Hillier: Our general with salt–water roots

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072790108

DATE: 2007.10.06

PAGE: A13 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: JANE TABER

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 660

WORD COUNT: 705

JANE TABER All important generals have descriptive monikers – Stonewall Jackson, the Confederate Civil War general, Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of the coalition forces in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and then there's Vlad the Impaler, the Romanian ruler who had a penchant for impaling his foes (obvious). And now there is Rick (the Big Cod) Hillier, our Chief of the Defence Staff.

Indeed, just a day after reports that the general was to be fired by the Harper Tories, General Hillier was finding the spotlight again. This time it was for fun and not denials. Last Thursday, Gen. Hillier accepted from *Esprit de Corps*, the military affairs magazine, a new moniker. The magazine, which loves the general and writes about him all the time, ran a contest.

With tongue firmly in cheek, it decided that the general deserved a moniker and it asked readers for suggestions. Suggestions such as "General (Hell–Yeah) Hillier" and "General (Hamburger) Hillier" were made. But "Big Cod" won out, reflecting the General's Newfoundland roots. In accepting a set of dog tags that were engraved with his new nickname, *Esprit de Corps*'s Scott Taylor says, the general was very gracious and played along. The general recalled that when he was in Afghanistan he awarded a medal to a soldier who leaned over and whispered to him that he liked the name Big Cod. The soldier was also from Newfoundland. Gen. Hillier says he knows now where the name came from.

DINOSAURS AND PM MEMOIRS Among the dinosaur bones and stuffed birds at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, one can now find the prime ministerial memoirs of Brian Mulroney and soon, those of Jean Chretien. Mr. Mulroney's book, *Memoirs*, is displayed prominently for sale in the ROM Museum Store.

Mr. Mulroney has a long friendship with William Thorsell, the former editor–in–chief of this newspaper, and now head of the ROM.

Mr. Mulroney launched his book at the museum and both he and his wife, Mila, attended the opening last June of the Michael Lee–Chin Crystal.

Museum spokesman Francisco Alvarez says there is a "good friendly relationship there." However, further checking reveals that Mr.

Chretien's autobiography, *My Years as Prime Minister*, which is coming out next week, will also be for sale in the store, which usually sells jewellery and decorative art and other museum–type items – not political biographies. Apparently, the store is stocking up on Canadian titles for its theme "A season of Canada." Or

does it not want to appear partisan? HOT AND NOT Hot: Foreign Affairs and International Trade for being the first government department to keep up with the times. It is running ads to recruit new trade commissioners on Facebook, the social networking site. The department goes to universities to tell students about International Trade and recruit. Now students can see these ads through their university accounts.

Not: Liberal infighting. The tradition of internecine warfare continues in the Liberal Party, provoked by the disastrous results for the Grits in last month's Quebec by-elections. And it reached a fever pitch this week with rumours that former Paul Martin Toronto cabinet minister and unsuccessful leadership candidate Joe Volpe was poised to cross the floor. It started with one e-mail from another Grit MP's office that suggested someone had told them that this was to happen. It was all very tenuous. That e-mail spread throughout the party like wildfire. Mr. Volpe denied the rumour.

He referred to the incident as "mischief." Hot: Francis Scarpaleggia . The Montreal MP and chair of the Liberal Quebec caucus issued "An Open Letter to Liberals" this week. It is his effort to try to stop the party from imploding. "The past few weeks have been turbulent within the Liberal Party of Canada – not an easy time for those of us who believe strongly in the history and values of our party," he wrote.
jtaber@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM:political; books

PERSONAL NAME: Rick Hillier; Brian Mulroney; Jean Chretien; William Thorsell

U.S. court imprisons Afghan drug lord for 15 years

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DATE: 2007.10.06
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: NEW YORK
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 63

NEW YORK – An Afghan heroin kingpin was sentenced yesterday to more than 15 years in prison for heading a drug trafficking ring, U.S. officials said.

Baz Mohammad was extradited to the United States and pleaded guilty in Manhattan federal court in July to heading an international heroin trafficking ring that manufactured and distributed the drug in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In the seat of a soldier: Small, dark, hot; Small LCD monitor provides only outside view for passengers in armoured vehicles

IDNUMBER 200710060004
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
COLUMN: Report from afghanistan
Photo: Rob Shaw, Times Colonist / A Canadian soldier from the Provincial
ILLUSTRATION: Reconstruction Team's battle group stands near the back of a LAV-3 light armoured vehicle near Kandahar City Thursday. ;
BYLINE: Rob Shaw
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 746

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Sitting inside one of the Canadian Forces light armoured vehicles is a claustrophobic's worst nightmare.

Small, dark and hot, the passenger compartment of the Forces' LAV-3 is essentially a small windowless metal box in which you hang on for dear life as the vehicle bounces its way across the Afghan desert. Like most types of military transportation, half the battle is just trying to keep your last meal from revisiting you.

Outside, an entire world flies by — everything from mud brick huts in farming villages to crowded city streets teeming with vendors on the sidewalk. But for those inside, the only way to catch a glimpse of it all is on a small LCD monitor that plays footage captured by a camera mounted on the armoured vehicle's turret.

It's an interesting view, in part because you see what the soldiers see as they scan the flat, desert horizon for any sign of landmines, or track a car that might be passing too close for comfort.

From the moment the LAV wheels start turning, the turret stays in motion and swings from potential target to potential target.

Yet it is often hard to see anything outside the LAV, let alone identify targets. Southern Afghanistan has swaths of dry, sandy, desert-like terrain.

Two soldiers stand in holes near the back door of the passenger box, their top halves exposed to the elements so they can aim their rifles at anything suspicious. But the vehicles kick up so much dust that it quickly gets everywhere, creating a fine, swirling fog that — were it not hotter than 30 degrees — might remind you of a dense mist on a wet fall day in Victoria. You can barely see the bumper in front of you.

Another soldier mans a machine-gun turret, while a driver sits in an enclosed compartment with a viewfinder and his own set of monitors.

The LAV is the workhorse of Canadian army transport vehicles in southern Afghanistan. Along with the Nyala and, to a lesser extent, the G-Wagon, they form a seemingly endless number of convoys moving troops

In the seat of a soldier: Small, dark, hot; Small LCD monitor provides only outside view for passengers in arm

and supplies around southern Afghanistan.

According to the military, there's still a high risk of suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices on most of the roadways. Convoys have proved a frequent target in the past. It only takes a moment for a suicide bomber to leap into the path of the vehicles, or for an insurgent to detonate a roadside bomb by cellphone. More than 40 of the 71 Canadians who had died in Afghanistan have been killed in such attacks.

The soldiers in the convoys, many of whom have had close calls with IEDs or know those killed by suicide bombers, take the trips on these roadways extraordinarily seriously.

And so do the Afghans. There are large red signs on the front and back of most vehicles, warning Afghan citizens and motorists not to travel too closely to the army trucks. On a trip in a LAV-3 as part of a convoy on Thursday, I noticed most cars pulled to the side of the road, and people steered well clear of the Canadian soldiers as they thundered down the streets.

But later that day, two vehicles apparently broke the rules. Soldiers were escorting a 37-vehicle convoy from Kandahar Airfield, which is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan, to the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Kandahar City, about 45 minutes north, when they opened fire on a Toyota pick-up truck that got too close, military officials told the media in a briefing yesterday.

The truck, later identified as carrying Afghan National Police, reportedly might not have had its headlights on as it approached the Canadian convoy at dusk. No one was injured.

Two hours later, that same convoy was headed back to Kandahar Airfield from the PRT when soldiers fired on another vehicle. It was later identified as from a private security firm. Seven Afghans were injured; three were taken to hospital and four were treated and released at a military medical facility, the Forces said.

The military is still investigating an incident last week in which Canadian troops shot a 12-year-old boy after a motorcycle approached a convoy in Kandahar City.

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REPORT FROM AFGHANISTAN

Times Colonist reporter Rob Shaw is in Afghanistan as part of a Canadian Forces regional media tour where he'll meet Canadian and Afghan officials, visit reconstruction projects and speak with soldiers. While in the country, Shaw is under escort by military officials. The military doesn't edit his stories, but has asked him not to divulge security information it deems sensitive.

He will file stories and photos during his trip that will appear in the paper and at www.timescolonist.com.

Park to honor slain London trooper Mark Wilson died last Oct. 7 while serving in Afghanistan.

SOURCETAG: 0710060216
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City & Region
PAGE: B5
ILLUSTRATION: photo of MARK WILSON
BYLINE: DANIELA SIMUNAC, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 201

As many Londoners prepare to say thanks surrounded by a turkey and loved ones this weekend, the family of slain soldier Mark Wilson remembers his legacy on the eve of his death.

Wilson, a London trooper, died last year on Oct. 7, while serving in Afghanistan. He was 39 years old.

A park, not yet finished, was named in his honour yesterday.

"He exemplified what the definition of courage means," said his brother, Scott Wilson.

"To have his name there means so much."

Members of the Wilson family will be spending the weekend at their cottage, where they have celebrated the holiday for the last 30 years.

But this year will be different. They will also be honouring a life lost.

"It's going to be a tough day, but it's going mean a lot that we're here with the family."

The park will serve as "a reminder to all of us of the men and women that give of themselves in the name of freedom," said London Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco-Best. "It gives us a reminder, as well as pays tribute to his memory."

The 2.5-acre park will be situated in the midst of a new residential area in Sunningdale West, by the intersection of Sunningdale and Wonderland roads.

The park naming tribute by the city, in co-operation with Corlon Properties Inc., is "indicative of the kind of person he was," she said.

Mark was an avid outdoors person and a family-oriented person, she said, adding the park will be "a place for people to bring their children."

It will include a children's playground, extensive lawn area, view of a pond, pathways, benches and trees.

"Mark Wilson and others have been very courageous in standing up for us," DeCicco-Best said.

"He paid the ultimate sacrifice."

Park to honor slain London trooper Mark Wilson died last Oct. 7 while serving in Afghanistan.

Wilson served with the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

He was the first combat casualty from London.

Thousands of Londoners have paid tribute to his loss by displaying yellow ribbons, which also show support for his family. KEYWORDS=LOCAL

Afghan drug lord gets 15 years in New York court

SOURCETAG: 0710060209
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
BYLINE: SUN MEDIA NEWS SERVICES
DATELINE: NEW YORK
COLUMN: World Digest
WORD COUNT: 153

An Afghan drug lord accused of plotting to poison U.S. neighbourhoods with heroin was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison yesterday. Haji Baz Mohammad, 51, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Denny Chin after he admitted violating drug laws from 1990 to 2005 by shipping heroin from Afghanistan and leading a drug ring that stretched into neighbouring Pakistan. He was the first Afghan heroin kingpin extradited from Afghanistan, authorities said. Mohammad pleaded guilty in July to a charge of conspiring to violate drug laws. Without the plea, Mohammad could have faced up to life in prison. Drug Enforcement Administration administrator Karen Tandy said in a news release that the sentencing demonstrated U.S. resolve "to destroy the hold opium lords have on Afghanistan." KEYWORDS=WORLD

Air force seeks pilotless planes for Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0710060193
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 242

Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100 million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet. The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles.

The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

"For a while there, we flirted with technology," Watt said in an interview.

"We have walked back from that flirtation. That doesn't mean we are not going to pursue UAVs, but I think we have a little more realistic view of the capabilities of the UAVs."

Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kilogram bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us," Watt said.

"The reason being is: we in Canada like to have a man in the loop dropping weapons and shooting weapons at people.

"We generally insist on a degree of oversight, legitimacy, adherence to the laws of war that require a man in the loop pretty definitively. So it would be a bit of a stretch for us."

The Americans have been routinely criticized by human rights groups over misdirected air strikes involving Predators since the drones first started firing missiles in the spring of 2002. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Military cops probe two shootings

SOURCETAG 0710060551
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 42
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 246

Canadian military police are investigating two shooting incidents involving a Canadian convoy.

The convoy from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city was heading to Kandahar Airfield at approximately 6:30 p.m. Thursday night when a Toyota pickup truck approached.

The convoy fired on the truck, which turned out to be a patrol of the Afghan National Police.

It appears the truck may not have had its headlights on as it drove through the dark toward the Canadian convoy.

Nobody was injured in the incident.

The convoy was on its way back to the reconstruction team base at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar city two hours later when it fired on another vehicle, which belonged to a private security company employed by other coalition countries based at Kandahar Airfield.

Later that night seven Afghan locals showed up at the gate at the base, saying they were victims of the second incident.

Three were transported to the hospital in Kandahar city for treatment and four were taken to the military hospital on base.

Three of those treated at the military facility were released a short time later.

"One (person) remains here at the hospital," said Capt. Josee Bilodeau, spokesman for Canada's Joint Task Force Afghanistan. "He is in stable condition."

Bilodeau said the investigation is ongoing. It has not been confirmed whether the seven civilians were injured in the incident.

Last week, an Afghan civilian was killed and a 12-year-old boy injured in what military officials called an accidental shooting after the motorcycle they were riding approached another Canadian logistical convoy in Kandahar city.

At the family's request, the boy was brought to the military hospital for treatment. He is in stable condition following surgery for a gunshot wound to the head.

Canadian convoys in Kandahar province have been regularly targetted by suicide attacks and roadside bombs.

Bilodeau said measures are in place to avoid such incidents.

"We were in contact with the Afghan National Police and Compass Security to review our measures and procedures to ensure this type of incident will not happen again," she said yesterday. KEYWORDS=WORLD

First extradited Afghan drug lord gets 15 years

SOURCETAG 0710060546
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 35
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: NEW YORK
WORD COUNT: 153

An Afghan drug lord accused of plotting to poison U.S. neighbourhoods with heroin was sentenced to more than 15 years in prison yesterday.

Haji Baz Mohammad, 51, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Denny Chin after he admitted violating drug laws from 1990 to 2005 by shipping heroin from Afghanistan and leading a drug ring that stretched into neighbouring Pakistan. He was the first Afghan heroin kingpin extradited from Afghanistan, authorities said.

Mohammad pleaded guilty in July to a charge of conspiring to violate drug laws. Without the plea, Mohammad could have faced up to life in prison.

Karen Tandy, with the Drug Enforcement Administration, said in a news release that the sentencing demonstrated U.S. resolve "to destroy the hold opium lords have on Afghanistan."

"This drug kingpin bragged that he waged jihad against Americans by poisoning them with his heroin. His attack was unconventional, and his massive drug profits funded the Taliban and other extremist organizations dedicated to destroying freedom and justice." **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

UN says drug operation funding terrorism

SOURCETAG 0710060740
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 19
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: DUSHANBE
WORD COUNT: 144

The UN urged Russia and ex-Soviet Central Asia yesterday to stem drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe and said the proceeds from a record opium crop were funding global terrorism.

This year, Afghanistan produced some 8,000 tonnes of opium, equivalent to a record 1,000 tonnes of heroin, Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, told a summit of the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States.

"This volume threatens not only to aggravate the health situation, especially with drug addiction and higher numbers of those infected with HIV," he said in Russian, addressing the 12-nation gathering in the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

"This record high volume of Afghan heroin will also trigger a rise in instability and terrorism."

Drug money in Afghanistan, devastated by a decade of Soviet occupation and civil war, feeds both the Taliban insurgency and official corruption.

This, in turn, weakens the government's hold over large area of the country, making it easier to produce more opium. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Canuck military cops investigate shootings

SOURCETAG 0710060739
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 19
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 180

Canadian military police are investigating two shooting incidents involving a Canadian convoy.

The convoy from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar city was heading to Kandahar Airfield approximately 6:30 p.m. Thursday night when a Toyota pick-up truck approached.

The convoy fired on the truck, which turned out to be a patrol of the Afghan National Police. It appears the truck may not have had its headlights on as it drove through the dark toward the Canadian convoy.

Nobody was injured in the incident. The convoy was on its way back to the reconstruction team base at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar city two hours later when it fired upon another vehicle, which belonged to a private security company employed by other coalition countries based at Kandahar Airfield.

Later that night seven Afghan locals showed up at the gate at the base, saying they were victims of the second incident.

Three were transported to the hospital in Kandahar city for treatment and four were taken to the military hospital on base. Three of those treated at the military facility were released a short time later.

Capt. Josee Bilodeau, spokeswoman for Canada's Joint Task Force Afghanistan said the investigation is ongoing. It has not been confirmed whether the civilians were injured in the incident.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Two kids die in Afghan bombing Violence at its worst since 2001

SOURCETAG 0710060738
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 19
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan,
WORD COUNT: 226

A Taliban suicide bomber blew himself up in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing two children, local government officials said.

The attack came near the town of Sangin in the restive province of Helmand, where mostly British troops are engaged in nearly daily firefights with Taliban insurgents.

No foreign troops were wounded in the blast, a military spokesman said.

The Taliban leader in Helmand, Mullah Mansour Dadullah appeared in a video Wednesday exhorting a group of about 200 insurgents to carry out suicide attacks to drive foreign forces from Afghanistan and overthrow the government.

At least 11 people, including women and children, were killed in a Taliban suicide attack on a police bus in Kabul on Tuesday and 30 people were killed in a similar attack on an army bus in the capital last Saturday.

Taliban rebels have grown increasingly reliant in the last two years on suicide attacks aimed at convincing ordinary Afghans their government and its Western backers cannot provide security.

Afghanistan is going through its worst period of violence since U.S.-led and Afghan forces toppled the Taliban in 2001. In the latest incident, the U.S. military said "several non-combatants were found dead, and several others found wounded" after a battle with insurgents in Paktika province.

"While conducting a search of a compound in Waza Khawa district, Taliban fighters opened fire and threw several grenades at Afghan and coalition forces," coalition spokesman Maj. Chris Belcher said in a statement.

"By hiding among innocent civilians, by waging a battle among women and children, the violent extremists have shown their utter disregard for the lives of the Afghan people," Belcher said. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Pilotless aircraft on military's need—now list

SOURCETAG 0710060736
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 18
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 168

Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100 million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet.

The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles.

The Predator proposal, part of the Conservative government's draft defence plan, was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

"For a while there, we flirted with technology," Watt said.

"We have walked back from that flirtation. That doesn't mean we are not going to pursue UAVs, but I think we have a little more realistic view of the capabilities of the UAVs."

Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kg bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us," Watt said. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

War in Afghanistan undermines war on drugs

IDNUMBER 200710060074
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: C3
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: Douglas Bjorkman
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 154

Re: Harper vows jail time for drug dealers, producers, Oct. 5

It is with some dismay that I take note of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's proposal for a "war on drugs."

Surely a politician with such a record for sycophantic regard for all things American could not have failed to notice that such a war has been tried and failed in the United States. I cannot imagine that even Harper wishes to double our prison population by incarcerating vast numbers of our minority people.

However there is also a Made-in-Canada reason for opposition to any such "war."

Our own military is fully occupied with our war on Afghanistan. Since this war began, Afghan production of drugs has more than trebled. I am not sure that we would be able to feed and house the number of Afghans we could expect to be produced as a result of a full-scale war on drugs.

This aside, it has long been apparent to all rational people that the solution to any drug problem is treatment, not punishment.

Douglas Bjorkman

Vancouver

A stark reminder of peacekeeping's price

IDNUMBER 200710060027
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
COLUMN: Lloyd Brown–John
BYLINE: Lloyd Brown–John
SOURCE: Special to The Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 945

If you drive Ontario's Highway 401, then you will surely miss this little memorial to peace. Any interchange between No. 195 and No. 208 will take you south either to the Village of Belmont or the Hamlet of Avon. Running between Belmont and Avon (southeast of London, Ontario) is Avon Road (Elgin County Road No. 37).

For there, along the Avon Road, is a former farm with flags flying and a field of white crosses; a stunning, stark, memorial. Each cross is a tribute to a Canadian peacekeeper who has died in the service of peace, Canada and humankind.

The memorial is moving and reminiscent of those fields of white crosses which mark final resting places of so many fine Canadians who died in wars and fought for freedom and peace.

I've walked many of those cross–strewn fields in Flanders and France, and even in Tunisia where Canadians lie among Commonwealth dead.

This Avon Road tribute to Canada's peacekeeping dead is a reminder, once more, that freedom and peace (however ephemeral) have been constant themes in military activities of Canadians for over 100 years.

One of Canada's finest prime ministers, Lester Pearson, once said: "We prepared for war like precocious giants and for peace like retarded pygmies." It was also Lester Pearson (with some assistance from External Affairs officers) who conceived of the concept of "international peacekeeping" in response to the Suez crisis of 1956. An international military force charged with responsibility for separating warring parties, protecting civilians and contributing to restoration of order and a condition of peace. Canadians have served on most United Nations sponsored peacekeeping missions since 1956–57 in Egypt.

The historic peacekeeping mission, I suggest, has rarely varied from original intent. But the price, as crosses in a field along the Avon Road attest, is demonstrably high. As a nation we have paid for our values and as a nation we have shared both the privileges and the tragedies of pursuing peace, freedom and a right to live.

Understanding that even now as our troops endeavour to cope with the absurdity of lunatic fanaticism in Afghanistan, the purpose of our military presence in that often tragic country is not one of conquest or of crusade. While our mission in Afghanistan is under the auspices of NATO, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that our combat troops are risking their lives and their limbs for those values which have always motivated Canada's military peacekeepers.

Lest you have any doubt about the pride of our soldiers both past and present, visit one of our local historical military museums — there is one in Kingsville and a new one in Blenheim — the Freedom Library and Museum.

Neither these museums nor the memorial along the Avon Road indulge in the glorification of war and combat. They all seek to remind visitors that war is Hell and that young Canadians have been dying for this country and for humankind for a long time.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper will ask Parliament for its opinion on the future of Canada's mission in Afghanistan whenever Parliament reconvenes. Irrespective of the views of either Mr. Harper or Mr. Dion or Mr Layton, the decision needs to be made by those of us who will be called upon to both finance the mission and, in many cases, contribute our loved ones to active pursuit of that mission no matter how long it lasts.

As my former Afghan civil servant students often reminded me: "Afghans have memories a thousand years long."

I had three career civil servants as students in public administration several years ago. One ultimately fled Afghanistan to escape the Taliban and arrived with his family in Windsor.

Blood feuds, revenge, corruption, "baksheesh" and memories incapable of moving beyond the past all hold large portions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and several other "stans" back in time—warps of medieval thinking and behavior. It is in this environment that many Afghans are seeking to move beyond the primitive qualities of tribalism into some form of societal order and productive future.

Canadians are involved in that gruelling process. It is neither easy work nor safe work. Indeed, as our military dead and injured can attest, one really can ask, "Is it worth the trouble?"

Do we really care whether Afghanistan is dragged somewhat unwillingly into the 21st century? Does it really matter to us that many female children would remain uneducated and that women in general would continue to be accorded the same status as chattel property?

Does it really matter that Afghans with limited life expectancies anyway should have access to minimal health care and hygiene? And, if tribal Pashtuns/Pathans (Pakistan) insist upon revenge at the drop of almost any slight, should we really care? Does it matter to us that corrupt drug-financed local lords (or bandits) provide a constant flow of illicit drugs to the global market?

If none of these things matter, then we are wasting our time, money and the lives of Canadians in a prospective quagmire known as Afghanistan.

But, if as a country and as a people committed to peace, freedom and individual rights, these abuses of humankind do matter and we do care as fellow humans, then for how long and under what conditions must we continue the mission in Afghanistan?

Canadians need to search their minds and their souls on this issue. We need to communicate our feelings to those elected political leaders who will make the decision for us. Personally, you might ask, "I believe we are in Afghanistan for all the right reasons and we should not quake if there is a price — we've paid it before."

Meanwhile, check out the peacekeeping memorial. It is a sobering reminder that even peacekeeping for freedom has a tragic price.

Lloyd Brown John is professor emeritus, public administration, at the University of Windsor.

Question: You support a group of peace activists who lobby against Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. Then they ask you to run for political office. Do you accept?

IDNUMBER 200710060148
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Religion
PAGE: E12
COLUMN: Ask the Religion Experts
BYLINE: James Christie
SOURCE: Citizen Special
WORD COUNT: 276

A: Hmmm ... so, which of the implicit questions shall I answer first?

Ought I to respond to the Canadian government's current form of engagement in Afghanistan?

Or should I concentrate on the role of clergy of my tradition supporting lobby groups of this or any ilk?

Or should I comment on the issue of the involvement of religious leaders — or at least clergy — among religious leaders, standing for elected office?

It feels rather like the old multiple choice exams of high school days: a, b, c, all of the above or none of the above.

In fairness, many of the questions we are asked to address in this feature are multilayered, but perhaps none so much as this one.

Well, in for a penny, in for a pound.

For or against a particular policy of the government of Canada, this is a democracy — or at least a democracy in progress — and in a democracy all citizens have a moral obligation to reflect upon socio-political issues, to discern one's position on those issues and to act accordingly.

No one is exempt from this rule, least of all religious people and their leaders.

Gandhi once observed that people who believe there is no proper connection between politics and religion understand neither.

As to supporting lobby groups, for clergy among the faithful there must be some serious nuance.

Clergy are also individual citizens and ought to participate in society as any other citizen, while keeping in mind the need to minister to those who may hold diametrically opposing views — especially with respect to lobby groups.

Question: You support a group of peace activists who lobby against Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. T

Still, this only means that Christians need to cultivate the art of disagreeing with one another while loving one another.

Ought clergy to stand for elected office? Should they feel so called, by all means, though if elected, they then must need to take a sabbatical from their explicitly pastoral responsibilities.

Rev. James Christie is a minister of the United Church of Canada whose home is in Old Ottawa South. He is the dean of the faculty of theology of the University of Winnipeg and president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

National. Afghan civilians hurt in Canadian convoy fire

IDNUMBER 200710060016
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 251

A Canadian convoy was involved in two shooting incidents late Thursday as it drove to and from a Canadian base in Kandahar City and the airfield that is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan. The convoy, part of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, first shot at an Afghan truck that had driven too close, a military spokesman said. There were no casualties. On the return journey, the same convoy shot at a second vehicle that also drove too close, wounding an unknown number of Afghan civilians. The first vehicle that was hit belonged to their allies in the Afghan National Police. The second vehicle belonged to Compass, a private company that provides security for a number of countries with troops and civilians living and working at the Kandahar Airfield. Seven Afghans later turned up at the main gate to the Kandahar Airfield, saying they had been wounded in the second shooting. Four of the seven were admitted to NATO's multinational hospital for treatment. Three were released. The fourth patient was stable. Both incidents were being investigated by military police, including how many Afghans had been injured, said Capt. Josée Bilodeau. "We are to review all our measures to make sure that such sad incidents do not happen again," she said.

Our 'pit bull' in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710060257
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: National
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: A21
BYLINE: Sonia Masters
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 116

Re: Critic Expects Cold Afghan Shoulder, Oct.5.

Don Martin's description of Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre as a: "pit bull"; "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"; [a man who] "says he will piggyback on charitable and humanitarian groups to ensure he sees the wilds of Kandahar up close," suggests to me that Mr. Coderre is an egocentric, irrational man.

Should the Liberal party form either a minority or majority government in our next election, it frightens me to think that Mr. Coderre would become a Cabinet minister.

Sonia Masters, Toronto.

KEYWORDS: 0

The PM doesn't need an election

IDNUMBER 200710060248
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.06
EDITION: National
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A20
COLUMN: Andrew Coyne
BYLINE: Andrew Coyne
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 780

Watching Stephen Harper on TV, I couldn't help feeling I'd seen that face somewhere else. It's... yes, I have it. It's Putin. Vladimir Putin. A little pudgier, granted, but the same eyes, or rather, the same look. It's wolfish: equal parts cunning, ruthlessness and hunger. Both men are sometimes described as icy, but a wolf does not regard his prey with indifference. He's ravenous. And at Wednesday's press conference, it was all Mr. Harper could do to keep from licking his lips.

You'd be that way, too, if you were in his position. The two men who stand in the way of his majority ambitions, Stephane Dion and Gilles Duceppe, are gravely weakened, the one beset by internal divisions, the other by a generalized apathy towards his party. Though both have talked tough about an election, their very words belie them.

If, after all, the Bloc were really looking to bring the government down, the very last thing they would do would be to issue a list of "non-negotiable" demands. Voters don't like parties that don't play nice. They want politicians to work together across party lines, or at least to give a convincing impression of doing so. The Bloc, especially, has always been careful not to leave themselves open to the charge of obstructionism — they know they were sent to Ottawa to "defend Quebec," to keep the other parties honest, not to make mischief.

So if the Bloc were really bent on forcing the country into an election, they would be at pains to ensure someone else took the blame for it. Mr. Duceppe would bite his lip, dolefully, as he announced that, at long last, his patience had run out. He had gone the extra mile, sought negotiations at every turn, tried to make this parliament work, but alas, the government's intransigence had made it impossible.

That the Bloc sought instead to sound as obdurate as possible can only be explained, rather, in terms of weakness — their own, and the Liberals'. Having taken a pasting in last month's byelections, the Bloc needed to reassure its supporters that it still had

some fight in it. And with the Liberals in even worse shape, the Bloc were in a position to take a free kick. They could threaten havoc, knowing the Grits would ensure it never happened.

The Liberals, for their part, have been keen to let it be known that, though they might appear in every respect unready for an election — divided, broke, adrift — they're actually champing at the bit. Mr. Dion is said to have confided to advisers his belief that he would resonate better with voters in an election campaign, where he could make a serious, sustained case for his candidacy, than in the Ottawa funhouse.

There may be some truth in this, but the interesting part is that we know about it — that we should be privy to his innermost thoughts on the matter. To me the subtext that suggests is: We have to give people some clever,

contrarian reason why we'd want an election (another option: that Mr. Dion has successfully managed expectations down) since there is in fact nothing that terrifies us more.

No wonder Mr. Harper looked so confident. I don't think we should interpret his "fish or cut bait" challenge to the opposition as an invitation to a fall election. He doesn't want one, either, not now: with the Tories still mired at 33% in the polls, there's little to be gained just yet. More to the point, he doesn't need one. He can press forward with his agenda, or at least those parts of his agenda that overlap with the public's -- crime, taxes -- knowing the opposition will not dare to bring him down. And time is on his side: the longer he stays in power, the more comfortable the public gets with him.

Meantime, he can use his opponents' weakness to gain yards: to take the centre ground for Conservatives, not by moving to the middle, but by moving the middle to him. "Reasonable... realistic... responsible" --count the number of times he used those words on Wednesday, even as he was taking a noticeably harder line on questions of policy. On Afghanistan, on taxes, on the "hollowing out" nonsense, the Prime Minister sounded, for the first time in a long while, like a conservative-- yet insulated from charges of provocation by the opposition's own provocative rhetoric.

Non-negotiable? Shucks, no. Every-thing's negotiable, when you know the other side has no leverage.

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Court refuses bail to terror suspect; To stay in prison while awaiting deportation

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A Toronto man accused of receiving terrorist training from al-Qaeda in Afghanistan remains a threat and will have to await his deportation in prison, the Federal Court of Canada ruled yesterday.

The court dismissed Syrian national Hassan Almrei's request to be released from a Kingston prison, saying he "continues to be a serious risk to national security" even though he has been in custody since 2001.

Liberal MP Andrew Telegdi, NPD MPs Alexa McDonough and Bill Siksay and a son of former prime minister Pierre Trudeau had all offered to post bail, and a Toronto woman had agreed to let him live in her basement.

But the judge, Francois Lemieux, said Mr. Almrei's plan to live under supervised house arrest was "wholly inadequate." It was the third time Mr. Almrei had applied for release. Of six terror suspects being deported by Canada under security certificates, he is the only one still in custody.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service says Mr. Almrei is a passport forger and member of an international network of Islamist extremists who support al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

CSIS had asked the court to keep Mr. Almrei in prison, arguing that were he released, he might re-establish his ties with associates who fought "jihad" in Afghanistan and support bin Laden.

CSIS named one of them as Nabil Al Marabh, a former Toronto resident and the nephew of Toronto cleric Ah-mad Shehab. Mr. Al Marabh is believed to be jailed in Syria.

"Mr. Nabil Al Marabh is an individual who Mr. Almrei met in Khunduz, Afghanistan, in 1994 at Ibn Khattab's camp and for whom Mr. Almrei arranged the procurement of a false passport while he was in Canada," the ruling says.

Others were identified as Abdul Sayyaf, Hoshen Al Tahah and Ahmed Al Kaysee, "an individual who did jihad in Afghanistan. He met Mr. Almrei at the airport when Mr. Almrei first came to Canada," it says.

Born in Syria and raised in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Almrei travelled to Pakistan in 1990 at the age of 16 and stayed at a guest house controlled by al-Qaeda, according to a CSIS report.

The following year, he trained at a paramilitary camp in Afghanistan. He returned in 1994, and in 1995 helped scout Russian positions in Tajikistan, it says. He arrived in Canada in 1999 and was accepted as a refugee.

Following a CSIS investigation, two Cabinet ministers signed a certificate ordering his deportation. He was arrested in October, 2001, but six years later, his case continues to make its way through the courts.

He has denied supporting bin Laden but the judge said yesterday his testimony was not credible because he "constantly lied," was "not truly forthcoming in his answers" and "continued to hide [the] truth."

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KEYWORDS: 0

Afghan a target without disguise Interpreter keeps face covered for protection

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CP Wire Lindsey Wiebe KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN — Sammy's face is almost completely hidden by a scarf tied multiple times beneath his dark sunglasses, and it's not just blowing dust that has the Afghan interpreter under wraps.

Sammy — an assumed name — works for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, translating Pashtu and other languages spoken in the province for Canadian soldiers helping with development projects.

Sammy's \$1,200 monthly salary is on the high end for interpreters, and amounts to a small fortune in a country where the average paycheque is estimated at \$20 to \$30 per month, and up to \$100 for soldiers in the national army.

But the risks for the slight 20-year-old may be even higher than those faced by the Canadians he assists. Afghan interpreters are known targets for the Taliban, and reports say more than 60 interpreters have been killed in southern Afghanistan this year.

"We would like to hide our identity from the locals," said Sammy, surrounded by children on a recent PRT visit to a project in the Arghandab District.

"We live here, and have to come out on a regular basis." Sammy knows he'll have little protection if the nature of his work is leaked into the community: hence the scarf, the sunglasses, and the false name.

Not even his parents know what their son really does when he's away from home — he has told his family he works as a computer programmer.

The young interpreter, who learned English while living in Pakistan as a Taliban-era refugee, returned to Afghanistan four or five years ago. He began interpreting for the American troops, then started with the Canadians in January. He now lives in the city of Kandahar, where he said the security situation is "beyond worse." "Many interpreters are taken out from their houses at night, and taken by the Taliban," he said.

Sammy has had a few close calls. He has been chased three times while on the job, and says one of his former employers, a lieutenant-colonel, was killed in the middle of Kandahar City.

But the interpreter has seven brothers and sisters to support, and he is taking his chances against the Taliban in the hopes of levelling the playing field.

"The helplessness," he said, pulling the scarf higher around his face as he prepared to be photographed. "I must do it." 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

Military fast-tracks drone deal

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CP Wire OTTAWA -- Canada's air force is shopping for new, unarmed pilotless aircraft to help protect troops in Afghanistan.

The head of the air force, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt, has ordered the program fast-tracked, and his staff plan to give special consideration to companies that can quickly deliver the so-called uninhabited aerial vehicles or UAVs.

The purchase, which industry insiders say could be worth up to \$100 million, is seen as a stopgap until the air force becomes more comfortable with the technology.

The plan is a step back from a \$500-million proposal that was rejected last spring by the federal cabinet. The original plan was to purchase 12 U.S.-made Predator drones, which can be equipped with Hellfire missiles.

The Predator proposal was bounced back to air force planners after concerns were raised by senior ministers about the military sole-sourcing yet another defence contract.

The air chief also says the technology hasn't evolved sufficiently.

"For a while there, we flirted with technology," Watt said recently.

"We have walked back from that flirtation. That doesn't mean we are not going to pursue UAVs, but I think we have a little more realistic view of the capabilities of the UAVs." Watt said technology that would deliver a 226-kilogram bomb, or fire a missile at a target, without humans nearby makes him nervous.

"I think it would be a stretch for us," Watt said.

-- The Canadian Press {Ottawa ONT}

Canadian convoy in shootings; Afghan vehicles drove too close, military says

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A Canadian convoy was involved in two shooting incidents late Thursday as it drove to and from a Canadian base in Kandahar City and the airfield that is home to most of Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The convoy, part of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team, first shot at an Afghan truck that had driven too close, a military spokesperson said. There were no casualties.

On the return journey, the same convoy shot at a second vehicle that also drove too close, wounding an unknown number of Afghan civilians.

Seven Afghans later turned up at the main gate to the Kandahar Airfield saying they had been wounded in the second shooting. Four of the seven were admitted to NATO's multi-national hospital for treatment. Three were quickly released. The fourth patient's condition was listed as stable.

Both incidents were being investigated by military police, said Capt. Josée Bilodeau.

Several civilians, including a child, were found dead after a U.S.-led coalition battle with militants, officials said.

Coalition forces raided a suspected Taliban compound in eastern Paktika province early yesterday killing several militants in the ensuing battle, the coalition said .

Soldiers later discovered the bodies of about four civilians, including a woman and a child, who also had been inside the compound, it said. It was unclear exactly how the civilians were killed.

A British soldier from the Royal Gurkha Rifles died in a roadside blast in southern Helmand province. Two others were wounded in the blast overnight Thursday.

An Afghan heroin kingpin was sentenced in New York yesterday to more than 15 years in prison for heading a drug trafficking ring, U.S. officials said.

Baz Mohammad was the first person to be extradited to the United States from Afghanistan, U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia and Karen Tandy, head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, said.

Mohammad pleaded guilty in Manhattan federal court in July to heading an international heroin trafficking ring that made and distributed millions of dollars worth of the drug in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The heroin was then transported to the United States hidden in suitcases, clothing and containers.

"This drug kingpin bragged that he waged jihad against Americans by poisoning them with his heroin," Tandy said.