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# Troops may take a back seat; O'Connor predicts winter will bring quieter role for Canadian soldiers

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions — roughly 3,000 soldiers — will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three-stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired yesterday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them. We had to take on the bulk of the fighting.

"In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army.

"We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations," he said.

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has claimed the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002.

With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

Canada's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role — thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in yesterday's interview: "We're hoping by the end of this rotation that's going in now — the so-called Van Doo rotation — we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle-hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada.

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and if O' Connor's prediction holds true it would see Canadian troops far less active in what could be the final year of the deployment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly said that he would only extend the Kandahar mission with the consensus of Parliament — something that appears unlikely with the Liberals calling for an end to the combat role on schedule, and the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois firmly opposed to an extension.

# U.S. would consider military force against al-Qaida in Pakistan

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The U.S. would consider military force if necessary to stem al-Qaida's growing ability to use its hideout in Pakistan to launch terrorist attacks, a White House aide said yesterday.

U.S. President George W. Bush's homeland security adviser, Fran Townsend, said the U.S. was committed first and foremost to working with Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf, in his efforts to control militants in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. But she indicated the U.S. was ready to take additional measures.

"Just because we don't speak about things publicly doesn't mean we're not doing things you talk about," Townsend said, when asked in a broadcast interview why the U.S. does not conduct special operations and other measures to cripple al-Qaida.

"Job No. 1 is to protect the American people. There are no options off the table," she said.

In the National Intelligence Estimate released last week, analysts stressed the importance of al-Qaida's comfortable hideout in Pakistan that has resulted from a hands-off accord between Musharraf and tribal leaders along the Afghan border.

That 10-month-old deal, which has unravelled in recent days, gave al-Qaida new opportunities to set up compounds for terror training, improve its international communications with associates and bolster its operations.

Yesterday, Townsend reiterated the importance of Musharraf's efforts.

"We should also be clear that we believe Pakistan has been a very good ally in the war on terrorism," she said.

Townsend spoke on Fox News Sunday and Late Edition on CNN.



# Afghan forces prepare to free S. Koreans held by Taliban

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Afghan security forces yesterday surrounded the location where Taliban fighters are suspected to be holding 23 South Korean hostages and were prepared to launch an operation if negotiations broke down, Afghan officials said.

The Koreans, most of whom are members of a church located near Seoul, the South Korean capital, were kidnapped from a bus Thursday as they travelled between the Afghan capital, Kabul, and the southern city of Kandahar.

After initially saying the hostages would be killed at noon Saturday, the Taliban extended the deadline, first until last night, then until this afternoon, and they continued to demand the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for the hostages. South Korean officials and local tribal elders were involved in talks with the Taliban last night.

"We are very hopeful that the talks will be successful," said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the police chief in Ghazni province, where the Koreans are believed to be held. "But if the negotiations fail, then we will take another step."

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesperson Zahir Azimi said the kidnappers were surrounded by Afghan army forces.

The Koreans are the largest group of foreigners the Taliban has taken hostage since the Islamic extremist group began an insurgent campaign after being ousted from power by a U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

Taliban fighters were also believed to be still holding a German aid worker abducted Wednesday after a second German died in the group's custody. The cause of death remains unknown.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her government would not agree to the Taliban's demand that Germany withdraw its troops.

"We will not give in to blackmail," she told the German public television network ARD.

The kidnappings, as well as previous cases, have targeted people from countries that have been ambivalent about their commitment to the international military presence in Afghanistan.

The governments of South Korea and Germany have both come under intense domestic political pressure to withdraw from Afghanistan, and South Korea has already announced that it will leave the country by the end of the year. South Korea has 200 military engineers and medics in Afghanistan.

In March, Afghan authorities released five Taliban prisoners in exchange for an Italian reporter. Italy has also been on the fence about its commitment to Afghanistan.

A NATO military spokesperson, Maj. John Thomas, said international troops were prepared to help in any operation to free the hostages but were not involved as of late last night.

"We're definitely ready if the Afghan national army asks us to assist," Thomas said.

A purported Taliban official in Afghanistan said in an interview that the group is demanding the release of one of its top commanders in Ghazni, who was captured two weeks ago.

"We have extended the deadline by 24 hours," said the official, who said he uses the nom de guerre Abu Mansor.

"We are directly in touch with the South Korean authorities in Kabul."

The official said the Koreans were being held at several locations.

Abu Mansor alleged that the Koreans were missionaries, but Korean officials say the group was in Afghanistan on a relief mission to provide medical and educational services.

# 'Feel as if army is turning it's back on you'; Some Canadian troops suffering from post-traumatic stress from combat say they feel they have few avenues for help

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half-hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories from combat in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

"They've made it impossible," David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said from his Edmonton home.

"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can't do your job no more. You come home and you almost feel like the army's turning its back on you."

Some troops will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as "operational stress injuries" — a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Numbers show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post-deployment screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental-health problems.

Of those, 16 per cent showed signs of high-risk drinking and just over six per cent were possibly suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

The numbers aren't alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how combat experiences are contributing to mental-health problems.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a complicated disorder characterized by what Zamorski described as "the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event." That can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can cause problems sleeping, expressing emotion, anger and avoidance of situations that remind someone of the traumatic event.

'Feel as if army is turning it's back on you'; Some Canadian troops suffering from post-traumatic stress from

For David, the signs began surfacing about six months after he was back from what was his first deployment. His wife and family kept telling him he was different, that he didn't laugh like he once had and that he was hanging out only with the guys from his tour.

"You don't see the problems right away. My wife kept mentioning it. So I went civvy street (to get help) because I didn't want to go on base. We have tons of psychiatrists on base, but you won't see anybody going to them because you can't — it's during the workday and everyone sees you, so who wants that?"

The military says it has gone to great lengths to make sure soldiers are as prepared as they can be before they deploy to deal with stress injuries.

Troops are briefed in theatre before they return to Canada on what it will be like adjusting to life at home.

All soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days must complete a detailed questionnaire and are supposed to undergo an interview with a health professional. If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says they can take advantage of resources on and off base.

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country.

"I'm proud that we really are doing the very best we can to take care of people who serve the country," he said. "Not that we don't have some work to do in terms of combating stigma in particular, but we have mechanisms to try to identify people early and we've got multiple mechanisms for care."

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview, raising the likelihood that some are falling through the cracks. Out of about 4,800 people who returned from Afghanistan and were required to have the screening, 2,900 were still due for it and only 1,257 had completed the questionnaire.

"We've come a long way, but we're still a bunch of guys in the army," said David, who's reconsidering his future in the Forces. "It's half our fault too. I was just too proud to go. We do have avenues, we just got to start taking them."

'Feel as if army is turning it's back on you'; Some Canadian troops suffering from post-traumatic stress from

# We owe them so much

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Regarding the July 16 letter, Stickers Don't Belong On Public Vehicles, and the statement "I'm saddened by the successful manipulation of the municipal government by the Families of Canadian Soldiers In Afghanistan," I couldn't believe someone could be so insensitive as to accuse the families of Canadian soldiers of manipulation.

The freedoms I enjoy were paid for by soldiers and continue to be protected by these soldiers and their families.

Kevin Grant

Port Alberni, B.C.

# Yellow ribbon debate is dividing Canadians

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I cannot help but notice that the letters to the editor concerning views opposing the war in Iraq and Afghanistan are becoming more intense and mixed with increasing anger and ignorance.

I am getting the impression from the Canadians that do not want to support our troops with stickers and pins that they are both anti-American and anti-Conservative. I find the hostility against President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Stephen Harper relating to the war on terrorism to be dividing this country and causing Canadians to become isolated, including from family members and friends.

I neither see nor hear any hostility or disrespect towards the president and the prime minister from the Canadians who support the war on terrorism.

Regarding this recent issue on supporting our troops with stickers and pins, I now believe that there is a growing undercurrent of anger that will begin to take its effect on society and our children.

Tony Olivieri

Waterloo

# Voter malaise is rife on both sides of the border

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These are tough days to be a politician, on either side of the 49th parallel.

Starting on this side, consider the plight of poor Stephen Harper. There must be times when he feels like screaming in pure frustration. Nothing seems to work — "work" in the sense of being able to move his political—support numbers anywhere close to majority—government range.

A Strategic Counsel poll last week put Harper and the Conservatives at 31 per cent, the same as the Liberals; for the Tories, that is six points lower than they were a year ago and five points lower than in the January 2006 election. According to the poll, the Conservatives are in trouble with women voters, in Quebec and, somewhat unexpectedly, among high-income Canadians.

Women find Harper's style too aggressive, and they are overwhelmingly opposed to the use of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Quebecers are also unhappy about Afghanistan. The Conservatives trail both the Bloc Quebecois and the Liberals, and the Grits seem to have re-established themselves as the party of second choice in the province. A year ago, the Conservatives led the Liberals by 11 points among francophone voters; now they trail the Liberals by four points.

Nationally, voters earning \$100,000—plus seem to be turning back to the Liberals. A year ago 49 per cent of this group said they would vote Conservative; today that number is down to 31 per cent (compared to 42 per cent for the Liberals). Strategic Counsel suggests a couple of reasons: the decision to tax income trusts and a recent rash of foreign takeovers of Canadian companies. It may also reflect a resentment among the Conservatives' core supporters that the government has not lived up to the party's private—enterprise rhetoric from before it was elected.

The Angus Reid polling company had more grim news last week. Only 29 per cent of Canadians, it reported, approve of Harper's performance as prime minister (the good news for the PM: only 14 per cent approve of the performance of Liberal Leader Stephane Dion). When respondents were asked which man, Harper or Dion, would make the best prime minister, the largest number, 40 per cent, said "neither."

South of the border, the picture is much the same — struggling politicians and a sour electorate. George W. Bush shares the public—opinion sub-basement with Harper. According to an Associated Press/Ipsos poll published last week, only 33 per cent of Americans approve of the way Bush is handling his job compared to 65 per cent who disapprove.

The Iraq war seems to have poisoned the well of public opinion. According to the same poll, 67 per cent of

Americans disapprove of Bush's handling of the war — and 60 per cent disapprove of his handling of the economy and 64 per cent of his handling of domestic issues in general. If Bush is doing anything right, the pollsters haven't found it.

Voter malaise is not confined to the White House. Congress gets lousy marks, too; according the Associated Press/Ipsos poll, 70 per cent of respondents disapprove of the way the Senate and House of Representatives are doing their work. And, as a sobering footnote, only 26 per cent of Americans believe their country is headed in the right direction; 69 per cent think it is on the wrong track.

It would be a relief to be able to suggest that the 2008 presidential election offers a shining beacon of hope for the American people. But perhaps not. According to the same poll, none of the above (with 23 per cent of Republican voters) leads the GOP race, ahead of candidates Rudy Giuliani, Fred Thompson, John McCain and Mitt Romney, in that order.

Among Democratic voters, however, Hillary Clinton (at 36 per cent), Barack Obama (20) and non-candidate Al Gore (15) all lead none of the above (13), with John Edwards (11) close behind. Clinton's biggest problem, seems to be weak support within her own demographic — married, high-income career women. Older women, in particular, are resistant to the idea of a female president.

In a trans-border comparison of governing parties, one would have to think the Republicans have greater cause for despair than the Conservatives. They are burdened by a hugely unpopular incumbent and a list of 2008 hopefuls who have more negatives than positives among them. Harper, on the other hand, can comfort himself with the thought that the Liberals have shown no signs of being ready to return to power — and their leader is even less popular than he is.

Cambridge resident Geoffrey Stevens, an author and former Ottawa columnist and managing editor of the *Globe and Mail*, teaches political science at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph. He welcomes comments at [geoffstevens@sympatico.ca](mailto:geoffstevens@sympatico.ca).



# Peacekeeping can tear at your soul, author says

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: DAVID BEBEE, RECORD STAFF / Matthew Bin, shown at the Galt cenotaph, is working on a book about Canadian peacekeepers. ;  
**BYLINE:** KEVIN SWAYZE  
**SOURCE:** RECORD STAFF  
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Peacekeeping isn't a warm and fuzzy cakewalk anywhere Canadian troops have to go, says a Cambridge author who is writing a book about Canadian soldiers who have done the job around the world.

"I want people to stop looking at these missions from a distance," said Matthew Bin, who served in the army reserves for three years.

Wearing a blue helmet on a United Nations mission can tear at a soldier's soul like combat in Afghanistan, he said.

"These people, our soldiers we are sending over there, are not zombies in green," said Bin, 34, who finds Canadians "sentimentalize" their soldiers.

"Do we know what we're sending them to?"

Since April, Bin has been searching out Canadian men and women who have served on UN or NATO peacekeeping missions since 1991.

On Guard For Thee: Canadian Peacekeeping Missions is planned for publication this fall by Bookland Press in Toronto.

"The intent of the book is to help people understand the world they are experiencing and we expect them to be in," Bin said.

The Toronto native served with Guelph's 11th Field Regiment reserve unit from 1991 to 1994. He's an English graduate from McMaster University and now a freelance technical writer, working for business and government.

Bin is also president of the Waterloo-Wellington branch of the Canadian Authors Association. He published a war novel called LMF in 2006.

For years, he's thought about writing military history, but it didn't become reality until he started talking with Bookland Press about its plans for a series of books about Canada's military.

Bin has friends in uniform who have served wearing a Canadian flag on missions to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Cambodia.

Some came home from peacekeeping missions with drinking problems and deep trouble readjusting to life in Canada. Others didn't seem fazed by their experiences.

Bin wants to give soldiers the chance to describe what a deployment is like, not what people at home imagine one to be. He's not asking veterans to get into the politics of their missions. He just wants to hear what happened while they were there.

"The one thing I can tell you is soldiers tell stories . . . there's always these stories when they get together. It's part of the culture," Bin said.

"It's much more personal and is in many ways the mundane," Bin said.

Stories will be recounted anonymously. They won't be censored, even when talk turns to behaviour that might offend -- or perhaps warrant charges.

"I'd rather take the heat than the soldiers take the heat," Bin said. "The point isn't to verify. It is to give the soldiers their say."

Bin doesn't intend this as a self-help book for soldiers struggling to find their life again at home.

"This is not Chicken Soup for the Peacekeeper's Soul," Bin said.

But the book might help Canadians help soldiers fit in again.

Bin hopes teenagers read his book to help ready them for adulthood and understanding their role in electing governments that send Canadian troops around the world.

The recent "support our soldiers" debate at local municipal councils troubles Bin.

For him, opportunistic politicians tainted the message. Nor is he convinced support for the troops can be segregated from political support for the mission, despite the assurances of supporters.

Canadian troops don't mind dissent and political debate at home, Bin said. It's one of the freedoms they're expected to transplant and fight for around the world.

Bin has no doubt Canada supports its troops overseas. There's no need to put yellow ribbons or decals on fire trucks to send that message to our troops in Afghanistan, he said.

"Should we have started putting 'Support Our Firefighters' on the back of (our) tanks? It's silly."

Bin asks Canadian peacekeeping veterans to contact him at [mattbin@gmail.com](mailto:mattbin@gmail.com).

[kswayze@therecord.com](mailto:kswayze@therecord.com)

# Canada to change its role in Afghan mission; Afghan troops likely to take over most combat operations by next winter, says Gordon O'Connor

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**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions — roughly 3,000 soldiers — will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three-stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired yesterday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role — thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in Sunday's interview: "We're hoping by the end of this rotation that's going in now — the so-called Van Doo rotation — we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle-hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Opposition to the war runs highest in Quebec, where a series of recent public opinion polls have shown a majority of people in favour of bringing the troops home.

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and if O'Connor's prediction holds

Canada to change its role in Afghan mission; Afghan troops likely to take over most combat operations by n

true it would see Canadian troops far less active in what could be the final year of the deployment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly said that he would only extend the Kandahar mission with the consensus of Parliament — something that appears unlikely with the Liberals calling for an end to the combat role on schedule, and the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois opposed to an extension.

Canada to change its role in Afghan mission; Afghan troops likely to take over most combat operations by next

# It pays to think about what you hear or read

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230011  
**PUBLICATION:** Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
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**PAGE:** D6  
**BYLINE:** Norbert Cunningham Lex Talk!  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**WORD COUNT:** 1064

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Another hearty July good morning folks! It's time for another installment of my column about words, language and all things related. But first, the recent columns, this one, and the ones to come in the next few weeks have all been written well in advance, primarily so I can concentrate on some other important matters keeping me busy in my personal life. So if any readers have forwarded me feedback lately, worry not about the lack of any mention of it here. I do appreciate it and perhaps in August there'll be a whole lot of feedback to discuss!

Beware TV!

Last week I began with some comments from comedian George Carlin about the misuse of the word "irony", particularly noticeable on TV by commentators, news people and sportscasters. It's interesting that the examples he provided all involved sportscasters. Beware TV, especially sportscasters, if you are taking what you hear to be somehow a guide to English usage. It's the last place to look for guidance, especially sportscasters. These people are often very good in terms of sports knowledge, but it is a rare one indeed who doesn't regularly mangle the language! And other talking heads on TV, whatever their role, often do so as well. Part of it is simply the fact that often this is conversation and not scripted, thus they don't have the luxury of thinking more than a few split seconds before the words and thoughts tumble out, but part of it is also just plain ignorance. Whatever, beware!

Spell checkers

It is virtually a cliché now to note that computer spell checkers are no substitute for a good dictionary, good vocabulary, good spelling skills and the ability to put a proper sentence together. I've made the same point here: if you don't know the difference between "their" and "there", a computer spell checker won't save your hide. But that said, today I want to defend these programs (usually a sub-program within a word processing program). They are amazingly good these days, despite their limitations. And they can be extremely helpful if one uses them carefully rather than just clicking through their warnings rapidly. It is easy to miss errors on a computer screen. I know! As well, but seldom ever discussed, a lot of programs (including Microsoft's Word, probably the most common one in use) contain a grammar checker. These aren't perfect either, but by gosh they are impressive and I dare say most writers could improve their work if they would only use them. Alas, a lot of users never turn the feature on and it wouldn't surprise me if a lot don't even know it exists. Try it, folks. You might be surprised and you'll find yourself creating fewer and fewer transgressions. It acts as a learning tool; a refresher course.

Thus, while these programs have limitations, I'm convinced that they are, if properly used, far better than they are often given credit for being.

Fog of war

Militaries world-wide are known for their jargon and euphemisms, but that's no reason not to fight back and call a bomb a bomb, a casualty a death and so on. Our war in Afghanistan is producing its share of the fog of war. For example, a recent unthinking regurgitation of military-speak from The Canadian Press said this about "IEDs" (improvised explosive devices):

"IEDs are unlike mines, which are sown by the millions throughout the parched deserts and lush valleys of Afghanistan and explode indiscriminately, maiming or killing untold numbers of innocent people. Instead, IEDs are deliberately constructed explosive devices planted in specific locations. They are designed, at a minimum, to cripple a vehicle or, at maximum, to kill."

First, a bomb is a bomb is a bomb and a mine (a buried bomb) is a mine is a mine. I doubt the soldiers killed, maimed or watching their friends die care a whit whether the mine or bomb was "improvised" (read homemade) or bought off the shelf. Other than the fact homemade bombs and mines may not be quite as uniformly standard or deadly as mass manufactured ones, there is no practical difference. The things are deadly and are meant to be. So what is that nonsense about "IEDs are deliberately constructed. . ."? Of course they are; so too are manufactured mines! This isn't good reporting, it's passing on of mindless propaganda that says nothing except for the tacit message that the people planting these things have evil intentions. Heck, they're actually targeting their victims by, heaven forbid, planting them "in specific locations." What kind of fighters would they be if they didn't do that? It is a war, both sides do such things!

Foggier still

What about those "mines" said to be sown by the millions in deserts and valleys and which explode "indiscriminately" to claim "innocent" victims? Never mind questioning the info presented as fact, this sentence logically implies that the homemade bombs, unlike off the shelf mines, actually have the power of discrimination and will only blow up and kill Canadian or NATO soldiers, never ever claiming an "innocent" victim. It is nonsense! Any person or vehicle, military or not, that hits a homemade mine will trigger it. And do we really believe those fighting our guys are randomly seeding the deserts with mines, not once thinking about where to put them so their enemies will stumble on them? I don't!

Readers beware. It pays to think about what one reads, to truly understand what is being said and to figure out what value it has. In this case, that story presented by an independent news organization nevertheless managed to be little more than, at best, nonsense, and, at worst, propaganda.

The last word

Here is Jacques Ellul, French philosopher:

"The goal of modern propaganda is no longer to transform opinion but to arouse an active and mythical belief."

n Lex Talk! is researched and written by Times & Transcript editorial page editor Norbert Cunningham. It appears in this space every Monday.

# Psychological battle scars; Afghanistan's stress toll leaves military seeking better treatment options

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**PUBLICATION:** Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B1

**SOURCE:** CP

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press

**ILLUSTRATION:** Pte. William Salikin was seriously wounded by a suicide bombattack while on patrol in Afghanistan in January. He finally sought help last September for the psychological wounds he also suffered. The military hadn't told him psychiatric services were available, leaving him to find treatment on his own .

**WORD COUNT:** 2013

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half–hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

"They've made it impossible," David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said in an interview from his Edmonton home.

"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can't do your job no more.

"You come home and you almost feel like the army's turning its back on you."

The blunt criticism comes as the Canadian Forces begins to deploy a fresh batch of troops to the country's restive southern flank, and welcome home still more who have endured everything from the tedium of life on a military compound to the stress of heavy combat.

It's likely some of them will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as "operational stress injuries" – a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post–traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Numbers obtained by The Canadian Press show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post–deployment screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems.

Of those, 16 per cent showed signs of high–risk drinking and just over six per cent were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

Psychological battle scars; Afghanistan's stress toll leaves military seeking better treatment options\$8

The numbers aren't alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how negative combat experiences are contributing to mental health problems.

For example, only eight per cent of troops who completed post-deployment questionnaires after rotations in Kabul – a less hostile mission than the current operation in Kandahar – showed signs of mental health issues.

"The magnitude of the health impact is about what we'd expect given the nature of the deployment," Zamorski said in an interview from Ottawa where he conducts research on ways to mitigate adverse health consequences on members of the Forces

"Mental health problems are a major source of casualties these days."

PTSD is a complicated disorder characterized by what Zamorski described as "the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event." That can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can cause problems sleeping, expressing emotion, anger and avoidance of situations that remind someone suffering from PTSD of the traumatic event.

For David, the signs began surfacing about six months after he was back from what was his first deployment. His wife and family kept telling him he was different, that he didn't laugh like he once had and that he was hanging out only with the guys from his tour.

"You don't see the problems right away," he said. "My wife kept mentioning it. So I went civvy street [to get help] because I didn't want to go on base. We have tons of psychiatrists on base, but you won't see anybody going to them because you can't – it's during the workday and everyone sees you, so who wants that?"

But while David is reluctant to openly deal with a mental health disorder, former corporal Brian Stevens says his plea for help went unheeded by military superiors.

Stevens, a 10-year veteran of the Canadian Forces, served in Afghanistan from August 2005 to March 2006. It was a rude awakening for the soldier from a small town in Nova Scotia, who on his first overseas deployment spent much of his time away from the main Kandahar base and taking fire while driving the area's treacherous roads. Witnessing the extreme poverty and dismal humanitarian situation didn't make it easier.

When he returned home, he displayed the telltale signs of a stress injury. He was irritable, couldn't sleep, flew into rages and became indifferent to most things, especially the authority of the military. Soon he was drinking heavily and racing down rural highways with a beer between his legs.

That summer, he hit rock bottom, indulging in a panoply of drugs that included intravenous cocaine, Dilaudid, OxyContin and morphine – drugs he insists he had never tried before.

"I never thought I'd stick a needle in my arm, but when I came home I did," he said from Edmonton, where he was recently living after being released from the military.

"I went right off the rails. They didn't know how to deal with me, you know: 'How do we deal with a junkie?' There was nothing in the rule book, so they didn't do nothing."

An already bad situation grew worse when he and four other soldiers at CFB Gagetown, N.B., were charged drug trafficking. Stevens denies selling drugs, but is facing a court martial on Sept. 11 and could be sent to prison if convicted on the four counts against him – a place not unfamiliar to him.

Stevens, 32, landed in a military prison in Edmonton for 30 days last Christmas for repeatedly going absent without leave. He had already spent time in a prison facility at his base at Gagetown for a similar offence. It



was in Edmonton where he says a physician diagnosed him with PTSD.

He claims he begged his bosses to lock him up in Edmonton, hoping it might help him kick a habit that he says had eaten up about \$100,000 and killed his career.

"I said, 'Do something, send me to jail – I'm going to be dead in a month if you don't do something,' " he said. "Prison was my only way to get help. I said if that's the only thing you've got, I'll take it. It's pretty sad that a soldier has to ask to go to jail."

Zamorski, who couldn't comment on Stevens's case, insisted people seeking help will usually get it, but that soldiers also have to be held accountable for their behaviour.

"No system is perfect," he said. "Some people are very difficult to help for a lot of reasons."

The military says it has gone to great lengths to make sure soldiers are as prepared as they can be before they deploy to deal with stress injuries as they develop. Officials have also added several screening steps when soldiers return to help identify signs of stress disorders.

Troops are briefed in theatre before they return to Canada on what it will be like adjusting to life at home and back in the garrison. All soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days have to complete a detailed questionnaire that can indicate if they might have an operational stress injury. And they are supposed to undergo an interview with a health professional. If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says they can take advantage of several resources on and off base.

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country. And Ottawa has pledged to boost the number of mental health workers to more than 400 by 2009.

Some soldiers are also now trained in identifying potential stress problems so they can offer peer support while overseas.

"I'm proud that we really are doing the very best we can to take care of people who serve the country," he said. "Not that we don't have some work to do in terms of combating stigma in particular, but we have mechanisms to try to identify people early and we've got multiple mechanisms for care."

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview, raising the likelihood that some are falling through the cracks.

Out of about 4,800 people who had returned from Afghanistan and were required to have the screening, 2,900 were still due for it and only 1,257 had completed the questionnaire.

The reason for the low numbers?

"The units are too busy doing other things, like getting ready for the next operation," said Zamorski.

David recognized that while officials are trying to help, they're not making time for soldiers to seek treatment or even be evaluated. "We're just so busy training that it's almost impossible to hold on to the guys and make sure they're OK," he said. "There's not enough connection after you get back because we're just too busy."

Despite the growing pains in the Forces' expanded mental-health program, some soldiers praise the military for finally improving a system that has been widely criticized for its neglect of soldiers' welfare.

When Cpl. Will Salikin returned to Canada from Afghanistan after his deployment last July he was in a drug-induced coma with massive head injuries, a host of other health problems and only sketchy memories of the moments before a bomb hurled him through the air.

He had been travelling west in a convoy from the Kandahar Airfield on Jan. 15, 2007, when a suicide bomber rammed his light-armoured jeep, detonating rockets and "throwing it up in the air and across the street." The blast killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry and seriously injured his section mates, leaving one of them a double amputee.

Salikin, now back at his base in Edmonton, awoke at the University of Alberta Hospital with a shattered radius and ulna, burns, compromised movement in his right side, no recollections of the incident, slight neurological issues and a bacteria common to Afghanistan.

The 24 year old spent more than a month in hospital recovering from his physical wounds, but soon began to wonder if he was in need of help for more elusive issues that had begun to reshape his personality.

At home, little things like the way his fiancée placed the coffee table next to the sofa would enrage him. He no longer wanted to hang out with his many friends. He began harbouring grudges over trivial annoyances. And every morning he would awake exhausted at 4:30 a.m. "Before my accident, I was a pretty laid-back person. Now I will fly off the handle for absolutely no reason whatsoever," he said in an interview.

"I would say that I'm significantly different now. I used to be a person who could make friends with everyone easily. Now, I'd rather hang around by myself. I'm not interested in friends."

Salikin, who was with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, finally sought help last September when he went to a psychiatrist on the base. The military hadn't indicated the service was available, leaving him on his own to find treatment.

"That's where the army dropped the ball. Nothing really was offered to me. I had to seek it out myself, but then they were fully helpful," he said. "Hopefully no one else has the same experience of having to walk through everything by themselves."

He ended up seeing a psychiatrist about twice a week to work on issues his doctor says could be linked to PTSD or another stress injury. Salikin, who has shifted to headquarters for a desk job, said the quality of military care rivals civilian services.

The challenge for the Forces, as it is for the civilian world, is to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental-health illnesses in the military's tough-guy culture and the long held belief that psychological ailments equal weakness.

A directive contained in a recent Defence Department briefing note states that due to the effect of operational stress injuries, "all unit commanding officers will assume a pro-active role in promoting a culture of support, understanding and caring towards injured personnel."

Zamorski said the higher profile of mental health issues and treatment options are helping reduce the stigma, but some soldiers don't believe it will ever be done away with entirely.

Post traumatic stress disorder

Symptoms: Irritability, anger, guilt, grief or sadness, emotional numbing, helplessness, loss of pleasure derived from familiar activities, difficulty feeling happy, difficulty experiencing loving feelings, fatigue, insomnia, vulnerability to illness.

Psychological battle scars; Afghanistan's stress toll leaves military seeking better treatment options

Definition: PTSD is described as a complicated disorder characterized by the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event, such as rape, warfare or the threat of physical harm. That can be in the form of nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can lead to problems sleeping, expressing emotion and avoidance of situations that remind sufferers of the traumatic event.

Number of cases: Of 1,300 Canadian soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems. Just over six per cent of those were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

# Is NATO getting the message?

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**PUBLICATION:** Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Forum

**PAGE:** 5

**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press

**ILLUSTRATION:** Dennis (second from left) and Juanita Bartsch (second from right) follow the casket of their son, Cpl. Cole Bartsch, who was killed on July 4, 2007, while serving in Afghanistan.

**WORD COUNT:** 494

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The following editorial was published by the Winnipeg Free Press on July 20.

Canada is contributing just about as much as it can to the war in Afghanistan and to rebuilding that shattered country. Not every nation that should be doing something can make the same claim.

Canadians have understood for some time that their troops are bearing a disproportionate part of the load there, and suffering a disproportionate part of the casualties as a result. Prime Minister Stephen Harper underlined that while on a tour of Latin America, an indication of how the Afghan war is never far from Canadian minds.

Only increased participation by other NATO countries offers a hope of victory in Afghanistan, he said.

Canada is there today because Afghanistan yesterday was a safe haven for terrorists. It will be a safe haven for terrorists again if the war is not successfully prosecuted. "I don't think it's an option for Canada or anybody else to close our eyes and pretend there aren't severe problems in other parts of the world."

A Strategic Counsel poll done for the Globe and Mail/CTV News last week indicated that although Canadians are deeply divided about the war, a large majority – 72 per cent – recognize the truth of what Harper is saying and believe that a loss in Afghanistan would result in a greater threat of terrorist attacks on Canada and other Western nations.

Two other reports also support Canada's position that NATO needs to do more.

Britain's senior military officers warned of a potential "strategic failure" in Afghanistan unless the United States and Britain remain focused on the problem there and other NATO members start to step up their contribution to the war effort there.

Aside from Canada, Britain, the U.S. and the Netherlands, most members of the alliance have been delinquent or passive in their participation. A loss in Afghanistan, the defence officials warned, poses a greater threat to international security than Iraq.

That was quickly reinforced by a British parliamentary report that predicted the Afghanistan campaign will collapse unless NATO nations increase their contribution. The message here is utterly clear. As Harper said, "Afghanistan is a daunting challenge, but if the international community really works together, we can make progress in that country to the point that it becomes a functioning nation, one that will not slip back into the status of being ... a threat to the security of the planet."

That threat, as this week's National Intelligence Estimate in the United States warned, is increased by the al-Qaida presence in Pakistan, which not only exacerbates the problem in Iraq and fuels the war in Afghanistan, but increases the danger of terror attacks in the U.S. and, by association, Canada.

That is a message that Canada has been sending to NATO for years and that perhaps NATO is beginning to get. It is a message that Canadians also need to send to themselves. Too much is at stake in Afghanistan, too much Canadian blood has been spilled there, for this country to lose its nerve now.

# WORLD

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** SpeedRead

**PAGE:** B6

**WORD COUNT:** 150

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said Sunday. Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region. / A5

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan villagers found Sunday the body of a German aid worker kidnapped in southern Afghanistan, a police chief said, while a delegation of South Korean officials arrived a day before a purported deadline set this evening for 23 Korean hostages. The body of the German was found in southern Wardak province, where two Germans and five Afghans were kidnapped on Wednesday, said provincial police chief Mohammad Hewas Mazlum. / A5

# Build a real Afghan army

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**BYLINE:** Scott Taylor

**WORD COUNT:** 669

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RECENT STATEMENTS by Gen. Rick Hillier, the chief of defence staff, would indicate that the Canadian Forces have developed an exit strategy for Afghanistan.

According to Gen. Hillier, if the Forces are to successfully complete their mission by the politically agreed-upon date of February 2009, we must refocus our efforts from combat operations to training the Afghan National Army up to a state of self-sufficiency. Until now, Canada has contributed a small number of trainers to the Kabul Military Training Centre and some personnel to the Operational Monitoring Liaison Teams. However, the vast majority of our expeditionary force is deployed in support of NATO combat operations against Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan.

The key to successfully withdrawing the bulk of our troops by 2009 will be the ability of the Afghan National Army to step up and assume responsibility for security operations. At present, the army consists of about 35,000 troops. The goal, according to the White House's latest appraisal, is to double the size of this force to 70,000, at which point President George W. Bush predicts it will become a stand-alone military force.

To accomplish this rapid expansion, the training centre is now crunching out 1,200 new Afghan soldiers every month. While on paper this may seem like a significant accomplishment, the fact is that the training and equipment provided to these recruits is third-rate at best.

From civvie street to front-line combat readiness, the average soldier in the Afghan army receives 17 weeks of instruction. While this may sound impressive, the average training day consists of little more than four hours of instruction divided into lessons translated from English into both Dari and Pashtu. The equipment and weaponry are cast-off junk from former Soviet donor countries, and the uniforms they receive are from U.S. Cold War stockpiles. The helmets, headgear and footwear are anything but uniform.

Non-commissioned officers are promoted from among those who show advanced aptitude during their basic recruit training and, as such, have no more experience than the troops they are to command upon graduation from the centre.

The British are responsible for providing an officer training program, which they have optimistically named Sandhurst-lite after the famous military academy in Camberley, England. Unfortunately, the fact that this compressed training course consists of just 12 weeks of instruction makes such a comparison ludicrous.

The original Sandhurst is limited to the best and the brightest of officer cadets, and successful graduates will receive their commission after 200 weeks of intense studies. By contrast, the poorly educated candidates at Sandhurst-lite are guaranteed an officer rank after just three months of training.

The rank and file has a similar no-fail standard at the centre. Unless a recruit is so witless that he poses an immediate danger to his superiors, self or comrades, he will become a qualified member of the army.

Beefing up the requisite training of the army and the officer corps along with investing real money into modern weaponry, uniforms and equipment would only be a first step in the process of making the Afghans self-sufficient.

Coalition forces are now responsible for providing all of the primary logistics for the fledgling army. As our trainers rapidly produce these light-infantry Afghan battalions, there needs to be a significant commitment made to training and equipping a capable service-support system. Medical personnel, engineers, logistics officers, communications technicians, intelligence operatives and pilots are not specialists you can spit out of a training centre after 17 weeks.

The training of such units will be far more time-consuming and costly than producing sheer numbers of light-infantry battalions. But until the international community addresses this requirement, the Afghan National Army will remain entirely dependent on foreign forces.

Real self-sufficiency for the army is the key to success in Afghanistan, and it's time we started to build a real Afghan army, rather than churning out cannon fodder at the rate of 1,200 a month. ( )



# Facing the battle after the war; Some survivors fall victim to alcoholism, post-traumatic stress disorder

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle-Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A6

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**ILLUSTRATION:** The first group of soldiers from Quebec arrived in Kandahar on July 17. More than 2,000 Quebec soldiers will be arriving in the next month to take over from the current rotation on the ground. Those who return will have endured everything from the tedium of life on a military compound to the stress of heavy combat. (STEPHANIE LEVITZ / CP)

**WORD COUNT:** 938

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half-hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

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"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can't do your job no more.

"You come home and you almost feel like the army's turning its back on you."

The blunt criticism comes as the Canadian Forces begins to deploy a fresh batch of troops to the country's restive southern flank, and welcome home still more who have endured everything from the tedium of life on a military compound to the stress of heavy combat.

It's likely some of them will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as "operational stress injuries" – a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Numbers obtained by The Canadian Press show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post-deployment screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems.

Of those, 16 per cent showed signs of high-risk drinking and just over six per cent were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

The numbers aren't alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how negative combat experiences are contributing to mental health problems.

For example, only eight per cent of troops who completed post-deployment questionnaires after rotations in Kabul – a less hostile mission than the current operation in Kandahar – showed signs of mental health issues.

"The magnitude of the health impact is about what we'd expect given the nature of the deployment," Zamorski said in an interview from Ottawa where he conducts research on ways to mitigate adverse health consequences on members of the Forces

"Mental health problems are a major source of casualties these days."

PTSD is a complicated disorder characterized by what Zamorski described as "the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event." That can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can cause problems sleeping, expressing emotion, anger and avoidance of situations that remind someone suffering from PTSD of the traumatic event.

Former corporal Brian Stevens says his plea for help went unheeded by military superiors.

Stevens, a 10-year veteran of the Canadian Forces, served in Afghanistan from August 2005 to March 2006. It was a rude awakening for the soldier from a small town in Nova Scotia, who on his first overseas deployment spent much of his time away from the main Kandahar base and taking fire while driving the area's treacherous roads. Witnessing the extreme poverty and dismal humanitarian situation didn't make it easier.

When he returned home, he displayed the telltale signs of a stress injury. He was irritable, couldn't sleep, flew into rages and became indifferent to most things, especially the authority of the military. Soon he was drinking heavily and racing down rural highways with a beer between his legs.

That summer, he hit rock bottom, indulging in a panoply of drugs that included intravenous cocaine, Dilaudid, OxyContin and morphine – drugs he insists he had never tried before.

"I never thought I'd stick a needle in my arm, but when I came home I did," he said from Edmonton, where he was recently living after being released from the military.

"I went right off the rails. They didn't know how to deal with me, you know: 'How do we deal with a junkie?' There was nothing in the rule book, so they didn't do nothing."

His mother Bonnie said she noticed marked changes in her son, who was once outgoing and talkative. He spent most of his time sleeping, became moody and withdrew into himself.

"He wouldn't get up out of bed in the morning to go to work and they'd send the military police and that wasn't like him at all," she said from her home in Salmon River.

"The military didn't seem to understand. He would go AWL and he wouldn't know why and all they'd do was throw him in jail instead of giving him the help he obviously needed."

An already bad situation grew worse when he and four other soldiers at CFB Gagetown were charged with trafficking in cocaine, ecstasy and marijuana. Stevens denies selling drugs, but is facing a court martial on Sept. 11 and could be sent to prison if convicted on the four counts against him – a place not unfamiliar to him.

Stevens, 32, landed in a military prison in Edmonton for 30 days last Christmas for repeatedly going absent

Facing the battle after the war; Some survivors fall victim to alcoholism, post-traumatic stress disorder

without leave. He had already spent time in a prison facility at his base at Gagetown for a similar offence. It was in Edmonton where he says a physician diagnosed him with PTSD.

He claims he begged his bosses to lock him up in Edmonton, hoping it might help him kick a habit that he says had eaten up about \$100,000 and killed his career.

"I said, 'Do something, send me to jail – I'm going to be dead in a month if you don't do something,'" he said. "Prison was my only way to get help. I said if that's the only thing you've got, I'll take it.

"It's pretty sad that a soldier has to ask to go to jail."

Zamorski, who couldn't comment on Stevens's case, insisted people seeking help will usually get it, but that soldiers also have to be held accountable for their behaviour.

"No system is perfect," he said. "Some people are very difficult to help for a lot of reasons."

'It's pretty sad that a soldier has to ask to go to jail.'

Former N.S. corporal

# About PTSD

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A6

**WORD COUNT:** 156

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Symptoms: Irritability, anger, guilt, grief or sadness, emotional numbing, helplessness, loss of pleasure derived from familiar activities, difficulty feeling happy, difficulty experiencing loving feelings, fatigue, insomnia, vulnerability to illness.

Definition: PTSD is described as a complicated disorder characterized by the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event, such as rape, warfare or the threat of physical harm. That can be in the form of nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can lead to problems sleeping, expressing emotion and avoidance of situations that remind sufferers of the traumatic event.

Number of cases: Of 1,300 Canadian soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems. Just over six per cent of those were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

The Canadian Press

# Body of kidnapped German aid worker found

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press

**WORD COUNT:** 296

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KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan villagers found Sunday the body of a German aid worker kidnapped in southern Afghanistan, a police chief said, while a delegation of South Korean officials arrived the day before a purported deadline this evening set for 23 Korean hostages.

The body of the German was found in southern Wardak province, where two Germans and five Afghans were kidnapped on Wednesday, said provincial police chief Mohammad Hewas Mazlum.

A purported Taliban spokesman said Saturday that militants shot and killed the Germans because Germany hadn't pledged to pull its 3,000 troops from Afghanistan. But Afghan and German officials said intelligence indicated that one died of a heart attack and the other was still alive.

Mazlum said he did not immediately know the cause of death of the German whose body was recovered.

The eight–man Korean delegation planned to meet with President Hamid Karzai and Afghanistan's foreign and interior ministers, said Sidney Serena, a political affairs officer at the Korean Embassy here.

A senior South Korean official said the team would negotiate with the Taliban through intermediaries. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The militants kidnapped the Koreans on Thursday while they were riding on a bus from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar.

A purported Taliban spokesman said Sunday that the hardline militia has extended its deadline for the lives of the Korean hostages until this evening to give negotiators more time.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the Taliban, said the militants were giving the Afghan and South Korean governments until 7 p.m. today to respond to their demand that 23 Taliban prisoners be freed in exchange for the Koreans' lives.

A police chief in Ghazni province said Afghan officials and elders had met with the kidnappers on Sunday to resolve the crisis. U.S. and Afghan troops also moved into the region in case military leaders call for a rescue operation.

# Afghan forces will be ready to take over next year, O'Connor tells CTV program; Afghan forces will be ready to take over next year, O'Connor tells CTV program

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**WORD COUNT:** 496

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OTTAWA – By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions – roughly 3,000 soldiers – will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three –stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired Sunday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role, thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in Sunday's interview: "We're hoping by the end of this rotation that's going in now – the so-called Van Doo rotation – we'll have about 3,000 Afghan (soldiers) operating within the Kandahar province. As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment – the Van Doos – are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle –hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Opposition to the war runs highest in Quebec, where a series of recent public opinion polls have shown a majority of people in favour of bringing the troops home.

Afghan forces will be ready to take over next year, O'Connor tells CTV program; Afghan forces will be ready

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and if O'Connor's prediction holds true it would see Canadian troops far less active in what could be the final year of the deployment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly said that he would only extend the Kandahar mission with the consensus of Parliament – something that appears unlikely with the Liberals calling for an end to the combat role on schedule, and the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois firmly opposed to an extension.

Last week, the defence committee of the British House of Commons released a report that cast doubt on the ability of the Afghan army to pick up the load, at least in the short-term.

Afghan forces will be ready to take over next year, O'Connor tells CTV program; Afghan forces will be ready

# How long should we stay in Afghanistan?; Police chief: Leaving before 2009 would be a mistake

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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	The Chronicle–Herald
<b>DATE:</b>	2007.07.23
<b>SECTION:</b>	World
<b>PAGE:</b>	A5
<b>SOURCE:</b>	The Canadian Press
<b>BYLINE:</b>	Martin Ouellet
<b>ILLUSTRATION:</b>	Sayed Aka Sakib, the new police chief of Kandahar province, says Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups. (Martin Ouellet / CP)
<b>WORD COUNT:</b>	359

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said Sunday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Sakib, who's been police chief for less than a month, told the Canadian Press in an interview at the Kandahar police headquarters that Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

His comments followed the recent kidnapping by Taliban militants of 23 South Korean aid workers while they were travelling to Kandahar from Kabul, and the kidnapping and slaying of two Germans, who along with five Afghan colleagues were abducted while working on a dam project.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp spike in violence recently, leading to a mounting number of civilian casualties. The deaths and injuries have sapped support for foreign troops and the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Sixty-six Canadian military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since the start of the mission in 2002. Of those, 24 have died as a result of improvised explosive devices. One-third of the fatalities have taken place this year alone.

The mounting death toll has renewed the political debate back home over the mission's future, with the opposition parties urging the government to inform NATO allies that Canada will not be renewing its combat commitment after 2009.

"It's a mistake," said Sakib.

Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures calling on the government to recall its troops, Sakib said.

"What's happening here, it's not just an Afghan problem. It's an international problem. What is happening here could happen elsewhere," Sakib said through an interpreter.

"Terrorism could easily make its way to Canada, in the same way it came to the United States, if the work here is not completed."



Sakib said that 30 years of war, guerrilla warfare and tyrannical rule has left Afghanistan in shambles. Sakib predicted it will take 15 to 20 years before the country can hope to regain control of its destiny.

Until then, the task at hand is to rebuild the country's education and health systems as well as infrastructure and economy. A well-equipped and well-trained Afghan army is also key, the police chief said.

# WE ASKED: What is your view on Canada's role in Afghanistan?

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Features

**PAGE:** C5

**COLUMN:** Listen up!

**WORD COUNT:** 430

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Alyssa Wooldridge Grace Christian school

I'm not sure of all the reasons Canadian soldiers are in Afghanistan; therefore it is difficult to take a stand one way or another. I do know our brave soldiers are daily risking their lives for a cause they believe in and they deserve our respect and support.

Heather Ross Souris regional high school

Canada is supposed to be a country of peace. I believe that Canada should be in the country as peacekeepers, not fighters. The 'axes of evil' is totally ridiculous wordplay. I think we should either be helping out in a peaceful manner or not be there at all.

Martha Dougan Montague regional high school

I feel Canada's peacekeeping efforts should continue in the Middle East. Providing aid to countries in need is an honourable thing to do, however serious precautions have to be taken to ensure that we do not end up fighting another country's controversial war.

Chris Millman Westisle composite high school

I believe Canada's peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan is a light in a very dark place. Canada is doing its part in the war while taking care of people's needs on both sides.

Joe MacMillan Colonel Gray high school

My feelings vary. My friend's father was murdered by the Taliban and Peter MacKay provided multiple reasons Canada should stay in Afghanistan. Yet, I'm not pro-war and I think it's greatly ironic that it takes war to bring peace. So I am stuck in the middle of this situation.

Brittany Rojas Kinkora regional high school

Canada should not be invading Afghanistan territory. Neither should the U.S. be trying to dominate something that doesn't belong to them. Afghanistan has its own cultural views and we need to learn to accept them and they have to deal with their own issues.

David Parker Colonel Gray high school

Canada has no business in Afghanistan, just as the U.S. has no business in Iraq. Canada entered Afghanistan to remove the Taliban and set up another government. People may tell me that I should support our troops.

Well, I say, support our troops –bring them home!

Laura Brown Kensington intermediate senior high school

If the war is justifiable and if Canada has the means to help, we should. I hope the leaders are making the right decisions and we`re not putting our soldiers' lives on the line without good reason. I believe we must support our troops and pray for their safe return.

Stephanie Ann Kelly Morell regional high school

I support the war and the efforts of the Canadian soldiers. The accomplishments of our soldiers should be recognized. They continue to risk their lives to improve the living conditions of the Afghan people. However, I regret to see the growing number of Canadian casualties.

# Canadian military presence past 2009 required: Kandahar police; Newly appointed chief urges NATO?countries to stay however long it takes to quell terrorist threat

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B8

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Sakib

**WORD COUNT:** 361

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties, an implausible goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition.

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Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures calling on the government to recall its troops, Sakib said.

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Sakib said that 30 years of war, guerrilla warfare and tyrannical rule has left Afghanistan in shambles. In his eyes, Sakib predicted, it will take 15 to 20 years before the country can hope to regain control of its destiny.

# Canadian troops liable to take back seat in Kandahar next winter; Defence minister tells news show that Canada will turn over fighting to Afghan troops

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A9

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**ILLUSTRATION:** Gordon O'Connor

**WORD COUNT:** 403

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions – roughly 3,000 soldiers – will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

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In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

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# Canada's odd silence on Taliban dead

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Opinion

**PAGE:** A7

**COLUMN:** Political analysis

**BYLINE:** Martin, Don

**DATELINE:** GHORAK, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 607

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One of the creaking, groaning, museum-ready Leopards the Canadians use as tanks over here was having another fried engine replaced in the middle of nowhere this week when an approaching car got a bit too close to the idling convoy.

The driver ignored soldiers waving it a safe distance away and a warning shot was fired at a spot 100 metres in front of the overcrowded vehicle, a message received to the sound of car brakes screeching to a halt in a cloud of dust.

This was the only time a Canadian soldier in the huge convoy had fired off a round in the almost two weeks we were on the road – and even then the soldier got a tongue-lashing from the commanding officer for shooting without sufficient cause. But soldiers told me they could empathize with the itchy trigger finger. Most have spent almost six months in Afghanistan without taking a single shot in anger. They can't believe how little combat they've seen.

This might be a good thing for their families, but the delicate question needs to be asked. This six-month rotation has lost 22 of its finest to the insurgency. How many Taliban has it killed?

The short answer from the Canadian military is odd: no comment. They won't disclose precise numbers, approximate numbers, reveal whether the Taliban toll is single digits, double digits or in the hundreds. Just tell me we've killed more of them than they've killed of our soldiers, I plead. Sorry, battle group spokesman Capt. Martell Thompson says, we don't discuss enemy numbers.

Military officials suggested the Afghan army may have a guesstimate, but cautioned it would be outrageously inflated for propaganda value.

The justification for the secrecy-shrouded death toll is that Canada doesn't want to get into a body count competition with the Taliban, the theory being they'd seek to avenge our tally by going after more Canadian soldiers.

That only works if the Taliban can kill at will – stamp their feet in anger after reading the claim in a Canadian newspaper, wave their rocket-propelled grenade launchers in the air and unleash an overnight massacre to even the score.

Sorry, no way. If they could wipe out a platoon tomorrow, they'd do it, whether we'd killed 10 or 10,000 of their extremist brethren.

My theory, after two weeks of monitoring the Canadian deployment's activities via radio, is there simply isn't a whack of Taliban-hunting going on anywhere in Kandahar right now – subject to change without notice.



This partly reflects Canada's changing role from that of military force attacking on its own initiative to that of assisting Afghan soldiers enforce their combat priorities. Even so, Canadians have just two confirmed and photographed Taliban kills to their credit in the past month, a sobering contrast to nine fallen soldiers at the hands of insurgents during the same time frame.

Just this week, 17 Afghan police officers were killed in various hot spots throughout the country, compared to only four dead Taliban.

There have got to be more enemy casualties, of course. Informed observers note Taliban fighters turned into a pink mist by aircraft bombing runs are not counted, although a bombed corpse is just as legitimately dead as a bullet-ridden one, in my view.

And, as someone now sleeping perhaps a hundred metres from the main Kandahar military runway, I can confirm there are a helluva lot of fighter jets with bombs taking off that no amount of earplug stuffing can muffle.

Still, it seems bizarre that Canada acknowledges Afghan police and army casualties promptly and moves as quickly as possible to name its military dead, yet success in enemy extermination is a tightly held secret.

If Canada only highlights its own victims and keeps the enemy casualty count under wraps, one might argue the Taliban are at least winning the propaganda war, if not the military conflict.

Canwest News Service

# A victim of combat debate fatigue

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Editorial

**PAGE:** A6

**COLUMN:** Letters to the editor

**WORD COUNT:** 230

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Editor:

I am tired. Not physically tired, I am tired of being told I am intolerant as a man in a turban mouths off about my wife and I speaking French and I admonish him. I am tired of being accused of not supporting our troops when I criticize our government's policy in Afghanistan. I fail to see the logic. The relationship dictates that our military simply follows civilian – elected officials' – orders. They must, and some die. To blame our troops would be ridiculous.

I am tired of being treated as a criminal at the airport if I try to go home for a friend's funeral. I tire of not wearing a cross on my lapel for fear it might offend someone who is standing beside me, her face covered with a veil or another with a obligatory kerchief over her head.

I am tired of those who justify invading another nation by saying we must eliminate a training ground for terrorism. Well, we can keep ourselves safer if we refuse to allow any suspicious person entry to Canada, period, and stop them before they arrive.

Why the sudden attack of tiredism on my part? My brother dug out an old news release and sent it to me, "Huge oil, gas resources found in northern Afghanistan," printed in the press shortly after the incursion.

So I am tired and confused as well, is it democracy or oil our troops are dying for?

Dan MacInnis Brampton, Ontario

# Military presence necessary: Kandahar police chief

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

**DATELINE:** Kandahar, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 528

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Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said Sunday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

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Sakib said that 30 years of war, guerrilla warfare and tyrannical rule has left Afghanistan in shambles. In his eyes, Sakib predicted, it will take 15 to 20 years before the country can hope to regain control of its destiny.

Until then, the task at hand is to rebuild the country's education and health systems as well as infrastructure and economy. A well equipped and well trained Afghan army is also key, the police chief said.

But those efforts will be in vain if the international community, which is heavily involved in reconstruction projects, decide to pack its bags and leave prematurely. By intending to remove its troops in February 2009, Canada is sending the wrong message, Sakib said.

Not everyone in Kandahar, however, shares his conviction.

Abdul Wasay says he won't miss the Canadian troops when they're gone.

"They've made some terrible mistakes recently. Innocent people, civilians were killed because of their mistakes," say Wasay, 38. "They should not stay here."

Ina Yatullah believes the opposite, convinced of the importance of Canadian military participation as part of the NATO's International Security Assistance Force, but has just one warning for the Canadian troops.

"The training given by the Canadian troops to the Afghan army is a good thing. But the Canadians must respect our customs, between us and them, there are huge differences. If they respect those differences, there won't be any problems here," he said.

# Change of heart; Memorial unveiled for Cpl. Jamie Murphy

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**SECTION:** Front

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** Paul Banks

**DATELINE:** Conception Harbour

**ILLUSTRATION:** Alice Murphy stands at the memorial honouring her son, Cpl. Jamie Murphy, who was killed Jan. 27th, 2004 by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan. The memorial was unveiled Sunday in Conception Harbour. – Photo by Rhonda Hayward/The Telegram

**WORD COUNT:** 621

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With a three-pillar monument unveiled Sunday, in memory of her son killed in action, Alice Murphy says she now has mixed feelings about Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

Yet, she still doesn't wish a child's desire to serve in the military on any other mother.

It was her son, Cpl. Jamie Murphy of Conception Harbour, who was the first Newfoundlander to die as part of the Canadian Force's Operation Athena.

A few hundred people gathered Sunday in the late soldier's hometown to take part in the ceremony meant to immortalize the 26-year-old.

His mother's public statements after his death in 2004 were visceral, saying then she believed Canada's troops should be pulled from Afghanistan.

She also did not want her son to join the Forces and pleaded with him not to do so, despite his passion for serving.

Three years later, that has changed for her somewhat.

"I guess so. But we can't do anything about it, can we? I'll never get Jamie back, and I'd rather have Jamie back than anything here today. But I am proud; very, very proud," Alice Murphy told The Telegram.

"He was a brave boy. He helped us. We should remember him, and be better people," she said.

"I wouldn't want my son to go over into it. But I'm after talking to some of the boys, and they say they're doing good. Because if they weren't over there, we may all get killed. So, they'll stay there for as long as they have to, I guess," she said.

Murphy was a member of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group when he was killed.

The young soldier was aboard an Iltis Jeep on a routine patrol less than a kilometre from the Canadian base in Kabul Jan. 27, 2004, when a man with explosives strapped to his chest jumped aboard.

Murphy was killed instantly in the explosion that followed, while three others were injured, one of them another Newfoundlander, Cpl. Jeremy MacDonald of Burnt Islands.

Murphy was 10 days away from finishing his six-month tour of duty.

After he graduated from high school, he applied to both the Forces and a local trade school.

He decided to go with whichever called on him first.

He's now remembered as a devoted serviceman, who loved being a soldier.

The granite base of the memorial reads, "He gave his today for our tomorrow."

Planning a future

He and his girlfriend, Candace McCauley, were preparing to take possession of a house in Petawawa, Ont., when he was killed.

She, along with Murphy's mother and sister, Norma, and others were part of the wreath-laying ceremony after the monument was unveiled. John Gushue also walked with a wreath.

He spearheaded the project as part of a committee that felt the community needed to honour its lost military son, and for closure.

"The most important reason was to recognize the family. It was a terrible tragedy. It took a long while to get over it. This is the final stage for them, and for the community as well. It's something that should be done.

"It's a part of history, and a recording of it. It'll form a centrepiece around the dedication that's around this area for the military."

David Gushue knows the family well and lived a few doors down from them. But he said everyone in the community felt close to the Murphys.

"We all knew him. It's a close-knit community. And we all hurt when we heard he died. And because he was one of the first Newfoundlanders, it's a little more heartfelt," he said.

"I hope the monument inspires not to be afraid of what you believe in, especially for the young people. As they're growing up, they'll say, 'Look how famous he was. He was brave, and he did something for us.'"

Three years after his death, it was still a "hard day" for the family, as Jamie Murphy's sister put it.

Their mother teared up during the remembrance part of the ceremony, and friends and others of the community greeted her with consoling, open arms.

Part of those tears came from gratitude for what was done in her son's memory.

"It was excellent; couldn't have been any better. He'd be proud. He always said he was special, now he's very, very special," she said. "They wanted to do something special. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. They put a lot of work into it. They went door-to-door and did everything."

While not the first to die serving in Afghanistan, Murphy's death captured the attention of not only this province, but the nation.

More than 3,000 attended a memorial service in Ontario in 2004.

"Cpl. Jamie Murphy left an indelible mark on the province, the country and the world," said Col. Tony Stack of St. John's, the commander of 37 Canadian Brigade.

"With the many tributes, it's clear he had and continues to have a positive impact.

"Many only have the opportunity to read about history. Imagine being part of that history. Cpl. Jamie Murphy accomplished that."

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# Taliban vows to kill Korean hostages

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**SECTION:** News

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Color Photo: Han Jae-Ho, Reuters / South Koreans hold candles during an anti-war rally in Seoul yesterday demanding the safe return of 23 Christian hostages and the withdrawal of South Korean troops from Afghanistan. ;

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** Tom Coghlan

**SOURCE:** The Daily Telegraph, with files from news services

**WORD COUNT:** 628

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KABUL – Taliban fighters threatened to execute 23 South Korean Christians held captive in southern Afghanistan yesterday as United States and Afghan forces prepared for a possible rescue operation.

Afghan officials said troops had sealed off an area of the southern province of Ghazni, where they believe the hostages are being held. The Koreans were seized from a bus on the main Kabul-to-Kandahar highway on Thursday in the largest single abduction of foreigners since 2001.

"We know where the hostages are held, but since the kidnappers warned that they would kill them if we attack, we are waiting for the order," said General Mohammed Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the defence ministry.

U.S. forces said they would launch a rescue attempt only with the agreement of both the Afghan and South Korean governments. Of the 23 Koreans, 18 are reportedly women. All are Evangelical Christians, apparently visiting Afghanistan as missionaries. They work for a medical aid agency called Korean Action in Kandahar.

On Saturday, the Taliban demanded that Korea withdrew the 200 troops it has serving with the U.S.-led coalition forces in Afghanistan in exchange for the hostages' freedom.

When the Korean government responded that its troops were already due to leave at the end of the year, the Taliban issued a new demand for the release of 23 of its prisoners by last night.

A Korean negotiating team, including the country's deputy foreign minister, arrived in Kabul yesterday and said it had opened channels to the Taliban through tribal elders in Ghazni.

Last night the Taliban extended its deadline for the release of the prisoners in a message carried on its official Web site. "Since Korea has sent a delegation of eight people to negotiate for the release of their 23 nationals and has showed their readiness to solve the situation through local elders, the Taliban leadership council extended the deadline for another 24 hours," read the statement.

It warned the Korean delegates to accelerate their work or "they would be responsible for the bad consequences."

The new deadline is 7 p.m. Eastern time tonight.



The head of the Canadian military contingent based in Kandahar said yesterday the kidnapping is another sign the Taliban has been reduced to stealth-like tactics of desperation, namely roadside bombs and suicide attacks, to reassert itself.

"It clearly states the Taliban will do anything to try and drive foreigners out of this country," Brigadier-General Tim Grant said.

"It's only when the foreigners leave, be they military or civilian, that the Taliban believe they can retake control of this country. They are ruthless in that regard and have no qualms about killing civilians, be they Afghans or foreigners," Brig-Gen. Grant said.

The Korean hostages are members of a church involved in "short-term evangelistic and aid work" in southern Afghanistan, according to Joseph Park, the mission director of the Christian Council of Korea. However, Korean embassy officials "strongly reject" any suggestion that the hostages were trying to win converts.

Last summer, evangelists tried to hold a "peace festival" in Afghanistan. Some 1,200 Korean Christians arrived, sparking violent local protests and accusations that they were undertaking missionary work. All were deported for their own safety before the event could take place.

Afghan officials expressed astonishment and anger that the Korean party was apparently travelling in a bus on a dangerous road without the knowledge of the authorities. "They must have thought they are in Korea, not in war-torn Afghanistan," said the Ghazni provincial governor, Mirajuddin Pattan. "They did not contact us, police or the security forces for protection."

The standoff is one of two hostage crises in Afghanistan. The Taliban claims to have executed two German engineers kidnapped along with five Afghans last Wednesday.

"The Germans were executed an hour apart because the Afghan and German governments failed to contact us about our demands," said Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a known Taliban spokesman.

Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, had earlier rejected Taliban demands to withdraw Germany's 3,000 troops from Afghanistan.

The body of one German was reportedly found by Afghan police yesterday, although it was not clear if the man had been murdered.

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

# LET US DEAL WITH AL-QAEDA, PAKISTANI MINISTER WARNS U.S.

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: / Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri. ;

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON

**SOURCE:** Reuters

**WORD COUNT:** 278

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WASHINGTON –Pakistan hit back on Sunday at U.S. critics of its fight against terrorism, insisting its army was best suited to hunt for Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda terrorists Washington believes enjoy safe haven in Pakistani tribal areas near Afghanistan. Appearing on CNN's Late Edition, an angry Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri criticized talk of U.S. forces attacking al-Qaeda on Pakistani territory, warning that any incursion would alienate opinion in the predominantly Muslim U.S. ally against terrorism. "We are committed to controlling terrorism, and people in Pakistan get very upset when despite all the sacrifices that Pakistan has been making you get all these criticisms" in the press, he said in an interview from Lahore, Pakistan. "What I don't like is the tone that I am now hearing and that I am now reading in the American media," said Mr. Kasurik. Part of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate made public last week found a "persistent and evolving" threat to the United States from Islamist groups, especially al-Qaeda, which it said has become entrenched in Pakistan's North Waziristan, a tribal region near Afghanistan. Washington has been pressing Pakistan to do more against al-Qaeda in the border area and has not ruled out U.S. strikes. Mr. Kasuri told CNN talk of an al Qaeda "safe haven" in their country angered the Pakistanis, who have had 700 soldiers killed fighting militants in tribal areas.

**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; BOMBS; WAR; REPORTS

# Canadian troops likely to take a back seat in Kandahar next winter: O'Connor

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**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 661

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OTTAWA (CP) \_ By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions \_ roughly 3,000 soldiers \_ will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

``It was part of our plan to go through a three -stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired Sunday.

``When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role \_ thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in Sunday's interview: ``We're hoping by the end of this rotation that's going in now \_ the so-called Van Doo rotation \_ we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment \_ the Van Doos \_ are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle -hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Opposition to the war runs highest in Quebec, where a series of recent public opinion polls have shown a majority of people in favour of bringing the troops home.

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and if O' Connor's prediction holds true it would see Canadian troops far less active in what could be the final year of the deployment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly said that he would only extend the Kandahar mission with the consensus of Parliament \_ something that appears unlikely with the Liberals calling for an end to the combat role on schedule, and the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois firmly opposed to an extension.

Last week, the defence committee of the British House of Commons released a report that cast doubt on the ability of the Afghan army to pick up the load, at least in the short-term.

“They will be able to do much more by 2009, but their numbers are small.” James Arbuthnot, the chair of the British defence committee also told Question Period.

“We can rely on them more and more, but as I say, I don't think it is possible to put Western time scales on this. We are dealing with a country that has been at war for 30 years and which has never had the sort of government we are trying to help them build up. It's going to be a long-term project and we cannot be impatient. Impatience doesn't work in Afghanistan.

Arbuthnot said the British commitment, which now numbers 7,700 troops, lasts only until 2009, but there has been little talk of ending the commitment, the way there has been in Canada.

“The British are committed to Afghanistan only so far as 2009 ourselves, but in reality, I am sure, we will not stop because if we did stop it would undermine the achievements we have made and the sacrifices that we've made,” he said.

# Afghanistan's stress toll leaves military seeking better treatment options

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**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 2062

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half-hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

“They’ve made it impossible,” David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said in an interview from his Edmonton home.

“I had to drop my treatment because I couldn’t get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can’t do your job no more.

“You come home and you almost feel like the army’s turning its back on you.”

The blunt criticism comes as the Canadian Forces begins to deploy a fresh batch of troops to the country’s restive southern flank, and welcome home still more who have endured everything from the tedium of life on a military compound to the stress of heavy combat.

It’s likely some of them will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as “operational stress injuries” — a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Numbers obtained by The Canadian Press show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post-deployment screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems.

Of those, 16 per cent showed signs of high-risk drinking and just over six per cent were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

The numbers aren’t alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how negative combat experiences are contributing to mental health problems.

For example, only eight per cent of troops who completed post-deployment questionnaires after rotations in Kabul — a less hostile mission than the current operation in Kandahar — showed signs of mental health issues.

“The magnitude of the health impact is about what we’d expect given the nature of the deployment,” Zamorski said in an interview from Ottawa where he conducts research on ways to mitigate adverse health

consequences on members of the Forces.

“Mental health problems are a major source of casualties these days.”

PTSD is a complicated disorder characterized by what Zamorski described as “the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event.” That can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can cause problems sleeping, expressing emotion, anger and avoidance of situations that remind someone suffering from PTSD of the traumatic event.

For David, the signs began surfacing about six months after he was back from what was his first deployment. His wife and family kept telling him he was different, that he didn't laugh like he once had and that he was hanging out only with the guys from his tour.

“You don't see the problems right away,” he said. “My wife kept mentioning it. So I went civvy street (to get help) because I didn't want to go on base. We have tons of psychiatrists on base, but you won't see anybody going to them because you can't \_ it's during the workday and everyone sees you, so who wants that?”

But while David is reluctant to openly deal with a mental health disorder, former corporal Brian Stevens says his plea for help went unheeded by military superiors.

Stevens, a 10-year veteran of the Canadian Forces, served in Afghanistan from August 2005 to March 2006. It was a rude awakening for the soldier from a small town in Nova Scotia, who on his first overseas deployment spent much of his time away from the main Kandahar base and taking fire while driving the area's treacherous roads. Witnessing the extreme poverty and dismal humanitarian situation didn't make it easier.

When he returned home, he displayed the telltale signs of a stress injury. He was irritable, couldn't sleep, flew into rages and became indifferent to most things, especially the authority of the military. Soon he was drinking heavily and racing down rural highways with a beer between his legs.

That summer, he hit rock bottom, indulging in a panoply of drugs that included intravenous cocaine, Dilaudid, OxyContin and morphine \_ drugs he insists he had never tried before.

“I never thought I'd stick a needle in my arm, but when I came home I did,” he said from Edmonton, where he was recently living after being released from the military.

“I went right off the rails. They didn't know how to deal with me, you know: ‘How do we deal with a junkie?’ There was nothing in the rule book, so they didn't do nothing.”

His mother Bonnie said she noticed marked changes in her son, who was once outgoing and talkative. He spent most of his time sleeping, became moody and withdrew into himself.

“He wouldn't get up out of bed in the morning to go to work and they'd send the military police and that wasn't like him at all,” she said from her home in Salmon River, N.S.

“The military didn't seem to understand. He would go AWOL and he wouldn't know why and all they'd do was throw him in jail instead of giving him the help he obviously needed.”

An already bad situation grew worse when he and four other soldiers at CFB Gagetown, N.B., were charged with trafficking in cocaine, ecstasy and marijuana. Stevens denies selling drugs, but is facing a court martial on Sept. 11 and could be sent to prison if convicted on the four counts against him \_ a place not unfamiliar to him.

Stevens, 32, landed in a military prison in Edmonton for 30 days last Christmas for repeatedly going absent without leave. He had already spent time in a prison facility at his base at Gagetown for a similar offence. It was in Edmonton where he says a physician diagnosed him with PTSD.

He claims he begged his bosses to lock him up in Edmonton, hoping it might help him kick a habit that he says had eaten up about \$100,000 and killed his career.

“I said, ‘Do something, send me to jail \_ I’m going to be dead in a month if you don’t do something,’” he said. “Prison was my only way to get help. I said if that’s the only thing you’ve got, I’ll take it.

“It’s pretty sad that a soldier has to ask to go to jail.”

Zamorski, who couldn’t comment on Stevens’s case, insisted people seeking help will usually get it, but that soldiers also have to be held accountable for their behaviour.

“No system is perfect,” he said. “Some people are very difficult to help for a lot of reasons.”

The military says it has gone to great lengths to make sure soldiers are as prepared as they can be before they deploy to deal with stress injuries as they develop. Officials have also added several screening steps when soldiers return to help identify signs of stress disorders.

Troops are briefed in theatre before they return to Canada on what it will be like adjusting to life at home and back in the garrison.

All soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days have to complete a detailed questionnaire that can indicate if they might have an operational stress injury. And they are supposed to undergo an interview with a health professional. If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says they can take advantage of several resources on and off base.

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country. And Ottawa has pledged to boost the number of mental health workers to more than 400 by 2009.

Some soldiers are also now trained in identifying potential stress problems so they can offer peer support while overseas.

“I’m proud that we really are doing the very best we can to take care of people who serve the country,” he said. “Not that we don’t have some work to do in terms of combating stigma in particular, but we have mechanisms to try to identify people early and we’ve got multiple mechanisms for care.”

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview, raising the likelihood that some are falling through the cracks.

Out of about 4,800 people who had returned from Afghanistan and were required to have the screening, 2,900 were still due for it and only 1,257 had completed the questionnaire.

The reason for the low numbers?

“The units are too busy doing other things, like getting ready for the next operation,” said Zamorski.

David recognized that while officials are trying to help, they’re not making time for soldiers to seek treatment or even be evaluated.

“We're just so busy training that it's almost impossible to hold on to the guys and make sure they're OK,” he said. “There's not enough connection after you get back because we're just too busy.”

Despite the growing pains in the Forces' expanded mental–health program, some soldiers praise the military for finally improving a system that has been widely criticized for its neglect of soldiers' welfare.

When Cpl. Will Salikin returned to Canada from Afghanistan after his deployment last July he was in a drug–induced coma with massive head injuries, a host of other health problems and only sketchy memories of the moments before a bomb hurled him through the air.

He had been travelling west in a convoy from the Kandahar Airfield on Jan. 15, 2006, when a suicide bomber rammed his light–armoured jeep, detonating rockets and “throwing it up in the air and across the street.” The blast killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry and seriously injured his section mates, leaving one of them a double amputee.

Salikin, now back at his base in Edmonton, awoke at the University of Alberta Hospital with a shattered radius and ulna, burns, compromised movement in his right side, no recollections of the incident, slight neurological issues and a bacteria common to Afghanistan.

The 24 year old spent more than a month in hospital recovering from his physical wounds, but soon began to wonder if he was in need of help for more elusive issues that had begun to reshape his personality.

At home, little things like the way his fiancée placed the coffee table next to the sofa would enrage him. He no longer wanted to hang out with his many friends. He began harbouring grudges over trivial annoyances. And every morning he would awake exhausted at 4:30 a.m.

“Before my accident, I was a pretty laid–back person. Now I will fly off the handle for absolutely no reason whatsoever,” he said in an interview.

“I would say that I'm significantly different now. I used to be a person who could make friends with everyone easily. Now, I'd rather hang around by myself. I'm not interested in friends.”

Salikin, who was with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, finally sought help last September when he went to a psychiatrist on the base. The military hadn't indicated the service was available, leaving him on his own to find treatment.

“That's where the army dropped the ball. Nothing really was offered to me. I had to seek it out myself, but then they were fully helpful,” he said. “Hopefully no one else has the same experience of having to walk through everything by themselves.”

He ended up seeing a psychiatrist about twice a week to work on issues his doctor says could be linked to PTSD or another stress injury. Salikin, who has shifted to headquarters for a desk job, said the quality of military care rivals civilian services.

The challenge for the Forces, as it is for the civilian world, is to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental–health illnesses in the military's tough–guy culture and the long held belief that psychological ailments equal weakness.

A directive contained in a recent Defence Department briefing note states that due to the effect of operational stress injuries, “all unit commanding officers will assume a pro–active role in promoting a culture of support, understanding and caring towards injured personnel.”



Zamorski said the higher profile of mental health issues and treatment options are helping reduce the stigma, but some soldiers don't believe it will ever be done away with entirely.

“We've come a long way, but we're still a bunch of guys in the army,” said David, who's reconsidering his future in the Forces. “It's half our fault too. I was just too proud to go. We do have avenues, we just got to start taking them.”

But for those like Stevens, now drug-free and who was recently working as an attendant at an ice arena, pride had little to do with his inability to get the help he needed.

“There should be safeguards in place to prevent the escalation of it, like what happened to me. I should have been stopped long before I was,” he said.

“I was a great soldier the first nine years. I was a proud soldier. I was in the infantry and did what I had to do and in the end I lost out. And I'm still losing out.”

# Kandahar police chief says Canadian military presence past 2009 necessary

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**DATE:** 2007.07.22

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE JUSTICE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 539

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) \_ Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said Sunday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Sakib, who's been police chief for less than a month, told the Canadian Press in an interview at the Kandahar police headquarters that Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

His comments followed the recent kidnapping by Taliban militants of 23 South Korean aid workers while they were travelling to Kandahar from Kabul, and the kidnapping and slaying of two Germans, who along with five Afghan colleagues were abducted while working on a dam project.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp spike in violence recently, leading to a mounting number of civilian casualties \_ deaths and injuries sapping support for foreign troops and the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Sixty-six Canadian military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since the start of the mission in 2002. Of those, 24 have died as a result of improvised explosive devices. One-third of the fatalities have taken place this year alone.

The mounting death toll has renewed the political debate back home over the mission's future, with the opposition parties urging the government to inform NATO allies that Canada will not be renewing its combat commitment after 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties, an implausible goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition.

``It's a mistake," said Sakib.

Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures calling on the government to recall its troops, Sakib said.

``What's happening here, it's not just an Afghan problem. It's an international problem. What is happening here could happen elsewhere," Sakib said through an interpreter.

``Terrorism could easily make its way to Canada, in the same way it came to the United States, if the work here is not completed."

Sakib said that 30 years of war, guerrilla warfare and tyrannical rule has left Afghanistan in shambles. In his eyes, Sakib predicted, it will take 15 to 20 years before the country can hope to regain control of its destiny.

Until then, the task at hand is to rebuild the country's education and health systems as well as infrastructure and economy. A well equipped and well trained Afghan army is also key, the police chief said.

But those efforts will be in vain if the international community, which is heavily involved in reconstruction projects, decide to pack its bags and leave prematurely. By intending to remove its troops in February 2009, Canada is sending the wrong message, Sakib said.

Not everyone in Kandahar, however, shares his conviction.

Abdul Wasay says he won't miss the Canadian troops when they're gone.

``They've made some terrible mistakes recently. Innocent people, civilians were killed because of their mistakes," say Wasay, 38. ``They should not stay here."

Ina Yatullah believes the opposite, convinced of the importance of Canadian military participation as part of the NATO's International Security Assistance Force, but has just one warning for the Canadian troops.

``The training given by the Canadian troops to the Afghan army is a good thing. But the Canadians must respect our customs, between us and them, there are huge differences. If they respect those differences, there won't be any problems here," he said.

# Taliban extends deadline for 23 South Korean hostages in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.07.22  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLITICS  
DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 703

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KABUL (AP) \_ A purported Taliban spokesman said Sunday the hardline militia had extended by 24 hours the deadline for the Afghan government to trade captured militants for 23 South Korean hostages.

Afghan elders leading the hostage negotiations met with the kidnappers and reported that the Koreans were healthy, said Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi, the police chief of Qarabagh district in Ghazni district, where the Koreans were kidnapped Thursday.

He said the delegation made progress in their talks, but the Afghan military said Afghan and U.S. troops had ``surrounded" the region in case the government decides the military should move in.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the Taliban, said the militants were giving the Afghan and South Korean governments until 10:30 a.m. EDT Monday to respond to their demand that 23 Taliban prisoners be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

``The Korean government should put pressure on the Afghan government to give a positive response to the Taliban's demands," Ahmadi told The Associated Press by satellite phone. ``They should try to solve things through negotiations in order to save the lives of the hostages and so they can get home without being harmed."

Neither the Afghan nor Korean governments have commented on the purported Taliban offer. A delegation of eight Korean officials arrived in the capital of Kabul on Sunday and met with President Hamid Karzai to discuss the crisis.

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said the troops positioned around the area where the Koreans were believed to be held could start a military operation to rescue them ``as soon as we receive the order."

But a U.S. spokesman said that appeared unlikely for the moment. ``We will only launch rescue operations or military action at the request of the Afghan and Korean governments," said Lt.-Col. David Accetta. ``We do not want to jeopardize the lives of the Korean civilians."

Villagers, meanwhile, found the body of a German construction worker who had been kidnapped in neighbouring Wardak province along with another German and five Afghans in a separate incident on Wednesday, provincial police chief Mohammad Hewas Mazlum said.

Ahmadi said Saturday that militants shot and killed the Germans because Berlin hadn't pledged to pull its 3,000 troops out of Afghanistan.

Afghan and German officials said intelligence indicated that one died of a heart attack and the other was still alive. But German Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Jaeger told AP in Berlin that the body had bullet wounds. He said the body had been brought to Kabul on Sunday night and would be transported to Germany

for an autopsy.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel vigorously defended Germany's troop deployment in Afghanistan, saying her government would not negotiate with the Taliban or pull out its soldiers.

“We will not react to the Taliban's demands. We will do everything responsibly, and we will not be blackmailed,” Merkel said on ARD public television.

Merkel said she did not have new information about the hostage situation, but that a government crisis team in Berlin “has worked intensively all day, and we're doing everything possible to save the life of the German citizen.”

The militants kidnapped the Koreans while they were riding on a bus from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar, where they live and work, some at medical facilities. It was the largest single abduction of foreigners since the 2001 fall of the hardline Taliban regime.

The 23 South Koreans, including 18 women, work at an aid organization in Kandahar, said Sidney Serena, a political affairs officer at the South Korean Embassy in Kabul.

Relatives in South Korea pressed their government to win the captives' safe release.

“Sister, I promise that I'll be good and take care of you. So please come back safely,” Lee Jung-hoon, younger brother of hostage Lee Jung-ran, told reporters as he held back tears.

“I would not really have any other wish ... if the Taliban send our family members home safely,” said Seo Jung-bae, father of two of the hostages, who gathered with relatives at a church in Bundang, just south of Seoul to watch television updates on the situation.

South Korea has about 200 troops serving with the 8,000-strong U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, largely working on humanitarian projects.

Earlier Sunday, the South Korean Defence Ministry said it has begun preparations to pull its troops out of Afghanistan by the end of this year as previously scheduled, stressing the process had begun well before the purported Taliban demand for their withdrawal.

# Germany–Terror

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**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 127

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BERLIN — A high ranking official in Germany is facing a higher risk of terror attacks from Islamic terrorists, including al–Qaida.

In an interview, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble is quoted as saying there have been many concrete indications Germany is increasingly in the sights of international terrorists.

He says that includes indications that suicide bombers could be sent to Germany, and that German institutions abroad could be targeted.

Another published report today claims German Islamists trained in terror camps in Pakistan re–entered Germany a few weeks ago.

In March, Islamic militants threatened an attack on Germany in a video.

Yesterday, a purported Taliban spokesman in Afghanistan said militants shot and killed two German hostages because Germany had not pledged to pull troops from Afghanistan.

But Afghan and German officials said intelligence indicated that one died of a heart attack and the other was still alive.

(AP)

RMo

# Afghan–Kidnappings–Update (adds Koreans negotiating)

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**DATE:** 2007.07.22

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 148

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KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan villagers have found the body of a German aid worker kidnapped in southern Afghanistan.

Police say the body was found near where two Germans and five Afghans were kidnapped on Wednesday.

The cause of death isn't immediately clear.

A purported Taliban spokesman yesterday said militants shot and killed them because Germany hadn't agreed to pull its troops from Afghanistan.

But Afghan and German officials said intelligence indicated one died of a heart attack and the other was still alive. Meanwhile, a delegation of South Korean officials arrived hours before a deadline set for 23 Korean hostages kidnapped Thursday from a bus. A senior official said the team would negotiate with the Taliban through intermediaries, who pledge to release the Koreans in exchange for 23 Afghan prisoners.

U–S and Afghan forces moved into the region where the Koreans are thought to be but military officials say they haven't started any offensive operations.

(AP)

clt

# What is post-traumatic stress disorder?

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
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**SECTION:** News  
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**SOURCE:** Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 142

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Some facts on post-traumatic stress disorder:

Symptoms: Irritability, anger, guilt, grief or sadness, emotional numbing, helplessness, loss of pleasure derived from familiar activities, difficulty feeling happy, difficulty experiencing loving feelings, fatigue, insomnia, vulnerability to illness.

Definition: It's a complicated disorder characterized by the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event, such as rape, warfare or threat of physical harm. It can take the form of nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can lead to problems sleeping, expressing emotion and avoidance of situations that remind sufferers of the event.

Number of cases: Of 1,300 Canadian soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan since 2005 and undergone screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of mental health problems. Just over 6 per cent of those were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.



# For some, home can be hell, too; War's toll continues for returning soldiers who struggle to find help for post-traumatic stress

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230094

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Ont

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A18

**ILLUSTRATION:** Jason Scott cp Cpl. Will Salikin, seen in Edmonton last week, sought psychiatric help after being injured in a suicide bombing. ;

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**SOURCE:** CANADIAN PRESS

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 575

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half- hour and change out of uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

"They've made it impossible," David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said in an interview from his Edmonton home.

"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can't do your job no more.

"You come home and you almost feel like the army's turning its back on you."

Some soldiers returning home from Afghanistan are suffering "operational stress injuries" – a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

The number of Forces members coming home describing symptoms suggestive of mental health problems aren't alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how negative combat experiences are contributing to such problems.

"The magnitude of the health impact is about what we'd expect given the nature of the deployment," Zamorski said in an interview from Ottawa where he conducts research on ways to mitigate adverse health consequences on members of the Forces.

"Mental health problems are a major source of casualties these days," he added.

For some, home can be hell, too; War's toll continues for returning soldiers who struggle to find help for post

The military says it has gone to great lengths to make sure pre-mission soldiers are as prepared as they can be to deal with stress injuries as they develop.

Officials have also added several screening steps when soldiers return to help identify signs of stress disorders.

All soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days have to complete a detailed questionnaire that can indicate if they might have an operational stress injury.

And they are supposed to undergo an interview with a health professional.

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview, raising the likelihood that some are falling through the cracks.

If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says they can take advantage of several resources on and off base.

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country. And Ottawa has pledged to boost the number of mental health workers to more than 400 by 2009.

When Cpl. Will Salikin returned to Canada from Afghanistan after his deployment last July he was in a drug-induced coma with massive head injuries, other health problems and sketchy memories of the moments before a bomb hit his convoy Jan. 15, 2006.

The suicide blast killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry and seriously injured his section mates, leaving one a double amputee.

Salikin awoke at the University of Alberta Hospital with a shattered radius and ulna, burns, compromised movement in his right side, no recollections of the incident, slight neurological issues and a bacteria common to Afghanistan.

The 24-year-old spent more than a month in hospital recovering from physical wounds, but had other problems, including rages over inconsequential things and waking up exhausted at 4: 30 a.m.

Nobody told him about help available so he found a psychiatrist on base himself.

"That's where the army dropped the ball. Nothing really was offered to me. I had to seek it out myself, but then they were fully helpful," he said. "Hopefully no one else has the same experience of having to walk through everything by themselves."

# O'Connor too optimistic, critics say

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230077  
**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 512

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OTTAWA — Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said Sunday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut back the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a back-up role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation ... the so-called Van Doos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. And as we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage basically be in reserve," O'Connor said.

O'Connor's assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when its current commitment to its NATO partners expires in February 2009.

Harper has said the combat mission will end unless opposition parties reach a consensus to extend it by a vote in the House of Commons.

Last week, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay told CanWest News Service his department is expanding its presence in Kabul and Kandahar in a strong signal that Canada will soon be emphasizing diplomatic efforts over military assistance.

Retired major-general Lew MacKenzie said that it makes no sense for Canada to scale back militarily in southern Afghanistan because NATO still needs a minimum of another 10,000 troops to fight the insurgency.

Even if the Afghan army can contribute 3,000 more troops by the year-end, that still won't be enough for Canada to pull back, said MacKenzie.

"They don't have anywhere near enough troops in the south," said MacKenzie. "There's 400 kilometres of porous border with Pakistan, for one thing."

MacKenzie said O'Connor is being overly optimistic in thinking the Afghan army can take over from Canada within six months.

"All politics is local. So naturally if we're able to say we're turning over our area of responsibility to the Afghans, that's good news.

"But there's not enough people in our area now to win, to stabilize or control the situation," said MacKenzie.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said O'Connor and the Conservatives are sending mixed signals to the Canadian people as well as their NATO allies by suggesting that Canada can simply scale back its combat role and turn it over to the Afghans.

"I think he improvises all the time. That's why people are so confused because of the lack of transparency," said Coderre.

"That story doesn't hold. How can you say on one hand you will play just a monitoring role, a role of reserve, when everybody knows we need more troops, and there's a process to go through our allies, to NATO?"

Coderre reiterated the Liberal party's call to immediately notify NATO of its intention to end combat operations in February 2009 so the alliance can plan for a replacement.

Ottawa Citizen

# Haiti visit could help at home

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A6  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 673

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OTTAWA — Prime Minister Stephen Harper may have brought a message of solidarity to Haiti's worse slum, ardently promoted free trade, and positioned Canada as a "third way" alternative to the U.S. — all while taking some less than subtle swipes at Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez.

But for all his efforts to broaden his foreign policy focus beyond Afghanistan and the United States, Harper's Latin American and Caribbean road trip could pay domestic dividends — particularly in Quebec where a series of byelections are looming.

"There's a lot of payoff if this goes well," says Andrew F. Cooper, a University of Waterloo political scientist and frequent writer and editor on Canadian foreign policy.

That's because Quebec, and particularly Montreal, have significant Haitian populations. By week's end, Harper must call a byelection in the downtown Outremont riding to fill a vacant Liberal seat, and will have to follow that with two more Quebec byelections, as well as two in Ontario.

Cooper says that even though it made good geopolitical sense for Harper to have gone to the Cite Soleil slum of Port au Prince to show Canada's support for the impoverished and backward Caribbean nation, it had the whiff of a domestic political calculation aimed at boosting Conservative totals in the House of Commons.

"It's a country that not only has a big diaspora but an influential diaspora in Montreal and Quebec more generally," Cooper explains.

"It is a population that has some sensitivity because they are in some swing seats in Montreal."

While it might make the prime minister cringe, the theme of Harper's four-country trip to Columbia, Chile, Barbados and Haiti, displayed thematic similarities with Pierre Trudeau's foreign policy vision of the 1970s, said Cooper.

Harper touted Canada as a "third way" political model, a regional alternative to the leftist philosophies of Venezuela's Chavez and Castro's Cuban communism versus U.S. capitalism.

"This constant re-jigging of Canadian foreign policy almost has the flavour of the Trudeau third option, a new pillar to Canadian foreign policy, but it's directed to the neighbourhood. It's got a logic," says Cooper.

Fen Hampson, the director of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, says Harper finally has Canadian foreign policy on "a smart track" and expanding it beyond the narrow

interests in Afghanistan or being a good neighbour to the U.S. Harper also did a good job of distinguishing himself from President George W. Bush, who visited Columbia four months before him.

"There was some danger that observers and critics would see this trip as following in Mr. Bush's footsteps. By pointing to Canada as a 'third way' he has adeptly done two things — said politely to his Latin America and Caribbean hosts that Canada is indeed different from the United States," says Hampson.

"But more importantly to his domestic critics, that he is not Bush's lapdog in the region. He also said these things in a way that will not offend Washington."

But Harper did not win unqualified approval from all his hosts. In Barbados, where reiterated his free trade pitch, Harper also took the opportunity to take a swing at the lack of freedom in Castro's Cuba, something that rankled Barbadian Prime Minister Owen Arthur. "Our hemisphere is diminished when we do not recognize Cuba, and validly so, as a citizen of our hemisphere," Arthur said.

David Schwanen, director of research for Center for International Governance Innovation, was in Barbados networking with top business leaders. He says there were deeper concerns there than the political differences over Cuba.

"The leaders here including the deputy prime minister really emphasized the doubts they have about free trade. They want to be engaged but it seems to me it's going to take more than a few speeches," says Schwanen. "People are little bit skeptical."

Hampson says Harper is showing himself to be a good international statesman, which is pretty good for someone who had little interest in foreign policy when he took office a year and a half ago.

But Harper still needs to "articulate a more general vision of Canada's place in the world that Canadians will buy into" — something he should focus on when he hosts Bush and Mexican President Felipe Calderon at Montebello, Que. next month, says Hampson.

Ottawa Citizen

# Bilingual base translates into tension; More Que. troops in Afghanistan could widen gap between French, English

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**KEYWORDS:** BILINGUALISM; FRANCOPHONES; LANGUAGE POLICY; ANGLOPHONES  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 504

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The two Canadian solitudes are alive and well here in Kandahar.

While anglophone and francophone soldiers fight on the same side, they live almost separate lives inside the camps and forward bases — and indulge in the occasional derisive swipe at each other.

Matters could worsen with the arrival of the first waves of the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment. The so-called Van Doo regiment, a corruption of the French "vingt-deux," or 22, will deploy 2,000 mostly French-speaking troops to take over operations of the Canadian base.

That will generate a unique logistical problem, because translators able to switch easily between French and Pashtu are said to be impossible to find.

That means the primary interaction between the Canadian military and Afghan people will have to be via bilingual brass, whose English may lose linguistic subtleties during translation in a war environment, where precision of meaning is critical.

This doesn't mean the mission is in any way compromised or that there's overt antagonism between the two cultures. Still, an undercurrent of disdain and derision between the soldiers of Canada's founding nations is a reality here.

For example, some anglophone soldiers in the field tried to teach new Afghan police officers that the traditional greeting in French for the new arrivals is "F— you, Van Doos."

It may be all for a laugh as the young recruits tongue-trip over those unfamiliar words, which come out sounding more like "phu voodoo." The consequences might not be so funny, however, if they perfect the phrase and that's the first contact between the Van Doos and local law enforcement.

The consequences might not be so funny, however, if they perfect the phrase and that's the first contact between the Van Doos and local law enforcement.

Yet, on the other side, Maj. Richard Collin, of the Van Doos now guarding provincial reconstruction teams, openly said he expects francophone troops will do a better job than their anglophone counterparts in

Bilingual base translates into tension; More Que. troops in Afghanistan could widen gap between French, English

negotiating local improvements with villagers.

That suggestion didn't sit well with anglophone officers, who privately counter that the Van Doos would rather work on their tans than suit up and head out to reconnect with Afghan tribal leaders.

This could all be typical military bluster, but there are optics to back up the twin solitudes concept. In the mess tents of Camp Nathan Smith, for example, there's a clear linguistic wall. French-language television beams into one wing, English into the other.

Out closer to the front lines at Patrol Base Wilson last week, I watched British and American forces mingle freely under a tent with anglophone Canadian soldiers, while the Van Doos huddled off in their own section, cooking their own meals and watching their own French-language shows on portable DVD players.

When this patrol camp was hit by a freak rainstorm and part of the outer fence washed away, an opportunity for soldier bonding was shrugged off when the Van Doos gathered by themselves to pound in their own fence posts.

So maybe all this doesn't have a bearing on military effectiveness or operational integrity. When it comes to fighting the Taliban, these guys are united in single-minded purpose.

But watching soldiers relax with their preferred peer group makes you realize that language, as the great Canadian divide, stretches from Parliament Hill all the way to dusty outposts in Afghanistan.



# Former Afghan king dies at 93

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230114  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**COLUMN:** World Digest  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 41

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KABUL, Afghanistan – Former Afghan King Mohammad Zahir Shah has died aged 93, the private Afghan television network Tolo said today.

Shah ruled Afghanistan from 1933 until he was deposed in 1973 and lived in exile in Italy before returning home in 2002.

# U.S. spy chief slams Pakistani effort

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230112  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; FOREIGN RELATIONS;  
PRESIDENTS;NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
**SOURCE:** Bloomberg News  
**WORD COUNT:** 211

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Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's attempt to achieve a political settlement in restive tribal areas backfired, resulting in al-Qaida establishing a safe haven there, the top U.S. intelligence official said Sunday.

Still, Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell said Musharraf, under pressure from Islamic militants in his country and facing criticism in the U.S., remains a critical American ally and the fall of his government would have a "severe impact" on the battle against terrorism.

"The government of Pakistan chose to try a political solution" with tribes along the border with Afghanistan, McConnell said today on NBC's Meet the Press. Instead the tribal leaders are giving al-Qaida "a safe haven for training and recruiting. And so, in that period of time, al-Qaida has been able to regain some of its momentum."

McConnell said it is his "personal view" that al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is alive and hiding in the region, though the U.S. hasn't had any solid intelligence about him in more than a year.

McConnell's comments sparked a denial from Musharraf's government. "Our stance is that Osama bin Laden is not present in Pakistan," said Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao. "If anyone has the information he should give it to us, so that we can apprehend him."

# Afghan forces prepare for attempt to free hostages; Taliban extend deadline on South Korean captives

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230111  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Reuters / South Koreans shout slogans during an antiwar rally in Seoul on Sunday, demanding the safe return of 23 kidnapped countrymen in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of South Korean troops from the country. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; HOSTAGES; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN; PAKISTAN  
**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, Pakistan  
**SOURCE:** Washington Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 207

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – Afghan security forces on Sunday surrounded the location where Taliban fighters are suspected to be holding 23 South Korean hostages and were prepared to launch an operation if negotiations broke down, Afghan officials said.

The Koreans, most of whom are members of a church located near Seoul, the South Korean capital, were kidnapped from a bus Thursday as they travelled between the Afghan capital, Kabul, and the city of Kandahar.

After initially saying the hostages would be killed at noon Saturday, the Taliban extended the deadline, first until Sunday evening, then until Monday afternoon, and they continued to demand the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for the hostages. South Korean officials and local tribal elders were involved in talks with the Taliban on Sunday night.

"We are very hopeful that the talks will be successful," said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the police chief in Ghazni province, where the Koreans are believed to be held. "But if the negotiations fail, then we will take another step."

Taliban fighters were also believed to be holding a German aid worker abducted Wednesday after a second German died in the group's custody. The cause of death remains unknown.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her government would not agree to the Taliban's demand that Germany withdraw its troops.

# Men, Aboriginals most likely to enlist; National Defence recruiting survey finds potential soldiers watch Seinfeld, read People magazine

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230104

**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Early

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Reuters, File / Canadian Master Corporal Mike McCauley marches on a joint patrol with Afghan National Army troops near Panjwaii village, Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan, on July 13. ;

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 744

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OTTAWA – An extensive profile of potential recruits to the Canadian Forces reveals personality traits of being more extroverted, more agreeable, marginally more open, less conscientious and less emotionally stable than the average Canadian, according to a recently released federal government report.

In order to prepare future recruitment programs for the Department of National Defence, the profile also finds that potential future soldiers prefer comedies on television, action flicks on their movie screens, rock and rap music on the radio and Cosmopolitan and People magazine on their reading table. The national survey, which cost taxpayers \$156,000, was conducted by TSN Canadian Facts Inc. in February and March.

Among the small pool of respondents who said they were likely to join — only six per cent of the population said they were somewhat or very likely to enrol — it identified men, Aboriginal Peoples, those under 25 and the unemployed as the demographic groups most ready to sign up.

"Canadians likely to join the Forces full-time or part-time are more likely to see themselves as 'creative' and 'outgoing,' but 'disorganized' compared to their peers," said the survey findings, which asked potential recruits to take a "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" to provide a wide scope of personality attributes.

"To better engage its target audience, the Department of National Defence has requested a current and comprehensive psychographic and demographic profile of eligible Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34," said the report, adding that the Harper government wants to increase the regular military force by 13,000 soldiers and the reserves by 10,000.

It says the challenge of meeting the targets is exacerbated by Canada's aging population and decreasing birthrates during the last 20 years. "This profile will examine the habits and interests of potential recruits and will allow DND to be more effective in their communications and advertising," it said.

Capt. Holly Brown, a spokeswoman for the Forces, said so far this year, the military is ahead in meeting its targets and is already using the profile from the report to put together future recruitment campaigns.

The Harper government has nearly tripled spending on advertising for the military, boosting its ad budget from about \$10.2 million to \$27.7 million as it attempts to boost enrolment of soldiers and meet the demands of the country's mission in Afghanistan.

"Almost half of Canadians who are eligible say that there is nothing the Forces could do to encourage them to join. The top activities cited that would encourage them to join are increasing awareness, changing work regulations and improving the monetary benefits," said the report. It also stressed the importance of the recruitment centres and the Forces' website because of the high Internet use among that age group of the population.

The national survey involved 1,504 completed telephone interviews of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34 years between Feb. 6 and March 4, 2007.

The primary motive for signing up for the potential recruits, according to the report, is a paycheque, a job and a career. "In fact, fully half (50 per cent) of those likely to enrol in the Forces report that they are job-seeking and thus more receptive to communications messages that speak about employment," said the report.

The profile offered by the report also shows that potential recruits spend, like most Canadians their age, more than three hours a day on the Internet, with television and radio, newspapers and magazines playing a smaller role in their daily lives.

It also shows that from a television perspective, they prefer such network comedies as Seinfeld and Everybody Loves Raymond. They also indicate a stronger liking for rap and alternative music than the rest of the population. They are not big magazine readers, and People magazine is the most popular, with six-per-cent readership among potential recruits.

Among the second tier of magazines are Maclean's, Time, Reader's Digest and Maxim, with two-per-cent readership among the group.

Unlike the average Canadian, Afghanistan is not the first thing that comes to mind of possible future soldiers when it comes to the forces. Only 11 per cent said the mission was top of mind when asked what they think of when they hear the words "Canadian Forces," as compared with 18 per cent of all Canadians. Instead, "peacekeeping and humanitarian aid" and the specific branches (army, air force and navy) of the military received about 20 per cent each of the responses.

# Canadian troop cutback touted; Military role diminishes as Afghan troops grow

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230103  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: O'Connor;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 225

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OTTAWA – Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said on Sunday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut back the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a backup role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation ... the so-called Van Doos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. And as we train more and more the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage basically be in reserve," O'Connor said.

O'Connor's assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when its commitment to NATO expires in February 2009.

# In dangerous Helmand province, people want peace before parks; British project to provide picnic area ignores violence, despair of region

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Opinion  
**PAGE:** A18  
**KEYWORDS:** PROVINCIAL PARKS; PARKS; AFGHANISTAN; GREAT BRITAIN  
**DATELINE:** LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Jean Mackenzie  
**SOURCE:** Institute for War and Peace Reporting  
**WORD COUNT:** 463

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LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan – Afghanistan is a country with many needs: security against the Taliban; economic development for its citizens; help in combating the growing drug trade.

The British have another idea of one of the country's pressing needs: a park.

Construction is nearly complete on a 17-acre park on the outskirts of this provincial capital in Helmand province on the bank of the Helmand River.

With its flowers, picnic areas and recreational facilities, it promises to provide a welcome respite from the heat and violence for the city's 100,000 residents.

"Almost 80 per cent of the work is complete," said Engineer Esanullah, the head of the Helmand office of the Helping Afghan Farmers Organization, which began work on the park in March.

But some here are openly wondering if the \$700,000 spent on the facility might not have been put to a better use.

"If the international community wants our country to be prosperous, they should first worry about peace and security," said Amir Mohammad, 44, a city resident.

"Then we can have parks."

Daud, 36, who like many Afghans uses only one name, agreed.

"If the (international community) is really interested in helping us, it would do better to set up a factory here to help the unemployed," he said.

Part of the problem is the site chosen for the park. It is located on the other side of the Helmand River, in an area known as Bolan.

The Taliban are known to be extremely active in the area.

In dangerous Helmand province, people want peace before parks; British project to provide picnic area ignores violence, despair of region

Bolan is also one of the richest poppy-growing areas in Helmand province, and becomes especially unstable at harvest time, when farmers, crop eradicators and the Taliban routinely clash.

In most people's minds, Bolan is more closely associated with explosions, kidnappings and killings than children's swings and flower beds.

"For two years now, there have been remote-controlled explosions on the main Bolan road," said Gul Mohammad, 35, a farmer.

"I think mines will be laid in this park. That will keep people from going there."

"People are now being killed even inside Lashkar Gah," said Mohammad Ekhlās, 25, a shopkeeper in the city.

"I don't think anybody will go to this park."

Ghulam Nabi, the head of the regional agriculture department, disagrees.

He says that the provincial government has made the park a priority because people really need it.

"This park is being built to international standards," he said.

"We are very happy that we'll have this kind of park in Helmand and I think people will come here from all over the place to enjoy themselves."

Men and women, however, will be going to the park on different days.

In this traditional part of Afghanistan, Nabi noted, the park would be strictly segregated, with some days set aside for men and others for women.

In fact, due to security concerns and long-standing traditions, it is unlikely that any women will actually ever enjoy the facility.

"I don't think this park is against Islam," said Mohammad Zaher, 60, who lives in the capital. The problem is that men are not accustomed to going to parks along with their women. And they won't let women go on their own."

Abdul Halek, 22, agreed.

"Although our house is very close to this park, we will never let our women go there," he said. "This park will be only for men."

Some younger people, however, seems appreciative of the British effort and look forward to a day when they can go to the park.

"I really want to be able to go there with my family," said Malika, an eighth-grade female student in Lashkar Gah.

Jean Mackenzie is conducting a journalism training and reporting project in Helmand province for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, a non-profit organization in London, U.K., that trains journalists in areas of conflict.

The institute's website is [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net)

In dangerous Helmand province, people want peace before parks; British project to provide picnic areas ignored



# South Koreans flee Kandahar city after 23 kidnapped; Hostages will be killed unless local prisoners are released, Taliban says

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service, with files from Reuters and AFP  
**WORD COUNT:** 395

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The South Korean man at the Ariana Airways office nervously flipped through a thick wad of tickets as they were hastily rebooked for an escape flight from humanitarian hell.

He was helping 19 passengers, including six children, make a dash for Kabul for a return flight to Seoul in the aftermath of the bold kidnapping of 23 fellow South Korean aid workers by the Taliban on Thursday.

All Kandahar city humanitarian efforts by that country will soon be halted as the rest of the group is recalled to Korea.

The mid-20s man wouldn't give his name, but allowed that he was terrified for his young friends, in constant contact with a worried nation — and wanted to go home.

The entire group had originally planned to fly from the Afghan capital to Kandahar last week, but erratic flight service between the two cities made the bus a more viable option for some of the workers, the man said.

It was a serious mistake. Terrorists stopped the bus midway between the two cities and kidnapped the Koreans and two Germans, demanding the government release one Afghan prisoner for every Korean hostage or they would begin executions on Sunday night. At this writing, the Taliban had extended the deadline by 24 hours, although the body of one German has been found.

"We have extended the deadline by 24 hours, which will last until tomorrow at 7 p.m.," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told Agence France-Presse minutes after the earlier limit expired.

"The talks continue," he said in a telephone call from an unknown location, without providing further detail.

There was no sign of the remaining South Koreans posted here at Hilla Hospital on Sunday. The group helps sick children and worked in an attached kindergarten, but centre staff were under orders not to answer any media questions lest any wrong word scuttle negotiations to free the hostages.

But there's no doubt the largest kidnapping since the fall of the Taliban is a worrisome sign that the eradication of the former Islamic extremist regime is still a long way off.

South Koreans flee Kandahar city after 23 kidnapped; Hostages will be killed unless local prisoners are released, Taliban says

The kidnapping shows the insurgents still have the ability to engage in forms of big-league terrorism when the opportunity presents itself, said Brigadier-General Tim Grant, commander of Canadian forces here.

"It clearly states the Taliban will do anything to try and drive foreigners out of this country," Grant said in an exclusive interview with CanWest News Service.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Sunday that Germany would not give in to the demands of the Taliban to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and would not allow itself to be blackmailed.

# Military-backed survey profiles potential recruits; Prospects' tastes and personality traits identified in a bid to boost enrolment

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230008

**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun

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**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: John McKay, Canwest news service / Name: KongChiu ; Colour Photo: Ryan Taplin, CanWest news service / Name: Alexandra Schumacher ; Colour Photo: Codie McLachlan, Canwest news service / Name: Trevor Starchuk ;

**KEYWORDS:** TELEVISION BROADCASTING

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 894

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OTTAWA — An extensive profile of potential recruits to the Canadian Forces reveals personality traits of being more extroverted, more agreeable, marginally more open, less conscientious and less emotionally stable than the average Canadian, according to a recently released federal government report.

In order to prepare future recruitment programs for the Department of National Defence, the profile also finds that potential future soldiers prefer comedies on television, action flicks on their movie screens, rock and rap music on the radio and Cosmopolitan and People magazine on their reading table. The national survey, which cost taxpayers \$156,000, was conducted by TSN Canadian Facts Inc. in February and March.

Among the small pool of respondents who said they were likely to join — only six per cent of the population said they were somewhat or very likely to enrol — it identified men, aboriginal peoples, those under 25 and the unemployed as the demographic groups most ready to sign up.

"Canadians likely to join the Forces full-time or part-time are more likely to see themselves as 'creative', and 'outgoing', but 'disorganized' compared to their peers," said the survey findings, which asked potential recruits to take a "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" to provide a wide scope of personality attributes.

It noted men are more likely than women to characterize themselves as "uncomplicated, quiet and disorganized" while women tend to view themselves as "dependable and outgoing."

The possible recruits were also asked to rank themselves under a "Big Five Personality Trait" framework, with the five categories being openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeability, and emotional stability. It explained that those who are emotionally stable, for instance, tend toward a calm and stable emotional nature rather than being anxious, high-strung and temperamental.

"To better engage its target audience, the Department of National Defence has requested a current and comprehensive psychographic and demographic profile of eligible Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34," said the report, adding that the Harper government wants to increase the regular military force by 13,000

soldiers and the reserves by 10,000.

It says the challenge of meeting the targets is exacerbated by Canada's aging population and decreasing birthrates during the last 20 years. "This profile will examine the habits and interests of potential recruits and will allow DND to be more effective in their communications and advertising," it said.

Capt. Holly Brown, a spokeswoman for the Forces, said so far this year, the military is ahead in meeting its targets and is using the profile from the report to put together future recruitment campaigns.

The Harper government has nearly tripled spending on advertising for the military, boosting its ad budget from about \$10.2 million to \$27.7 million as it attempts to boost enrolment of soldiers and meet the demands of the country's mission in Afghanistan.

"Almost half of Canadians who are eligible say that there is nothing the Forces could do to encourage them to join. The top activities cited that would encourage them to join are increasing awareness, changing work regulations and improving the monetary benefits," said the report. It also stressed the importance of the recruitment centres and the Forces' website because of the high Internet use among that age group of the population.

The national survey involved 1,504 completed telephone interviews of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34 years between Feb. 6 and March 4, 2007.

The report found that those likely to enrol are more interested in "combat" than any other area of employment, suggesting that "there is a fairly strong association between a career in the Forces and combat roles."

The primary motive for signing up for the potential recruits, according to the report, is a paycheque, a job and a career. "In fact, fully half [50 per cent] of those likely to enrol in the Forces report that they are job seeking and thus more receptive to communications messages that speak about employment," said the report.

For Sophia Vasquez, a 26-year-old mother of three who showed up at a recruitment centre in Ottawa Friday, this is true.

"I like the discipline and interesting work that the Canadian Forces offers but I also want to do it because it would be a better job for me," said Vasquez.

Unlike the average Canadian, Afghanistan is not the first thing that comes to mind of possible future soldiers when it comes to the Forces. Only 11 per cent said the mission was top of mind when asked what they think of when they hear the words "Canadian Forces," as compared with 18 per cent of all Canadians. Instead, "peacekeeping and humanitarian aid" and the specific branches (army, air force and navy) of the military received about 20 per cent each of the responses.

Name: Kong Chiu

Sex: Male

Age: 42

Television: News and history programs.

Magazines: Science and research magazines related to my job.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: None.

Military-backed survey profiles potential recruits; Prospects' tastes and personality traits identified as a bid to

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "I think about when there was a booth at UVic where I was doing my master's degree."

Why interested in joining?: "To serve this country."

Name: Alexandra Schumacher

Sex: Female

Age: 18

TV shows: Movies, news houses, House

Magazines: Cosmopolitan, other women's magazines, Sail.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: Grandfather, uncles.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "Probably pride and protection."

Why interested in joining?: "Because it's a good opportunity. They look after your schooling, subsidize it, good pay and you can retire early because you're paying into your pension."

Name: Trevor Starchuk

Sex: Male

Age: 21

TV shows: The Simpsons (classic episodes only), South Park, Family Guy

Magazines: Racer X, Motocross Action

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: Yes, my father served.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "The only thing that comes to mind is "army."

Why interested in joining?: "It's a secure job with very good medical and retirement coverage."

# Traditions that die hard Afghan women unseen in NATO-aided village

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**SOURCETAG** 0707220917

**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.22

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 16

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Martin Ouellette, CP A pump engine is fired up in Haji Sarfiraz, Afghanistan, as villagers speak with Canadian soldiers (right, partially hidden). A water well was built by the International Stabilization Force.

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 300

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In the small southeastern Afghan village of Haji Sarfiraz, yesterday was a day of celebration.

Villagers were invited to pose for photographs beside the community's new well, built by members of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

Close to the well, on the outskirts of town, men, children, elders, the disabled and mangy dogs bustled about.

But there were no women. The women of Haji Sarfiraz, near the Pakistan border, were not allowed to join the party.

"It's tradition here — women do not go outside," villager Mohammad Dawood said through an interpreter.

"The women stay at home while we, the men, bring them whatever they need."

As partygoers drank tea and watched water gush from the well, a few women gathered behind terra cotta walls to catch a glimpse. They dispersed when one of the cameras pointed in their direction.

Improvements in women's rights, repeatedly brought up by International Co-operation Minister Josee Verner as justification for Canada's mission in Afghanistan, are not on the minds of those in Haji Sarfiraz.

Nor are they a concern in neighbouring Wesh, a city of more than 300,000 citizens.

On the sidewalks of this border city, men haggle, trade, sell and buy while women remain far from sight inside the walls of their homes.

"Since I've been here, I have not seen one woman during any of my patrols," said Cpl. Natacha Dupuis of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, who has been stationed at the Spin Boldak forward operating base for five weeks.

"It's shocking," she said. "I think it's a good thing that we're here. Interpreters and others come to realize that we are equal (to men)."

Cpl. Martin Duperron agrees local beliefs are beginning to change.

"During my first tour here ... if a woman was ever caught watching you, she was beaten," said Duperron, who is completing his second six-month tour in Afghanistan.

Today, he says much of the pressure has eased. "They (women) are less hidden than before," he said.

### NOBODY HAS IT EASY

In the desert, nobody has it easy, says Maj. Steve Graham, commander of the Reconnaissance Squadron of the Dragoons.

"Women don't go outside and men can die as young as 25 or 30 years old," he said.

With the Pakistan border close by, southeastern Afghanistan is not an area that has not made much social progress. Contact with the Taliban, and their ideological influences, is frequent, Graham said.

Afghan authorities, supported by about 100 Canadians from the Spin Boldak base, have had difficulty monitoring more than 400 kilometres of border in the region. There have been recent weapon seizures and insurgent arrests at the porous border, but Graham says they are only the "tip of the iceberg."

# Taliban: We'll kill Korean hostages Release of rebels demanded after execution of Germans claimed

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**SOURCETAG** 0707220904

**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.22

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 7

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Reuters These South Korean Christians, posing for a photo in Seoul before leaving for Afghanistan on July 13, have been kidnapped by the Taliban, who want to swap the Koreans for captured rebels.

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 288

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A purported Taliban spokesman said the hardline militia killed two German and five Afghan hostages yesterday but said the militants were willing to release 22 South Korean Christians in exchange for the freedom of imprisoned Taliban fighters.

The Afghan government, however, said it had contradictory information concerning the Germans, casting doubt on the purported spokesman's claims.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, who claims to be a Taliban spokesman, said the Afghan and South Korean governments had until 7 p.m. today to agree to the exchange of 22 Taliban militants or the Korean hostages would be killed.

He said the Germans and Afghans were shot to death because Germany did not announce the withdrawal of its 3,000 troops from Afghanistan.

## SEVEN KIDNAPPED

The seven were kidnapped on Wednesday in the southern province of Wardak while working on a dam project.

"The German and Afghan governments didn't meet our conditions," Ahmadi told The Associated Press by telephone from an undisclosed location. Ahmadi offered no proof of the killings and said the Taliban would give information about the bodies later.

The Afghan government, however, said one of the Germans died of a heart attack and the second was still alive.

"The information that we and our security forces have is that one of these two who were kidnapped died of a heart attack," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sultan Ahmad Baheen said.

"The second hostage is alive and we hope that he will be released soon and we are trying our best to get him released."



## KOREA THREATENED

Ahmadi earlier said the kidnapped Koreans would also be killed yesterday if South Korea didn't withdraw its 200 troops.

Late yesterday he changed those demands, and also said the militants held 22 Koreans, up from the 18 he earlier claimed. He said several Koreans spoke the Afghan languages Dari and Pashtu and were mistaken for Afghans.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun urged the Taliban to "send our people home quickly and safely." He said 23 South Koreans had been abducted.

Roh also spoke with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and asked for co-operation to quickly win the release of the South Koreans, Roh's office said.

A senior Korean official said the South Korean government was "maintaining contact" with the Taliban.  
KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Pullout linked to Afghan training Feds say plan working

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230398  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 20  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GORDON O'CONNOR "Be in reserve"  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 219

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions — roughly 3,000 soldiers — will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three-stage transition," he said in the interview, aired yesterday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role.

O'Connor expanded on that by saying: "As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009. KEYWORDS=CANADA

# Respite for 23 Koreans

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230028

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 5

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Han Jae-Ho, Reuters A South Korean child holds a candle and a banner during an anti-war rally demanding the safe return of kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of South Korean troops from the country in central Seoul yesterday. An Afghan government team went to an area yesterday where 23 Koreans were kidnapped to ask tribal elders to mediate for their release.

**BYLINE:** REUTERS

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**WORD COUNT:** 106

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The Taliban kidnappers of 23 Korean hostages yesterday extended the deadline for the South Korean government to agree to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by 24 hours to 10:30 a.m. today.

"The Islamic emirate is keen to resolve this issue peacefully and this extension is aimed at persuading the Korean government to put pressure on Kabul to accept our demands," Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters.

While tribal elders tried to mediate between the militants and government negotiators, Afghan forces had surrounded the group of some 70 kidnappers, a Western security analyst said.

"Afghan forces have surrounded the location of the kidnappers," he said. "They have no way to escape."

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Stay, says top cop

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230027

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 5

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 104

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Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said Sunday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Sakib, who's been police chief for less than a month, told Canadian Press that Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties, an implausible goal in the face of resistance from the opposition.

"It's a mistake," said Sakib. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Army sees way out Forces will scale down in Afghanistan, says minister

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230025

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 5

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo of SAYED AKA SAKIB Grave error 2. photo of GORDON O'CONNOR Transition

**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER, CP

**WORD COUNT:** 459

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions — roughly 3,000 soldiers — will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three-stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired yesterday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role — thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

"As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve," said O'Connor.

## OPPOSITION RUNS HIGH

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle-hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Opposition to the war runs highest in Quebec, where a series of recent public opinion polls have shown a majority of people in favour of bringing the troops home.

Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and if O'Connor's prediction holds true it would see Canadian troops far less active in what could be the final year of the deployment.

Last week, the defence committee of the British House of Commons released a report that cast doubt on the ability of the Afghan army to pick up the load, at least in the short –term.

"They will be able to do much more by 2009, but their numbers are small." James Arbuthnot, the chair of the British defence committee also told Question Period.

"We can rely on them more and more, but as I say, I don't think it is possible to put Western time scales on this. We are dealing with a country that has been at war for 30 years and which has never had the sort of government we are trying to help them build up. It's going to be a long–term project and we cannot be impatient. Impatience doesn't work in Afghanistan." KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Taliban: We'll kill Korean hostages Release of rebels demanded after execution of Germans claimed

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**SOURCETAG** 0707220830

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.22

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 14

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Reuters These South Korean Christians, posing for a photo in Seoul before leaving for Afghanistan on July 13, have been kidnapped by the Taliban, who want to swap the Koreans for captured rebels.

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORD COUNT:** 288

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The Afghan government, however, said it had contradictory information concerning the Germans, casting doubt on the purported spokesman's claims.

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He said the Germans and Afghans were shot to death because Germany did not announce the withdrawal of its 3,000 troops from Afghanistan.

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Roh also spoke with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and asked for co-operation to quickly win the release of the South Koreans, Roh's office said.

A senior Korean official said the South Korean government was "maintaining contact" with the Taliban.  
KEYWORDS=WORLD



# Taliban threatens to kill Korean hostages

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230463

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Reuters LIGHT OF HOPE: A South Korean child holds a candle during an anti-war rally in Seoul demanding the safe return of kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of South Korean troops from the country yesterday.

**BYLINE:** REUTERS

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**WORD COUNT:** 275

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The Taliban kidnappers of 23 Korean hostages yesterday extended the deadline for the South Korean government to agree to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by 24 hours to today.

In Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany would not give in to the demands of the kidnappers — who also seized two German engineers and killed at least one of them — to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

"We will not give in to blackmail," she told ARD public television.

The 23 hostages belong to the Saemmul Church in Bundang, a city outside South Korea's capital, Seoul. Most of them are in their 20s and 30s, and include nurses and English teachers.

"The Taliban have extended the deadline by another 24 hours," Taliban spokesperson Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters by telephone from an unknown location.

"The Islamic emirate is keen to resolve this issue peacefully and this extension is aimed at persuading the Korean government to put pressure on Kabul to accept our demands," he said.

South Korea has so far said it will withdraw its 200 military engineers and medics at the end of this year as planned.

A South Korean government delegation was in the Afghan capital of Kabul holding talks with government officials.

Yousuf said the kidnappers had extended the deadline "as a sign of honour for the Korean delegation."

While tribal elders tried to mediate between the militants and government negotiators, Afghan forces had surrounded the group of some 70 kidnappers in the Qarabagh area of Ghazni province, south of Kabul, a Western security analyst said.

"Afghan forces have surrounded the location of the kidnappers," he said. "They have no way to escape."

Afghan forces were poised to strike.

"They are awaiting orders to assault suspected locations," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. "The operation will be launched if authorities deem it necessary."

Yousuf said fighters were holding the captives at different locations. Use of force will have dire consequences for the hostages, he said.

The Koreans are the biggest group of foreigners kidnapped so far in the campaign to oust the Western-backed government.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said the Koreans were providing free medical or educational services with no missionary intentions. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Canada set for gradual withdrawal

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230461  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GORDON O'CONNOR  
**BYLINE:** MURRAY BREWSTER, CP  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 352

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions — roughly 3,000 soldiers — will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"It was part of our plan to go through a three-stage transition," he said in the television interview, aired yesterday.

"When we arrived in the south, because of the situation with the Taliban and the situation with the Afghan army, there were very few of them, we had to take on the bulk of the fighting. In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations."

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role — thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in yesterday's interview: "We're hoping by the end of this rotation that's going in now — the so-called Van Doo rotation — we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within Kandahar province. As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Opposition to the war runs highest in Quebec, where public opinion polls show a majority favour bringing the troops home.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Our troops urged to stick with mission

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230460

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR

**WORD COUNT:** 262

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Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said yesterday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Sakib, who's been police chief for less than a month, told CP in an interview at the Kandahar police headquarters that Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

His comments followed the recent kidnapping by Taliban militants of 23 South Korean aid workers while they were travelling to Kandahar from Kabul, and the kidnapping and slaying of at least one German, who along with five Afghan colleagues was abducted while working on a dam project.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp spike in violence recently, leading to a mounting number of civilian casualties — deaths and injuries sapping support for foreign troops and the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Sixty-six Canadian military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since the start of the mission in 2002. Of those, 24 have died as a result of improvised explosive devices. One-third of the fatalities have taken place this year alone.

The mounting death toll has renewed political debate back home over the mission's future, with opposition parties urging the government to inform NATO allies Canada will not renew its combat commitment after 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties, an implausible goal in the face of resistance from the opposition.

"It's a mistake," said Sakib.

Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures to recall its troops, Sakib said. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

# CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Taliban extend deadline for 23 South Koreans 'My kids went to the war-ravaged country to do volunteer work, carrying love,' says mother of two of the victims

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040155

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**PAGE:** A9 (ILLUS)

**BYLINE:** PAUL KORING

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** STAFF REUT AP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 825

**WORD COUNT:** 816

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PAUL KORING With reports by Reuters and Associated Press KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN The Taliban delayed – until this morning – the threatened execution of nearly two dozen young Christian South Koreans unless the embattled government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul agrees to free an equal number of imprisoned militants.

Afghanistan's latest hostage crisis underscores the grim security realities across much of the south and east of the country, where, outside major towns, the government has only limited and sporadic control.

One of two German engineers captured by the Taliban a day before the bus carrying the Korean group was seized on Highway 1, the main highway linking Kabul with Kandahar was found dead yesterday.

The doctrinaire Muslim guerrillas, waging a fierce insurgency aimed at toppling the Karzai government in Kabul and ousting the more than 40,000 foreign troops deployed in Afghanistan, seek to restore the Taliban regime that ruled this rugged and remote country until 2001.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi announced the 24-hour extension yesterday in a series of calls to news agencies by satellite phone, after earlier warning that the German and Korean hostages would be killed unless Berlin and Seoul pulled their troops from Afghanistan.

Germany, which has 3,000 soldiers deployed in the relatively safe north part of the country, refused, although Chancellor Angela Merkel is under pressure in her country to bring troops home.

Korea's small military contingent of 200 non-combat soldiers, mostly medics running a hospital for Afghans at a U.S. air base, were already due to pull out of Afghanistan by the end of the year.

Yesterday, a Korean delegation arrived in Kabul to press the Karzai government to deal with the Taliban for the release of the 23 Koreans, whose ill-advised 10-day trip to Afghanistan was vaguely described as an aid effort.

"My kids went to the war-ravaged country to do volunteer work, carrying love," said Seo Jung-bae, 57, whose son and daughter were both taken hostage when Taliban fighters wielding AK-47s intercepted their bus last Thursday. Most of the 23 Koreans, 18 of whom are women, are in their 20s and belong to the evangelical Saemmul Presbyterian Church in Bundang, close to Seoul.

Although South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun insisted the group wasn't seeking Christian converts, many Muslims remain deeply suspicious of the missionary zeal of some evangelical groups. Last year 900 Korean Christians were ordered out of Afghanistan.

The capture of the busload of Koreans is the largest seizure of foreigners by the Taliban since they were ousted from power in 2001 in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda suicide hijackers.

Senior NATO and U.S. commanders point to the shift in Taliban tactics – to roadside bombs, suicide bombers and hostage-takings – as evidence that the insurgency cannot defeat the heavily armed foreign troops in conventional battle. They are less willing to concede that the Taliban's tactics have demonstrated, with deadly effectiveness, the limits of government control outside of major cities.

Efforts were under way last night to broker the release of the Koreans, whose smiling group photo, taken at Incheon airport last week, now belies the severity of their plight.

"An Afghan government delegation has gone to begin talks with tribal elders in Qarabagh, Ghazni, as part of an effort to try to secure the freedom of the Koreans," said Mirajuddin Pattan, governor of the province.

Unconfirmed reports also said there was a buildup of Afghan army units in the area. Any effort to stage a rescue mission – likely spearheaded by U.S. Special Forces – would depend on whether the location of the hostages had been determined. The Taliban claimed the hostages had been dispersed and warned against any military effort to free them.

"We will only launch rescue operations or military action at the request of the Afghan and Korean governments," U.S. Lieutenant-Colonel David Accetta said. "We do not want to jeopardize the lives of the Korean civilians." But a prisoner swap – as demanded by the Taliban in exchange for freeing the Koreans – would also be problematic.

In March, under pressure from the Italian government, Mr. Karzai ordered five Taliban prisoners released in a deal to secure the release of an Italian journalist seized by the insurgents. It was the first time the Afghan government openly agreed to a deal to free hostages and Mr. Karzai was sharply criticized by the Bush administration and other Western governments for dealing with so-called terrorists.

But the potentially gruesome spectacle of nearly two dozen young Korean facing executions – perhaps one at a time over an extended period – could put Mr. Karzai under enormous pressure.

Meanwhile, the fate of the two German engineers who were working on a dam project in Wardek province remains uncertain.

The Taliban claim both were shot and killed after Berlin ignored its demands. Afghan and German officials said intelligence indicated that one died of a heart attack and the other was still alive.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; South Korea

SUBJECT TERM: strife; kidnapping; south koreans; hostages; missionaries

CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Taliban extend deadline for 23 South Koreans 'My kids went to

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# WAR ON TERRORISM Afghan police chief asks Canada to stay

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040154

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A4

**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET

**SECTION:** National News

**SOURCE:** CP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** Kandahar AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 504

**WORD COUNT:** 479

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MARTIN OUELLET Canadian Press KANDAHAR Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar said yesterday.

Sayed Aka Sakib also urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Mr. Sakib, who's been police chief for less than a month, said that Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

His comments followed the recent kidnapping by Taliban militants of 23 South Korean aid workers travelling to Kandahar from Kabul, and the kidnapping and slaying of two Germans, who, along with five Afghan colleagues, were abducted while working on a dam project.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp spike in violence recently, leading to a mounting number of civilian casualties, sapping support for foreign troops and the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Sixty-six Canadian military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since the start of the mission in 2002. Of those, 24 have died as a result of improvised explosive devices. One-third of the fatalities have taken place this year alone.

The mounting death toll has renewed the political debate back home over the mission's future, with the opposition parties urging the government to inform NATO allies that Canada will not be renewing its combat commitment after 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties.

"It's a mistake," Mr. Sakib said.

Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures calling on the government to recall its troops, he said.

"What's happening here, it's not just an Afghan problem. It's an international problem. What is happening here



could happen elsewhere," Mr. Sakib said through an interpreter. "Terrorism could easily make its way to Canada, in the same way it came to the United States, if the work here is not completed." Mr. Sakib said that 30 years of war, guerrilla warfare and tyrannical rule has left Afghanistan in shambles. Mr. Sakib predicted that it will take between 15 and 20 years before the country can hope to regain control of its destiny.

Not everyone in Kandahar, however, shares his conviction.

Abdul Wasay says he won't miss the Canadian troops when they're gone.

"They've made some terrible mistakes recently. Innocent people, civilians were killed because of their mistakes," said Mr. Wasay, 38. "They should not stay here." Ina Yatullah believes the opposite, convinced of the importance of Canadian military participation as part of the NATO's International Security Assistance Force, but has just one warning for the Canadian troops.

"The training given by the Canadian troops to the Afghan army is a good thing. But the Canadians must respect our customs, between us and them, there are huge differences. If they respect those differences, there won't be any problems here," he said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; foreign policy; defence; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Sayed Aka Sakib

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

# Missionaries in dangerous regions Asian country one of top exporters of Christianity

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040153

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A9

**BYLINE:** TU THANH HA

**SECTION:** International News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 410

**WORD COUNT:** 385

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TU THANH HA In China, their pastors get arrested for smuggling North Korean asylum seekers. In Afghanistan, hundreds are expelled after trying to attend a rally. In Iraq, a missionary hopeful is kidnapped and beheaded.

The abduction in Afghanistan last week of 23 South Korean Christians is the latest reminder that South Korea ranks second after the United States among countries sending evangelical missionaries overseas.

Evangelical churches enjoyed a phenomenal growth in South Korea, helped by the fact that, rather than be associated with colonial powers, foreign missionaries were seen as allies against the Japanese occupation.

An estimated 12,000 to 14,000 South Koreans are currently serving as missionaries around the world, spreading the gospel and doing relief work from Thailand to Brazil to Jordan.

But often tensions have arisen in Muslim countries where the Koreans' ardour has frequently put them at great perils from unfriendly authorities and locals.

The contingent kidnapped in Afghanistan included 20 members of the Saemmul Presbyterian Church in Bundang, south of Seoul.

According to South Korean news media, they were accompanied by three staff members of a Christian agency, the Institute of Asia Culture & Development. Korean radio KBS reported that the mission was organized by another Christian group, the Korean Foundation for World Aid, whose chief apologized for causing concerns to the country.

Both the institute and the foundation have had run-ins with Muslim officials before. Their activities in Uzbekistan were suspended for three months last year after they were accused of spreading Christian teachings.

The Institute also tried last year to stage a three-day festival in Kabul, to cap a month of charity work around the country.

However, out of fear that the event would be used for proselytizing, the Afghan government ordered it shut down and deported more than 900 South Koreans out of the country.

Afghanistan's powder-keg setting has always been a tricky place for Christian groups.

South Korean Christians have been warned by their government that they run the risk of provoking Muslims when they venture into volatile, unstable areas, especially after the killing in June of 2004 of Kim Sun-II, a South Korean translator who had planned to do missionary work. Islamic militants in Iraq linked to al-Qaeda abducted and beheaded him.

"We cannot turn away from poor people and children there just because of safety risks," Joseph Park, mission director of the Christian Council of Korea, told AFP in the wake of the latest abduction.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; South Korea

SUBJECT TERM: strife; kidnapping; south koreans; hostages; missionaries

# CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Taliban extend deadline for 23 South Koreans 'My kids went to the war-ravaged country to do volunteer work, carrying love,' says mother of two of the victims

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040152

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A9 (ILLUS)

**BYLINE:** PAUL KORING

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** STAFF REUT AP AFP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 830

**WORD COUNT:** 824

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Germany, which has 3,000 soldiers deployed in the relatively safe north part of the country, refused, although Chancellor Angela Merkel is under pressure in her country to bring troops home.

South Korea announced today new rules to punish unauthorized travel to Afghanistan with possible jail terms.

The Foreign Ministry has banned its nationals from travelling to the war-torn country, and urged South Koreans already there to get out. Spokeswoman Han Hye-Jin said the ban will take effect under a new law tomorrow.

Korea's small military contingent of 200 non-combat soldiers, mostly medics running a hospital for Afghans at a U.S. air base, were already due to pull out of Afghanistan by the end of the year.

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"We will only launch rescue operations or military action at the request of the Afghan and Korean governments," U.S. Lieutenant-Colonel David Accetta said. "We do not want to jeopardize the lives of the Korean civilians." But a prisoner swap – as demanded by the Taliban in exchange for freeing the Koreans – would also be problematic.

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But the potentially gruesome spectacle of nearly two dozen young Korean facing executions – perhaps one at a time over an extended period – could put Mr. Karzai under enormous pressure.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; South Korea

CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Taliban extend deadline for 23 South Koreans 'My kids went to

SUBJECT TERM:strife; kidnapping; south koreans; hostages; missionaries

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW Bhutto's fight for democracy calls her home Return to happen in weeks, former Pakistani PM asserts

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040144

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A1 (ILLUS)

**BYLINE:** SONYA FATAH

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** SPCL

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** London ENGLAND

**WORDS:** 996

**WORD COUNT:** 908

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SONYA FATAH Special to The Globe and Mail LONDON Even at the cost of being jailed, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto says she plans to end her eight-year-long self-imposed exile within weeks to fight for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

"My return is not tied to any dialogue," Ms. Bhutto said in an exclusive interview with The Globe and Mail. "My return is going to happen." Ms. Bhutto had earlier avoided setting a specific date for her return, saying only that it would be before the end of this year.

However, after hearing of the supreme court's reinstatement last week of Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry as Pakistan's chief justice, Ms. Bhutto says confidence in the independence of the judiciary may mean a return as early as September.

Ms. Bhutto says talks between her party and General Pervez Musharraf are about ensuring that free and fair elections take place this year, and not about power-sharing agreements. Regardless of how those negotiations turn out, she will return to Pakistan, she said.

Back-door diplomacy between Ms. Bhutto's party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Gen. Musharraf has been afoot for months now. There has been much speculation about deal-making between the two. Analysts believe Ms. Bhutto could be prime minister with a suited – not uniformed – Pervez Musharraf as president.

Gen. Musharraf recently declared his intention to continue on as army chief: a necessity, he said, as a result of the recent spate of suicide bombings.

That, Ms. Bhutto says, is not acceptable.

"A uniformed president blurs the distinction between democracy and dictatorship and unless the uniform is taken off, then Pakistan will continue to be seen as a military dictatorship." Ms. Bhutto had been expected to return to Pakistan before parliamentary elections scheduled for October of 2002.

At the time, analysts said opposition parties had not generated enough momentum to secure Ms. Bhutto's confidence in a return.

In the past six months, however, opposition parties have been at the forefront of a serious political effort to challenge military rule. Sustained protests and an unprecedented series of suicide bombs over two significant events – the Red Mosque affair that ended in bloodshed in the country's capital, and the suspension and subsequent reinstatement of the country's top judge – have weakened Gen. Musharraf at home and abroad.

For Ms. Bhutto, there could be no better time to return. But whether she has the power to control Pakistan's strong military and intelligence agencies is questionable.

Numerous roadblocks lie in her path. The much-amended Pakistani constitution prevents a twice-elected prime minister from being elected a third time, courtesy of Gen. Musharraf, and Pakistan's previous military dictator, Gen. Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq, empowered the President to dissolve the National Assembly.

Moreover, a long list of corruption charges in several countries has plagued Ms. Bhutto's reputation. The charges have never been proven, but they have hung like an albatross around her party.

In addition, Ms. Bhutto will have to win a two-thirds majority in Parliament to have effective control over policy making. And finally, whether Ms. Bhutto and Gen. Musharraf, both of whom are mega-personalities, can share power with such conflicting agendas remains to be seen.

Ms. Bhutto says military intervention lies at the heart of Pakistan's many problems today: "The military, since the days of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, has used religious parties in an attempt to give Islamic legitimacy to an illegitimate military rule and today we are facing the consequences of repeated military intervention." Gen. Musharraf has marketed the military as the only solution to the extremist problem.

Ms. Bhutto's agenda for defeating Pakistan's growing internal problems stands in striking contrast to that of Gen. Musharraf.

He and the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, have had hostile relations during the "war on terror." Ms. Bhutto plans to work closely with Afghanistan to bring about stability in both countries. Gen. Musharraf believes in signing peace agreements and negotiating with radical groups; Ms. Bhutto says she will have zero tolerance when combatting "political" madrassas (religious schools) where terrorist ideologies are carried out.

"He and I speak from different vantage points," Ms. Bhutto said.

"He needs the extremist issue to legitimize his rule. I don't. I need the people's support." If anyone has the people's support, Ms. Bhutto's party has it.

Her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, also ruled Pakistan. In 1977, he was ousted by his much-trusted armed forces chief, Gen. Zia, and was subsequently hanged.

Ms. Bhutto was the darling of Pakistan and the international media when she first came to power in 1988, after Gen. Zia's mysterious death in a plane crash after an 11-year reign. A graduate of Harvard University and Oxford University, Ms. Bhutto, then 35, was the first female prime minister in the Muslim world. But Ms. Bhutto's governments were plagued by problems: an increase in ethnic violence in Karachi, her brother's murder, and accusations against her husband, Asif Zardari, of blackmail and corruption.

Moreover, Ms. Bhutto was unable to move legislation because of petty differences with opposition parties and because of her lack of control over Pakistan's military.

That means her government will focus on its internal strategy of four Es: education, employment, energy and the environment. Ms.



Bhutto has yet to detail how exactly that agenda will be carried out.

Ms. Bhutto says the Election Commission needs to do much more to convincingly preside over a free and fair election this year.

More than 30 per cent of the electorate is not enrolled, she says.

Without free and fair elections, she will have no guarantee of power.

"The last time I could not contain the military and the intelligence because the power over the military and intelligence was not with me – it was with the President. This is why I say to the people of Pakistan, 'Give me a mandate that I can make a change.' "

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Pakistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; government; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Benazir Bhutto; Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry; Pervez Musharraf

# No monitoring here

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040087

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A12

**BYLINE:** JAMIE ROBERTSON

**SECTION:** Letter to the Edit

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 207

**WORD COUNT:** 232

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Jamie Robertson Lieutenant-Colonel, Department of National Defence Re Lawrence Martin's Too Often, Access Is Denied To Hide Wrongdoing (July 19): The Department of National Defence does not "monitor" individuals. The "report" referring to Steven Staples was an e-mailed speech summary and personal observations of follow-on discussions on a topic titled The Americanization of the Canadian Military.

At no time did DND deny the Access to Information request as cited in the original Ottawa Citizen story, nor did DND try to cover anything up. The request was for documents or e-mails written between Jan.

15-30, 2006, on speeches by civilians in Halifax. The e-mail cited in the Citizen story was written after those dates. As publicly stated by the deputy minister of National Defence, the department follows the Access to Information Act diligently.

Operational security checks are done on documents that may have the potential to compromise the security of our troops. Such information is legally severed in accordance with the ATI Act, and these severances can be – and often are – challenged. The department handled 1,808 individual ATI requests last year, resulting in 153,103 pages of released information. Some 93.3 per cent of the requests – which require thousands of hours of research – were completed on time.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; policy; strife; freedom of information; prisoners; human rights

PERSONAL NAME: Steven Staples

ORGANIZATION NAME: Department of National Defence

# O'Connor sees chance to scale back Afghan role

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230076  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A3  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 481

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OTTAWA — Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said yesterday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut back the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a back-up role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation . . . the so-called Van Doos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. And as we train more and more the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage basically be in reserve," O'Connor said.

O'Connor's assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when its current commitment to its NATO partners expires in February 2009.

Retired major-general Lew MacKenzie said it makes no sense for Canada to scale back militarily in southern Afghanistan because NATO still needs a minimum of another 10,000 troops to fight the insurgency.

Even if the Afghan army can contribute 3,000 more troops by the year-end, that still won't be enough for Canada to pull back, said MacKenzie.

"They don't have anywhere near enough troops in the south," said MacKenzie. "There's 400 kilometres of porous border with Pakistan, for one thing."

MacKenzie said O'Connor is being overly optimistic in thinking the Afghan army can take over from Canada within six months.

"All politics is local. So naturally if we're able to say we're turning over our area of responsibility to the Afghans, that's good news. But there's not enough people in our area now to win, to stabilize or control the situation," said MacKenzie.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said O'Connor and the Conservatives are sending mixed signals to the Canadian people as well as their NATO allies by suggesting that Canada can simply scale back its combat role and turn it over to the Afghans.

"I think he improvises all the time. That's why people are so confused because of the lack of transparency," said Coderre. "That story doesn't hold. How can you say on one hand you will play just a monitoring role, a role of reserve, when everybody knows we need more troops, and there's a process to go through our allies, to NATO?"

Coderre reiterated the Liberal party's call to immediately notify NATO of its intention to end combat operations in February 2009 so the alliance can plan for a replacement.

# Military asks: What kinds of people want to be soldiers?; They're outgoing, creative and young, concludes a survey done to help Forces find new recruits

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**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: (Adam Whitehouse.); Photo: (Izaak Koolman.) ; Photo: (Sophia Vasquez.) ; Photo: CanWest News Service / The military will use the new survey to tailor its marketing and recruitment campaigns. ;

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 781

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OTTAWA — An extensive profile of potential recruits to the Canadian Forces reveals personality traits of being more extroverted, more agreeable, marginally more "open, less conscientious and less emotionally stable" than the average Canadian, according to a recently released federal government report.

In order to prepare future recruitment programs for the Department of National Defence, the profile also finds that potential future soldiers prefer comedies on television, action flicks on their movie screens, rock and rap music on the radio and Cosmopolitan and People magazine on their reading table. The national survey, which cost taxpayers \$156,000, was conducted by TSN Canadian Facts Inc. in February and March.

Among the small pool of respondents who said they were likely to join — only six per cent of the population said they were somewhat or very likely to enrol — it identified men, Aboriginal Peoples, those under 25 and the unemployed as the demographic groups most ready to sign up.

"Canadians likely to join the Forces full-time or part-time are more likely to see themselves as 'creative,' and 'outgoing,' but 'disorganized' compared to their peers," said the survey findings, which asked potential recruits to take a "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" to provide a wide scope of personality attributes.

It noted a few differences by gender: Men are more likely than women to characterize themselves as "uncomplicated, quiet and disorganized" while women tend to view themselves as "dependable and outgoing."

The possible recruits were also asked to rank themselves under a "Big Five Personality Trait" framework, with the five categories being openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeability, and emotional stability. It explained that those who are emotionally stable, for instance, tend toward a calm and stable emotional nature rather than being anxious, high-strung and temperamental.

According to the federal report, the Harper government wants to increase the regular military force by 13,000 soldiers and the reserves by 10,000.

Military asks: What kinds of people want to be soldiers?; They're outgoing, creative and young, concludes a

It says the challenge of meeting the targets is exacerbated by Canada's aging population and decreasing birthrates during the last 20 years.

Capt. Holly Brown, a spokeswoman for the Forces, said so far this year, the military is ahead in meeting its targets and is already using the profile from the report for future recruitment campaigns.

The Harper government has nearly tripled spending on advertising for the military, boosting its ad budget from about \$10.2 million to \$27.7 million as it attempts to boost enrolment of soldiers and meet the demands of the country's mission in Afghanistan.

The national survey involved 1,504 completed telephone interviews of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34 years between Feb. 6 and March 4, 2007.

The findings have a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points, 9.5 times out of 10. As well, self-administered interactive surveys with 1,712 respondents were conducted for the report between Feb. 15 and Feb. 21, with a margin of error in the findings of plus or minus 2.4 percentage points, 95 per cent of the time.

The report found that those likely to enrol are more interested in "combat" than any other area of employment, suggesting that "there is a fairly strong association between a career in the Forces and combat roles."

The primary motive for signing-up for the potential recruits, according to the report, is a paycheque, a job and a career. "In fact, fully half (50 per cent) of those likely to enrol in the Forces report that they are job seeking and thus more receptive to communications messages that speak about employment," said the report.

The profile offered by the report also shows that potential recruits spend, like most Canadians their age, more than three hours a day on the Internet with television and radio, newspapers and magazines playing a smaller role in their daily lives.

Unlike the average Canadian, Afghanistan is not the first thing that comes to mind of possible future soldiers when it comes to the forces. Only 11 per cent said the mission was top of mind when asked what they think of when they hear the words "Canadian Forces," as compared with 18 per cent of all Canadians.

#### WHAT SOME POTENTIAL RECRUITS HAD TO SAY:

Name: Sophia Vasquez, Ottawa

Sex : Female

Age: 26

TV shows: Decoration and housing maintenance shows

Magazines: Enfant

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: None.

Why interested in joining?: "I have three kids and I believe it offers me the promise of a better job and career for the future."

Name: Izaak Koolman, Victoria

Military asks: What kinds of people want to be soldiers?; They're outgoing, creative and young, concludes a

Sex: Male

Age: 18

Television: "I don't really watch TV"

Magazines: "I read books, not magazines."

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: "I have a few friends in the Forces, no family although my grandpa was in the army."

Why interested in joining?: "I'd always wanted to do it. I think it would be interesting and I'd like to do something to serve the country"

Name: Adam Whitehouse, Victoria

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Television: "I don't really watch ... but if I do it's usually news."

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: "I have some friends in the Forces and I have had family in the Forces."

Why interested in joining?: "The military is something I've always been interested in since I was a little kid."

Military asks: What kinds of people want to be soldiers?; They're outgoing, creative and young, concludes a

# THE AFGHAN MISSION: COMBAT DUTIES EXPECTED TO SHIFT BY FEBRUARY

## O'Connor predicts fast exit from front lines As Afghan army is trained for heavier fighting, Canadians will likely start moving to a reserve role, Defence Minister says

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040058

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** BRIAN LAGHI

**SECTION:** National News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 661

**WORD COUNT:** 630

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BRIAN LAGHI OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor laid out a speedy timetable yesterday for Canada's departure from the Afghanistan front lines, saying up to 3,000 Afghan troops are being trained over the next five months to take over the heavier fighting.

Mr. O'Connor made the prediction yesterday as concern over the mission threatens to reach new heights in Quebec with the recent deployment of the famed Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, also known as the Vandoos.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, he said the training of Afghan soldiers over the next four or five months will allow Canadians to take on a reserve role some time near the end of the Vandoos' tour, which concludes next February. "We're hoping that by the end of this rotation ... the so-called Vandoos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan Army operating in the Kandahar province," he said.

"And as we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw. With more emphasis on training . . . at some stage [we'll] basically be in reserve." Mr. O'Connor said that if all goes according to plan, it will mean a reduction in Canadian combat duties. So far, 66 Canadian soldiers have died in the conflict.

The mission is slated to end in February, 2009, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said it will only be extended if a consensus of parliamentary parties can be reached. He said that one Canadian-trained Afghan battalion is already seeing action and that Canadians will train four or five more.

Asked whether he was concerned that potential casualties from the Vandoos might undermine the mission and harm the Conservatives' standing in Quebec, Mr. O'Connor couldn't say.

"I hope not. I always hope against hope that we won't have casualties," he said. "But our soldiers, no matter where they are [from] in Canada, whether they're from Edmonton or the Atlantic or Gagetown [N.B.] or Quebec City, our soldiers, they're all professionals.



"They're all volunteers and they know what they've got to do and they'll carry it out regardless of where they're from or what language they speak." The minister's suggestion that the Afghan army would be adequately trained by the new year was scoffed at, both by opposition members and academics.

Wesley Wark, an associate professor at the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies, said the minister is being exceedingly optimistic.

"The reality is it takes years to train a fully functioning army," Prof. Wark said.

He suggested that the Conservative government may be trying to soften the focus of the mission to persuade Parliament to extend Canadian involvement beyond 2009. The government may also be trying to persuade the North Atlantic Treaty Organization of the need to begin bringing in troops from other nations to take part in the dangerous Kandahar theatre.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said Mr. O'Connor's suggestion reminds him of a similar one made by U.S. President George W. Bush, who pledged to train the Iraqi army to take over once its soldiers left.

"We know what happened," he said.

Mr. Coderre said the Canadian position looks increasingly confused and added that any suggestion of the Vandoos not being involved in combat is patently false. "You and me both know that there will be combat." Last week, a report from a British House of Commons defence committee concluded that it will be difficult for the Afghans to shoulder the burden, at least initially.

James Arbuthnot, the chair of the committee, said in Question Period that the number of the Afghan soldiers is small and, for now, individuals can make more money in the narcotics trade than through the armed forces.

". . . It's going to be a long-term project and we cannot be impatient and expect to succeed. Impatience doesn't work in Afghanistan."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; foreign relations; defence; strife; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Gordon O'Connor

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

# WAR ON TERROR U.S. won't rule out strike on al-Qaeda in Pakistan

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040056

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A10

**BYLINE:** JITENDRA JOSHI

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** AFP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, D.C.

**WORDS:** 367

**WORD COUNT:** 355

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JITENDRA JOSHI Agence France-Press WASHINGTON, D.C.

The United States sparked heated verbal skirmishes yesterday by refusing to rule out military action against al-Qaeda leaders sheltering inside Pakistan, one of its closest "war on terror" allies.

The U.S. director of national intelligence, Mike McConnell, said al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden was in all likelihood sheltering in a frontier zone where pro-Taliban Pakistani tribal leaders hold sway.

"My personal view is that he's alive, but we don't know because we can't confirm it for over a year," he told NBC television. "I believe he is in the tribal region of Pakistan." Senior U.S. officials reiterated that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf remained a linchpin of the campaign against terrorism.

But their comments signalled frustration over what U.S. intelligence chiefs say is al-Qaeda's resurgence in lawless parts of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

Asked if the United States could take action inside Pakistan, Homeland Security Adviser Frances Townsend said: "There are no tools off the table, and we use all our instruments of national power to be effective." A new report by the U.S. intelligence community last week stated that al-Qaeda had regrouped in its Pakistani "safe haven" and was determined to inflict mass casualties through new attacks on the United States.

Mr. McConnell said al-Qaeda's recovery was made possible by a September peace accord between the Pakistani government and tribal leaders in the ill-governed border region, which the tribal groups scrapped a week ago.

Fighting along the rugged frontier has intensified amid a nationwide wave of Islamist bloodshed that has killed more than 200 people, sparked by the Pakistani army's storming of the radical Red Mosque in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, this month.

"Instead of pushing al-Qaeda out, the people who live in these federally administered tribal areas, they made a safe haven for training and recruiting," Mr. McConnell said. "And so, in that period of time, al-Qaeda has been able to regain some of its momentum." The U.S. administration's latest remarks sparked a curt response from Islamabad.

"Our stance is that Osama bin Laden is not present in Pakistan," Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao said in Islamabad.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: United States; Pakistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; foreign relations; strife; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Mike McConnell; Osama bin laden

ORGANIZATION NAME: al-Qaeda; Taliban

# IN BRIEF Coalition kills 20 Taliban in Afghan skirmish

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072040008

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**PAGE:** A11

**BYLINE:**

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** AFP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** Kabul AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 69

**WORD COUNT:** 80

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AFP Kabul – The military coalition in Afghanistan killed more than 20 Taliban militants in a prolonged clash yesterday in troubled Helmand province, a coalition statement said.

The militants were killed after an Afghan and coalition patrol came under fire from rockets and automatic weapons in the Musa Qala district in Helmand, a hotbed of insurgency in southern Afghanistan.

The attack triggered a battle that continued into yesterday evening, the statement said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# When the terror doesn't end Some Canadian soldiers returning from duty in Afghanistan face new battles with their demons

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230629  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 17  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Jason Scott, CP Afghanistan veteran Cpl. Will Salikin's mood changed when he returned home from deployment with serious injuries.  
**BYLINE:** ALISON AULD, CP  
**WORD COUNT:** 659

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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

"They've made it impossible," David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said in an interview from his Edmonton home.

"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with."

Some of our returning soldiers will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as "operational stress injuries" – a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Numbers obtained by The Canadian Press show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post-deployment screening, 28% had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems.

Of those, 16% showed signs of high-risk drinking and just over six per cent were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces says PTSD is a complicated disorder characterized by "the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event."

The military says all soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days have to complete a detailed questionnaire that can indicate if they might have an operational stress injury. If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says they can take advantage of various resources.

When the terror doesn't end Some Canadian soldiers returning from duty in Afghanistan face new battles with

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country.

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview.

Out of about 4,800 people who had returned from Afghanistan and were required to have the screening, 2,900 were still due for it and only 1,257 had completed the questionnaire.

But some soldiers praise the military for finally improving a system that has been widely criticized for its neglect of soldiers' welfare.

When Cpl. Will Salikin returned to Canada from Afghanistan after his deployment last July he was in a drug-induced coma with massive head injuries, a host of other health problems and only sketchy memories of the moments before a bomb hurled him through the air.

"Before my accident, I was a pretty laid-back person. Now I will fly off the handle for absolutely no reason whatsoever," he said in an interview.

Salikin, who was with the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, finally sought help last September when he went to a psychiatrist on the base.

He ended up seeing a psychiatrist about twice a week to work on issues his doctor says could be linked to PTSD or another stress injury. Salikin, who has shifted to headquarters for a desk job, said the quality of military care rivals civilian services.

A directive contained in a recent Defence Department briefing note states that due to the effect of operational stress injuries, "all unit commanding officers will assume a pro-active role in promoting a culture of support, understanding and caring towards injured personnel."

Zamorski said the higher profile of mental health issues and treatment options are helping reduce the stigma, but some soldiers don't believe it will ever be done away with entirely.

"We've come a long way, but we're still a bunch of guys in the army," said David, who's reconsidering his future in the Forces. "It's half our fault too. I was just too proud to go. We do have avenues, we just got to start taking them."

## PTSD DEFINITION AND SYMPTOMS'

Symptoms: Irritability, anger, guilt, grief or sadness, emotional numbing, helplessness, loss of pleasure derived from familiar activities, difficulty feeling happy, difficulty experiencing loving feelings, fatigue, insomnia, vulnerability to illness.

Definition: PTSD is described as a complicated disorder characterized by the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event, such as rape, warfare or the threat of physical harm. That can be in the form of nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can lead to problems sleeping, expressing emotion and avoidance of situations that remind sufferers of the traumatic event. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

# Mission's future uncertain

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230628

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 17

**BYLINE:** SUN NEWS SERVICES

**WORD COUNT:** 365

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By the time the famed Van Doos are ready to come home next winter, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes the Canadian army will be able to cede most of the fighting around Kandahar to Afghan troops.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the training of fresh Afghan National Army units is accelerating to the point where as many as five battalions – roughly 3,000 soldiers – will be under Canadian mentorship this fall.

"In the last few months, we took over sponsorship of one of the infantry battalions of the Afghan army. We've trained it to a very high level and it's out there now conducting operations," said O'Connor.

Fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan has cost the lives of 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat since 2002. With each casualty, pressure has mounted on the Conservative government to define an exit strategy from the war.

The country's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, began outlining a possible way out of the conflict, by stating last week that Canada would take on more of a training role – thereby reducing the exposure of troops and the potential for casualties.

His timetable was somewhat unclear, but O'Connor set down this marker in yesterday's interview: "As we train more and more of the Afghan army to carry out their operations, we will continue to withdraw, put more emphasis on training and at some stage basically be in reserve."

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment – the Van Doos – are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing 2,500 battle-hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada. Canada's combat commitment to Afghanistan extends until February 2009 and then all bets are off.

But Canada would be committing a grave error by pulling its troops out of Afghanistan by 2009, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province said yesterday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties, which is highly unlikely.

"It's a mistake," said Sakib.

Even if some Canadian soldiers are killed during the war against terrorism, Canada must resist internal pressures calling on the government to recall its troops, Sakib said.

"What's happening here, it's not just an Afghan problem. It's an international problem. What is happening here could happen elsewhere," Sakib said through an interpreter.

"Terrorism could easily make its way to Canada, in the same way it came to the United States, if the work here is not completed." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL



# Taliban extends deadline for 23 hostages

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230567  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 22  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Shin Young-Kun, AP Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry in Sungnam, South Korea as they demand their release yesterday.  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**WORD COUNT:** 241

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A purported Taliban spokesman said yesterday the hardline militia had extended by 24 hours the deadline for the Afghan government to trade captured militants for 23 South Korean hostages.

Afghan elders leading the hostage negotiations met with the kidnappers and reported that the Koreans were healthy, said Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi, the police chief of Qarabagh district in Ghazni district, where the Koreans were kidnapped Thursday.

He said the delegation made progress in their talks, but the Afghan military said Afghan and U.S. troops had "surrounded" the region in case the government decides the military should move in.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the Taliban, said the militants were giving the Afghan and South Korean governments until 10:30 a.m. EDT today to respond to their demand that 23 Taliban prisoners be freed in exchange for the South Koreans.

"The Korean government should put pressure on the Afghan government to give a positive response to the Taliban's demands," Ahmadi said by satellite phone.

"They should try to solve things through negotiations in order to save the lives of the hostages and so they can get home without being harmed."

Neither the Afghan nor Korean governments have commented on the purported Taliban offer.

A delegation of eight Korean officials arrived in the capital of Kabul yesterday and met with President Hamid Karzai to discuss the crisis.

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said the troops positioned around the area where the Koreans were believed to be held could start a military operation to rescue them "as soon as we receive the order."

But a U.S. spokesman said that appeared unlikely for the moment.

"We will only launch rescue operations or military action at the request of the Afghan and Korean governments," said Lt.-Col. David Accetta.

"We do not want to jeopardize the lives of the Korean civilians." KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Stressed soldiers reach out for help

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230566

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 22

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of CPL. WILL SALIKIN Seriously injured in Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** CP

**WORD COUNT:** 207

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Every week, David would quietly leave his office and drive a half-hour away before sitting down with a doctor.

For months, the young soldier ventured from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in Afghanistan.

It's likely at least some soldiers suffer from what the medical community calls "operational stress injuries" — afflictions that include alcoholism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Numbers show of 1,300 who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post-deployment screening, 28% had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems.

Soon after Cpl. Will Salikin spent more than a month in hospital recovering from physical wounds of war he began to wonder if he was in need of help for more elusive issues that had begun to reshape his personality.

"Before my accident, I was a pretty laid-back person. Now I will fly off the handle for absolutely no reason," he said.

The challenge for the Forces is to eliminate the stigma surrounding the military's tough-guy culture and the long held belief psychological ailments equal weakness.

A directive contained in a recent Defence Department briefing states that due to the effect of operational stress injuries, "all unit commanding officers will assume a pro-active role in promoting a culture of support, understanding and caring towards injured personnel." **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Back-seat war role likely Defence boss expects Canuck troops to go into 'reserve' early next year

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230565

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 22

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GORDON O'CONNOR 'Reserve' role

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 296

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Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor says he believes by next winter Canadian troops in Afghanistan will be relegated to the back seat when it comes to fighting the Taliban.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said the influx of newly trained Afghan National Army battalions means Canadian troops will go into "reserve," probably by the end of the current rotation in February 2008.

A fresh batch of soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — are in the midst of arriving in Kandahar, replacing battle-hardened soldiers from bases in Atlantic Canada.

O'Connor says by the end of the Van Doo rotation, he believes the Afghans will be strong enough to take on the bulk of fighting in the war-torn region.

This week, the defence committee of the British House of Commons released a report that cast doubt on the ability of the Afghan army to carry the load, at least in the short-term.

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the newly appointed Afghan police chief in Kandahar province said a 2009 pullout would be a grave error.

Sayed Aka Sakib urged NATO countries to maintain their presence on Afghan soil for as long as it takes to quell the terrorist threat and stabilize the region.

Sakib said Afghanistan remains a fertile ground for terrorist groups.

His comments followed the recent kidnapping by Taliban militants of 23 South Korean aid workers while they were travelling to Kandahar from Kabul, and the kidnapping and slaying of two Germans, who along with five Afghan colleagues were abducted while working on a dam project.

Afghanistan has seen a sharp spike in violence recently, leading to a mounting number of civilian casualties — deaths and injuries sapping support for foreign troops and the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Sixty-six Canadian military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since the start of the mission in 2002.

By intending to remove its troops in February 2009, Canada is sending the wrong message, Sakib said.

Back-seat war role likely Defence boss expects Canuck troops to go into 'reserve' early next year134

Not everyone in Kandahar shares his conviction.

Abdul Wasay says he won't miss the Canadian troops when they're gone.

"They've made some terrible mistakes recently. Innocent people, civilians were killed because of their mistakes," say Wasay, 38.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond 2009 if he doesn't have political consensus from the four political parties. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# D-Day for troop decals

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**SOURCETAG** 0707230533  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of RIC McIVER Likes decal idea  
**BYLINE:** KATIE SCHNEIDER, SUN MEDIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 279

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As council votes today whether to debate Support Our Troops decals on city vehicles, at least one alderman on the fence says more questions need to be asked.

Ald. Helene Larocque said she's undecided about the issue and worries about drivers who will not want to operate vehicles with decals on them.

"I'm neutral at this point and I have a couple of questions before making my decision," she said.

"Can we ask our employees to drive vehicles with the decals on them if they don't even support them?"

She said she's concerned about potential vandalism.

"If there's going to be potential damage to our vehicles, we have to be accountable," she said.

Other aldermen question the urgency of debating the issue today since it will be presented as an item of urgent business.

Ald. Joe Ceci said he needed to wait to learn how pressing the matter is before he could reveal which way he would vote.

"I'm going to see what the urgency is," he said.

Administration sent council members a response via a memo July 13 stating, at that point, it had no plans to place decals on vehicles and that it would be council's decision, Ceci said.

And though Ald. Madeleine King is in favour of displaying decals on city vehicles, she also said she isn't sure if the issue is urgent enough to debate today.

"I don't think that municipal politicians should be talking about federal issues or influencing them ... but I do think that we can support the guys and their families for what they do," she said, adding however, that today's agenda is lengthy.

But Ald. Andre Chabot said he would vote in favour of debating the decals today as someone whose father-in-law served for Canada in the Second World War.

He recalls the many stories his father-in-law would tell about his experience.

"It's enough to make me want to support the troops," he said.

"It is about supporting the men and women serving their country."

Ald. Ric McIver, who needs the support of 10 council members before the issue can be placed on today's agenda to debate, agreed placing decals on city vehicles is just a way to say thank you, especially since Calgarians and even city employees are serving in Afghanistan.

On June 26, McIver made an administrative inquiry about city staff's plans to put Support Our Troops decals on city vehicles. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

# Profiling helps recruiters target new blood; Do you like sitcoms and action flicks? Prefer listening to rock or rap? Are you a Cosmo girl or a People watcher? If so, then a new survey says the military is for you, Jack Aubry writes.

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**IDNUMBER** 200707230099

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen

**DATE:** 2007.07.23

**EDITION:** Early

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: James Weiler; Colour Photo: Adam Whitehouse ; Colour Photo: Izaak Koolman ; Colour Photo: Leslie Murphy ; Colour Photo: Sam Brunet ; Colour Photo: Kong Chiu ; Colour Photo: Jennifer Uhlman ; Colour Photo: Ken Majaury ; Colour Photo: Sophia Vasquez ; Colour Photo: Trevor Starchuk ; Colour Photo: Kong Chiu, 42 ; Colour Photo: Leslie Murphy, 26 ; Colour Photo: Alexandra Schumacher, 18 ; Colour Photo: Kier Gilmour, CanWest News Service / Sam Brunet, 24, seen recently at a recruiting centre in Ottawa, likes TV's Cops and prefers gaming magazines — a switch from the comedies and celebrity magazines a new survey touts. ;

**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 1696

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An extensive profile of potential recruits to the Canadian Forces reveals personality traits of being more extroverted, more agreeable, marginally more "open, less conscientious and less emotionally stable than the average Canadian, according to a recently released federal government report.

In order to prepare future recruitment programs for the Department of National Defence, the profile also finds that potential future soldiers prefer comedies on television, action flicks, rock and rap music and Cosmopolitan and People magazine on their reading table. The national survey, which cost taxpayers \$156,000, was conducted by TSN Canadian Facts Inc. in February and March.

Among the small pool of respondents who said they were likely to join — only six per cent of the population said they were somewhat or very likely to enrol — it identified men, aboriginals, those under 25 and the unemployed as the demographic groups most ready to sign up.

"Canadians likely to join the Forces full-time or part-time are more likely to see themselves as 'creative', and 'outgoing', but 'disorganized' compared to their peers," said the survey findings, which asked potential recruits to take a "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" to provide a wide scope of personality attributes.

It noted a few differences by gender where men are more likely than women to characterize themselves as "uncomplicated, quiet and disorganized" while women tend to view themselves as "dependable and outgoing."

The possible recruits were also asked to rank themselves under a "Big Five Personality Trait" framework, with the five categories being openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeability, and emotional stability.

It explained that those who are emotionally stable, for instance, tend toward a calm and stable emotional nature rather than being anxious, high-strung and temperamental.

"To better engage its target audience, the Department of National Defence has requested a current and comprehensive psychographic and demographic profile of eligible Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34," said the report, adding that the Harper government wants to increase the regular military force by 13,000 soldiers and the reserves by 10,000.

It says the challenge of meeting the targets is exacerbated by Canada's aging population and decreasing birthrates over the last 20 years. "This profile will examine the habits and interests of potential recruits and will allow DND to be more effective in their communications and advertising," it said.

Capt. Holly Brown, a spokeswoman for the Forces, said so far this year, the military is ahead in meeting its targets and is already using the profile from the report to put together future recruitment campaigns.

The Harper government has nearly tripled spending on advertising for the military, boosting its ad budget from about \$10.2 million to \$27.7 million as it attempts to boost enrolment of soldiers and meet the demands of the country's mission in Afghanistan.

"Almost half of Canadians who are eligible say that there is nothing the Forces could do

to encourage them to join. The top activities cited that would encourage them to join are increasing awareness, changing work regulations and improving the monetary benefits," said the report. It also stressed the importance of the recruitment centres and the Forces' website because of the high Internet use among that age group of the population.

The national survey involved 1,504 completed telephone interviews of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34 between Feb. 6 and March 4, 2007.

The findings have a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 per centage points, 9.5 times out of 10. As well, self-administered interactive surveys with 1,712 respondents were conducted for the report between Feb. 15 and Feb. 21, with a margin of error in the findings of plus or minus 2.4 per centage points, 95 per cent of the time.

The report found that those likely to enrol are more interested in "combat" than any other area of employment, suggesting that "there is a fairly strong association between a career in the Forces and combat roles."

The primary motive for signing up for the potential recruits, according to the report, is a paycheque, a job and a career. "In fact, fully half (50 per cent) of those likely to enrol in the Forces report that they are job seeking and thus more receptive to communications messages that speak about employment," said the report.

Certainly for Sophia Vasquez, a 26-year-old mother of three who showed up at a recruitment centre in Ottawa on Friday, this is true. Ms. Vasquez said she believed the chance at training and a career while being paid was a big draw for the military.

"I like the discipline and interesting work that the Canadian Forces offers, but I also want

to do it because it would be a better job for me," said Ms. Vasquez.

She associates the forces with "disaster relief," especially that provided to her parents and home country of El Salvador. The Canadian Forces sent two Hercules aircraft there to deliver disaster relief supplies after the country was hit by an earthquake in 2001.

Profiling helps recruiters target new blood; Do you like sitcoms and action flicks? Prefer listening 139



The profile offered by the report also shows that potential recruits spend, like most Canadians their age, more than three hours a day on the Internet, with TV and radio, newspapers and magazines playing a smaller role in their daily lives.

It also shows that from a TV perspective, they prefer such network comedies as Seinfeld and Everybody Loves Raymond. They also indicate a stronger liking for rap and alternative music than the rest of the population. They are not big magazine readers, and People magazine is the most popular, with six-per-cent readership among potential recruits.

When it comes to movies, the recruits are true to form, saying they like "action" flicks best (42 per cent compared with the Canadian average of 27 per cent). There are, of course, significant differences between male and female recruits, with women preferring comedy (31 per cent), followed by drama (15 per cent) and then action (14 per cent).

Recruits are more positive about the Canadian Forces than the average Canadian (80 per cent compared with 69 per cent) with only 19 per cent of average Canadians saying they are "very" positive about the military compared to 45 per cent of recruits. Also, almost twice as many recruits say they are familiar with Canadian Forces (65 per cent) as the average Canadian (38 per cent).

And the likelihood of joining the Forces jumps among recruits when a fully paid education is mentioned as a possibility, going from six per cent to 23 per cent when it is mentioned.

Unlike the average Canadian, Afghanistan is not the first thing that comes to mind for possible future soldiers. Only 11 per cent said the mission was top of mind when asked what they think of when they hear the words "Canadian Forces," as compared with 18 per cent of all Canadians. Instead, "peacekeeping and humanitarian aid" and the specific branches (army, air force and navy) of the military received about 20 per cent each of the responses.

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Military Hopefuls: 'I want to make a difference'

James Weiler, 44

TV shows: Adventure shows such as Highlander and Star Trek; sports programs such as UFC Unleashed, Ultimate Fight Night.

Magazines: I read books.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: Both

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "A professional, well-trained, proud fighting force. I also think of a generally underappreciated force!"

Why interested in joining?: "I truly feel that we are doing an important job in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda needs to be put out of business. When I found out that the age requirements had dropped, I got very excited about the opportunity to join. I enjoy a challenge and our mission in Afghanistan is an opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself."

Adam Whitehouse, 21

TV shows: "Usually, news."

Profiling helps recruiters target new blood; Do you like sitcoms and action flicks? Prefer listening 1400k or r

Magazines: none

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: "I have some friends in the Forces and I have had family in the Forces."

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "An establishment that's gone back a long time that has battle honours starting with the First World War."

Why interested in joining?: "The military is something I've always been interested in since I was a little kid. I always knew I would be in some part of the military."

Izaak Koolman, 18

TV shows: I don't really watch TV

Magazines: I read books.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: "I have a few friends in the Forces, no family, although my grandpa was in the army."

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "Mostly the current mission in Afghanistan, and Cyprus and the Balkans."

Why interested in joining?: "I'd always wanted to do it. I think it would be interesting and I'd like to do something to serve the country. I'm not sure if I'll stay in it, but I'm doing five years, minimum. I'll get out when I'm 23. That's not too long, really."

Leslie Murphy, 26

TV shows: The Simpsons, Malcolm in the Middle, Star Trek

Magazines: I don't read magazines.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: My oldest brother was in cadets and another brother was briefly in infantry.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "Where did 'armed' go?"

Why interested in joining?: "It would be great to have a career that means something and to make a difference in the world — make it a better place."

Sam Brunet, 24

TV shows: COPS

Magazines: Gaming magazines

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: Distant relatives are in the air force.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "For me, I associate the Forces with disaster relief in Canada and around the world."

Why interested in joining?: "I want to do my share and help out in the world. I want to make a difference, or

Profiling helps recruiters target new blood; Do you like sitcoms and action flicks? Prefer listening 141 rock or r

at least try to. And I'm also interested in travelling."

Kong Chiu, 42

TV shows: News, history shows.

Magazines: Science and research magazines.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: None.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "I think about when there was a booth at UVic where I was doing my master's degree."

Why interested in joining?: "To serve this country."

Jennifer Uhlman, 25

TV shows: Doesn't own a TV. Hasn't watched for years.

Magazines: Runner's World, Women's Health, Wish.

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: None.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "I think respect and peace. We are a peacekeeping country."

Why interested in joining?: "It's challenging and in the field I'm in (pharmacy) they offer a lot of extra training and education. I like the travelling aspect. I like the thought of being able to live in different parts of Canada."

Ken Majaury, 32

TV shows: Anything on the Discovery Channel.

Magazines: Popular Mechanics

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: Both.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "I first think of providing domestic relief such as during the ice storm or the Manitoba floods."

Why interested in joining?: "I'm attracted to getting career training while being paid at the same time. And it's a way out of a dead-end job."

Sophia Vasquez, 26

TV shows: Decoration and housing maintenance shows.

Magazines: Infant

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: None.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "Search and rescue. Bringing help to people during

Profiling helps recruiters target new blood; Do you like sitcoms and action flicks? Prefer listening 142ock or r

a disaster like the military did in El Salvador for my parents."

Why interested in joining?: "I have three kids and I believe it offers me the promise of a better job and career for the future."

Trevor Starchuk, 21

TV shows: The Simpsons, South Park, Family Guy

Magazines: Racer X, Motocross Action

Friends or family in Canadian Forces: My father served.

What comes to mind when you hear "Canadian Forces?": "The only thing that comes to mind is "army."

Why interested in joining?: "It's a secure job with very good medical and retirement coverage."

# Canada eyes cut in combat; O'Connor wants Afghan army to take over for Canadian soldiers, but critics say his plan makes no sense

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 538

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Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said yesterday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused Mr. O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, Mr. O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a back-up role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation ... the so-called Van Doos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province.

And as we train more and more the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage, basically be in reserve," Mr. O'Connor said.

His assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when

its current commitment to its NATO partners expires in February 2009.

Retired major-general Lewis MacKenzie said it makes no sense for Canada to scale

back militarily in southern Afghanistan because NATO still needs a minimum of another 10,000 troops to fight the insurgency.

Even if the Afghan army can contribute 3,000 more troops by the year's end, that still won't be enough for Canada to pull back, said Mr. MacKenzie.

"They don't have anywhere near enough troops in the south," he said. "There's 400 kilometres of porous border with Pakistan, for one thing."

Canada eyes cut in combat; O'Connor wants Afghan army to take over for Canadian soldiers, but critics say

Mr. MacKenzie said Mr. O'Connor is being overly optimistic in thinking the Afghan army can take over from Canada within six months.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said Mr. O'Connor and the Conservatives are sending mixed signals to the Canadian people as well as their NATO allies by suggesting that Canada can simply scale back its combat role and turn it over to the Afghans.

"That story doesn't hold," said Mr. Coderre.

"How can you say on one hand you will play just a monitoring role, a role of reserve, when everybody knows we need more troops, and there's a process to go through our allies, to NATO?"

Mr. Coderre reiterated the Liberal party's call to immediately notify NATO of its intention to end combat operations in February 2009 so the alliance can plan for a replacement.

"The first thing we need to do is be honest with NATO. To give an impression that we might be there 'on reserve' might have consequences," said Mr. Coderre.

"He (Mr. Harper) doesn't have a consensus. The Liberals, who are part of the official opposition, will pull the plug on the combat mission in February 2009. We should say right away, to the allies, let's find a contingency plan."

Mr. Coderre said it is time for other NATO countries to contribute more troops.

Mr. O'Connor also renewed the government's call for other NATO countries to contribute more troops to the combat efforts in southern Afghanistan, where Canada, the Netherlands, Britain and the U.S. are bearing the brunt of the front-line fighting.

"It would help the situation if more NATO nations sent troops to the south and the east," Mr. O'Connor said. "We have to train the Afghan army as quickly as possible and that's what we're doing."

NATO has about 37,000 troops in Afghanistan from its 26 member countries and 11 other non-alliance partner countries. That includes the 2,500 Canadian military personnel stationed in Kandahar.

# Canada eyes cut in combat; O'Connor wants Afghan army to take over for Canadian soldiers, but critics say his plan makes no sense

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**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 538

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# U.S. hints at attacks on al-Qaeda in Pakistan; Remarks draw fire from Islamabad

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**PAGE:** A6  
**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON  
**SOURCE:** Agence France-Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 199

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WASHINGTON – The United States yesterday sparked heated verbal skirmishes by refusing to rule out military action against al-Qaeda leaders sheltered inside Pakistan, one of its closest anti-terrorism allies.

The U.S. director of national intelligence, Mike McConnell, said al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden was in all likelihood hiding in a frontier zone where pro-Taliban Pakistani tribal leaders hold sway.

"My personal view is that he's alive," he told NBC television. "I believe he is in the tribal region of Pakistan."

Senior U.S. officials reiterated that Pakistani President

Pervez Musharraf remained a lynchpin in the campaign against terrorism.

But their comments signalled frustration over what U.S. intelligence chiefs say is al-Qaeda's resurgence in lawless parts of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

Asked if the United States could take action inside Pakistan, White House Homeland Security adviser Frances Townsend said: "There are no tools off the table, and we use all our instruments of national power to be effective."

The latest remarks sparked a curt response from Islamabad.

"Our stance is that Osama bin Laden is not present in Pakistan," Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao said in the Pakistani capital. "If anyone has the information, he should give it to us."

Pakistan's chief military spokesman was indignant: "Pakistani forces are quite capable of conducting operation(s) against militants on their territory and only they have the authority to do so," Maj. Gen. Waheed Arshad said.

# S. Korean hostages get 24-hour reprieve; Taliban extend deadline to pull troops

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A6  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Sayed Salahuddin  
**SOURCE:** Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 244

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KABUL – The Taliban kidnappers of 23 Korean hostages yesterday extended the deadline for the South Korean government to agree to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by 24 hours to this morning.

In Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany would not give in to the demands of the kidnappers — who also seized two German engineers and killed at least one of them — to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

"We will not give in to blackmail", she told ARD public television.

The 23 hostages belong to the "Saemmul Church" in Bundang, a city outside South Korea's capital, Seoul. Most of them are in their 20s and 30s, and include nurses and English teachers.

"The Taliban have extended the deadline by another 24 hours," Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters by telephone from an unknown location.

"The Islamic emirate is keen to resolve this issue peacefully and this extension is aimed at persuading the Korean government to put pressure on Kabul to accept our demands," he said.

South Korea has so far said it will withdraw its 200 military engineers and medics at the end of this year as planned.

A South Korean government delegation was in Kabul holding talks with government officials.

Mr. Yousuf said the kidnappers had extended the deadline "as a sign of honour for the Korean delegation".

While tribal elders tried to mediate between the militants and government negotiators, Afghan forces had surrounded the group of approximately 70 kidnappers in the Qarabagh area of Ghazni province, south of Kabul, a western security analyst said.

"Afghan forces have surrounded the location," he said. "They have no way to escape."

But Mr. Yousuf said fighters were holding captives at different locations. "Any use of force will have dire consequences for the hostages, he said.

# More civilians

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**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A7  
**BYLINE:** David Mulroney  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 199

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Re: Bureaucrats with guns, July 19.

That the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) is a key aspect of Canadian engagement in Afghanistan is without question. In the opinion article, Robert J. Jackson also suggests that civilians might not be willing to work in a war zone. Far from it. The SAT works as part of a team that includes the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, led by our Ambassador to Afghanistan Arif Lalani. The Embassy is staffed by dedicated Canadian civilians, career diplomats and development officials who willingly take on the personal risks and sacrifices associated with the assignment.

Canadian civilian officials are also making important contributions to our ongoing efforts in Kandahar. Canada's new Senior Civilian Coordinator Michel de Salaberry has recently deployed to Kandahar and will work closely with the civilian and military members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in delivering aid and reconstruction assistance.

By the end of this year it is expected there will be more than 50 Canadian civilian officials in the field adding to our balanced and integrated approach in helping the Afghans reach their security, governance and development objectives.

David Mulroney, Ottawa

Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Interdepartmental Co-ordinator  
for Afghanistan

# Troops' deaths in Afghanistan lead to apprehension at home

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**PAGE:** A7

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen / Letterwriter Hartmut de Witt says the Canadian military is seen as just another military invader in Afghanistan. ;

**BYLINE:** Hartmut De Witt

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 318

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I remember the day in 1943 during the Second World War when notification arrived that my brother, serving in the German army outside Leningrad, never would be coming home.

Under such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine for anyone but a soldier's family the pain and turmoil they suffer, and it is understandable that they seek solace in any way possible.

My reaction to more of our troops being killed in Afghanistan is recurring anger at the politicians and generals who send young Canadians to kill and be killed in a foreign land. Glorifying them at their funerals will not reach these young men once they are gone, never to experience adulthood and a life of their own.

Yet this is the price we — no, they — pay for our interfering in another country, especially after events turned ugly there since 2003, when Canada sent more than 1,000 troops to "maintain peace and security" in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Two years later, after Canadian troops were moved to the Kandahar region, their death toll rose as they became engaged in more dangerous combat roles.

Back home, Canadians have become increasingly confused and apprehensive about a mission that was supposed to involve reconstruction and aid to the Afghans rather than military attacks on Taliban insurgents.

Today, our Canadian military is seen as just another invader, paying for its warlike attitude in the severest manner possible. We — and especially our politicians — seem to forget that the Taliban are Afghans, too. Viewing them as aliens is one thing, but trying to change their ways in the ancient manner of the Crusaders is quite another. Moreover, were we to be evenhanded, Canada and the other Western countries involved in Afghanistan would have a truly gigantic task to change the ways of every warlord across the globe. Are you listening, Stephen Harper?

Hartmut de Witt,

Ottawa

# Afghan mission has changed

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
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**COLUMN:** Sheila Pratt  
**BYLINE:** Sheila Pratt  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 781

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Last February, about 100 students and other citizens gathered in the Dinwoodie Lounge at the University of Alberta to hear a panel discussion of the role of Canada's military. The Afghan mission was top of mind.

It seemed like an innocent episode of democracy in action. But maybe more was going on.

Capt. Peter Avis, a soldier with a degree in international relations, spoke for the Department of National Defence. Lauryn Oates, who has worked on women's rights in Afghanistan since 1996, spoke about development work and efforts to build a civil society in Afghanistan to support women. Lastly, there was Steven Staples, an Ottawa-based defence analyst, and one of the early critics of the Afghan campaign — the guy the Canadian military doesn't like and had been watching for a year, it turns out.

The Citizen revealed last week that the military monitored Staples's speeches and appearances, compiled a report on his views and sent it out to 50 top officers. Initially, the defence department denied the existence of the report, but it came to light in the Citizen's Access to Information request.

"Everyone engaged with communicating on Afghanistan should be made aware of (Staples's) arguments so they can be better prepared to deal with them," recommended the report on Staples sent to Lt.-Col. Jacques Poitras at national defence headquarters. So the U of A event, which seemed innocent enough, had another layer to it. Unbeknownst to the crowd, Staples was already a watched man.

An early critic of the Afghan campaign, Staples asked a lot of uncomfortable questions about whether the campaign could be successful. He told the Citizen he wasn't surprised to find out the military was watching him.

But this doesn't sit well with a lot of Canadians. The job of dealing with critics should fall to politicians, not the military. At worst, this might intimidate other critics. It will certainly lead people to wonder who else the military has in its sights.

The defence department says it's just doing its job. "Our job is to make sure we are aware of the information that is floating in the public domain," said an army spokesperson. At least it was only using public information, we assume.

The revelation about Staples comes just a few days after Canada's top soldier, Gen. Rick Hillier, took another troubling step. He clamped down on information available to the public through Access to Information requests about the treatment of detainees handed over to the Afghan authorities. Hillier explains the need to withhold information previously released on detainees in order to protect our soldiers.

No one wants operational details that will endanger soldiers' lives. But there's a lot of room in between for public information. If we're fighting for democracy and human rights in Afghanistan, the military shouldn't quash the transparency and accountability citizens in this country deserve.

It was an Access to Information request that revealed problems in Canada's system of monitoring the detainees. Without that knowledge, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor wouldn't have been forced to make some improvements in that system.

Most Canadians, including this one, agree we must stay in the dangerous combat role to the end of 2009. We can't break that NATO commitment. But trying to follow Harper on where he's going after 2009 is like being his dance partner and wearing a blindfold. You're never quite sure where he's leading, and he won't discuss what music is coming next.

A few weeks ago, Harper said he could not extend the combat mission without the support of the Opposition parties. While flipping pancakes in Calgary, he repeated that stand and hinted he was looking at opposition support for a new mission after 2009. What new mission?

"Canadians have been fairly clear that if we were to be in after 2009, that they would expect our participation to evolve ..." Harper said. To what? And most important, for how long?

Andy Knight, University of Alberta professor, says Canadians have never had a proper and open debate on the mission from the day the Liberal government committed troops after the 9/11 terror attacks.

The Liberals committed Canada to a UN-approved campaign carried out by NATO, to go after al-Qaeda and the Taliban. It morphed into establishing a democracy in the war-torn country. The fighting has changed, suicide missions previously unheard of in Afghanistan are now taking our soldiers' lives, development goals are in the back seat and extremists in Pakistan are a huge problem, Knight says.

"Once it becomes a war on terror, it becomes unwinnable by military means," says Knight. (Is the Defence Department taking notes on this?)

"We need to rethink the mission."

This time, the Canadian public should have a full and open debate. Harper should be clear about the benchmarks for success and how long it will take to get there.

Sheila Pratt writes for the Edmonton Journal.

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# Independent intelligence

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**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen  
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The United States' latest "national intelligence estimate" makes alarming claims about the state of Islamist extremism. If only we could trust they're correct.

The estimate's claims are certainly plausible. Al-Qaeda still wants to attack the United States; it has a safe haven in the tribal regions of Pakistan that border Afghanistan; radical Islamism is spreading and doesn't answer to Osama bin Laden or any other single leader; al-Qaeda's Iraq franchise, with its daily attacks on Americans and Iraqi Shia, is respected among Islamist radicals; the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon might act up if the U.S. moves closer to attacking its patron; and homegrown radicals are seeking stronger links with violent extremists abroad.

If it's all true, that's bad enough. The U.S.'s own intelligence estimate asserts that Islamist radicalism is just about as strong now as it was on 9/11, and perhaps less centralized and therefore more resilient. Canada is not a party to the war in Iraq, but it is a party to the broader war on Islamist radicalism, and so the report is bad news for our side.

But the U.S. intelligence apparatus is so discredited that we cannot assume a thing is true just because the U.S. director of national intelligence stands up and says it is.

Today, the man in that job is a career military-intelligence officer, retired admiral Mike McConnell, and the estimate is supposed to represent the best consensus of all branches of the U.S. intelligence community.

But then, former-secretary of state Colin Powell, another career military man, burned his own credibility and his country's with his 2003 presentation to the United Nations, trying to persuade the world that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. His claims were plausible, but substantially false.

Ever since, senior U.S. government officials -- from President George W. Bush on down -- have offered less and less credible claims on intelligence and military matters. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein had no connection to al-Qaeda.

A hinterland insurgency supposedly in its last throes has thrashed so desperately that U.S. forces don't even control Baghdad's Green Zone anymore.

That is the burden Mr. McConnell and the U.S. government must overcome with every declaration.

Everyone is weary of a government that has such difficulty telling the truth that its every utterance must be triply scrutinized for errors, self-serving omissions, and outright dishonesty. Intelligence informed by politics, rather than fact, is dangerous.

For Canadians, the importance of having our own sources and assessments of foreign intelligence and our own capability to respond to threats — clandestinely, diplomatically, militarily, and in combination — has never been greater. The United States remains our best friend and strongest ally, but that friendship won't be served by dependency.



# We've given war a chance

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**COLUMN:** Mitchell Anderson  
**BYLINE:** Mitchell Anderson  
**SOURCE:** Citizen Special  
**WORD COUNT:** 827

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War doesn't work anymore. From Iraq to Afghanistan to the Palestinian conflict, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the oldest method in human history for resolving disputes has become obsolete.

It's not that war is wrong (it usually is). It's not that war is ghastly (it always is). The simple fact is that war as a strategy to achieve a desired outcome no longer works.

Look no further than the ongoing debacle in Iraq. The U.S., with the biggest military machine in human history, is mired in a losing struggle with a determined insurgency equipped mainly with small arms and improvised roadside bombs.

After spending more than \$450 billion and counting, the U.S. military still cannot pacify a country with no organized military opposition, even when the prize is the second biggest oil reserves in the world.

The grisly human toll mounts even as the prospect of a military victory fades daily. The U.S. has so far lost more than 3,500 soldiers. More than 26,000 have been wounded. Last year the Lancet estimated that more than 600,000 Iraqis had lost their lives to violence since the invasion in 2003.

Even while saddled with arguably the most docile and jingoistic media in the developed world, the American public is demanding an end to this fiasco. Two thirds of the U.S. public currently opposes the war. Over half believe that it is creating more terrorists than reducing the threat from terrorism.

This last point is key. The strategy of trying to pacify a population by killing those that don't agree with you may have worked for millennia but has now become plainly counterproductive. It is like trying to fight a fire with kerosene.

With every door kicked in, every person humiliated, every loved one killed, there are more bereaved and enraged people willing to join an insurgency. This ad-hoc volunteer force of combatants is becoming an unbeatable foe for the world's leading military powers.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a poignant example of this emerging reality. Pound for pound, Israel has one of the most effective militaries in the world. They also have employed a grimly well-honed policy of disproportionate retribution.

There is no doubt that the various groups opposed to Israel know very well that the Jewish state can and will exact a terrible cost for every action against them. This strategy, with its gruesome human toll on both sides, has been going on for generations, yet has utterly failed to make the Israeli state safe or to protect its citizens.

So what has changed? Why has it become so much easier to mount a crippling insurgency? One factor is the global profusion of small arms. There are now about 600 million in circulation in the world, which cause 500,000 deaths each year.

The cost of a new AK-47 in Iraq is about \$200. In Afghanistan, a used one is a bargain at about \$10. Bullets are 30 cents each. A rocket launcher in Baghdad can be had for about \$100.

According to U.S. terrorism expert Stephen Flynn, "weapons like the AK-47 are so plentiful that they can be had for the price of a chicken in Uganda, the price of a goat in Kenya, and the price of a bag of maize in Mozambique or Angola."

The other new factor is the deadly and recent phenomenon of suicide bombing. Developed as a tactic in the Lebanese civil war only in the 1980s, it has become a frighteningly effective tool that military powers are virtually powerless to prevent.

Between 1980 and 2003, suicide attacks accounted for only 3 per cent of terrorist attacks worldwide but 48 per cent of deaths due to terrorism. A conventional army trained to fight other soldiers is of little practical use against such extreme tactics.

Contrary to popular opinion, most suicide bombers are motivated not by religious fanaticism. According to Robert Pape's seminal book on the subject *Dying to Win*, 95 per cent of suicide attacks have had one strategic goal: to remove an occupier.

Not surprisingly, places such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, where suicide tactics are commonplace, are also examples where it has become virtually impossible to achieve a "military solution."

In spite of the waning utility of war, like many sunset industries, it will be subsidized long after it makes sense to do so. Military spending around the world has increased 34 per cent since 1996 and currently eats up \$1.2 trillion each year — 46 per cent of which is accounted for by the U.S. alone.

Instead of throwing more good money after bad, we should admit that military interventions are no longer effective and reallocate those resources toward preventing conditions leading to conflict. Rather than lamenting the end of war, we should embrace the possibilities it creates.

The U.S. government spends 32 times more on the military than foreign aid. Globally, aid is less than seven per cent of military spending. Based on those numbers, the potential to make the world a more civil, just and peaceful place is enormous.

The so-called "war on terror" will not be won on a battlefield; it will be resolved through economic development, fair trade practices, strategic assistance and respectful negotiation.

Like slavery, subjugation of women and eugenics, the age of war has come and gone. It will not be missed.

Mitchell Anderson is a freelance writer based in Vancouver. His blog is at:  
<http://mitchellanderson.blogspot.com/>

# They forgive but ... they can't forget; SPECTATOR EXCLUSIVE; For the first time, the parents of the Hamilton soldier killed by friendly fire tell of their unrelenting sadness ... and enduring anger

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Sheryl Nadler, the Hamilton Spectator / Mark Graham's father Albert Graham and Mark's daughter Shae-Lynn, 8, with a photo of Hamilton's fallen soldier. ;  
**SOURCE:** The Hamilton Spectator  
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A government report into the friendly fire incident that killed Hamilton soldier Mark Graham has answered some of his parents' questions about what happened that morning in Afghanistan last September.

But answers don't replace their son.

In their first comments since receiving the report 11 days ago, Albert and Linda Graham talk about the lingering sadness — and, yes, anger — they still feel.

"It's been a tough year," said Albert Graham, Mark's father.

"Some days are good, and some days are very bad."

RELATED STORY: A11

# Taliban set to kill hostages

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Taliban insurgents have said they will execute 23 South Korean hostages today unless an equal number of Taliban prisoners is released from Afghan jails.

Security forces said late yesterday that they have surrounded the abductors' suspected location.

The Koreans, described as aid workers, were kidnapped from a bus Thursday as they travelled between Kabul and Kandahar.

Taliban fighters were also believed to be still holding a German aid worker abducted Wednesday after a second German died in the group's custody.

The kidnappings, as well as previous cases, have targeted people from countries that have been ambivalent about their commitment to the international military presence in Afghanistan.

Demonstrators, above, continued protests yesterday in the South Korean capital, Seoul, even though the government has already said it will withdraw its 200 military engineers and medics by year's end.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has also come under intense domestic pressure, said yesterday that her government will not negotiate with the Taliban or submit to "blackmail" to pull out its 3,000 soldiers.

RELATED STORY: A6

# Soldiers battle mental–health stigma; Returning from overseas duty, some say the military is failing fighters traumatized by the rigours of war; Post–traumatic stress disorder

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Jason Scott, the Canadian Press / Corporal Will Salikin, injured in Afghanistan, praises the military for its help, but says it 'dropped the ball' when he wasn't advised of the services available. ;  
**BYLINE:** Alison Auld  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
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About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half– hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment.

For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrades' bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan.

It was a hassle, but it was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war.

"They've made it impossible," David, who insisted on using a pseudonym, said from his Edmonton home.

"I had to drop my treatment because I couldn't get the time off from work and I was embarrassed to tell the people I work with. Once you start going to see someone to help you out, they treat you like you can't do your job no more.

"You come home and you almost feel like the army's turning its back on you."

The blunt criticism comes as the Canadian Forces begins to deploy a fresh batch of troops to the country's restive southern flank, and welcome home still more who have endured everything from the tedium of life on a military base to the stress of heavy combat.

It's likely some of them will suffer from what the medical community benignly refers to as "operational stress injuries" — a range of afflictions that includes alcoholism, depression and post–traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Numbers obtained by The Canadian Press show that of 1,300 Forces members who served in Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent a post–deployment screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more

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mental–health problems. Of those, 16 per cent showed signs of high–risk drinking and just over 6 per cent were possibly suffering from PTSD. Five per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

The numbers aren't alarming, says Dr. Mark Zamorski of the deployment health section of the Canadian Forces, but they do show how negative combat experiences are contributing to mental–health problems.

For example, only 8 per cent of troops who completed post–deployment questionnaires after rotations in Kabul showed signs of mental–health issues.

"The magnitude of the health impact is about what we'd expect given the nature of the deployment," Zamorski said from Ottawa where he does research on ways to mitigate adverse health consequences on members of the Forces

PTSD is a complicated disorder characterized by what Zamorski described as "the intrusive re–experiencing of a traumatic event." That can happen through nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can cause problems sleeping, expressing emotion, anger and avoidance of situations that remind someone suffering from PTSD of the traumatic event.

For David, the signs began surfacing about six months after he was back from what was his first deployment. His wife and family kept telling him he was different, that he didn't laugh like he once had and that he was hanging out only with the guys from his tour.

"You don't see the problems right away," he said. "My wife kept mentioning it. So I went civvy street (to get help) because I didn't want to go on base. We have tons of psychiatrists on base, but you won't see anybody going to them because you can't — it's during the workday and everyone sees you, so who wants that?"

But while David is reluctant to openly deal with a mental–health disorder, former corporal Brian Stevens says his plea for help went unheeded by his superiors.

Stevens, a 10–year veteran of the Forces, served in Afghanistan from August 2005 to March 2006. It was a rude awakening for the soldier from a small town in Nova Scotia, who on his first overseas deployment spent much of his time away from the main Kandahar base and taking fire while driving the area's treacherous roads. Witnessing the extreme poverty and dismal humanitarian situation didn't make it easier.

When he returned home, he displayed the telltale signs of a stress injury. He was irritable, couldn't sleep, flew into rages and became indifferent to most things, especially the authority of the military. Soon he was drinking heavily and racing down rural highways with a beer between his legs.

That summer, he hit rock bottom, indulging in a panoply of drugs that included intravenous cocaine, Dilaudid, OxyContin and morphine — drugs he insists he had never tried before.

"I never thought I'd stick a needle in my arm, but when I came home I did," the 32–year–old said from Edmonton, where he was recently living after being released from the military.

His mother, Bonnie, said she noticed marked changes in her son, who was once outgoing and talkative. He spent most of his time sleeping, became moody and withdrew into himself.

"The military didn't seem to understand. He would go AWOL and he wouldn't know why and all they'd do was throw him in jail instead of giving him the help he ... needed," she said from her home in Salmon River, N.S.

An already bad situation grew worse when he and four other soldiers at CFB Gagetown, N.B., were charged

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with trafficking in cocaine, ecstasy and marijuana. Stevens denies selling drugs, but is facing a court martial on Sept. 11.

Zamorski, who couldn't comment on Stevens's case, insisted people seeking help will usually get it, but that soldiers also have to be held accountable for their behaviour.

"No system is perfect," he said. "Some people are very difficult to help for a lot of reasons."

The military says it has gone to great lengths to make sure soldiers are as prepared as they can be before they deploy to deal with stress injuries as they develop. Officials have also added several screening steps when soldiers return to help identify signs of stress disorders.

Troops are briefed before they return to Canada on what it will be like adjusting to life at home and in the garrison.

All soldiers who have been away for more than 60 days have to complete a detailed questionnaire that can indicate if they might have an operational stress injury. And they are supposed to undergo an interview with a health professional. If they are found to be in need of help, Zamorski says, they can take advantage of several resources on and off base.

There is a new anonymous toll-free number staffed by health practitioners, specialized operational stress injury clinics, and trauma and stress support centres on bases across the country.

Some soldiers are also now trained in identifying potential stress problems so they can offer support while overseas.

But only a fraction of redeployed troops have completed the questionnaire or undergone the interview, raising the likelihood that some are falling through the cracks.

Out of about 4,800 people who had returned from Afghanistan and were required to have the screening, 2,900 were still due for it and only 1,257 had completed the questionnaire.

The reason for the low numbers?

"The units are too busy doing other things, like getting ready for the next operation," said Zamorski.

Despite the growing pains in the Forces' mental-health program, some soldiers praise the military for improving a system that has been widely criticized for its neglect of soldiers' welfare.

When Corporal Will Salikin returned to Canada from Afghanistan after his deployment last July he was in a drug-induced coma with massive head injuries, among other problems.

He had been travelling west in a convoy from the Kandahar Airfield on Jan. 15, 2007, when a suicide bomber rammed his light-armoured jeep, detonating rockets and "throwing it up in the air and across the street." The blast killed Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry and seriously injured his section mates, leaving one of them a double amputee.

Salikin, now at his base in Edmonton, awoke at the University of Alberta Hospital with a shattered forearm, burns, compromised movement in his right side, no recollections of the incident, slight neurological issues and a bacterial infection common in Afghanistan.

He spent more than a month in hospital recovering from his physical wounds, but soon began to wonder if he

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was in need of help for more elusive issues that had begun to reshape his personality.

At home, little things like the way his fiancée placed the coffee table next to the sofa would enrage him. He no longer wanted to hang out with his friends. He began harbouring grudges over trivial annoyances. And every morning he would awake exhausted at 4:30 a.m.

"Before my accident, I was a pretty laid-back person. Now I will fly off the handle for absolutely no reason whatsoever," the 24-year-old said.

Salikin finally sought help last September when he went to a psychiatrist on the base. The military hadn't indicated the service was available, leaving him on his own to find treatment.

"That's where the army dropped the ball. Nothing really was offered to me. I had to seek it out myself, but then they were fully helpful," he said.

The challenge for the forces is to eliminate the stigma around mental-health illnesses in the military's tough-guy culture and the long held belief that psychological ailments equal weakness.

A directive in a recent Defence Department briefing note states that due to the effect of operational stress injuries, "all unit commanding officers will assume a proactive role in promoting a culture of support, understanding and caring towards injured personnel."

Zamorski said the higher profile of mental-health issues and treatment options are helping reduce the stigma, but some soldiers don't believe it will ever be done away with entirely.

"We've come a long way, but we're still a bunch of guys in the army," said David, who's reconsidering his future in the Forces. "It's half our fault, too. I was just too proud to go. We do have avenues, we just got to start taking them."

But for those like Stevens, now drug-free, pride had little to do with his inability to get the help he needed.

"There should be safeguards in place to prevent the escalation of it, like what happened to me. I should have been stopped long before I was," he said.

"I was a great soldier the first nine years ... I was in the infantry and did what I had to do and in the end I lost out. And I'm still losing out."

#### Post-traumatic stress disorder

Symptoms: Irritability, anger, guilt, grief or sadness, emotional numbing, helplessness, loss of pleasure derived from familiar activities, difficulty feeling happy, difficulty experiencing loving feelings, fatigue, insomnia, vulnerability to illness.

Definition: PTSD is described as a complicated disorder characterized by the intrusive re-experiencing of a traumatic event, such as rape, warfare or the threat of physical harm. That can be in the form of nightmares, flashbacks and vivid memories, all of which can lead to problems sleeping, expressing emotion and avoidance of situations that remind sufferers of the traumatic event.

Number of cases: Of 1,300 Canadian soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan since 2005 and underwent screening, 28 per cent had symptoms suggestive of one or more mental health problems. Just over 6 per cent of those were possibly suffering from PTSD, and 5 per cent showed symptoms of major depression.

Soldiers battle mental-health stigma; Returning from overseas duty, some say the military is failing fighters



# Embraced by the enemy; A U.S. navy SEAL headed to Afghanistan intending to avenge the deaths of 9/11 victims. A decision to spare villagers turned into the greatest American loss of life and the beginning of this SEAL 's ordeal.

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Courtesy of Daniel Murphy, the Washington Post /Marcus Luttrell, fourth from left, with five of the 19 U.S. navy SEALs who died in Afghanistan on June 28: Matthew Axelson, left, Dan Healy, James Suh, Eric S. Patton and Michael Murphy. ; Photo: Family Photo, the Washington Post / Major Jeff (Spanky) Peterson flew the helicopter that rescued Petty Officer Marcus Luttrell from a village in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Courtesy of Josh Appel, the Washington Post / A large contingent of U.S. soldiers were involved in the dangerous rescue of navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell in Afghanistan. ; Photo: Helayne Seidman, the Washington Post / Marcus Luttrell looks at a memorial at New York's Ground Zero — his touchstone for his mission as a soldier. ;

**BYLINE:** Laura Blumenfeld

**SOURCE:** The Washington Post

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

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The blood in his eyes almost blinded him, but the Navy Seal could hear, clattering above the trees in northeast Afghanistan, rescue helicopters.

"Hey," he pleaded silently. "I'm right here."

Marcus Luttrell, a fierce, 6-foot-5 rancher's son from Texas, lay in the dirt. His face was shredded, his nose broken, three vertebrae cracked from tumbling down a ravine. A Taliban rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) had ripped off his pants and riddled him with shrapnel.

As the helicopters approached, Luttrell, a petty officer first class, turned on his radio. Dirt clogged his throat, leaving him unable to speak. He could hear a pilot: "If you're out there, show yourself."

It was June 2005. The United States had just suffered its worst loss of life in Afghanistan since the invasion in 2001. Taliban forces had attacked Luttrell's four-man team on a remote ridge shortly after 1 p.m. on June 28. By day's end, 19 Americans had died. Now U.S. aircraft scoured the hills for survivors.

There would be only one. Luttrell's ordeal — described in exclusive interviews with him and 14 men who helped save him — is among the more remarkable accounts to emerge from Afghanistan. It has been a dim and distant war, where after 5 1/2 years about 26,000 U.S. troops remain locked in conflict.

Out of that darkness comes this spark of a story. It is a tale of moral choices and of prejudices transcended. It is also a reminder of how challenging it is to be a smart soldier, and how hard it is to be a good man.

Luttrell had come to Afghanistan "to kill every SOB we could find." Now he lay bleeding and filthy at the bottom of a gulch, unable to stand. "I could see hunks of metal and rocks sticking out of my legs," he recalled.

He activated his emergency call beacon, which made a clicking sound. The pilots in the HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters overhead could hear him.

"Show yourself," one pilot urged. "We cannot stay much longer." Their fuel was dwindling as morning light seeped into the sky, making them targets for RPGs and small-arms fire. The helicopters turned back.

As the HH-60s flew to Bagram airbase, 130 kilometres away, one pilot told himself, "That guy's going to die."

Luttrell never felt so alone. His legs, numb and naked, reminded him of another loss. He had kept a magazine photograph of a World Trade Center victim in his pants pocket. Luttrell didn't know the man but carried the picture on missions. He killed in the man's unknown name.

Now Luttrell's camouflage pants had been blasted off, and with them, the victim's picture. Luttrell was feeling light-headed. His muse for vengeance was gone.

#### Hunting a Taliban leader

Luttrell's mission had begun routinely. As darkness fell on Monday, June 27, his SEAL team fast-roped from a Chinook helicopter onto a grassy ridge near the Pakistan border. They were Navy Special Operations forces, among the most elite troops in the military: Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy and three petty officers -- Matthew G. Axelson, Danny P. Dietz and Luttrell. Their mission, code-named Operation Redwing, was to capture or kill Ahmad Shah, a Taliban leader. U.S. intelligence officials believed Shah was close to Osama bin Laden.

Luttrell, 32, is a twin. His brother was also a SEAL. Each had half of a trident tattooed across his chest, so that standing together they completed the SEAL symbol. They were big, visceral, horse-farm boys raised by a father Luttrell described admiringly as "a hard man."

"He made sure we knew the world is an unforgiving, relentless place," Luttrell said. "Anyone who thinks otherwise is totally naive."

Luttrell, who deployed to Afghanistan in April 2005 after six years in the navy, including two years in Iraq, welcomed the moral clarity of Kunar province. He would fight in the mountains that cradled bin Laden's men. It was, he said, "payback time for the World Trade Center. My goal was to double the number of people they killed."

The four SEALs zigzagged all night and through the morning until they reached a wooded slope. An Afghan man wearing a turban suddenly appeared, then a farmer and a teenage boy. Luttrell gave a PowerBar to the boy while the SEALs debated whether the Afghans would live or die.

If the SEALs killed the unarmed civilians, they would violate military rules of engagement; if they let them go, they risked alerting the Taliban. According to Luttrell, one SEAL voted to kill them, one voted to spare them and one abstained. It was up to Luttrell.

Part of his calculus was practical. "I didn't want to go to jail." Ultimately, the core of his decision was moral.

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"A frogman has two personalities. The military guy in me wanted to kill them," he recalled. And yet: "They just seemed like — people. I'm not a murderer."

Luttrell, by his account, voted to let the Afghans go. "Not a day goes by that I don't think about that decision," he said. "Not a second goes by."

At 1:20 p.m., about an hour after the SEALs released the Afghans, dozens of Taliban overwhelmed them. The civilians he had spared, Luttrell believed, had betrayed them. At the end of a two-hour firefight, only he remained alive. He has written about it in a book, *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10*.

Daniel Murphy, whose son Michael was killed, said he was comforted when "Mike's admiral said, 'Don't think these men went down easy. There were 35 Taliban strewn on the ground.'"

Before Murphy was shot, he radioed Bagram: "My guys are dying."

Help came thundering over the ridgeline in a Chinook carrying 16 rescuers. But at 4:05 p.m., as the helicopter approached, the Taliban fighters fired an RPG. No one survived.

"It was deathly quiet," Luttrell recalled. He crawled away, dragging his legs, leaving a bloody trail. The country song *American Soldier* looped through his mind. Round and round, in dizzying circles, whirled the words "I'll bear that cross with honour."

News of a crash

In southwestern Afghanistan, at the Kandahar airfield, Major Jeff Peterson, 39, sat in the briefing room with his feet up on the table, watching the puppet movie *Team America: World Police*.

Peterson was a full-time air force reservist from Arizona, known as Spanky because he resembles the scamp from *The Little Rascals*. He was passing a six-week stint with other reservists he called "old farts." In three days they would head home, leaving behind the smell of burning sewage and the sound of giant camel spiders crunching mouse bones.

Someone flipped on the television news. A Chinook had crashed up north.

Peterson flew an HH-60 for the 305th Rescue Squadron. Motto: "Anytime, anywhere." Their rescues had been minor. "An Afghani kid with a blown-up hand or a soldier with a blown-up knee," Peterson recalled in an interview at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz.

That was OK with him. Twelve men, including Peterson's best friend, had died during training in a midair collision in 1998. The accident, he said, "took the wind out of my life sails." He just wanted to serve and get back to his wife, Penny, and their four small boys.

Peterson is dimply, 5-foot-8, and describes himself with a smile as "an idiot. A full-on, certified idiot." He almost flunked out of flight school because he kept getting airsick. While the other pilots downed lasagna, he nibbled saltines. He had trouble in survival training because they had to slaughter rabbits: "I didn't want to kill the bunny."

Peterson dealt with stress by joking, singing Mr. Rogers' Neighbourhood songs on missions: "It's a beautiful day in the neighbourhood."

Now, with the news of the Chinook crash, the tension in the Kandahar briefing room amped up as a call came

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over the radio. Bagram needed them. Peterson grabbed his helmet and a three-day pack. He asked himself, "What is this about?"

### Encounter with a villager

The SEAL wondered whether he was dying — if not from the bullet that had pierced his thigh, then surely of thirst. "I was licking sweat off my arms," Luttrell recalled. "I tried to drink my urine."

Crawling through the night, as Spanky Peterson's HH-60 flew overhead with other search helicopters, he made it to a pool of water. When he lifted his head, he saw an Afghan. He reached for his rifle.

"American!" the villager said, flashing two thumbs up. "OK! OK!"

"You Taliban?" Luttrell asked.

"No Taliban!"

The villager's friends arrived, carrying AK-47s. They began to argue, apparently determining Luttrell's fate. "I kept saying to myself: 'Quit being a little bitch. Stand up and be a man.'"

But he couldn't stand. Three men lifted 240 pounds of dead weight and carried Luttrell to the 15-hut village of Sabray. They took his rifle.

What happened next baffled him. Mohammed Gulab, 33, father of six, fed Luttrell warm goat's milk, washed his wounds and clothed him in what Luttrell called "man jammies."

"I didn't trust them," Luttrell said. "I was confused. They'd reassure me, but hell, it wasn't in English."

Hours after his arrival, Taliban fighters appeared and demanded that the villagers surrender the American. They threatened Gulab, Luttrell said, and tried to bribe him. "I was waiting for a good deal to come along and for Gulab to turn me over.

"I'd been in so many villages. I'd be like, 'Up against the wall, and shut the hell up!' So I'm like, 'Why would these people be kind to me?'" Luttrell said. "I probably killed one of their cousins. And now I'm shot up, and they're using all the village medical supplies to help me."

What Luttrell did not understand, he said, was that the people of Sabray were following their own rules of engagement — tribal law. Once they had carried the invalid SEAL into their huts, they were committed to defend him. The Taliban fighters seemed to respect that custom, even as they lurked in the hills nearby.

During the day, children would gather around Luttrell's cot. He touched their noses and said "nose"; the children taught him words in Pashto. At prayer time, he knelt as best he could, wincing from shrapnel wounds. A boy said in Arabic, "There is no god but Allah." Luttrell repeated: "La ilaha illa Allah."

"Once you say that, you become a Muslim — you're good to go," he said. Luttrell offered his own unspoken prayer to Jesus: "Get me out of here."

On several occasions, he heard helicopters. In one of them was Peterson. "Come on, dude, show yourself," Peterson would silently say, looking down into the trees. At dawn, as Peterson flew back from a search, he felt his stomach sink. "We failed."

On July 1, with Taliban threats intensifying, Gulab's father, the village elder, decided to seek help at a Marine

outpost eight kilometres down in the valley. Luttrell wrote a note: "This man gave me shelter and food, and must be helped."

The old man tramped down the mountain.

### Preparing a rescue

At 1 a.m. on July 2, Staff Sergeant Chris Piercecchi, 32, an air force pararescue jumper, picked up Gulab's father at the marine outpost. He flew with him to Bagram. "He was this wise, older person with a big, old beard," Piercecchi recalled. Gulab's father handed over Luttrell's note and described the SEAL's trident tattoo.

U.S. commanders drew up rescue plans. "It was one of the largest combat search-and-rescue operations since Vietnam," said Lieutenant Colonel Steve Butow, who directed the air component from a classified location in southwest Asia.

Planners first considered sending a Chinook to get Luttrell, while Peterson's HH-60 would wait a few miles away to evacuate casualties. But the smaller HH-60, the planners concluded, could navigate the turns approaching Sabray more easily than a lumbering Chinook.

"Sixties, you got the pickup," the mission commander said to the HH-60 pilots.

"I was like, 'Holy cow, dude, how am I not going to screw this up?'" Peterson recalled. His chest felt tight. He had never flown in combat. "You want to do your mission, but once you're out, you're like, damn, I'd rather be watching the American puppet movie."

At 10:05 p.m. — five nights after Luttrell's four-man team had set out — Peterson climbed aboard with his reservist crew: a college student, a doctor, a Border Patrol pilot, a former firefighter and a hard-of-hearing Vietnam vet.

First Lieutenant Dave Gonzales, 41, Peterson's co-pilot, recalled that he felt for his rosary beads. "If you guys are praying guys, make sure you're praying now," Gonzales said.

They flew for 40 minutes toward the dead-black mountains. Voices from pilots — A-10 attack jets and AC-130 gunships flying cover — droned over five frequencies. Peterson's crew was quiet, breathing a greasy mix of JP-8 jet fuel fumes and hot rubber.

As they climbed from 1,500 to 7,000 feet, Peterson asked about the engines: "What's my power?" In thin air, extra weight can be deadly. He didn't want to dump fuel; they were flying over a village. But he could sense the engines straining through the vibrations in the pedals.

Peterson broke the safety wire on the fuel switch. "Sorry, guys," he said, looking down at the roofs. He felt bad for the people below, but he needed to lighten the aircraft if he wanted to survive. Five hundred pounds of fuel gushed out. "That's for Penny and the boys."

Five minutes before the helicopter reached Sabray, U.S. warplanes — guided by a ground team that had hiked overland — attacked the Taliban fighters ringing the houses. "They started shwacking the bad guys," Peterson recalled. The clouds lit up from the explosions. The radio warned, "Known enemy 100 metres south of your position." The back of Peterson's neck prickled.

At 11:38 p.m., they descended into the landing zone, a ledge on a terraced cliff. The rotors spun up a blinding funnel of dirt. The aircraft wobbled, drifting left toward a wall and then right toward a cliff. Piercecchi lay down, bracing for a crash. Master Sergeant Mike Cusick, 57, the flight engineer who had been a gunner in

Vietnam, screamed, "Stop left! Stop right!"

"I'm going to screw up," Peterson recalled thinking. He thought of his best friend's wife, how she howled when he told her that her pilot husband had crashed. "Don't let this happen to Penny."

Then, suddenly, through the brown cloud, a bush appeared. An orientation point.

Luttrell was crouching with Gulab on the ground, watching them land. The static electricity from the rotors glowed green. "That was the most nervous I'd been," Luttrell said. "I was waiting for an RPG to blast the helicopter."

Gulab helped Luttrell limp through the rotor wash. Piercecchi and Master Sergeant Josh Appel, 39, jumped out and saw two men dressed in billowing Afghan robes.

Appel trained the laser dot of his M4 on Luttrell. "Bad guys or good guys?" Appel recalled wondering. "I hope I don't have to shoot them."

Someone shouted, "He's your precious cargo!"

Piercecchi performed an identity check, based on memorized data: "What's your dog's name?"

Luttrell: "Emma!"

Piercecchi: "Favourite superhero?"

"Spiderman!"

Piercecchi shook his hand. "Welcome home."

Luttrell and Gulab climbed into the helicopter. During the flight, Gulab "was latched onto my knee like a three-year-old," Luttrell recalled. When they landed and were separated, Gulab seemed confused. He had refused money and Luttrell's offer of his watch.

"I put my arms around his neck," Luttrell recalled, "and said into his ear, 'I love you, brother.'" He never saw Gulab again.

The lessons

Two years have passed. Peterson, back in Tucson, realizes he may not be "a big idiot" after all. "I feel like I could do anything," he said.

On a recent evening, he took his boys to a scout meeting. The theme: Cub Scouts in Shining Armour. The den leader said: "A knight of the Round Table was someone who was very noble, who stood up for the right things. Remember what it is to be a knight, OK?"

Peterson's boys nodded, wearing Burger King crowns that Penny had spray-painted silver.

Peterson had never spoken to Luttrell, either in the helicopter or afterward. Last month, the SEAL phoned him.

"Hey, buddy," he said. "This is Marcus Luttrell. Thank you for pulling me off that mountain."

Embraced by the enemy; A U.S. navy SEAL headed to Afghanistan intending to avenge the death of 9/11 v

Peterson whooped.

Such happy moments have been rare for Luttrell. After recuperating, he deployed to Iraq, returning home this spring. His injuries from Afghanistan still require a "narcotic regimen." He feels tormented by the death of his SEAL friends, and he avoids sleeping because they appear in his dreams, shrieking for help.

Three weeks ago, while in New York, Luttrell visited Ground Zero. On an overcast afternoon, he looked down into the pit. The World Trade Center is his touchstone as a warrior. He had linked Sept. 11 to the people of Afghanistan: "I didn't go over there with any respect for these people."

But the villagers of Sabray taught him something, he said.

"In the middle of everything evil, in an evil place, you can find goodness. Goodness. I'd even call it godliness."

As Luttrell talked, he walked the perimeter fence. His gait was hulking, if not menacing, his voice angry, engorged with pain. "They protected me like a child. They treated me like I was their eldest son."

Below Luttrell in the pit, earthmovers were digging; construction workers in orange vests directed a beeping truck. Luttrell kept talking. "They brought their cousins brandishing firearms. ..." The cranes clanked. "And they brought their uncles, to make sure no Taliban would kill me ... "

Luttrell kept talking over the banging and the hammering of a place that would rise again.

# Report brings no peace to family; Mark Graham's parents say answers do not ease sadness, anger

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**EDITION:** Final

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**PAGE:** A11

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR / The parents of Mark Graham, above, say they bear no animosity toward the pilot. ;

**BYLINE:** Steve Buist

**SOURCE:** The Hamilton Spectator

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 740

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The video footage lasts just a few seconds, and the images aren't very clear.

"It's from a mile up and the fire was like this," Albert Graham says, as he makes a circle about the size of a nickel with his thumb and forefinger. "You see the fire, and you see the burst of the gunshots."

The footage he's describing was taken Sept. 4, 2006, from a camera mounted in the cockpit of a U.S. A-10A fighter plane.

As he watched the short, grainy video, Graham already knew the outcome of the chilling footage. Heck, it's been on his mind day and night for the past 10 months.

His son, Mark, was standing next to that fire, and one of those gunshots killed him.

"Seeing the actual incident, seeing it actually happen, it was very emotional," said Graham. "This is not a movie, it's really happening."

"That was very hard to take."

The video, along with some satellite photographs, were part of a presentation made to Graham and his wife, Linda, 11 days ago by Canada's Department of National Defence, a day before the government released details of an investigation into the friendly fire incident that killed Mark Graham and wounded 35 Canadian soldiers west of Kandahar, Afghanistan.

"They asked us if we wanted to see it and we said yes," Linda Graham said, although she admitted it was a difficult decision.

Mark Graham, a 33-year-old former Olympic track star from Hamilton's west Mountain, was killed at daybreak last Labour Day when the American pilot of the A-10A mistook a garbage fire at the Canadian encampment for an enemy position.

In their first public comments since the government's report was released, the Grahams say they bear no anger or animosity toward the pilot who made the fateful mistake that nearly wiped out a Canadian Forces company



of soldiers.

"I really don't have any animosity against the pilot," said Albert Graham. "He was doing a job, he made a terrible mistake and as far as I understand, he's not doing very well because he's very distraught about it."

The Grahams don't know the identity of the pilot and haven't spoken to him, but they said the U.S. military did pass along his condolences to them.

Ten months after the tragic incident, the 118-page report answers some of the Grahams's questions about what happened to their son that morning in Afghanistan but it's done little to relieve their lingering sadness and anger.

"Basically, there was nothing I was told that makes me feel better," said Albert Graham, a soft-spoken man who measures his words carefully before he speaks.

"The miracle I would want is to have him back here and that, I know, will not happen.

"Now that I've seen the report and talked about it, I don't think it's really changed anything," he added. "He's dead. Whatever they've told me will not bring peace to the way I feel."

The report concludes that pilot error was the cause of the tragedy and that the incident was preventable.

Daylight was just beginning to break and there was a significant contrast between the brightening sky and the shadows down below on the ground.

The pilot had just removed his night vision goggles and instead of relying on his instrumentation, he looked out the cockpit window and honed in on the wrong target.

"I'm kind of glad we have the information because it answers the questions but I still feel profoundly sad," said Linda Graham.

"And angry," added Albert Graham. "Well, I am. I'm not going to go out there and wave my fist and yell and scream.

"But it's not just because of Mark," he said. "When I see all those young fellows coming home wrapped in the flag in a box, it's sadness and anger.

"These young men, they all could be my son. It makes me really sad and angry when I see these young men die."

But he's uncomfortable getting drawn into political discussions about Canada's role in the Afghanistan war.

"I don't like any kind of war," Graham said.

The past 10 months have left him conflicted, however, especially since he has another son, Daniel, who is stationed in Edmonton with a Canadian Forces tank battalion.

"At first, I thought these guys should come back, let's go, come home," said Graham. "Then you talk to some of the soldiers that are back from Afghanistan and one of my questions is always 'Would you go back?'"

"Nine out of 10 times I ask that question, they say yes," he added. "Why? Because they see what they're accomplishing there.

Report brings no peace to family; Mark Graham's parents say answers do not ease sadness, anger

"So I have to think about it."

The Grahams also announced that they have created an annual scholarship in memory of their son, who was a track star at Sir Allan MacNab secondary school on the west Mountain.

The \$500 bursary will be awarded each September for at least the next five years to a Hamilton student from any high school entering college or university who combines academic and athletic skill.

"One of the reasons was that we need something positive that month, something positive in September," said Albert Graham.

"We also wanted to thank the community," added Linda Graham. "In fact, the community has been very supportive.

"When it's happening, you don't really notice but when you think back you go, wow, that's pretty amazing that we heard from so many people, and so many people thought about us enough to send a card or a letter."

The first recipient of the bursary will be announced Sept. 22 at the annual dinner for the Jamaica Foundation of Hamilton.

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# Liberals bet on professor to take Outremont

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**COLUMN:** Andrew Dreschel  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Peter McCabe, the Canadian Press / Jocelyn Coulonspeaks at press conference in Montreal recently as Stephane Dion listens. ;  
**DATELINE:** Ottawa  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Dreschel  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 563

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Stars are always nice but it will take more than one to pierce the gloom surrounding Stephane Dion. With revealing difficulty, the Liberal leader has finally found a marquee candidate for a Montreal riding that was once a prized party pass to Parliament.

Political scientist and pundit Jocelyn Coulon will be lugging more than a damaged Liberal brand around Outremont when Stephen Harper decides to call byelections. Coulon's knees will also be buckling under the weight of a leader who is far from buoyant.

How important is Outremont to Dion and broader Liberal prospects? So important the party is counting on success in Ontario seats it now holds to mask what would be a signature Quebec failure.

That's either wildly optimistic or foolishly naïve. After accelerating the exit of at least one stalwart in hopes of forcing another byelection, Liberals are crossing their fingers that the prime minister will set a common date to fill two vacant Quebec seats, plus up to six more across the country where the sitting MP has resigned or soon will.

Except that's not in Conservative interest. Simultaneous races would almost certainly let Dion assemble in Parliament the so-called dream team now missing only Bob Rae and Martha Hall Findlay.

It remains to be seen if that's ultimately a good thing for a leader watching his back. Michael Ignatieff is already on the front bench where he's growing fast enough for Liberals to question convention wisdom. And Rae, whose December leadership loss isn't sitting well, is expected to win Bill Graham's old Toronto Centre riding even more easily than Hall Findlay will slip into Jim Peterson's well-worn Willowdale shoes.

Still, multiple contests in ridings mostly won by Liberals in the last election would buffer an Outremont embarrassment while creating at least the illusion of momentum. The problem is that a strategically shrewd prime minister isn't likely to oblige with suspect tactics.

With little to lose and plenty to gain, Harper can test Dion in the Outremont crucible without providing useful distractions. While the prime minister must set the Montreal byelection date by July 28, his flexibility to delay others, while ultimately limited by law, is primarily constrained by public pressure to give citizens their voice.

Liberals found an articulate one in Coulon. A University of Montreal professor and foreign affairs analyst, he is expected to benefit from Quebec opposition to the Afghanistan mission and from residual support for a party still recovering from the sponsorship scandal.

But its no slam-dunk. An unstable mix of a weak Conservative and strong NDP presence threatens to split voters to Liberal disadvantage.

That would be disastrous for Dion. Defeat would tell Liberals their leader isn't rebuilding the Quebec base despite brave talk about his integrity and intellect, provincial bloodlines, and popular positions on the environment and Afghanistan.

Couple that to a party going nowhere in the polls and personal approval ratings stuck dangerously close to single digits and Dion's position becomes precarious. Liberals, who are still trying to decide if they want their party to succeed in the next election or Dion, to fail will have another reason to tilt away from a leader too many consider autocratic and/or inept.

None of that is surprising. Stripped to essentials, politics is about winning and Dion must still prove to his party and to Canadians that he has what it takes to win more than a very peculiar convention.

James Travers writes on national affairs. [jtravers@thespec.com](mailto:jtravers@thespec.com)

# Language threatens to divide troops

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**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**COLUMN:** Don Martin in Afghanistan  
**KEYWORDS:** BILINGUALISM; FRANCOPHONES; ANGLOPHONES  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 506

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A mirror reflection of Canadian society has beamed all the way to Kandahar, but it's probably not a slice of life we should import into an Afghan society already divided tribally, politically and militarily.

The two Canadian solitudes are alive and isolated here in Kandahar, even though anglophone and francophone soldiers are fighting for the same cause, running the same convoys and guarding each others' backs outside the fence.

But inside the camps and forward bases, they live, eat and socialize separately, while occasionally taking derisive swipes at each other.

Matters could worsen with the arrival of the first waves of the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment.

The so-called Van Doo regiment, a corruption of the French "vingt-deux," or 22, will deploy 2,000 mostly French-speaking troops to take over operations of the Canadian base.

That will generate a unique logistical problem because translators able to switch easily between French and Pashtu are said to be impossible to find.

That means the primary interaction between the Canadian military and Afghan people will have to be bilingual brass, whose English may lose linguistic subtleties during translation in a war environment where precision of meaning is critical.

This is not to suggest the mission is in any way compromised or that there's overt antagonism between the two cultures.

Still, an undercurrent of disdain and derision between the soldiers of Canada's founding nations is a reality here.

For example, I watched some anglophone soldiers in the field trying to teach new Afghan police officers that the traditional greeting in French for the new arrivals is "f--- you, Van Doos."

It may be all for a laugh as the young recruits tongue-trip over those unfamiliar words, which come out sounding more like "phu voodoo," but the consequences might not be so funny if they perfect the phrase and that's the first contact between the Van Doos and local law enforcement.

Yet, on the other side, Maj. Richard Collin of the Van Doos now guarding provincial reconstruction teams openly said he expects francophone troops will do a better job than their anglophone counterparts in negotiating local improvements with villagers.

That suggestion didn't sit well with anglophone officers, who privately counter that the Van Doos would rather work on their tans than suit up and head out to reconnect with Afghan tribal leaders.

This could all be typical military bluster and meaningless banter, but there are optics to back up the twin solitudes concept.

In the mess tents of Camp Nathan Smith, for example, there's a clear linguistic wall. French-language television beams into one wing, English into the other.

Out closer to the front lines at Patrol Base Wilson last week, I watched British and American forces mingle freely under a tent with anglophone Canadian soldiers, while the Van Doos huddled off in their own section, cooking their own meals and watching their own French-language shows on portable DVD players.

When this patrol camp was hit by a freak rainstorm and part of the outer fence washed away, an opportunity for soldier bonding was shrugged off when the Van Doos gathered by themselves to pound in their own fence posts.

So maybe all this doesn't have a bearing on military effectiveness or operational integrity. When it comes to fighting the Taliban, these guys are united in single-minded purpose.

But watching soldiers relax with their preferred peer group makes you realize that language, as the great Canadian divide, stretches from Parliament Hill all the way to dusty outposts in Afghanistan.

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# U.S. rebuked for threat to pursue bin Laden in Pakistan

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**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

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**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; PRESIDENTS; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; FOREIGN RELATIONS

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON

**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse

**WORD COUNT:** 310

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WASHINGTON – The United States Sunday sparked heated verbal skirmishes by refusing to rule out military action against al–Qaeda leaders sheltering inside Pakistan, one of its closest "war on terror" allies.

The U.S. director of national intelligence, Mike McConnell, said al–Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden was in all likelihood alive and sheltering in a frontier zone where pro–Taliban Pakistani tribal leaders hold sway.

"My personal view is that he's alive, but we don't know because we can't confirm it for over a year," he told NBC television. "I believe he is in the tribal region of Pakistan."

Senior U.S. officials reiterated that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf remained a lynchpin of the campaign against terrorism.

But their comments signalled frustration over what U.S. intelligence chiefs say is al–Qaeda's resurgence in lawless parts of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

Asked if the United States could take action inside Pakistan, White House Homeland Security Adviser Frances Townsend said: "There are no tools off the table, and we use all our instruments of national power to be effective."

A new report by the U.S. intelligence community last week said that al–Qaeda had regrouped in its Pakistani "safe haven" and was determined to inflict mass casualties through new attacks on the United States.

McConnell said its recovery was made possible by a September peace accord between the Pakistani government and tribal leaders in the ill–governed border region, which the tribals scrapped a week ago.

Fighting along the rugged frontier has intensified amid a nationwide wave of Islamist bloodshed that has killed more than 200 people, sparked by the Pakistani army's storming of the radical Red Mosque in Islamabad this month.

"Instead of pushing al–Qaeda out, the people who live in these federally administered tribal areas, they made a safe haven for training and recruiting," McConnell said.

"And so, in that period of time, al–Qaeda has been able to regain some of its momentum."

The U.S. administration's latest remarks sparked a curt response from Islamabad.

"Our stance is that Osama bin Laden is not present in Pakistan," Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao told AFP in the Pakistani capital.

"If anyone has the information he should give it to us, so that we can apprehend him."



# Taliban kidnappers trapped by army

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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Han Jae-Ho, Reuters / South Koreans take part in a Seoul rally demanding the safe return of kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan on Sunday. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS  
**BYLINE:** Griff Witte and Javed Hamdard  
**SOURCE:** Washington Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 333

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Afghan security forces on Sunday surrounded the location where Taliban fighters are suspected to be holding 23 South Korean hostages and were prepared to launch an operation if negotiations broke down, Afghan officials said.

The Koreans, most of whom are members of a church located near Seoul, the South Korean capital, were kidnapped from a bus Thursday as they travelled between the Afghan capital, Kabul, and the southern city of Kandahar.

After initially saying the hostages would be killed at noon Saturday, the Taliban extended the deadline, first until Sunday evening, then until Monday afternoon, and they continued to demand the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for the hostages. South Korean officials and local tribal elders were involved in talks with the Taliban on Sunday night.

"We are very hopeful that the talks will be successful," said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the police chief in Ghazni province, where the Koreans are believed to be held. "But if the negotiations fail, then we will take another step."

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman Zahir Azimi said the kidnappers were surrounded by Afghan army forces.

The Koreans are the largest group of foreigners the Taliban has taken hostage since the Islamic extremist group began an insurgent campaign after being ousted from power by a U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

Taliban fighters were also believed to be still holding a German aid worker abducted Wednesday after a second German died in the group's custody. The cause of death remains unknown.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her government would not agree to the Taliban's demand that Germany withdraw its troops. "We will not give in to blackmail," she told the German public television network ARD.

The kidnappings, as well as previous cases, have targeted people from countries that have been ambivalent about their commitment to the international military presence in Afghanistan.

The governments of South Korea and Germany have both come under intense domestic political pressure to withdraw from Afghanistan, and South Korea has already announced that it will leave the country by the end of the year. South Korea has 200 military engineers and medics in Afghanistan.

# O'Connor predicts cutbacks in Afghan combat missions; Defence minister's optimistic outlook decried by critics

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Gordon O'Connor;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; POLICE COMPLAINTS  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 392

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OTTAWA – Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said Sunday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused

O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut back the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a back-up role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation . . . the so-called Van Doos rotation, we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. And as we train more and more the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage basically be in reserve," O'Connor said.

O'Connor's assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when its current commitment to its NATO partners expires in February 2009.

Retired major-general Lew MacKenzie said it makes no sense for Canada to scale back militarily in southern Afghanistan because NATO still needs a minimum of another 10,000 troops to fight the insurgency.

Even if the Afghan army can contribute 3,000 more troops by the year-end, that still won't be enough for Canada to pull back, said MacKenzie.

"They don't have anywhere near enough troops in the south," said MacKenzie. "There's 400 kilometres of porous border with Pakistan, for one thing."

MacKenzie said O'Connor is being overly optimistic in thinking the Afghan army can take over from Canada within six months.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said O'Connor and the Conservatives are sending mixed signals to the Canadian people as well as their NATO allies by suggesting that Canada can simply scale back its combat role and turn it over to the Afghans.

"I think he improvises all the time. That's why people are so confused because of the lack of transparency," said Coderre.

"That story doesn't hold. How can you say on one hand you will play just a monitoring role, a role of reserve, when everybody knows we need more troops, and there's a process to go through our allies, to NATO?"

# Potential Forces recruits prefer action films; Ottawa profiles future soldiers

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A7  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 533

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OTTAWA – An extensive profile of potential recruits to the Canadian Forces reveals personality traits of being more extroverted, more agreeable, marginally more "open, less conscientious and less emotionally stable than the average Canadian," according to a recently released federal government report.

In order to prepare future recruitment programs for the Department of National Defence, the profile also finds that potential future soldiers prefer comedies on television, action flicks on their movie screens, rock and rap music on the radio and Cosmopolitan and People magazine on their reading table. The national survey, which cost taxpayers \$156,000, was conducted by TSN Canadian Facts Inc. in February and March.

Among the small pool of respondents who said they were likely to join — only six per cent of the population said they were somewhat or very likely to enrol — it identified men, Aboriginal peoples, those under 25 and the unemployed as the demographic groups most ready to sign-up.

"Canadians likely to join the Forces full-time or part-time are more likely to see themselves as 'creative' and 'outgoing', but 'disorganized' compared to their peers," said the survey findings, which asked potential recruits to take a "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" to provide a wide scope of personality attributes.

It noted a few differences by gender where men are more likely than women to characterize themselves as "uncomplicated, quiet and disorganized" while women tend to view themselves as "dependable and outgoing."

The possible recruits were also asked to rank themselves under a "Big Five Personality Trait" framework, with the five categories being openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeability, and emotional stability. It explained that those who are emotionally stable, for instance, tend toward a calm and stable emotional nature rather than being anxious, high-strung and temperamental.

"To better engage its target audience, the Department of National Defence has requested a current and comprehensive psychographic and demographic profile of eligible Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34," said the report, adding that the Harper government wants to increase the regular military force by 13,000 soldiers and the reserves by 10,000.

It says the challenge of meeting the targets is exacerbated by Canada's aging population and decreasing birthrates during the past 20 years.

"This profile will examine the habits and interests of potential recruits and will allow DND to be more

effective in their communications and advertising," it said.

Capt. Holly Brown, a spokeswoman for the Forces, said so far this year, the military is ahead in meeting its targets and is already using the profile from the report to put together future recruitment campaigns.

The Harper government has nearly tripled spending on advertising for the military, boosting its ad budget from about \$10.2 million to \$27.7 million as it attempts to boost enrolment of soldiers and meet the demands of the country's mission in Afghanistan.

"Almost half of Canadians who are eligible say that there is nothing the Forces could do to encourage them to join. The top activities cited that would encourage them to join are increasing awareness, changing work regulations and improving the monetary benefits," said the report.

The national survey involved 1,504 completed telephone interviews of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 34 years between Feb. 6 and March 4, 2007.

# Backing troops, not the mission

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** The Editorial Page  
**PAGE:** A12  
**COLUMN:** Opinion  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES  
**BYLINE:** Les Brost  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 526

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Dear Prime Minister Harper:

There are thousands of Canadians whose support for Canada's military mission in Afghanistan has ended. I am one of those Canadians.

I supported the initial action of the Canadian government in participating in the overthrow of the Taliban regime.

The Taliban had provided aid to the al-Qaeda fanatics who carried out the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, in the United States. It was appropriate that Canada joined the multinational effort to oust the Taliban and to bring democratic government to Afghanistan.

The western resources diverted to salvage the American-led invasion of Iraq would have found a far, far better use in Afghanistan.

Bush's folly in Iraq was a blunder of historic proportions borne of hubris and falsehood. It eroded support for America and played directly into the hands of Osama bin Laden.

It also had a direct impact on Afghanistan. Suddenly,

al-Qaeda had a living lab in which to field test new strategies and weaponry for its war on the west. These strategies and weapons have killed 66 Canadian soldiers and maimed hundreds more.

What exactly is the purpose of our Afghan mission? Canadians heard Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor say that our troops are there to rebuild the country, and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier say that our mission is to "kill the scumbags."

There is a huge difference between these two statements.

The reality is that we are fighting a guerrilla insurgency in Afghanistan.

Guerrilla warfare is a serious and deadly business and the 66 men and women who died bear witness to that seriousness.

The deep grief following the death of those men and women reflected the pride of all Canadians in their soldiers.

All Canadians, regardless of their opinion on the merits of the mission, shared in the sadness that accompanied the bodies on their final journeys. That sadness has prompted many thoughtful and patriotic Canadians to question the purpose and leadership of the mission and to call for its end.

How has your government reacted to these voices of dissent? You, along with O'Connor, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day and other Conservative politicians, quickly attacked the patriotism of anyone who questioned the mission.

You equated criticism of the mission with lack of support for our soldiers and "support for the Taliban."

That is when I joined those Canadians deeply distressed by your government's leadership of the Afghan mission.

It is reprehensible to attack the patriotism of critics of the current mission in Afghanistan.

There is nothing unpatriotic about questioning the conduct of an unending guerrilla war undermined by the Iraq debacle and costing Canadian lives.

Such accusations are also cheap politics. "Waving the bloody shirt" is an old, ugly political ploy first used in post-Civil War America and still used by people like U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney. Canadians expect more from our prime minister.

I am very critical of the conduct of the current mission, and yet I support our troops. How is that possible?

I believe that we best support our troops when we give them a clear mission and when we ensure that the politicians sending them into combat are competent. Canadian troops in combat deserve the very best in political leadership.

Sadly, most Canadians perceive the political leadership of the Afghan mission to be inept.

O'Connor is seen as unfit for duty as the minister of the Crown responsible for national defence.

Yet, he continues in office. Mr. Prime Minister, the buck stops at your desk.

Why have you not fired a minister who is not up to the job — so lost in his portfolio you should fire off flares to help him find his way home?

How can you question the patriotism of critics of the Afghan mission while you allow O'Connor to continue as defence minister?

Has political partisanship clouded your sense of duty to our troops?

I will close with some words to consider before you again wrap yourself in the Maple Leaf to attack critics of the Afghan mission.

They come from the famous 18th century writer Samuel Johnson, who said, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."

Yours truly,

Backing troops, not the mission



Les Brost

Les Brost is a recovering rancher and proud Old Prairie Dog with deep roots in Southern Alberta.

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# Salute all troops

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
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**SECTION:** Q: Queries – Quibbles – Quirks  
**PAGE:** A13  
**BYLINE:** Vic Green  
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Stickers – Re: "Calgary considers saluting troops," July 17.

I'm an old soldier of 31 years service. I wear a yellow rubber band on my wrist in support of our troops, including those serving in about 40 places in the world. In most of those places, no war is going on.

The notion that we can carry on a dialogue with the Taliban is absurd in the extreme. While I have never been in Afghanistan, I have served in the city of Gaza for a seven-month stretch. We lived in houses among the citizens of Gaza and watched them live their daily lives. The only ones we could talk to were the men; you cannot reason with them. The women would like to speak out, but cannot because control is in the hands of the men.

The western mind cannot fathom the eastern mind, no matter how long you study it or deal with it. If dialogue were possible, peace would have been achieved 1,000 years ago.

I urge everyone to put a ribbon on their vehicles and wear a yellow band on their wrists in support of our troops for the job they are doing.

Vic Green, Calgary

## Quote

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"This is a country full of hope" – Actor Jude Law, after shooting a documentary in Afghanistan.

# Terror leader finds 'safe haven'; Bin Laden in Pakistan, U.S. claims

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**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Osama bin Laden;  
**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD  
**BYLINE:** Isambard Wilkinson  
**SOURCE:** The Daily Telegraph  
**WORD COUNT:** 435

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ISLAMABAD – Osama bin Laden is alive and hiding in Pakistan, the United States intelligence chief said Sunday.

Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, blamed President Pervez Musharraf's government for allowing al-Qaida to regroup in Pakistan's lawless tribal areas on the frontier with Afghanistan. Western officials believe that a controversial peace deal struck by Musharraf's regime and local tribal leaders took the pressure off bin Laden and his followers.

"My personal view is that he's alive," said McConnell on NBC television when asked about bin Laden.

"I believe he is in the tribal region of Pakistan."

Relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, a key ally in the "war on terrorism," have worsened significantly. Last week a U.S. intelligence report said that al-Qaida had regrouped in its "safe haven" inside Pakistan.

Khurshid Kasuri, Pakistan's foreign minister, reacted angrily to the charges that bin Laden was in the country and called on America to provide evidence. "Pakistan's commitment cannot be doubted by anybody and that is why some of our people do not like what we read in some of your newspapers, which are more like leaks, and calculated leaks," he said. Kasuri added that instead of intelligence estimates America should give Pakistan "evidence" and "actionable intelligence" on the al-Qaida presence.

Violence has intensified in the tribal area of North Waziristan since militants scrapped a peace deal with the government last week.

During his most recent weekly radio address, U.S. President George W. Bush said: "President Pervez Musharraf recognizes the agreement has not been successful or well-enforced and is taking active steps to correct."

Despite Musharraf's robust pledges to combat extremists after the siege of the Red Mosque in Islamabad, Kasuri said Sunday that his government was working to salvage its agreement with the militants in North Waziristan. Musharraf's military campaign in the tribal areas has cost the lives of 600 soldiers.

Troops fought large-scale battles against Islamic militants linked to the Taliban Sunday, killing 19.

Helicopter gunships strafed militant positions in North Waziristan.

Security forces in this lawless region have faced daily revenge attacks since commandos launched an assault on the Red Mosque two weeks ago. At least 100 people were killed in the mosque, and at least 200 more have died in clashes since it fell.

Sunday's fighting broke out after militants ambushed a military convoy near Miran Shah, the main town in North Waziristan. Clashes between security forces and tribesmen on Saturday left 13 dead near the town of Ghulam Khan.

A senior U.S. official angered the Islamabad government last week by declining to rule out an American strike against al-Qaida or Taliban targets on Pakistani soil.

Pakistan rejected the statement as "irresponsible" and said only its troops could carry out counterterrorism actions on its territory.

# Combat role may shrink; Canada could step back as Afghan army expands, defence chief says

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**DATE:** 2007.07.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Gordon O'Connor;  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 579

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OTTAWA – Canadian troops may be able to scale back combat operations in Kandahar by year's end as Afghanistan's own army continues to expand, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said Sunday.

But a leading military analyst and the Liberal defence critic accused O'Connor of wishful thinking and being out of step with NATO's overall emphasis of trying to find more troops for Afghanistan — not cut back the ones already there.

Speaking on CTV's Question Period, O'Connor said he hoped that by the end of the current six-month rotation of Quebec-based troops from the Royal 22nd Regiment, enough new Afghan army troops would be trained and able to take the lead in securing the volatile country, relegating Canada to a back-up role.

"We're hoping by the end of this rotation ... the so-called Van Doos rotation — we'll have about 3,000 Afghan army operating within the Kandahar province. And as we train more and more the Afghan army to carry out their own operations, we will continue to withdraw, train them, put more emphasis on training, and at some stage basically be in reserve," O'Connor said.

O'Connor's assessment is the latest in a series of comments by top Conservative government ministers, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, that suggests the groundwork is being laid so Canada can scale back its combat operations when its current commitment to its NATO partners expires in February 2009.

Harper has said the combat mission will end unless opposition parties reach a consensus to extend it by a vote in the House of Commons.

Last week, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay told CanWest News Service his department is expanding its presence in Kabul and Kandahar in a strong signal that Canada will soon be emphasizing diplomatic efforts over military assistance.

Retired major-general Lewis MacKenzie said it makes no sense for Canada to scale back militarily in southern Afghanistan because NATO still needs a minimum of another 10,000 troops to fight the insurgency.

Even if the Afghan army can contribute 3,000 more troops by the year-end, that still won't be enough for Canada to pull back, said MacKenzie.

"They don't have anywhere near enough troops in the south," said MacKenzie. "There's 400 kilometres of porous border with Pakistan, for one thing."

MacKenzie said O'Connor is being overly optimistic in thinking the Afghan army can take over from Canada within six months.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said O'Connor and the Conservatives are sending mixed signals to the Canadian people as well as their NATO allies by suggesting that Canada can simply scale back its combat role and turn it over to the Afghans.

"I think he improvises all the time. That's why people are so confused because of the lack of transparency," said Coderre.

"That story doesn't hold. How can you say on one hand you will play just a monitoring role, a role of reserve, when everybody knows we need more troops, and there's a process to go through our allies, to NATO?"

Coderre reiterated the Liberal party's call to immediately notify NATO of its intention to end combat operations in February 2009 so the alliance can plan for a replacement.

"The first thing we need to do is be honest with NATO. To give an impression that we might be there 'on reserve' might have consequences," said Coderre.

"He (Harper) doesn't have a consensus. The Liberals, who are part of the official opposition, will pull the plug on the combat mission in February 2009. We should say right away, to the allies, let's find a contingency plan."

Coderre said it is time for other NATO countries to contribute more troops.

O'Connor also renewed the government's call for other NATO countries to contribute more troops to the combat efforts in southern Afghanistan, where Canada, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States are bearing the brunt of the front-line fighting.