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Helping in Afghanistan

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U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates was on firm ground this week when he criticized a number of European members of NATO for not helping as much as they could in Afghanistan. Speaking after a meeting of southeast European countries, Gates said that some European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have not provided the extra troops their governments promised last year.

Gates has a point. Not all members of NATO have provided a fair commitment of troops to the Afghan mission, which was initially sanctioned by the United Nations. To be sure, the British and Dutch government have made serious commitments. Their troops operate in the volatile Kandahar region along with Canadian and U.S. troops. Canadians know only too well that the Kandahar area can be deadly. Many of the 71 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan were in Kandahar.

The weak European contribution to Afghanistan has indirect repercussions in Canada. It makes opposition to the campaign easier to mount. It raises a hard question: If some of our European allies won't put their soldiers in battle zones, why should Canada?

There are many issues about Afghanistan that may be legitimately debated, but one point should be remembered above all. Canadians are in that country only because of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The former Taliban government in Afghanistan assisted al-Qaida, which launched the attacks that killed Canadians as well as Americans.

The fundamental principle that NATO was built upon is that its members regard an attack on one member as an attack on all. Alas, that principle, like wet gunpowder, has lost some of its potency in recent years. Fortunately, there are signs this week that some European NATO members are ready to boost their troop commitment to Afghanistan. Let's hope these good intentions translate into more boots on the ground. Canada's soldiers deserve help.

Afghans need our help

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BYLINE: Joe Adam
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Regarding the Oct. 19 article, Where Do We Go From Here? by J.L. Granatstein, thank you. The article was well written and non-partisan.

Too many Canadians don't realize, or don't want to accept the fact that the conflict in Afghanistan is not a war about U.S. issues. This is not a Conservative or a Liberal war. This is about being a member of a world community, and about giving other people a chance to have the same freedoms we enjoy.

I cringe every time I read or hear someone say "Harper's war" or that we are "bowing to U.S. interests." Our men and women are over there doing a job that needs to be done. Everybody should be behind our troops and behind our government that supports them and their mission.

Where would we be today if 70 years ago we stayed home, avoiding "Britain's issue" or "Europe's war"? Time has diluted our appreciation for what has been done, and for the heroes who did it for us.

Joe Adam

Kitchener

Afghanistan a lost cause

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BYLINE: Werner Broschinski
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According to former top United Nations envoy Lord Paddy Ashdown, international forces are unlikely to win their battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan. In a recent interview Ashdown said: "I think we are losing in Afghanistan now. We have lost I think and success is now unlikely."

I agree with his assessment of the military situation there.

Given their experience in Korea, Vietnam and now Iraq, the Americans should realize that partisan wars are virtually unwinnable because among the people ethnic and cultural bonds are stronger and count for more than ties based on political orientation. Foreign soldiers are regarded as outsiders by the native population and no amount of public relations efforts changes this.

Furthermore, partisans recruit the uncommitted by threatening reprisals against family. So how is it possible to win in a situation like this?

The 10-year occupation of Afghanistan, from 1979 to 1989, proved disastrous for the Soviet Union, even though Soviet forces totalled more than 600,000 troops, of which more than 14,000 were killed and almost 60,000 wounded.

The Afghan partisans will fight the American-led occupation just as bitterly as they fought the Soviets and, if the past is any guide to the future, will ultimately prevail.

Werner Broschinski

Princeton, Ont.

Canada asks NATO allies for support in Afghanistan

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PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A6
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS / Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier yesterday wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 423

Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit yesterday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

It is part of the federal government's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately yesterday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung tomorrow, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support — Canadian troops don't have helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47

Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul.

"We are pursuing several avenues to see that that type of lift capacity remains," MacKay told Canadian reporters at a news conference.

The effort to secure regular alternate airlift capability took on new importance yesterday with a decision ordering Boeing to resubmit its bid on a major contract to supply Chinooks to the U.S. military.

Defence industry officials in Canada say the ruling has the potential of delaying Canada's effort to acquire 16 of the hardy helicopters.

NATO has also signalled it intends to lease 20 helicopters from private companies for the mission in Afghanistan.

Those aircraft would be used to ferry supplies, though, and not troops as needed by Canada.

NATO officials said as many as nine alliance countries have volunteered to increase their troop commitments to Afghanistan at their meeting, with four of them saying they'll help in the volatile southern region.

Canada asks allies for trainers, choppers: sources

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SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
DATELINE: Noordwijk, The Netherlands
WORD COUNT: 240

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'Morale boost'; Hillier wraps up visit to troops

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DATE: 2007.10.25

SECTION: International

PAGE: B7

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Bill Graveland

PHOTO: Photo by The Canadian Press

DATELINE: Masum Ghar, Afghanistan

ILLUSTRATION: Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier (right) receives an update from Capt. Shawn Thompson on Canada's new mine detection unit, Wednesday in Masum Ghar, Afghanistan.

WORD COUNT: 402

Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan Wednesday.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier, a Newfoundlander, made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment – the Van Doos – since they were deployed in July.

"It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier in an interview with The Canadian Press at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 kilometres west of Kandahar City. "First of all, it's fundamental for any commander to be able to put a face on the mission and what we ask these great young men and women to do."

Hillier had dinner with the troops when he arrived. He held a question-and-answer session with them. And some of the soldiers lined up to shake hands with him and snap pictures during his visit. On Wednesday, Hillier watched a demonstration of the Canadian Force's new mine-detection unit, the Husky, just a day after one of the units was blown in half by a powerful improvised explosive device – or IED – on a narrow road west of Masum Ghar. The driver of the Husky, who was not injured in the blast, did the demonstration for Hillier.

"This is the kind of equipment they need to do the job to increase our chances of success on the mission, to reduce the risk to our soldiers and particularly in this kind of threat environment, where the Taliban really are working IEDs and anti-tank mines as a way of attacking our soldiers," he said.

With its lush fields of opium poppies and marijuana, narrow roads and mountainous terrain, the region continues to give the Taliban what amounts to free reign. Their IEDs have inflicted casualties on Canadian troops, who are in a seemingly never-ending search for more of the roadside bombs that are planted almost daily.

Hillier said wasn't as a surprise.

"This is a standard counter-insurgency campaign and the Taliban are using exactly the kind of tactics that we expect from them."

Since 2002, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan.

It is widely believed that many of the Taliban fighters in Masum Ghar region are actually paid by drug lords and criminals, and the insurgency is a way of preventing Afghan government forces from interfering with the lucrative narcotics business.

Defence earnings up

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U.S. defence contractors continue to reap the bounty of robust Pentagon spending on military equipment and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, with several top military suppliers reporting big third quarters this week.

General Dynamics Corp. and Northrop Grumman Corp., two of the largest U.S. makers of military equipment, posted double-digit earnings yesterday, and predicted more profit strength for the rest of the year.

Northrop's 62 per cent earnings spike and the nearly 25 per cent improvement for General Dynamics compared with the same period a year ago follows a 22 per cent earnings increase reported Tuesday by the sector's biggest company, Lockheed Martin Corp.

Trainers, choppers needed for Afghan mission

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Defence chief visits troops in Afghanistan; Canada's top soldier says visit with troops in Afghanistan 'a morale boost – for me'

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Defence chief visits troops in Afghanistan; Canada's top soldier says visit with troops in Afghanistan 'a morale

It is widely believed that many of the Taliban fighters in Masum Ghar region are actually paid by drug lords and criminals, and the insurgency is a way of preventing Afghan government forces from interfering with the lucrative narcotics business.

Public needs to stay informed about the world

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In the days before newspapers, people used to gather in the middle of town and talk about the issues surrounding them and their families. Information was shared from all areas of the region with people giving insight on what they saw, heard and knew.

Decisions were also made on how to solve these problems, address local governments and how best to make decisions that would be in everyone's best interest. There was a real sense of democracy and freedom of expression, and the people had the power to lead their own futures.

As newspapers began to replace the town meetings, it acted as a representative for those, who believed freedom of speech was the key to their democracy. Being informed, being active in the debate, and having the ability to form government were all a part of process.

In days past it was the duty of the people to stay informed and challenge ideas in their government that they did not agree with. People who knew the issues and stayed informed, were more likely to vote and feel they had a say in the issues of the day.

So how does the freedom of press really affect us today? Have newspapers just turned into a morning ritual, or are we still masters of our democratic domain?

There is no question that the more you know about your local community, the more you will have to say. But does this translate into action? Are we all just a bunch of know it all's who don't use their freedom to act?

With civic literacy on the way down and voting across all areas heading the same way, is there a connection? Are we more interested in who Pamela Anderson married than what Canada's plan is for solving the problems of Afghanistan?

One of the greatest freedoms we have in our country, seems to be our ability to educate ourselves about issues and make decisions based on what we know. We are the generation that has more access to information than any other, but we seem to take our freedoms for granted.

A true democracy is lead by the people and their right to oppose actions taken by their elected officials. But if we don't know what is going on in our own communities, we can very easily be blind sided and taken advantage of.

Newspapers provide the information we need on a daily basis to interact with people in our community and the rest of the world. The more we know about our local area, the better decisions we can make on a local and provincial level.

With all the talk about media conglomeration and the death of the newspaper, it is now more important than ever to be involved. Freedom of information is not just a privilege, it's a right. But it takes all of us to demand the truth and keep media within the boundaries of what is public interest.

We live in a time when it seems like we are accepting what we are given, more than demanding what we need. As a privatized business, newspapers and media require feedback from their readership to regulate what they can and cannot get away with.

The less we know in the public about the problems facing our economy or our political parties, health care or education, the more wool will be pulled over our eyes. It's not enough to just be entertained by media; it is our responsibility to maintain its integrity with our voices.

The shrinking powers that control the news outlets in the U.S. are creating problems for those trying to create objectivity in their news. With business interests controlling the bottom line of news organizations and hard news fighting for air time with the "info-tainment" model, we are at risk of becoming censored by the same problems.

I am personally tired of big business and government manipulating the media to get exposure about their issues. I am also tired of big business and media taking advantage of a decline in people staying informed. And finally, I am tired of having to fight for hard news between the stories of who is wearing what, while our Prime Minister is making up his own rules.

* Jason Murray is a local business person, whose hobbies include reading, writing, travelling with his wife, movies and social activism. He is a big fan of music and pop culture and he has two cats. You can reach him at jaymurray@hotmail.com and be sure to check out his new food blog at CanadaEast.com

Hillier says visit to Afghanistan helped boost morale

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Since 2002, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan.

Letters to the editor | UN not the agency for peace

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A distinguished veteran of the Second World War, whose letters appear regularly in The Daily Gleaner, shows great faith in the United Nations.

I admire his genuine passion for peace and the protection of current and future generations from the scourge of war.

Sadly, it is difficult to accept the assumption that the UN is the instrument by which to guarantee world peace.

The UN has developed into an organization so Orwellian that, yes, Libya was chosen in the recent past to head its Human Rights Commission. Iraq was designated to chair the UN Disarmament Conference on the eve of the war there; and to add more flair to the situation, Iran was going to co-chair.

Under Kofi Annan's UN management, the oil-for-food program became the biggest bungle and embezzlement in the history of humanitarian relief by funneling billions to Saddam Hussein and helps build his lavish palaces.

Its irrelevance was glaringly demonstrated in its role leading up to the Rwandan massacre. General D'Allaire has claimed that the UN could have easily stopped that horrendous ethnic slaughter of some 800,000 people. Unfortunately the situation is being repeated in Darfur, and the UN still doesn't know what to do about a genocide that has been ongoing for more than a decade.

The UN ought to confer legitimacy on everything from humanitarian missions to wars to peace treaties — or so proclaims its charter. But the UN is, in fact, very few of the things it ought to be. It keeps passing resolutions it can't or simply won't enforce.

It seems more interested in playing in Al Gore's global warming sandbox.

Thaddée Renault

Fredericton

Support the troops

Be proud. Wear your red on Fridays and keep your Yellow Ribbon.

We've been hearing the news reports and reading print media regarding the attack on the yellow ribbon campaign and the ongoing negative media about Red Fridays.

It saddens me. Both these programs were brainstorms of military spouses, like me, not the federal government. The government does not benefit from these fund-raising campaigns in any way.

It's a way for the average Canadian to say thanks for the job you do and I'm proud of you. It does not in any way support war.

The Fredericton Peace Coalition has not informed itself. Members are attacking a fund-raising program that helps fund support groups for spouses whose better half is away for extended periods of time not just to places like Afghanistan.

It provides programs for our little ones which gives them a chance to play and talk with other kids like themselves who are also just missing their Mom or Dad.

It helps fund childcare so shopping and appointments can be done because Grandma lives too far away to help.

It means a parent of a single soldier gets a friendly phone call. This call ensures parents whose single son or daughter is away anywhere in the world for more than 30 days is doing okay and are kept informed about the missions and how their young soldier is doing.

So wear your red T-shirt or put your yellow ribbon on your car and let everyone know you are proud of our Armed Forces and feel good about yourself because you're helping their families manage while they are away.

Know that the Royal Canadian Legion has been sending care packages overseas for our soldiers at Christmas. And they have been helping the wounded in hospitals across Canada while they recuperate from their injuries with financial costs such as television rentals and care packages of magazines and items not provided by the hospital.

Please continue to support our men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces. I do.

Anne Zinck

Moncton, N.B.

October is library month

October is Canadian Library Month and the Members of the Association of Professional Librarians of New Brunswick believe it's a timely opportunity to raise awareness about librarians and the work they do.

Many people assume any person working in a library is a librarian, but the title librarian is actually a professional designation applicable only to individuals who have completed a Master of Information Studies, a Master of Library and Information Studies, a Master of Library Science or a Bachelor of Library Science.

Briefly, librarians have the responsibility of managing a library or a department within a library; managing human and financial resources; planning and implementing new programs and services; selecting materials for library collections and organizing and providing ready access to information and collections.

Librarians are only one element of a successful library team. They work alongside library technicians, a paraprofessional designation in its own right, library assistants and library clerks and others. But while it may happen that someone else is in charge of a library, it is unfortunately not correct to use the professional designation of librarian for that person. In these cases, the appropriate title would be library manager, library co-ordinator or information services co-ordinator, depending on the institution.

We appreciate the visibility recently provided to the library field by the Daily Gleaner's article Booking on a career as a librarian, (Daily Gleaner, Sept. 15), members of the librarian association were surprised this article referred to the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design as having a librarian on staff when the library co-ordinator to whom the article refers has not completed a Master of Library and Information Studies.

The association hopes that, in writing this letter, we have shed light on this distinction and have provided information which will prove helpful in the future.

Sarah Gladwell

Secrecy and the prime minister

Harper's foiled plan threatened public's right to know Prime Minister Stephen Harper's top secret \$2-million mission, cryptically referred to as the shoe store project, immediately conjured up the image of the PM with a Maxwell Smart shoe to his ear transmitting crucial messages to his media secret service.

In reality, the Toronto Star learned through the Access to Information Act that the political sleuth has been planning for a year to develop a new, tightly controlled government media centre in an abandoned shoe store to replace the National Press Theatre.

Prime ministers and cabinet ministers have traditionally used this latter venue since 1965 to pass along important information to the public. Parliamentary Press moderators there ensure the non-biased selection of who asks questions. Already using Bush's strategy of controlling which journalists speak, Harper's new approach to communication would give his government even greater control over what the public hears.

A released document stated the new facility would establish "robust physical and information security measures to protect the Prime Minister and Cabinet." Information security sounds menacingly Orwellian.

The Parliamentary Press, long brushed aside by Harper, represents a diversity of viewpoints and party leaning that collectively provide the public with a far more non-partisan snapshot than the Tory's carefully scripted communications strategy.

On Oct. 3, Harper absolutely shocked journalists with his first ministerial appearance at the National Press Theatre. Amateur gumshoe investigators suspect the PM was tipped off about the upcoming disclosure and wanted to quickly counter with an image of being press friendly.

Harper's office staff wisely announced Oct. 15 it was shelving the plan, the day the Star published the story, a decision that might not have been made if the Tories were in a majority position.

It could be said that the free press's role as the safeguard of democratic process is nonetheless eroded. Maxwell Smart would glibly respond, "I asked you not to tell me that.

Walter Belsito

Echo Bay, Ont.

Canada asks NATO allies for choppers, trainers

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SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands

WORD COUNT: 631

Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit yesterday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

It is part of the federal government's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately yesterday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung today, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support – Canadian troops don't have helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47 Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul.

"We are pursuing several avenues to see that that type of lift capacity remains," MacKay told Canadian reporters.

The effort to secure regular alternate airlift capability took on new importance yesterday with a decision ordering Boeing to resubmit its bid on a major contract to supply Chinooks to the U.S. military. Defence industry officials in Canada say the ruling has the potential of delaying Canada's effort to acquire 16 of the hardy helicopters.

NATO has also signalled it intends to lease 20 helicopters from private companies for the mission in Afghanistan. Those aircraft would be used to ferry supplies, though, and not troops as needed by Canada.

NATO officials said as many as nine alliance countries have volunteered to increase their troop commitments to Afghanistan at their meeting, with four of them saying they'll help in the volatile southern region.

Eimert van Middelkoop, the Dutch defence minister, delivered a barely veiled shot at the opening of the NATO meeting earlier today. "One thing is certain, there is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security," van Middelkoop said in a jab at Germany, Spain and Italy, which have refused to let their forces fight in the heartland of the Taliban insurgency.

"It is not about what we are willing to say for a safer and more just world, it ultimately depends on what we are willing to do. Fair risk– and burden–sharing will remain leading principles of the alliance."

A few weeks ago, van Middelkoop asked the Germans and Norway for help, specifically helicopters and mentors for the fledgling Afghan army.

The Norwegians have turned down the request, with Defence Minister Strøm-Erichsen telling a news agency in her country that she doesn't want the country's contingent – totalling about 100 troops – broken up and spread about piecemeal.

Taking a direct bilateral approach to allies was praised by a defence analyst back in Canada. "It would show that the allies see the difficulties we're in and share the burden," said Allain Pellerin, executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations.

Canada asks allies for help in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)
DATE: 2007.10.25
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PAGE: B9
COLUMN: Around the world
SOURCE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands
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Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit Wednesday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Let the troops do the job

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COLUMN: Letters to the editor

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Editor:

Afghanistan: it is time for an objective evaluation of the situation, to consider our options keeping in mind the long-term effect it will have on Canada's international reputation, the morale of our fighting troops and our military generally. We must end grandstanding, ignore those who, for political gain, offer quick, oversimplified solutions to a complex problem. We are in it, and in it together, as a nation.

Disregarding the why of our presence there, we are there. Our troops, male and female, are, according to reports, doing an excellent job, using skills developed through intensive and thorough training. To accept the argument we withdraw before some form of lasting political system is in place would not only demoralize our troops but leave Afghanistan in the same turmoil as Somalia is undergoing – warlords fighting for control, civilians terrorized, murdered, children starving. By all reports Somalia is in chaos.

In retrospect, our government of the time, caving in to public opinion, retreated from Somalia, largely because the media was showing pictures of our troops in combat situations not behaving as Boy Scouts.

Collateral damage is unavoidable, meaning some innocent civilians get killed. That's reality.

We have been delegated to clean out Kandahar. Let's task our military to do it, then stand out of their way. I am not a military strategist but I have prepared business plans. The primary reason a business fails is underfunding. In the military sense, let's not underfund the operation. If more troops or equipment are required, provide them. We train Afghans to take over, then our troops can march out, head and shoulders high, not at some predetermined, artificial date and time.

Dan MacInnis,

Brampton, Ont.

Defense industry results soar on big military spending; companies raise forecasts

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WASHINGTON _ U.S. defence contractors continue to reap the bounty of robust Pentagon spending on military equipment and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, with several top military suppliers reporting big third quarters this week.

General Dynamics Corp. and Northrop Grumman Corp., two of the largest U.S. makers of military equipment, posted double-digit earnings on Wednesday, and predicted more profit strength for the rest of the year.

Northrop's 62 per cent earnings spike and the nearly 25 per cent improvement for General Dynamics compared with the same period a year ago follows a 22 per cent earnings increase reported Tuesday by the sector's biggest company, Lockheed Martin Corp.

The big profits come from a variety of Pentagon priorities, from General Dynamics building armoured vehicles to quickly replace war-worn equipment in Iraq to the longer term programs like Northrop's warships and Lockheed's fighter jets.

All three companies raised their outlooks for 2007 based on the strong results.

"Our combat systems business remains vital to the security of this country and our aspirations as a world power," General Dynamics CEO Nicholas Chabreja said of the company's unit that makes the mine resistant armored vehicles in heavy demand by the army.

Shares of Northrop and General Dynamics both rose Wednesday on the earnings news.

Falls Church, Va.-based General Dynamics reported third quarter net earnings of \$546 million, or \$1.34 per share, up from the \$438 million, or \$1.08 per share, the company earned in the 2006 third quarter. Analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial expected earnings of \$1.25 per share.

Revenue was up 13 per cent to \$6.8 billion, largely on the strength of the company's Gulfstream corporate jet business and combat systems, which supplies everything from bullets to tanks to the U.S. military. Sales in the unit rose 37 per cent to \$1.87 billion.

The company is making armoured vehicles equipped with mine-resistant armour to protect against improvised explosive devices that have plagued U.S. troops in Iraq. General Dynamics is part of a joint contract to produce 2,500 such vehicles, and the Pentagon announced last week that it wants 2,400 more.

The company now expects to earn between \$5 and \$5.05 per share in 2007, up 15 cents from its guidance released in July. Analysts expect earnings of \$4.95 per share.

Los Angeles-based Northrop said Wednesday that its big earnings jump was paced by sales gains at its shipbuilding and information technology units.

In the quarter ended Sept. 30, net income jumped to \$489 million, or \$1.41 per share, from \$302 million, or 86 cents per share, a year ago. The latest results included a \$21 million gain from restructuring, or six cents per share.

The results still topped analyst expectations for profit of \$1.27 per share, according to Thomson Financial. Those estimates typically exclude one-time items.

Sales rose seven per cent to \$7.93 billion from \$7.43 billion, roughly in line with the Wall Street estimate of \$7.92 billion.

The company said it was raising its guidance for 2007 earnings per share to about \$5.10 on sales of about \$31.5 billion.

Defence spending has been strong in recent years as the Pentagon works to upgrade its equipment and fights wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the 2007 budget year ending in September, defence spending stood at \$529.9 billion, a six per cent increase over 2006. Just this week U.S. President George W. Bush asked the U.S. Congress for another \$46 billion, putting his 2008 fiscal year total request for Iraq and Afghanistan at \$196.4 billion.

Some analysts wonder if defence spending may be near its peak, however, with the possibility of troop withdrawals and the forthcoming presidential election.

The industry's two largest defence firms are somewhat conservative about next year. Lockheed issued a tepid forecast for 2008, saying its transition between big jet fighter programs will dampen earnings going forward. Boeing Co. kept its defence division forecast unchanged after the unit posted a six per cent third quarter drop in operating income.

Northrop and General Dynamics also both opted not to give 2008 guidance, saying they wanted to wait until Congress deals with the defence budget.

But analyst Paul Nisbet of JSA Research said there likely won't be a big fall off in defence spending, and that companies like General Dynamics will continue to benefit from the military's immediate need for war fighting tools.

“Regardless of who gets into the White House, we are going to see heavy defence spending,” he said.

Shares of General Dynamics gained \$2.90, or 3.3 per cent, to close at \$90 Wednesday, while Northrop's stock rose \$2.72 to \$82.25, 3.4 per cent gain.

AP Business Writer Gary Gentile in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Senior detective quits probe into blast that killed 136 at Bhutto homecoming

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KARACHI, Pakistan _ The detective leading the probe into the suicide attack on opposition leader Benazir Bhutto withdrew from the case Wednesday after she accused him of being involved in the torture of her husband in 1999, a senior official said.

Ghulam Muhammad Mohtarem, the home secretary of Sindh province, said the government would form a new team of investigators to probe the attack in Karachi last week. Two explosions rocked Bhutto's homecoming parade after eight years in exile, spewing metal shards through a sea of supporters and killing at least 136 people.

Bhutto has blamed Islamic militants for the attack, but has also accused elements in the government and the security services of complicity, demanding international experts be called in to help in the investigation.

She had specifically objected to Manzar Mughal, a senior investigator in the Sindh province police force, claiming he had been present while her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was tortured in custody on corruption charges in 1999.

Mohtarem said the provincial government had no doubt about Mughal's competency and professionalism, but said he had decided to withdraw to protect the investigation from accusations of bias.

“The investigation team will be formed anew after Manzur Mughal disassociated himself from the investigation in view of the objections raised by Benazir Bhutto on the chief investigator's credentials,” he said.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, meanwhile, rejected the idea of bringing in foreign investigators.

“We know what we're doing. We don't need assistance,” he said, adding that Mughal's withdrawal “doesn't change the very fact that we have a whole process looking into such cases.”

Investigators are holding at least 15 people for questioning in the blast, an investigator said.

Some of the people being held were wounded in the attack and picked up from local hospitals. None are currently being treated as suspects, a police investigator said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Authorities have said the attack was likely carried out by two suicide bombers, and have released a picture showing the head of one of the attackers.

Bhutto, whose two governments between 1988 and 1996 were toppled amid allegations of corruption and mismanagement, has returned to contest parliamentary elections due in January, after months of talks with President Gen. Pervez Musharraf that could see them working side-by-side in the next government.

With encouragement from Washington, both are urging voters to support moderates willing to battle rising religious extremism.

The attack has raised fears about Pakistan's stability amid a rising Islamic militancy _ fears further underlined Wednesday when the government announced it had sent 2,500 troops into a remote valley to combat a militant cleric who calls for Taliban-style rule and holy war against Pakistani authorities

But the attempt at quell the militancy appeared to fall flat as some 6,000 supporters of the cleric, Maulana Fazlullah, gathered in a schoolyard to hear him speak just a few kilometres from where the soldiers deployed.

Fazlullah, wearing a black turban and with long, flowing hair, addressed the crowd from the back of a truck. A dozen armed men were deployed around him as bodyguards.

“The government has made a declaration of war,” he said, according to a local journalist who witnessed the scene. “Is it a crime to sit in the home of Allah and to study the Qur'an?”

The paramilitary troops deployed Tuesday across Swat, a mountain valley popular with tourists until violence flared there this summer, army spokesman Maj.-Gen. Waheed Arshad said.

Militants responded by detonating a remote-controlled bomb near a convoy late Tuesday, wounding four soldiers. Arshad said security forces had detained seven suspects.

The army already sent regular troops into Swat, which lies about 50 kilometres north of the city of Peshawar, in July as part of a crackdown on militancy spreading across the region.

The deployment prompted a string of bombings and suicide attacks on security forces.

Fazlullah is the leader of Tehrik Nifaz-e-Sharia Mohammed, or TNSM, a pro-Taliban group which sent thousands of volunteer fighters to Afghanistan during the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Pakistan banned the group and jailed TNSM's founder, Fazlullah's father-in-law, in 2002.

But the group re-emerged this year in Swat and Malakand, another impoverished, conservative region next to the Afghan border.

As well as marshalling armed militants and enforcing Islamic law, Fazlullah has reportedly used an FM radio station to campaign against girls' education and denounce a recent polio vaccination program as a western plot to sterilize Muslim children.

Rice admits U.S. bungling in Arar case but offers no apology to the Canadian

DATE: 2007.10.24
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WASHINGTON _ In a startling admission, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Wednesday American officials had bungled the Maher Arar case but she didn't apologize or offer to remove him from the U.S. no-fly list.

Fielding questions on Capitol Hill, Rice carefully conceded that U.S. officials had mishandled the case and said they didn't properly communicate with Canada before Arar, a Canadian citizen, was sent to Syria where he was tortured as a suspected terrorist in 2002.

``We do not think that this case was handled as it should have been," Rice said.

``We do absolutely not wish to transfer anyone to any place in which they might be tortured."

Rice pledged to improve the way the U.S. government deals with Canada.

``Our communication with the Canadian government about this was by no means perfect; in fact, it was quite imperfect," Rice told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

``We have told the Canadian government that we did not think this was handled particularly well in terms of our own relationship and that we will try to do better in the future."

In Canada, Arar and Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcomed the remarks, calling them ``encouraging."

Rice's comments came as a surprise because the U.S. administration had long resisted public admissions of shortcomings in the Arar affair. But she offered no explanation for why Arar was sent to Syria by U.S. officials _ whom Arar is suing _ and didn't acknowledge that he was mistreated there.

Rice also suggested Arar will continue to be considered a security threat by the United States.

``We and the Canadians do not have exactly the same understanding of what is possible in the future for Mr. Arar in terms of travel and the like."

Asked by Democrat William Delahunt whether U.S. authorities relied on diplomatic assurances from Syria that Arar wouldn't be tortured, Rice said she had forgotten some of the details but would provide a ``full accounting" later.

Syria is routinely cited by the State Department in annual reports as employing 38 torture techniques during interrogations.

``You're aware of the fact that he was tortured for a year?" asked Delahunt.

``I am aware of claims that were made, congressman," replied Rice.

Arar, a telecommunications engineer, was arrested during a stopover in New York on his way home to Canada. U.S. authorities sent him to Syria after the RCMP said he was a suspected Islamic extremist.

A commission of inquiry in Canada last year said the Mounties followed up with their U.S. counterparts by admitting they had no proof Arar was aligned with terrorists. Justice Dennis O'Connor said the Americans didn't keep Canadians in the loop or tell them Arar was going to be deported.

The commission cleared Arar of any links to terrorism and Ottawa gave him a \$10.5 million in compensation.

Harper has called for a similar apology from American officials and wants Arar to be allowed to travel to the United States.

"We are encouraged by the comments issued by (Rice) regarding the Arar case," Harper told the Commons on Wednesday. "We have raised this issue on many occasions with the Americans and we hope that the U.S. government will act to fully address this matter."

For his part, Arar also called it an "encouraging step."

"I fully support the very important work of the congressional committees which are trying to get to the bottom of the extraordinary rendition program."

But Montreal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, a former justice minister, said Rice's comments are too little, too late.

"For the Americans to say they're acting improperly is an understatement. They in fact breached both international law and their own domestic law in sending Maher Arar to Syria," he said in Ottawa.

"There's no way you can keep somebody on a no-fly list when the person was not only an innocent person but was the innocent victim of the actions of three governments."

Rice's comments are "by no means adequate," said NDP Leader Jack Layton, calling it "outrageous" that Arar still can't travel to the United States with his family.

"Obviously our government hasn't done its job. Thank goodness we have some members of Congress who have been standing up for Maher Arar."

U.S. officials have promised to collaborate with Canada on any future terrorism cases involving Canadians.

David Wilkins, the U.S. ambassador to Canada, pointed out that in January 2004, the two governments exchanged letters pledging they would "notify each other when a citizen of one country is subject to involuntary removal from the other country to a third country."

The U.S. government has always maintained that Arar was merely deported, not rendered to a third country to be tortured. American officials have said they have their own reasons for keeping Arar out of the United States.

But U.S. legislators and Canadian officials, including Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day, who have seen all the intelligence on Arar say that's nonsense.

A report last week suggested the United States still considers Arar a security threat based on an allegation that he was seen in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s by a man who led training at a terrorist camp — a charge Arar has denied.

Arar's U.S. lawyer, Maria LaHood, said Rice's comments are a step in the right direction.

“It's certainly not an apology, but it is something,” she said in an interview from New York. “She's admitting some wrongdoing, some mishandling.”

LaHood said it's unlikely there will be a direct impact on Arar's lawsuit against U.S. officials.

The suit has been blocked so far by government lawyers. Arguments are scheduled for Nov. 9 in New York at a U.S. Court of Appeals.

The case was dismissed by a lower court that agreed with the government's position that there's a great need for secrecy for national security reasons and to maintain good relations with Canada.

“How can it be that squelching justice can improve our relations with Canada?” asked LaHood.

“I'm hopeful the congressional pressure will keep up ... and this will continue to unravel the U.S. position.”

Republicans joined with Democrats last week to apologize to Arar at a congressional committee hearing where he appeared by video link from Ottawa.

New York Democrat Jerrold Nadler, who has seen the secret dossier on Arar, said there's nothing to justify “this campaign of vilification against you or to deny you entry into this country.”

“This was a kidnapping,” he told the hearing, called to put pressure on U.S. officials to end the practice of rendition.

Arar was the first to challenge the policy and has become the most visible victim of the program in which terror suspects are transferred to third countries without court approval.

Toronto Sun fronts for Wednesday, Oct. 24

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MAIN HEADLINE:

HOWZ-E-MADAD, Afghanistan (Reuters) _ Canadian troops in Afghanistan combat under fire
(COVERED)

MAIN PHOTO:

HOWZ-E-MADAD, Afghanistan (Reuters) _ Canadian soldier

Pakistan sends 2,500 troops to militant stronghold in northwest

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE RELIGION

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 389

The paramilitary troops deployed Tuesday and were setting up checkpoints across Swat, a mountain valley popular with tourists until violence flared there this summer, army spokesman Maj. Gen. Waheed Arshad said.

Militants responded by detonating a remote-controlled bomb near a convoy heading into the valley late Tuesday. Arshad said four soldiers were slightly wounded and security forces had detained seven suspects.

The army said the deployment would curb the activities of Maulana Fazlullah, a militant leader who reportedly has used FM radio broadcasts to call for jihad, or holy war, against Pakistani authorities.

Checkpoints manned jointly by paramilitary Frontier Corps. troops and local police are to "ensure law and order, to assist the civil administration and ensure that Fazlullah and his band of criminals stop terrorizing innocent civilians," Arshad said.

The army already sent regular troops into Swat, which lies about 50 kilometers north of the city of Peshawar in July as part of a crackdown on militancy spreading across the region.

The deployment prompted a string of deadly bombings and suicide attacks on security forces in the region.

Arshad warned militants to surrender or face tough action.

"It will be perhaps better for them if they desist from their activities and turn themselves over to the law enforcement agencies," he said.

Fazlullah is the leader of Tehrik Nifaz-e-Sharia Mohammed, or TNSM, a pro-Taliban militant group which sent thousands of volunteers to Afghanistan during the U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

Pakistan banned the group and jailed TNSM's founder, Sufi Muhammad, who is also Fazlullah's father-in-law, in 2002.

However, the group has re-emerged this year in Swat and Malakand, another impoverished, conservative region next to the Afghan border where the government provides few services.

As well as marshaling a band of armed militants, Fazlullah has reportedly used an FM radio station to campaign against girls' education and denounce a recent polio vaccination as a Western plot to sterilize Muslim children.

Authorities have accused him of links to Islamabad's radical Red Mosque, which was stormed by army commandos in July in an operation that left more than 100 people dead.

That incident and the deployment of army reinforcements to Swat and the North Waziristan region touched off a wave of violence that has killed more than 1,000 people and raised concern about Pakistan's stability.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, hated by the militants for siding with the U.S. in 2001, recently renewed his pledge to eliminate extremism in Pakistan.

He is widely expected to join forces with former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who survived a suicide attack on her return from exile last week, to continue that policy after January parliamentary elections.

Toronto Star major play for Wednesday, Oct. 24

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MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan _ Bill Graveland on Mine-detection vehicle struck, A25

MONTREAL _ Ross Marowits on Mining industry faces shortage of skilled staff, B6

MONTREAL _ Bill Beacon on Players pray for QB Calvillo's wife, S5

Hillier visits troops in Afghanistan for first time since Van Doos deployed

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL
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WORD COUNT: 594

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan _ Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan on Wednesday.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment _ the Van Doos _ since they were deployed in July.

``It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier in an interview with The Canadian Press at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

``First of all, it's fundamental for any commander to be able to put a face on the mission and what we ask these great young men and women to do."

Hillier had dinner with the troops when he arrived. He held a question-and-answer session with them. And some of the soldiers lined up to shake hands with him and snap pictures during his visit.

On Wednesday, Hillier watched a demonstration of the Canadian Force's new mine-detection unit, the Husky, just a day after one of the units was blown in half by a powerful improvised explosive device _ or IED _ on a narrow road west of Masum Ghar.

The driver of the Husky, who was not injured in the blast, did the demonstration for Hillier.

``This is the kind of equipment they need to do the job to increase our chances of success on the mission, to reduce the risk to our soldiers and particularly in this kind of threat environment, where the Taliban really are working IEDs and anti-tank mines as a way of attacking our soldiers," he said.

With its lush fields of opium poppies and marijuana, narrow roads and mountainous terrain, the region continues to give the Taliban what amounts to free reign. Their IEDs have inflicted casualties on Canadian troops, who are in a seemingly never-ending search for more of the roadside bombs that are planted almost daily.

Hillier said it has not come as a surprise. ``This is a standard counter-insurgency campaign and the Taliban are using exactly the kind of tactics that we expect from them."

Since 2002, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan.

It is widely believed that many of the Taliban fighters in Masum Ghar region are actually paid by drug lords and criminals, and the insurgency is a way of preventing Afghan government forces from interfering with the lucrative narcotics business.

Taliban attacks have slowed down in recent weeks.

It is coming up on harvest time in what is known as the ``breadbasket" of Afghanistan. Those farmers who are essentially working part-time for the Taliban or crime bosses will be concentrating on their day jobs _ bringing in their harvest of grapes, opium and pot.

Hillier said he believes Canada is winning the war in Afghanistan, pointing to improvements in the Panjwaii region where Canadian soldiers have been embroiled in some of the fiercest fighting.

``As a lot of people know, we lost a lot of fine young soldiers providing the security in this area," Hillier said.

``I came back in March and April and June and now and the difference is night and day and there are tens of thousands of people living in this valley now."

``That doesn't mean there isn't a great challenge, but the governor of Kandahar province is working with the police out here in rebuilding their own province, their own communities."

Canadian soldiers have been mentoring the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, training them to take care of their own needs.

Hillier said progress is being made, but it is a little slower than he would like in some ways.

``They're working with the police and, yeah, we know there are major problems with the police _ a lack of pay and there's corruption and there's a lack of training and some of them just don't belong there."

``We are winning. This is without question the toughest part of Afghanistan and we have made huge progress and that can continue."

Graphics moving on The Canadian Press GraphicsNet today

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 1741

GRAPHICS ADVISORY

3:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Following is a list of graphics moving today. In this menu each graphic's file name is followed by a brief description, column size and time of input. For questions or retransmission requests please call The Canadian Press Graphics Desk in Toronto at 416-507-2172.

DOWNLOAD GRAPHICS FROM CPIMAGES

All graphics are available to subscribers at www.cpimages.com. Select "Graphics" from the "Search in" drop down menu to see the thumbnails of the art. Graphics are displayed from newest to oldest. There is no charge for graphics that are less than one week old. If you have any problems call The Canadian Press Picture Desk at 416-507-2169.

THE CANADIAN PRESS GRAPHICS

National/Business/Sports

MARKET WATCH: Graphic shows closing figures for markets with charts for S&P/TSX and Canadian Dollar; 4x1c; ETA 6 p.m.

PHD GRADUATES: Chart show gap between male and female PhD graduates in Canada; 1c; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

PHD CITIES LIST: Chart lists Canada's largest cities by concentration of science and engineering PhDs; 1c; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

NEXEN EARNINGS: Chart shows Q3 results from Nexen Inc.; 1c; with BC-Nexen; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

NUNAVUT MISSING BOYS: Map locates Baker Lake, Nunavut where a search is underway for two missing teens; 1c; with BC-Missing-Boys; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Weekly

DVD RENTALS: Graphic lists Rogers Video's top 10 DVD rentals for the week; 1c; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 23.

MUSIC CHARTS: Graphic lists Music World's top 10 sales of pop and country albums for the week; 1c; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 23.

TV RATINGS: Graphic lists the top 10 TV programs in Canada for the week; 1c; MOVED Friday, Oct. 19.

BEST SELLING BOOKS: Graphic lists the Macleans top 10 fiction and non-fiction books for the week; 1c; MOVED Thursday, Oct. 18.

AP GRAPHICS

3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 24.

National/World

IRAQ BOMBINGS: Graphic locates bombing attack in southeastern Baghdad; 1c x 3 5/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 92 mm; with BC-Iraq and related stories; ETA 5 p.m.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES: UPDATES with latest information; 3-D map shows location of wildfires in California; three sizes; 3c x 3 7/8 inches; 146 mm x 98 mm; 3c x 6 inches; 146 mm x 152 mm; 2c x 4 1/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 105 mm; with BC-California Wildfires or any related story; ETA 6 p.m.

FIRE DEMOGRAPHICS: Graphic looks at the demographics of San Diego and pre-Katrina New Orleans; 2c x 6 inches; 96.3 mm x 152 mm; with BC-California Wildfires; ETA 6 p.m.

BORDER FENCE: Map shows proposed and existing border control fencing along Texas; 2c x 3 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 89 mm; with BC-Border Fence; ETA 6 p.m.

FIRE PLANE: Graphic compares California's large wildfire fighting plane, the Tanker 910, to the smaller S-2T; 2c x 4 1/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 105 mm; with BC-California Wildfires; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

STAPH INFECTIONS: Graphic shows staph infection incident rates by age and race and percentage of infections by incident type; 2c x 3 3/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 95 mm; with BC-Staph Infections; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

TURKEY IRAQ: Map shows Kurdish-inhabited areas in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia and current aggressions; 2c x 3 1/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 79 mm; with BC-Turkey Iraq; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

AFGHAN VIOLENCE: Map locates Wardak and Kunar provinces in Afghanistan; 1c x 2 3/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 70 mm; with BC-Afghanistan; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Business

STUDENT LOANS: Graphic shows the rise in college tuition in the past decade; 1c x 3 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 79 mm; with BC-Student Loans; ETA 5 p.m.

PARENTS TEENS TECH: Graphic shows ownership of laptops, cell phones and other devices by parents and teens; 1c; 46.5 mm; with BC-Teens Online; ETA 5 p.m.

HEATING COSTS: RETRANSMISSION of graphic that previously moved Oct. 9; graphic shows heating cost forecasts; 1c x 3 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 79 mm; with BC-On The Money; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

EXISTING HOMES: Chart shows the number of existing and single-family existing homes sold by month in millions of units; two charts; 1c x 4 3/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 111 mm; with BC-Home Sales; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

Sports

NFL PICKS WK 8: Graphic shows Week 8 matchups and how they'll fare in week's play; 3c x 4 1/2 inches; 146 mm x 114 mm; with related stories; ETA 4 p.m.

FBC PICKS: Chart shows the Top 25 college football teams and how they'll fare in week's play; 3c x 3 1/4 inches; 146 mm x 83 mm; with related story; ETA 5 p.m.

CHASE FOR THE CUP: Graphic looks at the field of 12 drivers in the Nextel Cup championship; 2c x 2 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 64 mm; with related story; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

BREEDERS CLASSIC PP: Graphic shows post positions with silks for Saturday's Breeders' Cup Classic; 3c x 2 inches; 146 mm x 51 mm; with related story; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

CAR PEP BOYS AUTO 500: Graphic shows layout of Atlanta Motor Speedway, site of the Pep Boys Auto 500; two sizes; 2c x 2 5/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 67 mm; 1c x 4 1/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 105 mm; with auto package and related stories; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

WS 2007 MATCHUP 2: UPDATES with changes in starting pitching; graphic shows World Series matchups between the Colorado Rockies and Boston Red Sox; 6c x 11 1/2 inches; 295.2 mm x 292 mm; with related stories; MOVED Wednesday, Oct. 24.

MLS CONF SEMIS: Graphic compares MLS Eastern and Western conference semifinal matchups; 2c x 2 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 64 mm; with related stories; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 23.

COLO ROCKIES: UPDATES introduction; graphic originally moved Oct. 17; graphic shows teams that entered the World Series with five or more days off and how they fared; 2c x 3 inches; 96.3 mm x 76 mm; with BC-BBO—World Series; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 23.

WS 2007 BREAKDOWNS: Graphics show stadiums and team compositions for the Colorado Rockies and Boston Red Sox; includes payrolls for all 2007 MLB postseason teams; two sizes; 2c x 2 inches; 96.3 mm x 51 mm; 2c x 2 1/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 57.2 mm; with related World Series stories; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 23.

NEXTEL CUP TOP 12: Graphic lists Nextel Cup Top 12 drivers with stats; two sizes; 1c x 2 1/2 inches; 46.5 mm x 64 mm; 2c x 2 inches; 96.3 mm x 51 mm; with related story; MOVED Monday, Oct. 22.

Hurricane Season 2007

Editors: Hurricane graphics available for retransmission.

HURRICANE HOUSE: Graphic shows how to prepare a home for a hurricane; 3c x 6 inches; 146 mm x 152 mm; with any related story; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE FORECAST NOAA: Graphic shows forecast for hurricanes from NOAA since 2001 versus actual hurricanes; 1c x 3 inches; 46.5 mm x 76 mm; with BC-Hurricane Forecast and related stories; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE YEARLY STORMS: Graphic shows number of major and minor hurricanes for each year since 1900 and plots 10-year averages; 2c x 2 7/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 73 mm; with BC-Hurricane Forecast and related stories; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE NAMES: Graphic shows storm names for the 2007 Atlantic storm season; three sizes; 1c x 5

1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 133 mm; 1c x 4 1/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 108 mm; 1 1/2c x 2 1/2 inches; 66.5 mm x 64 mm; with BC–Hurricane Forecast and related stories; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE SEASON: Graphic shows the number of named Atlantic storms in the past 10 years; 1c x 2 5/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 67 mm; with BC–Hurricane Forecasts and hurricane–related stories; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE PATHS: Map shows hurricane paths since 1976; 4c x 7 3/8 inches; 195.7 mm x 187 mm; with BC–The Next New Orleans; MOVED Friday, June 1.

HURRICANE FORECAST CSU: Graphic shows hurricane forecasts from Colorado State University since 2001; 1c x 2 7/8 inches; 46.5 mm x 73 mm; with BC–Hurricane Forecast; MOVED Thursday, May 31.

COASTAL POPULATION: Map shows U.S. population living in a coastal county; 3c x 4 1/2 inches; 146 mm x 114 mm; with BC–The Next New Orleans; MOVED Wednesday, May 30.

HURRICANE LOGO: Logo to accompany coverage of the 2007 hurricane season; 1/2c x 5/8 inches; 20 mm x 16 mm; with any related stories; MOVED Friday, May 25.

HURR INSURANCE: Graphic looks at some statistics on recent hurricanes; 2c x 6 inches; 96.3 mm x 152 mm; with related hurricane stories; MOVED Thursday, May 24.

Advance and Features

COAL OVERVIEW: ADVANCE FOR OCT. 29; graphic shows world coal production, electricity generation costs by fuel, and U.S. trends of electricity generation costs; 2c x 5 inches; 96.3 mm x 127 mm; with BC–Coal–Resurgence; ETA 6 p.m.

TEACHER SEX ABUSE LOGO: Logo for use with any teacher abuse related story; 1c x 0 1/2 inches; 46.5 mm x 13 mm; with any BC–Teacher Sex Abuse package or related stories; MOVED Thursday, Oct. 18.

TEACHER SEX ABUSE 2C: ADVANCE FOR OCT. 21 AND THEREAFTER; graphic shows findings of AP investigation on school teacher abuses, includes a map of abuses, statistics on victims and perpetrators; 2c x 6 1/2 inches; 96.3 mm x 165 mm; with any BC–Teacher Sex Abuse or related stories; MOVED Thursday, Oct. 18.

TEACHER SEX ABUSE: ADVANCE FOR OCT. 21 AND THEREAFTER; graphic shows findings of AP investigation on school teacher abuses, includes a map of abuses, statistics on victims and perpetrators; 3c x 6 1/2 inches; 146 mm x 165 mm; with any BC–Teacher Sex Abuse stories; MOVED Thursday, Oct. 18.

HALLOWEEN STATS: RETRANSMITTING graphic that previously moved Oct. 1; graphic shows statistics on Halloween; two sizes; 2c x 7 3/4 inches; 96.3 mm x 197 mm; 4c x 3 1/2 inches; 195.7 mm x 89 mm; with related Halloween story; MOVED Monday, Oct. 8.

WAR WOUNDED LOGO: RETRANSMITTING graphic previously moved June 20; logo to accompany any story about the war wounded; 1c x 1 inches; 46.5 mm x 25 mm; with BC–Coming Home Wounded package or related stories; MOVED Tuesday, Oct. 2.

Weekly

NIELSENS: Graphic shows the top 10 weekly television shows for the week; 1c x 5 3/4 inches; 46.5 mm x 146 mm; 2c x 2 5/8 inches; 96.3 mm x 67 mm; with BC–Nielsens; ETA 7 p.m.

BOX OFFICE: Graphic shows U.S. box office sales for the past weekend; 1c x 4 3/4 inches; MOVED Monday, Oct. 22.

CYBERTRIPS LOGO: Logo for use with BC-TRV--Travel-CyberTrips; 1c; 46.5 mm; MOVED Monday, Oct. 22.

ON THE NET LOGO: Logo for placement with weekly On the Net column; multiple sizes; 1c x 1 inch; 46.5 mm x 18 mm; half-column x 1.25 inches; 17 mm x 33 mm; with BC-On the Net; MOVED Monday, Oct. 22.

IN THE PITS LOGO: Logo to accompany column on NASCAR racing; 1/2c x 1 3/8 inches; 17 mm x 35 mm; 1/2c x 2 inches; 17 mm x 51 mm; 2c x 3/4 inches; 96.5 mm x 18 mm; 3c x 3/4 inches; 146 mm x 18 mm; with weekly NASCAR column by Jenna Fryer; MOVED Monday, Oct. 22.

SNAPSHOT: Weekly financial snapshot looks at major stock indexes; 2c x 4 3/4 inches; 96 mm x 121 mm; stand-alone; ETA Friday, Oct. 26.

FANTASY BASEBALL LOGO: Logo for placement with weekly Fantasy Baseball column; 1/2c x 1 1/4 inches; 20 mm x 32 mm; with BC-Fantasy Baseball; ETA Friday, Oct. 26.

Canada asks NATO allies for trainers, choppers for Afghan mission: sources

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 813

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands _ Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit Wednesday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

It is part of the federal government's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately Wednesday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung on Thursday, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support _ Canadian troops don't have helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47 Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul.

"We are pursuing several avenues to see that that type of lift capacity remains," MacKay told Canadian reporters at a news conference late Thursday.

The effort to secure regular alternate airlift capability took on new importance Wednesday with a decision ordering Boeing to resubmit its bid on a major contract to supply Chinooks to the U.S. military.

Defence industry officials in Canada say the ruling has the potential of delaying Canada's effort to acquire 16 of the hardy helicopters.

NATO has also signalled it intends to lease 20 helicopters from private companies for the mission in Afghanistan. Those aircraft would be used to ferry supplies, though, and not troops as needed by Canada.

NATO officials said as many as nine alliance countries have volunteered to increase their troop commitments to Afghanistan at their meeting, with four of them saying they'll help in the volatile southern region.

Eimert van Middelkoop, the Dutch defence minister, delivered a barely veiled shot at the opening of the NATO meeting earlier Wednesday.

“One thing is certain, there is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security,” van Middelkoop said in a jab at Germany, Spain and Italy, which have refused to let their forces fight in the heartland of the Taliban insurgency.

“It is not about what we are willing to say for a safer and more just world, it ultimately depends on what we are willing to do. Fair risk– and burden–sharing will remain leading principles of the alliance.”

A few weeks ago, van Middelkoop asked the Germans and Norway for help, specifically helicopters and mentors for the fledgling Afghan army.

The Norwegians have turned down the request, with Defence Minister Strøm-Erichsen telling a news agency in her country that she doesn't want the country's contingent _ totalling about 100 troops _ broken up and spread about piecemeal.

Taking a direct bilateral approach to allies was praised by a defence analyst back in Canada. “It would show that the allies see the difficulties we're in and share the burden,” said Allain Pellerin, executive director of the Conference of Defence Associations.

The problem thus far, Pellerin said, was that most other NATO partners haven't taken the complaints seriously.

Prior to last year's NATO summit in Riga, Latvia, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Dutch prime minister wrote an opinion piece that was published in the international papers, calling allies to cough up more troops.

“When they got to the summit, I understand Harper never raised the issue because he'd been advised, if you do that, it's going to tick off the Germans and therefore don't do it. And he didn't,” Pellerin said.

“The Germans were left with the impression that (the Canadians) raise it in public, but it's not a big issue.”

Details of the expected NATO reinforcements will be hammered out at what's called a force-generation conference, where NATO officials will be expecting to see those commitments in writing. The conference is expected to take place next month in Belgium.

At last year's NATO leaders summit, De Hoop Scheffer made similar optimistic predictions after the 26 alliance members promised at that time to get behind the mission with troops and equipment.

NATO ground forces in Afghanistan swelled to 41,000 from roughly 32,000, but much of that increase came from Britain, the United States, which extended tours of some units already in the country, newer alliance members including Poland.

Global National News, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2007

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 257

SPRING VALLEY, Calif. _ Wildfires in California have destroyed 1,500 homes and caused at least a half-million people to flee, in what has become the largest evacuation in state history. CVD.

OTTAWA _ Police in Ottawa received four false alarm 911 calls today related to bomb and gun threats at schools. CVD PREVIOUSLY, CHECKING FOR UPDATE.

OTTAWA _ Conservative government's throne speech has passed the House of Commons, averting an election. CVD.

WASHINGTON _ U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice admits the United States has mishandled the case of Canadian Maher Arar. CVD.

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands _ As many as nine countries have offered to increase their troop strength in Afghanistan, NATO officials say. CVD.

SICHUAN PROVINCE, China _ China launched its first lunar probe today, just weeks after China's regional rival Japan put one in orbit over the moon in a big leap forward for Asia's undeclared space race. CVD.

TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. _ A councillor from the small town at the centre of Quebec's debate on integrating immigrants says citizens must wrestle control of the issue away from the courts. CVD.

UNDATED _ The French parliament passed a law today allowing the state to test the DNA of potential immigrants sponsored by relatives to prove they are actually family members. CHECKING.

CALGARY _ This evening, Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach will deliver his first televised address, during which he is expected to discuss his government's response to the report of the royalty review panel. CVD.

HALIFAX _ Cats will have to be licensed in Halifax following the adoption of a controversial new bylaw. As of next April, all animal owners will have to register their pets, and cats must be kept confined to their owners' property. CVD.

The Canadian Press – Toronto

Americans deeply skeptical about U.S. foreign policy: poll

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 514

WASHINGTON _ Fewer Americans think the United States is adequately thwarting terrorists, meeting its objectives in Iraq or achieving other goals overseas, said a poll that shows a deepening skepticism about the country's foreign policy.

The survey also shows people in the United States have flagging hopes a range of strategies and policies _ from improving intelligence operations to showing more respect for other countries _ can do very much to keep the country safe.

“We are reaching a point where the public seems to be questioning not just whether current policies are working but whether the United States can have an effective foreign policy at all,” said a report accompanying the survey, conducted in the United States last month for Public Agenda, a non-partisan public policy group, and the journal Foreign Affairs.

The poll also found little taste for a military confrontation with Iran, though there was slightly more interest than earlier this year. Tensions with Tehran have risen over its nuclear program and aid to fighters opposing U.S. troops in Iraq.

Sixty-five per cent said they preferred economic or diplomatic moves against Iran, compared with 19 per cent who favoured military action or threats. When the question was asked in March, 13 per cent chose threatened or actual military steps.

Asked to assign grades to the United States for meeting foreign policy goals, 48 per cent awarded As or Bs for giving terrorism the attention it deserves. The number giving those grades was 10 percentage points lower than when the question was asked in 2005.

Twenty-five per cent gave those highest grades when asked how well the United States is succeeding in Iraq, down 14 points from 2005. There were similar drop-offs in top grades for meeting U.S. objectives in Afghanistan, spreading democracy in the world, resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and having good relations with Muslim countries.

While 56 per cent said improved intelligence operations would help a great deal to protect the country, that was down nine points from 2005.

Thirty-eight per cent said respecting other countries more would do a great deal to improve U.S. security, down 11 points in two years. There were similar or slightly smaller reductions in the portion of people saying tighter immigration controls, better space weaponry and reduced energy dependence would help.

By 65 per cent to 28 per cent, people said the United States should rely more on diplomatic and economic efforts, rather than military might, to combat terrorism, numbers that were virtually unchanged from two years ago.

The survey also found:

Americans deeply skeptical about U.S. foreign policy: poll

_ Most think global co-operation can reduce global warming but also doubt the United States can keep other countries from getting nuclear weapons or keep oil supplies stable and reasonably priced.

_ Sixty-four per cent said they think the rest of the world sees the United States negatively, including 30 per cent who said very negatively.

_ Seventy-nine per cent said the world has become more dangerous for the United States.

_ One-quarter said the United States is doing a good or excellent job making the world more peaceful.

_ People ranked the Middle East as the top U.S. foreign policy problem, with four in 10 choosing it.

The telephone survey of 1,011 adults was conducted from Sept. 17–27. It had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

On the Net:

Public Agenda _ <http://www.publicagenda.org>

Top news stories and photo for Wednesday, Oct. 24.

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 364

The Canadian Press suggests the following stories for front-page consideration:

TOP PHOTO

WASHINGTON _ DCCD101 (Vertical) _ Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is confronted by CodePink member Desiree Anita Ali-Fairooz, her hands painted red, as she arrives to testify before the House Foreign Relations Committee regarding US policy in the Middle East

Top stories:

U.S. ADMITS MISHANDLING OF ARAR CASE

WASHINGTON _ Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice admitted Wednesday the United States mishandled the case of Canadian Maher Arar. Questioned by a congressional committee about Arar's ordeal in Syria, Rice says the U.S. administration does not want to send anyone anywhere to be tortured, and that Washington has told Canada "we will try to do better in the future." Arar and Prime Minister Stephen Harper say her remarks are "encouraging." 600 words. By Beth Gorham. See Photos BC-US-Cda-Arar, 5th Writethru. Moved.

CANADA ASKS NATO ALLIES FOR TRAINERS, CHOPPERS FOR AFGHAN MISSION: SOURCES

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands _ Following in the footsteps of the Dutch, Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said. The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week. 912 words. By Murray Brewster. See Photos. BC-Cda-Afghan-NATO, 5th Writethru. Moved.

LIBERALS THINK IT STINKS BUT ALLOW PASSAGE OF TORY THRONE SPEECH

OTTAWA _ Liberal MPs held their noses through one of the most crucial tests of the minority Parliament on Wednesday, abstaining from a vote on the Conservative throne speech in order to avoid forcing an election. 500 words. By Jennifer Ditchburn. BC-Throne-Speech-Vote, 2nd Writethru. Moved.

The buzz:

FACEBOOK ADDS MICROSOFT AS A FRIEND – SELLS TINY STAKE FOR \$240M

SAN FRANCISCO _ Rapidly rising Internet star Facebook Inc. has sold a 1.6 per cent stake to Microsoft Corp. for US\$240 million, spurning a competing offer from online search leader Google Inc. The deal announced Wednesday after several weeks of negotiation values Palo Alto-based Facebook at \$15 billion _ less than four years after Mark Zuckerberg started the online social networking site in his Harvard University dorm room. 570 words. BC-Facebook-Microsoft, 1st Writethru. Moved.

Afghan battle kills militants, civilians: officials

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 417

KABUL _ U.S.-led coalition forces clashed with suspected militants in central Afghanistan, leaving several insurgents dead and detaining two, a statement from the coalition said.

The troops moved into compounds in Nirkh district, in Wardak province late Tuesday after ``intelligence sources indicated militant forces were hiding" there, the statement said.

``During the course of operations, militants opened fire on coalition forces," it said.

The troops returned fire, killing several militants, said Maj. Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesman.

During a search of the area, the coalition troops discovered weapons, ammunition and explosive materials and also detained two suspected militants for questioning, the statement said.

The clash happened in the same province where on Monday, NATO and Afghan troops called in air strikes during a battle against insurgents that left 20 suspected militants and up to 12 civilians dead, officials said.

In eastern Afghanistan, meanwhile, a NATO soldier was killed and two others wounded Tuesday, the alliance said in a statement.

The casualty figures from the central Afghanistan clash varied widely. Afghan officials said between three and 12 civilians were killed in the fighting Monday in a remote area of Wardak province, just west of the capital Kabul.

NATO's force in Afghanistan said 50 insurgents were trying to set up an ambush and fighter aircraft dropped two bombs on their position.

Spokesman Maj. Charles Anthony said soldiers were investigating the incident to see if civilians had perished.

``We've been looking since yesterday," Anthony said.

``We still have not gotten any evidence of any civilian casualties. I'm not saying it's not possible."

NATO said it killed ``numerous" enemy fighters.

Mohammad Hussein Fahami, deputy head of the Wardak provincial council, said 12 civilians were killed _ eight people from one family and four others. Ten civilians were wounded, he said.

Anthony said soldiers had been on the ground to guide the bombs to their targets. He said ISAF has ``no evidence" the bombs hit a housing compound.

Some 700 civilians have died in fighting this year, by an Associated Press count based on figures from Afghan and western officials. About one-half of those deaths were caused by U.S. and NATO forces.

Maj. Zalmay Khan, an Afghan army commander, said 20 enemy fighters died in the joint NATO–Afghan operation. But a governor's aide, Mohammad Sadiq, said the operation killed 12 fighters and three civilians.

Khan said militants were firing at Afghan and NATO forces from the cover of civilian homes.

Casualty figures from remote battles often vary widely in Afghanistan and are hard to independently verify.

In eastern Afghanistan, an ISAF soldier was killed and two others were wounded during a firefight with insurgents in Kunar province, NATO said in a statement.

Separately, the U.S.–led coalition said one child and five militants were killed in Zabul province Tuesday after militants fired on coalition soldiers from a tent.

Afghanistan this year has seen the heaviest fighting since the 2001 ouster of the Taliban. In all, more than 5,200 people have died in insurgency related violence by the AP count.

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 125

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands — NATO officials say as many as nine countries have offered to increase their troop strength in Afghanistan.

They say the promise to do more to help defeat the Taliban insurgency includes four countries who are volunteering to send mentors to help train the fledgling Afghan National Army.

He says all the talk during a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Holland was about increasing commitments, nobody was talking about decreasing.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer wouldn't identify the countries today, saying it will be up to individual governments to say what they are prepared to contribute.

He says some nations have offered to send troops to the volatile southern part of Afghanistan where most Canadian troops are stationed.

Details will be hammered out at a conference that is expected to take place next month in Belgium.

(The Canadian Press)

SAF

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 150

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands _ The Dutch defence minister has fired a verbal warning shot across the bow of allies reluctant to share the combat burden in Afghanistan.

Eimert (correct) van Middelkoop opened today's meeting of NATO defence ministers in Brussels by saying there is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security.

He says it's not about what a country says, but what it's willing to do.

The Netherlands, like Canada, has been complaining bitterly that they've borne a heavier burden of the fighting in Afghanistan than others _ notably Germany, France and Italy _ who patrol relatively quiet sectors in the north.

Going into the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said he would push the idea of countries rotating their troops throughout Afghanistan.

However, he immediately moved to dampen expectations, noting that individual countries decide how their troops are employed.

Moving troops between the front lines and quieter sectors could appeal to Canada.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has listed troop rotation as an option worthy of consideration.

(The Canadian Press)

mcw

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 154

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands — Canada is lobbying individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan, requesting elements such as air support and training mentors.

Canadian defence sources tell The Canadian Press that the push involves potential helicopter support, something Canadian troops lack.

They say air support threatens to become even more scarce as Allies with CH-47 Chinook helicopters are thinking about withdrawing them for rest and overhaul.

NATO defence ministers are meeting in the Netherlands this week and Afghanistan has been a major topic of discussion.

The Germans and the French have been the focus of intense lobbying that appeared to bear fruit today, with an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength.

Instead of looking for a potential country to replace Canada in the front lines in Afghanistan, the Harper government has focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay says Canada has been encouraging other countries to participate more fully.

(The Canadian Press)

MUB-SAF

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 365

NATO defence ministers are opening two days of informal talks in the Netherlands today.

At the top of the agenda will be the war in Afghanistan.

The Dutch have signalled they're prepared to stay, and the Germans recently voted to extend their mission too.

Liberal Senator Colin Kenny says that puts Defence Minister Peter MacKay in a tight spot, because the best he can see is that Canada's role in Afghanistan is up in the air beyond February 2009. (4)

(California-Fires) (Audio: 57)

Not even the U-S Marines are getting a pass from wildfires raging across southern California.

Two spot fires are burning on the grounds of Camp Pendleton.

No one there has been evacuated, but more than a half-(m) million people have fled their homes — from L-A to San Diego.

Howling desert winds are expected to continue for at least another day, and firefighters say it's a losing battle until the winds die down. (4)

(Flaherty-Retail-Prices)

It appears Finance Minister Jim Flaherty needs to take his own advice.

After meeting with retail executives to discuss the higher prices consumers are still paying to shop Canadian despite our soaring loonie, Flaherty said those looking for lower prices need to shop around.

He then held up the latest ``Harry Potter" book as an example, saying he bought it in Ottawa for 36-dollars — nearly eight-bucks higher than the price he saw it going for in a Washington store last week.

But the Globe and Mail reports the same book is selling at an Ottawa Costco for \$23.69, and Amazon-dot-ca for \$22.50 — cheaper even than the U-S price he quoted. (4)

(Cop-Murder-Trial)

Closing arguments are being heard in the sensational trial of a Toronto cop accused of murdering his married mistress.

Fifty-year-old Richard Wills is charged with first-degree murder in the 2002 death of 40-year old Linda Mariani.

Her body was found in a garbage bin, behind a fake wall in Wills's basement.

Wills claims she died in an accidental fall, and that he made an error in judgment when he decided to hide her body rather than call 9-1-1. (4)

(BC-Airport-Taser)

The B-C coroner's office will hold a formal investigation into this month's death of a Polish immigrant at Vancouver International Airport.

Robert Dziekanski died October 14th after being zapped by a stun gun as police officers tried to subdue him. (4)

(ENT-The Sopranos)

Now that fans of ``The Sopranos" have hopefully come to terms with the way the mob series ended, the T-V show's creator is offering an explanation.

David Chase strongly suggests in an interview included in ``The Sopranos: The Complete Book," that, no, Tony Soprano did not get whacked moments after the screen went black, while munching on onion rings with his family at a restaurant.

He's suggesting life just went on -- that what you saw, and didn't see, is what you get. (4)

(NewsWatch by Karen Rebot)

INDEX:Defence, Health, International

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE HEALTH INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 89

MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier has wrapped up two days worth of visits with Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier has made his first trip to meet with soldiers from Quebec's Van Doos Regiment since they were deployed in July.

Hillier says it's been a morale boost – for him.

He says it's important for any commander to be able to put a human face on the mission.

During his visit, Hillier travelled to Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 kilometres west of Kandahar City, to visit the troops in person.(The Canadian Press)

INDEX:International, Defence, Economy, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.24

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE ECONOMY POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 109

WASHINGTON – The Congressional Budget Office says the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could cost as much as 2.4 (t) trillion dollars through the next decade.

The White House has brushed off the analysis as speculation.

The estimate is the most comprehensive and far-reaching to date.

It factors in costs previously not counted and assumes large numbers of forces will remain in the regions.

The analysis says the United States has spent about 604 (b) billion dollars on the wars.

If the United States were to reduce the number of troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan to 75,000 six years from now, it would cost the federal budget one (t) trillion dollars more for military and diplomatic operations and 705 (b) billion in interest payments to pay for the wars through 2017.

(The Associated Press)

NATO–Cda–Afghan

DATE: 2007.10.24

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 197

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands — Defence Minister Peter MacKay will be facing some tough questions today as he meets with his NATO counterparts in the Netherlands. While other countries are signing on to have soldiers serve additional time in Afghanistan, MacKay will have to tell the ministers that Canada is still trying to decide what to do. A committee headed up by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley is reviewing Canada's position in the war-torn country and is expected to make recommendations on whether the army should pull out by 2009. In the recent throne speech, the conservatives said they'd like to extend the mission mandate in the country until 2011. Canada currently has 25-hundred troops serving in the volatile Kandahar province. Seventy-one soldiers have died while serving in the country since 2002. Other countries in the NATO coalition, such as the Netherlands and Germany, have already agreed to keep their troops in Afghanistan. (The Canadian Press) mmq

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 323

The Harper government's throne speech faces its final hurdle today in the Commons.

But the speech, outlining the priorities of the minority Conservative government, is expected to pass when M-P's vote on it for the last time.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said his party will abstain from the vote to ensure its passage.

Among other things, it outlines how the Tory government expects Canada to fail to keep its Kyoto commitments to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

It also calls for an extension of Canada's mission in Afghanistan to 2011. (2)

(NATO-Cda-Afghan) (Audio: 05)

Defence Minister Peter MacKay will face some tough questions in the Netherlands, where he's meeting with his NATO counterparts today.

While other countries are signing on to have their soldiers serve additional time in Afghanistan, MacKay will have to admit that Canada is still trying to decide what to do beyond our 2009 mandate.

He's waiting on a report from a committee studying a possible mission extension.

Canada has 25-hundred troops in southern Afghanistan.

Seventy-one have died since 2002. (2)

(Flaherty-Taxes)

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is denying a report he'll announce significant tax cuts in next month's fiscal update.

He insists he has no plans for breaks until the next federal budget, expected in March.

Flaherty was reacting to a National Post report that the Harper government plans to turn November's economic update into a mini-budget stuffed with tax cuts.

It cited Tory sources as saying the move is aimed at forcing the Liberals to vote against it and trigger an election while the Tories hold a 10-point lead in the polls. (2)

(Calif-Fires)

Fire crews in Southern California say they can do little more than wait out wildfires that have already had a hand in five deaths, charred 16-hundred square kilometres and destroyed 13-hundred homes.

Unrelenting desert winds have whipped the fires into an unstoppable frenzy.

A half-(m) million people have been chased from their homes from north of Los Angeles down beyond San Diego.

U-S President Bush is due to visit the stricken area tomorrow. (2)

(Halifax-Cat-Bylaw)

Big changes are coming for cat owners in Halifax.

Regional councillors have voted in favour of a controversial pet bylaw that will restrict the movement of cats.

Starting in April, all animal owners will have to register all pets, and cats must be kept confined to their owners' properties.

Any felines found roaming around may be trapped and sent to the municipal shelter. (2)

(Shuttle)

The shuttle crew is awake, as Discovery continues to close in on the international space station.

Tomorrow's scheduled docking will set up one of the most challenging space-station construction missions yet.

It will involve a record five spacewalks.

During their week-and-a-half-long station visit, astronauts will install a live-in compartment they're bringing along. (2)

(NewsWatch by Karen Rebot)

TOR OUT YYY

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 236

Firefighters are finding many of the wildfires raging in southern California impossible to slow down or to stop.

Nearly 13-hundred homes have been destroyed by more than a dozen wind-stoked fires, and tens of thousands more are threatened.

More than half-a-million people have fled the flames.

The mass evacuation is the largest in California history.

Meanwhile, a number of local officials are blaming the state for lack of preparation for a disaster that should have been foreseen.

The head of Orange County's fire authority says if aircraft had been deployed more quickly, a massive fire near Irvine could have been controlled. (6)

(NATO Cda Afghan)

Peter MacKay is meeting with his NATO counterparts today in the Netherlands.

The federal defence minister might face some tough questions.

Other nations have already decided to keep their troops in war-torn Afghanistan longer.

The Conservative government has said it wants the Canadian mission extended to 2011.

A five-member panel is exploring the options before any decision is made. (6)

(Stelmach Broadcast)

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach delivers his state-of-the-province broadcast this evening.

He'll give his first official reaction to the contentious royalty review report calling for a two (b) billion-dollar increase in royalties.

The energy sector has been issuing dire warnings.

It's feared the impact of the proposed royalty increases will kill jobs and investment in Alberta's booming economy. (6)

(OJ Simpson)

Additional charges are expected against O-J Simpson and three co-defendants in the alleged armed robbery

of two sports memorabilia dealers at a Las Vegas hotel.

Lawyers for the four are due in court today to discuss a revised complaint from prosecutors.

Two defendants have been removed from the case, after pleading guilty to reduced charges. (6)

(Space Shuttle)

It's the first full day in space for the seven-member Discovery crew.

The space shuttle is headed for what NASA sees as the most complicated space-station construction mission so far.

Discovery is on track to reach the International Space Station tomorrow. (6)

(Space China)

The Asian space race is intensifying, with China taking a big step forward today.

It's launched its first lunar probe, part of a process aimed at sending a rover to the moon and returning it to Earth.

Japan put a probe into orbit around the moon a few weeks ago. (6)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)

Update:RECASTS; ADDS secretary general comments

DATE: 2007.10.24
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 110

NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands – NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer says member countries are willing to commit more forces to Afghanistan, especially in the volatile southern part of the war-torn country.

But he wouldn't identify the countries, saying it will be up to individual governments to say what they are prepared to contribute.

Details will be hammered out at what's called a force-generation conference.

That conference is expected to take place next month in Belgium.

De Hoop Scheffer did hint that further contributions to NATO's 41,000-member International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, would involve training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

The secretary general's statement came after the Dutch defence minister fired a verbal warning shot across the bow of allies reluctant to share the combat burden in Afghanistan.

(The Canadian Press)

Cash hasn't put military at ease

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SECTION: News
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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 555

How much happiness does big money buy the military? A lot less than it hoped.

Even after Liberal and Conservative cash injections, the forces are struggling to rebuild and renew while fighting a very different and difficult 21st century war. Equally worrying for the department, the consensus that led successive governments to boost spending to modern highs is cracking as other political priorities emerge.

Senior government officials and academics confirm entrenched problems aren't evaporating with a budget that will top \$18 billion next year, some 27 per cent higher than before 9/11, according to a report released this week. Conflicting visions and trouble balancing recruiting, procurement, logistics and combat readiness still plague a military that needed an international timeout even before the Afghanistan mission.

This is complex stuff made refreshingly simple by Douglas Bland, author of *Canada Without Armed Forces?* and chair of the Queen's University defence management studies program. "The shiniest new destroyer tied up to a dock is not a capability."

His point is that making the military an effective foreign policy tool demands more than buying modern "kit." It also means, among other things, attracting and training more people willing and able to serve at a time when higher numbers are leaving, and finding common ground between the Conservative Canada First platform plank and a future holding more missions to failed and failing states.

Squaring that circle was a prime source of public tension between chief of defence staff Gen. Rick Hillier and Gordon O'Connor, the Conservative defence policy architect and the minister shuffled this summer after becoming a political liability. But instead of disappearing with O'Connor, the stress continues as the trickle-down implications of government purchases grow more obvious.

Two multi-billion-dollar decisions stand out, both politically driven. Neither the giant C-17 heavy lift transport aircraft nor the so-called Arctic slush breakers were top of the shopping list for Hillier's modern expeditionary military. While each has operational uses – the planes are more multi-purpose than the ships – the common value that makes them more attractive to politicians than generals is that they wave the flag.

If the cost-to-benefit ratio seems high to taxpayers, it's stratospheric to an armed forces that knows these good times won't roll much longer. Bland and insiders agree that the political and military communities are now exhausting most of the mutual benefits of rebuilding the armed forces. Or, as Bland puts it, politicians have fulfilled their defence promises and are anxious to move on.

A new order is evolving, one that will limit spending increases as well as the unusually large political space Hillier now fills. That's subtly evident in defence headquarters staff changes that increase bureaucratic control

and will eventually decrease the visibility of an institution that, in the jealous eyes of some here, has grown too big for its boots.

Those signals are being sniffed carefully in a capital sensitive to the smallest wind shifts. But what's far more important to Canada and to its ability to forcefully express its foreign policy is finding equilibrium between the attention-grabbing purchases politicians want and the operational spending flexibility the military needs.

Instead of happiness, money only buys the military more chances to make tough choices.

James Travers' national affairs column appears Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Childhood abuse fuels fiction; Meg Tilly's novels have a common theme of adults who disappoint and betray

IDNUMBER 200710250148
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DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Life
PAGE: L03
ILLUSTRATION: Colin McConnell toronto star Meg Tilley speaks to young readers about her novels at Brookbanks Library in Toronto this week. ;
BYLINE: Judy Gerstel
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 729

no more acting With silver threads in her dark hair and no makeup, Meg Tilly at 47 is as far from the Hollywood ingenue she once was as she is from the vulnerable young girl who was abused by her stepfather, her mother's lover and a family member.

It's no surprise that such a life fuels the fiction she's driven to write.

"I write all the time now, pretty much every day. I've been given" – she pauses to correct herself – "I've given myself the right to my words in a really big way."

But writing also feels, she says, "like a giving back."

While writing Porcupine, her first novel for young adults, she was "picturing girls like me at that age.

"It felt like, 'Here, honey,'" she leans forward, cupping her hands in a gesture of offering.

The author was in Toronto this week reading from Porcupine.

When she read to a Grade 5 class in Calgary recently, she says, "It was one of the happiest days I've ever had, how they were so engrossed, these little faces, and then putting little life lessons in my talk, all the things that kind of saved me."

It only adds to her pleasure that these kids know her only as a writer, not as an Oscar-nominated actress.

Porcupine is about Jack, a feisty, 12-year-old Newfoundland girl whose military dad is killed in Afghanistan. When her weak and careless mother leaves Jacqueline and her younger siblings to live with a tough old bird of a great-grandmother on a hardscrabble prairie farm, Jack struggles to survive abandonment and find joy.

"With Porcupine, what I wanted is for girls who are in situations like that, who feel let down or abandoned, to know that you can look inside and get strong in yourself," she says.

Adults who disappoint and betray are a recurring theme in Tilly's writing. More than a decade after her first book, *Singing Songs*, was released as fiction, Tilly admitted it wasn't fiction at all.

It was "based on my life," she confessed last year, with the publication of her second book, *Gemma*, about a sexual predator.

"I wanted people to know why I wrote it and what my experience was," she says about *Gemma*. "I wanted people to know what it's like to be trapped with someone like this." Whether through the catharsis of writing or finding serenity in motherhood and maturity, Tilly is able to reconcile the betrayal and weakness of people you love and who love you.

"That's part of life," she says pragmatically. "There's always people who disappoint you or let you down but the fact is people do the best they can with whatever tools they're given."

She's obviously still conflicted about her mother, relating a telling anecdote about their relationship that she then asks to retract. "I don't want my mom to feel like a bad person," she explains.

Tilly is now on good terms with most of her large family, including eight siblings, half-siblings and step-siblings, after some friction and outright hostility following the publication of her novels about abuse. But she is reluctant to publish the many other manuscripts she's completed because, she says, "people in them are still alive."

It was her own children, Tilly says, who changed her life. "I grew up a lot," she says. "At first, I was still trying to be the person, to make the shape the outside world told me to be. Teaching my children to stand tall, and that they had a right to defend their bodies, and to pick their words, you think, how can I ask this of them if I can't do it myself?"

Motherhood also motivated her to turn her back on Hollywood and raise her children in British Columbia, where she'd grown up.

She feels no urge to return to acting. Offered a movie role recently, she confides, "I thought, 'Eeew, I don't think so' – but I can't say never because you never know. I used to say I'd never get married again and here I am, married."

Still, Tilly is comfortable with her 17-year-old son, Will, wanting to become an actor like his father, Colin Firth, who lived with Tilly in British Columbia for several years after they made *Valmont* together and before he became a heartthrob as Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

"He is very talented," she says with a measure of pride about her son.

He does complain about not being allowed to see his mother's movies. "I have a rule that you can't see my stuff until you're 18. Because parents already cast such a big shadow in their children's lives. If you see them on a screen, there's such worship of that kind of thing."

She warned her older children, "If you don't want to see me naked, don't rent *Girl on a Swing*, because I did that for no money because I believed in the material, but it's not a very good movie."

These days, Tilly is revealing much more than she did in that movie.

NATO allies offer troops, resources for Afghan mission; But help from 9 nations expected to fall far short

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PAGE: AA01
BYLINE: Mitch Potter
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 597

NATO allies rallied yesterday with pledges to assist Dutch troops in war-torn southern Afghanistan in a move widely interpreted as a dose of political courage as the Netherlands approaches a crucial parliamentary debate on its role in the international mission.

Dutch media reports last night named France, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Czech republic as either confirmed, or in the process of confirming modest military deployments to Uruzgan, where 1,700 Dutch soldiers are locked in the thick of fighting one province away from the Canadians in Kandahar.

De Volkskrant newspaper said the French commitment, though initially not expected to exceed more than a few dozen military trainers, was especially important for the Netherlands as public pressure mounts for a withdrawal of troops.

The promises, discussed during a closed-door meeting of NATO defence ministers at the Dutch seaside resort of Noordwijk, included pledges from five other nations to send more military personnel to Afghanistan. But the cumulative numbers are expected to fall far short of the battalion-sized increases sought by U.S. officials.

Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop welcomed the help, but said the Netherlands still has not excluded the possibility of a full withdrawal. "All options as far as this government are concerned are still open," he said.

A diplomatic source in attendance at the NATO talks described the pledges as "badly needed political cover. The numbers aren't huge. But it is a solid step forward because it gives the Dutch direct help in Uruzgan, just as they ready to take the question to their parliament in November."

U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates offered muted praise following the meeting after earlier accusing allies of leaving gaps in the NATO force by not fulfilling pledges of troops and equipment.

"I wouldn't say I'm satisfied but I would say that today was a considerably more positive day than I anticipated," Gates said.

Dutch military analysts told the Toronto Star that beneath the facade of high tension, the Netherlands is quietly cobbling a pragmatic solution, including symbolic support from other allies, which will enable a

NATO allies offer troops, resources for Afghan mission; But help from 9 nations expected to fall far short

one-year extension of the Dutch mandate in Uruzgan.

Complicating the Dutch political question is a trans-Atlantic rift that was exposed again yesterday when Germany rejected U.S. demands for a sharp increase in NATO troops.

"We need security and reconstruction and development, that is the wider concept," said German Defence Minister Franz Jozef Jung. "That's why I think these calls simply for more and more military involvement are misguided. We have 3,500 soldiers in Afghanistan and I think our contribution is significant."

Jung announced Germany would instead triple its involvement in troop training in other, less volatile areas of Afghanistan, raising to more than 300 the number of trainers embedded with Afghan units

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer spoke earlier of a possible rotation plan that would see members of the NATO-led coalition more equitably share the burden of a military commitment to Afghanistan's most troubled sectors. But the suggestion appears to be little more than a talking point at this stage.

"I think there is a positive feeling coming out of these meetings, considering the political context," a senior NATO source told the Star last night.

"Going in, there was some concern things would get animated. But inside the room, things were actually quite encouraging. You had commitments to stay and commitments for more support. Did we see dramatic battalion-sized promises? No. But we saw nine countries indicate a willingness to do more. And we saw a clear unity of purpose – the need to accelerate the training of Afghan soldiers and the need to do a much better job of explaining to our own populations why this is so important."

NATO allies offer troops, resources for Afghan mission; But help from 9 nations expected to fall far short

Sub standard: Keep out of water

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BYLINE: Slinger
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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 549

The Slinger Column takes pride in being the leading purveyor of information about the \$897 million program that established Canada's current submarine fleet. The story began in 1998 with the purchase of four used subs from Britain, and has continued through efforts to make them seaworthy despite dents that made it impossible for them to submerge and leaks that meant if they did happen to submerge they couldn't resurface.

The big news today is that the defence department believes the time has come to replace them.

Among their problems: Because the navy has been unable to work out a contract to fix its compressed-air system, by the time one of them, HMCS Victoria, is able to fire its torpedoes, its torpedoes will be obsolete.

Besides that, it won't be long until all four will require an \$865 million midlife refit even though they have yet to reach full operational capacity, if by "full operational capacity" you mean they can be put in the water.

One reason Canadians are so pleased that the army is fighting the Taliban is that if the navy had been given the job it would still be drawing up plans to leave for Afghanistan.

As an April 2002 Slinger Column revealed, the saga really goes back to a Liberal defence minister named Art Eggleton wandering onto the lot of HM This Sub's For You in Portsmouth, England, past signs that said "Gently pre-owned!" and "Easy credit for colonials!"

Here's the clip: "Was the salesman in the checked suit and the hat festooned with gold braid thinking, 'Looks like we've hooked a live one!' as he clapped Eggleton on the back and said, 'Come to kick the tires, have you, mate? Well, mind you don't kick them too hard! Haw haw haw! Careful! No! Don't lean on it!'

"Spitting on the end of his tie, he rubbed it against the concavity that appeared under the minister's elbow. 'Not to worry, mate!' the salesman chortled. 'That'll pop out. Climb down inside with a ball-peen hammer, and it's good as new in no time.'"

Hardly months passed before we brought you John McCallum, another Liberal defence minister, trying to do what the defence department would like to do now, five years later. "Have I got a deal for you," he said when he got King Mswati III of Swaziland on the phone.

Mswati had caught Canada's eye as a free-spending African statesman when he took \$51 million of the money Canada had given his drought-stricken country to relieve famine and diverted it to purchase an executive jet.

He had also earned a reputation for impulsiveness by kidnapping an 18-year-old virgin and forcing her to become his 10th wife even though he was constitutionally entitled to a new one every year anyway.

"What is this deal you are offering me?" asked the king.

"Submarines," said McCallum. "I have four, hardly broken-in, that would be perfect for you."

"Submarines? But my country is landlocked."

"That," crowed McCallum, "is why I say these submarines would be perfect for you."

Peter MacKay, the latest Conservative defence minister, is scarcely more clear-thinking. Another reason cited for getting rid of the subs is that they're useless when it comes to asserting Canada's Arctic sovereignty because they can't operate under ice.

The Slinger Column feels obliged to point out that, partly thanks to the Conservative government's position on global warming, in a month or two there won't be any ice up there at all, ever again. And when that happens, these subs will be in their element, provided, of course, that there's no water up there either.

Slinger's column appears Tuesday and Thursday.

A majority may save voters hassle, but we don't get better government

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KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: Oliver Ryffel
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 198

Re: "Fears of Harper majority waning: poll; But most don't want an election until spring at the earliest," The Journal, Oct. 20.

So a majority of Canadians want the next federal election to yield a majority government. It is this kind of news that at times makes it difficult for someone like me not to despair.

For the past three and a half years, our Parliament — for the first time in a generation — has actually been something more than just a rubber stamp for the prime minister of the day. It has actually wielded real veto power over any legislation it did not like, and apparently Canadians cannot wait for this outburst of actual democracy to come to an end.

It appears that the main reason why Canadians like the four- to five-year elected dictatorship that a majority government creates is that they do not have to go through this bothersome exercise of voting every two years or so.

Worse, if the current federal government falls on a non-confidence motion this fall, the poor people of Ontario, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan may have to exercise their democratic rights twice this year! Oh, the humanity!

And to think that our soldiers are dying in Afghanistan, supposedly in defence of democracy.

Oliver Ryffel, Edmonton

Ont. firm set to lease choppers to NATO; Aircraft available to fly Canadian troops around Afghanistan

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DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: David Pugliese
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 352

OTTAWA – A Canadian company that supplies transport helicopters for military operations in the Sudan says it is ready to provide similar aircraft for the Afghanistan mission and has been talking to NATO about its choppers.

SkyLink Aviation of Toronto is one of several firms from around the world that could provide the choppers NATO is looking to use in Afghanistan. The firm has supplied aircraft for operations in the Sudan, Iraq and other world hotspots.

"We have been working with NATO and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) providing them the information they would need to go out for a commercial lease agreement," said Jan Ottens, SkyLink's general manager.

"The procurement has not come out yet, but we are clearly capable and interested in bidding on it."

NATO defence ministers were meeting in the Netherlands Wednesday to discuss the helicopter issue and other Afghanistan-related topics.

MAJOR PROBLEM

The lack of helicopters for the Afghanistan mission has been identified as a major problem by Canadian and other NATO officers.

The aircraft are used for for transporting supplies and troops. Officers point out that making more use of helicopters to move around the battlefield would cut down on the need for ground convoys — a favourite target of suicide bombers and attackers using improvised explosive devices.

Last summer the Harper government announced it would spend \$4.7 billion to purchase a fleet of 16 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters and put in place a 20-year support package for the aircraft. But the acquisition appears to have bogged down and air force officials confirm purchase negotiations have not started. Informal talks are continuing with Boeing.

Delivery of the helicopters will be required within three years of a contract being signed and military officials have suggested the new choppers will not be available until at least 2011.

The Canadian Forces used to operate Chinook choppers but those were sold in the 1990s.

With helicopters in short supply in Afghanistan, NATO is looking at leasing about 20 choppers from commercial providers.

Private security firms operating in Afghanistan use Russian-built and U.S.-built choppers for their missions and similar privately owned aircraft have ferried NATO troops.

Ottens said a request for the helicopter lease is expected to be released by NATO sometime within the next two to three weeks. He estimated it would cost NATO about \$80 million a year for the helicopters.

Canada asks allies for help Trainers, choppers for Afghan mission

SOURCETAG	0710250487
PUBLICATION:	The Winnipeg Sun
DATE:	2007.10.25
EDITION:	Final
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	16
ILLUSTRATION:	photo by Virginia Mayo, AP MacKay arrives for a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Noordwijk, the Netherlands.
BYLINE:	CP
DATELINE:	NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands
WORD COUNT:	291

Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit yesterday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that have been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

EVOLVING STRATEGY

It is part of Ottawa's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately yesterday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay told The Canadian Press.

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung today, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support — Canadian troops don't have

helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47 Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Hillier gets his morale boost

SOURCETAG 0710250486
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 16
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 143

Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan yesterday.

Hillier made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — since they were deployed in July.

"It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier told The Canadian Press at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 km west of Kandahar.

Hillier said he believes Canada is winning the war in Afghanistan, pointing to improvements in the Panjwaii region where Canadian soldiers have been embroiled in some of the fiercest fighting. "I came back in March and April and June and now and the difference is night and day and there are tens of thousands of people living in this valley now." KEYWORDS=WORLD

Only in Ottawa \$73,000 payoff for low-flying chopper among new fed follies

SOURCETAG 0710250475
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 544

Your attention please! The veteran who left his dentures on the food tray in the government cafeteria is asked to pick up his federal compensation cheque for \$1,835 to replace his lost chompers.

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- The next time you are scared witless as you try to smuggle that extra bottle of cheap booze through Canadian customs, know that the Canada Border Services Agency was hit with \$265,000 in government credit card fraud.

- While our troops are fighting the war in Afghanistan, the defence department spent \$32 million last year on — furniture.
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U.S. war costs in trillions 10-year projection

SOURCETAG 0710250606

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 57

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Charles Dharapak, The Associated Press Desiree Sairooz, a member of women's peace group CodePink, has blood red paint on her hands as she confronts U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Rice was there to testify before the House Foreign Relations Committee about Iraq, Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

BYLINE: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

WORD COUNT: 126

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could cost as much as \$2.4 trillion through the next decade, according to a new analysis yesterday that the White House brushed off as "speculation."

The analysis, by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, provides the most comprehensive and far-reaching estimate to date, taking into account costs previously not counted and assuming a large number of forces would remain in the regions.

According to CBO, the U.S. has spent about \$600 billion to date on both wars, including \$39 billion in diplomatic operations and foreign aid.

If the U.S. cuts the number of troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan to 75,000 six years from now, it would cost another \$1 trillion for military and diplomatic operations and \$705 billion in interest payments to pay for the wars through 2017. KEYWORDS=WORLD

NATO allies step up in Afghan war More willing to put troops in south

SOURCETAG: 0710250592

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 33

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Michael Kooren, Reuters NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer addresses a news conference at a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Noordwijk, near Amsterdam, yesterday. 2. photo of EIMERT VAN MIDDELKOOP Share burden

BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands

WORD COUNT: 212

As many as nine countries have offered to increase their troop strength in Afghanistan — and four of them are willing to go to the volatile south where Canadian forces are stationed, NATO officials said yesterday.

"All the talk around the table was about increasing the commitment," said a senior alliance official, who spoke on background following the first day of an informal meeting of NATO defence ministers.

"Nobody was talking about decreasing."

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer wouldn't identify the countries, saying it will be up to individual governments to say what they are prepared to contribute.

"I've noticed offers from nations, including for the southern part of Afghanistan," he told a news conference.

Four countries have volunteered to send military mentors to help train the fledgling Afghan National Army, said a senior alliance official.

Details will be hammered out at a conference to take place next month in Belgium.

Canada's Defence Minister Peter MacKay has yet to comment on the developments. He met separately yesterday with his French counterpart.

Earlier yesterday the Dutch defence minister fired a verbal warning shot across the bow of allies reluctant to share the combat burden.

FAIRNESS

"It is not about what we are willing to say for a safer and more just world," Eimert van Middelkoop said.

"It ultimately depends on what we are willing to do. Fair risk— and burden—sharing will remain the leading principle for this alliance."

The blunt talk was aimed at other European members of NATO — notably Germany, France and Italy —

who have sizable troop commitments but refuse to let them fight in the restive southern region.

Only troops from the U.S., the Netherlands, Britain and Canada are fighting insurgents in the area.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

Only in Ottawa \$73,000 payoff for low-flying chopper among new fed follies

SOURCETAG 0710250586
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 25
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 544

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Letters to the Editor Column

SOURCETAG 0710250582
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 23
COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
WORD COUNT: 591

HOORAY HAZEL

Re "We're broke David," (Letters of the day, Oct. 24): Your retort, "But Mississauga is heading that way, too," about Mississauga going broke, is so wrong. Mississauga is far from ever being broke. We are not in debt for anything, because our fantastic Mayor Hazel McCallion thinks before acting. Plus, she plans way ahead. Remember when Toronto wanted Mayor McCallion to run Toronto, and was voted the second best Mayor in the world? Yep, Hurricane Hazel. We love her and rightly so!

Eve Melito

Mississauga

(Love her all you want --- and she's a good one --- Mississauga is heading to red numbers in 2012, according to its city manager)

WRONG COUNTRY

Re "Afghan poll opened eyes" (Oct. 24): Peter Worthington claims a recent poll in Afghanistan justifies continued Canadian military participation in that country. Since when has Afghan public opinion dictated how the Canadian government should act? The Afghans don't pay Canadian taxes, they don't vote in Canadian elections and they don't attend the funerals of our dead soldiers.

Elias Borges

Toronto

(Knowing whether we're making an impact in Afghanistan is important)

BRIGHT SIDE?

Re "City OKs land tax, car fee," (Oct. 23): A land transfer tax may stop agents and others from flipping properties and causing high prices.

Mike Cummings

Uxbridge

(Thanks for finding a positive)

MILLER, RESIGN

Re "Mayor: Tell your MPP to help T.O." (Oct. 24): Suppose you hired a team of managers to run your company. If they were unproductive you could change the team, or change the method they operate. None of this is valid in the life of the City Hall. Watching the councillors comically debating, arguing, name-calling is sad and funny, totally insane and very expensive. Bad management is what we have at 100 Queen St. W., they could not negotiate one good deal for the city for decades. Is this democracy or we are paying too much for comedy hour? The mayor should resign immediately. Bring in a passionate, interim team — appointed by Queen's Park — of talented citizens, businessmen, artists, economists — until we come up with a working formula. Until then, it is way down to destruction.

Sam Butera

Toronto

(Not exactly democracy, is it? City run by appointees)

GAS GOUGE

Re "Bordering on parity?" (Oct. 24): How wonderful that Jim Flaherty has decided to go to bat for Canadian consumers over the difference in retail pricing between Canada and the U.S. Now, how about those gas prices? That gouge has been going on way too long, regardless of our dollar's value on the international market.

Chris Pifer

Ancaster

(Hosers getting hosed)

MAKE THEM PAY

Re "Mayor: Tell your MPP to help T.O." (Oct. 24): Too bad some of the city's shortfall does not come out of the council's own pockets. The fools who run this city should be totally ashamed of themselves for the way they fleece the public with the freebies and perks. But the damage is done. Even if he's voted out, the taxes he imposed will not be turned back. I'll be moving out of Toronto while the getting is good. Some do and live, others don't and die. There's lots of places just outside the city limits where his act has no affect. I have no problem paying taxes but when more and more of my pay cheque goes to line their pockets, it's time to re-evaluate.

Helmuth Reindel

(Be warned, there are politicians everywhere)

DOES ANYONE CARE?

Re "We must invest in T.O." (Shelley Carroll, Oct. 23): Is any thinking person buying this crap? This woman, along with Miller and his puppets, could not give a damn about Toronto. What exactly did they give up? Where the hell is the outrage from people? Apathy wins again.

Mike Bushell

(It's three years until the next election. We trust people won't forget)

Only in Ottawa \$73,000 payoff for low-flying chopper among new fed follies

SOURCETAG 0710250403
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 544

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Letters to the Editor Column

SOURCETAG 0710250401
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
WORD COUNT: 587

Re: "Tripping over religious holidays" (Oct. 24). I think Sheila Copps is still thinking like a politician, not a taxpayer. Why should the government (at any level) send out any type of card, whether for Christmas, Hanukkah or a birthday?

If politicians want to acknowledge their supporters, then they should pay for that out of their political party coffers, not the taxpayers' pockets. Other than Canadian embassies sending "Thanks for your business" cards to foreign companies trading with Canada or investing here, I see no reason for our government to waste my money on sending out cards.

TOM LITTLE

OTTAWA

(And who's to say all the recipients are going to recycle their cards?)

RE: "Truth Surprises CBC" (Oct 24). I've been reading a lot of columns in the Sun lately about the left-wing bias in the CBC. Isn't that a little like the pot calling the kettle black? According to documentary filmmaker Garth Pritchard, the CBC is, in the case of Afghanistan, "going there with an agenda and only airing the views that back that agenda." But can't the argument be made that the Sun is an undeniably right-wing paper with it's own agenda to push, whether it be pro-police state, focussing on the positive elements of militarism or all the "great" things Prime Minister Stephen Harper is doing?

No news source makes up the news, they merely ask different questions. The Sun and the National Post won't ask the kind of questions that concern me, because they have their own agenda, but at least with the CBC, we can see both sides of the coin. And, at least by being supported through tax revenue, it can ask questions that may not jive with its corporate sponsors, or try to compete through sensationalism.

MARK SUDWORTH

VANIER

(You're right to say that newspapers don't make up the news)

I find it heartbreaking to read letters like those from federal employee Paul Lavergne, lamenting how he's missing out on the new stat holiday in Ontario. My understanding is that people in the government already get more holidays than "the rest of us." They even get three extra activity days which are supposed to be for personal development, but usually result in overcrowded shopping centres. How about some fairness for a change?

NICK SCHIEBEN

ORLEANS

(Some people have it really hard)

Re: "Transit needs to grow down road" (Oct. 24). I just read that the white paper from city hall recommends more new roads and widening existing roadways, to deal with our growth. The reason we have poor air quality, gridlock during rush hour and why our open spaces are becoming smaller is because we concentrate on making it easier for families to have multiple vehicles, while cutting back on public transit.

If we had a good transit system, we could use our existing roads to move more people, while reducing the above problems associated with more cars.

BOB NYE

OTTAWA

(Increased public transit definitely needs to be part of this discussion)

It seems the perpetrators of these prank calls are going to be given a slap on the wrist. If that is the case then I suggest the city fine these people as they would anyone else who calls in a false alarm. The fines per occurrence are: Fire department is about \$300, ambulance is about \$250, police is about \$250. Let's settle at \$1,000 per occurrence for the sake of these fine citizens with minimal mental capacity. I also expect the usual interest charges will be applied.

Since these fine citizens with all their creativity can be fined for other offences (like riding a bike on the sidewalk), then these fines can be applied as well. No age discrimination here.

I'll bet this would be the best real-life education they'd receive in their life.

FRANK RICHICHI

KANATA

(We know how attached teenagers are to their money)

Invisible injuries A clinic in London's Parkwood Hospital is the only place in Ontario where returning soldiers can get treatment for a range of disorders caused by the stress of serving in the world's hot spots.

SOURCETAG 0710250835

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: City & Region

PAGE: C1

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Derek Ruttan, Sun Media NIGHTMARE: Chuck Marazzo, a 21-year veteran of the Canadian Forces who served in Somalia and Rwanda among other places, is recovering from the effects of combat stress.

BYLINE: JOHN MINER, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 832

It can be triggered by something as simple as a price special at the local grocery store.

People start to crowd together, pushing to get to the front. Then there's a sharp voice in the crowd, ordering everyone to move back.

But the veteran who is barking the orders isn't at the local grocery store in his mind. He's back in Rwanda or Somalia or Afghanistan, dealing with a swarming that could be lethal if he misjudges the crowd.

He's a victim of what Canada's military calls "operational stress injury" and their American counterparts call "combat stress injury."

London is home to Ontario's only clinic set up to treat the increasing number of veterans, armed forces members and RCMP officers who have suffered psychological injuries serving in the Canadian military.

When Brenda Dawdy's son signed up for the Canadian military, people who knew the strapping 24-year-old agreed he had found his niche in life.

"He was just in love with it. He was hyped. He was taking all kinds of courses.

"Everybody said, 'Oh man, this is it.' He was so proud to wear the uniform. I thought he was going to be a career soldier," Dawdy recalls.

During his deployment to Bosnia as part of the NATO force in 2000 and 2001, he was able to phone home occasionally.

Toward the end of his tour, Dawdy noticed a change in the calls.

Invisible injuries A clinic in London's Parkwood Hospital is the only place in Ontario where returning soldiers

"He sounded really distressed and not very good. He said as soon as he finished his tour he was going to leave the military. That's all that was said. I thought, 'Oh God, what is going on?' "

He kept his word. He finished his tour in March 2001 and was out of the Canadian Armed Forces by June.

He returned to Jarvis, near Simcoe, with no visible wounds.

Reunited with his friends, he found it great to just touch the grass at home again.

But about four months later, Dawdy started noticing changes. Her son was short with everyone around him. He wasn't sleeping well and he was drinking more than usual.

There would be sudden outbursts.

Before signing up with the military, he had held a job with the same employer for four years. After he returned, he went through 18 jobs over a few months.

There were assault charges. There was talk of suicide. The son who had been a mentor to other students in high school and was named most valuable player on sports teams told his mother he was "a useless piece of crap."

"I just didn't know if I would get a phone call to come and get him, that he was dead. We went through hell," his mother says.

Dawdy says there was little sympathy and understanding for the returned soldier with the invisible pain.

"Everybody labelled him crazy, crazy, crazy."

In a frantic search for help, she talked to her family doctor and a social worker.

The answer was the same: They couldn't intervene unless her son talked to them directly.

She turned to the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, which put her in touch with the Department of National Defence.

It took more than a year and a half of visits to medical professionals to get a diagnosis.

Her son was suffering post-traumatic stress disorder caused by his military service, part of a group of illnesses called operational stress injury.

"I had never even heard of it," Dawdy says.

Dawdy says her son doesn't want to talk about his experiences.

In his third-floor office at Parkwood Hospital in London, Dana Martel co-ordinates the Operational Stress Injury Clinic.

It is one of six in Canada and the only one in Ontario set up to treat psychological injuries from serving in the Canadian military.

Clients range in age from 20 to 85, a mixture of veterans from the Second World War through to Korea, Rwanda, Somalia, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

Invisible injuries A clinic in London's Parkwood Hospital is the only place in Ontario where returning soldiers

Referred to as shellshock in earlier wars and dismissed with scorn, stress injuries have been shown to actually cause physical changes in the brain.

A 2004 landmark study published in the New England Journal of Medicine on stress injuries from combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan pegged the percentage of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder at 17 per cent, with only about one-quarter seeking health care.

The Parkwood OSIS clinic treats a broad range of conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The damage from combat injuries can result in marital breakups, inability to keep a job, difficulties controlling anger, sleep problems and run-ins with the law, Martel says.

Sometimes it takes a year or two after a soldier has returned home for problems to show up.

"When the dust settles, memories come back, the flashbacks all come back," Martel says.

In a 21-year career with the Canadian military, Chuck Marazzo's foreign deployments include Cyprus, the Golan Heights, Persian Gulf, Somalia and Rwanda.

He believes it was the nightmare of Rwanda, serving as a sergeant with Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire in the futile effort to stop the genocide, that probably caused his injury.

Even the smell of garbage, or a crowded room, can trigger vivid memories of driving around the bodies of children hacked to death on the roadway.

The Londoner says he had been fun-loving and liked social contact. He became withdrawn, anxious, and had difficulty sleeping. There was anger and distrust.

In the military culture, you don't want to be noticed as a whiner. The attitude is to "suck it up," he says.

Marazzo credits his family and the help he received through the clinic with turning his situation around.

"I am one of the lucky ones. I have a supportive wife. Since I was referred to the clinic it has been nothing but an upswing."

He still has trouble if he sees a group of black people getting off a bus.

"Your alertness is heightened. I am not prejudiced, but I do have trouble with that. It is still there."

Mike Newcombe joined the military in 1980 and served most of his time in Europe. He was in both the Gulf War and in Yugoslavia.

"We did see a lot," the former sergeant says matter-of-factly.

His first night in Yugoslavia was in a school house. His unit was hit by mortar fire from three positions.

For a period, his group controlled a buffer zone between the Serbs and Croats. They were shot at every day.

Invisible injuries A clinic in London's Parkwood Hospital is the only place in Ontario where returning soldiers

Newcombe says people started to tell him he had changed.

"I wouldn't accept that. Nobody wants to accept that. How will people look at you when you are the one leading and you have a condition?"

Newcombe says it was hard to sleep with the depression and anger.

Married with two young children, he quit the military in hopes things would get better. They got worse.

At the suggestion of a doctor in St. Marys where he lives, Newcombe got help after suffering his third heart attack in a year.

He was referred to the London clinic Operational Stress Injury Clinic and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support program that provides Canadian Forces members, veterans and their families with peer counselling.

"I started getting help right away. It made a big difference," he said.

Newcombe is now a peer support counsellor, helping others suffering combat stress injuries.

Despite their injuries and the struggle to get better, Newcombe and Marazzo are certain of one thing. They have no regrets about their military service.

"I convince myself that anything I have done is for the good and I really helped a lot of people," Marazzo says.

"You know what? We make a difference. We really make a difference. I would do it again," said Newcombe.

For Dawdy, her son received medical help and has moved to Western Canada for a fresh start. He has stayed with the same construction job for three months, a sign he's improving.

"When he talks to me, he sounds better. He is not ever going to be better, better, but on a scale of one out of 10, I'd say he is probably at a four or five now."

Dawdy, herself, has joined the family peer support group at Parkwood. KEYWORDS=LOCAL

Only in Ottawa A \$73,000 payoff for a low-flying chopper is among new fed follies.

SOURCETAG 0710250814
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A12
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
WORD COUNT: 545

Y our attention please! The veteran who left his dentures on the food tray in the government cafeteria is asked to pick up his federal compensation cheque for \$1,835 to replace his lost chompers.

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Following are some of our favourite moments in federal cheque-writing for the past year, recorded for posterity in the latest public accounts:

- The office of the Governor General spent \$25,000 on "management consulting," apparently to no avail. Michaelle Jean's junket to Africa set taxpayers back a whopping \$1.5 million, mainly to cover the mountain of chits generated by an entourage just slightly smaller than the average country she visited. Overall, the trip was almost \$300,000 more than the price of sending the prime minister and his army of baggage handlers and other admirers to Russia, London and Paris for the G8 summit.
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- Here's another notation that should raise a few eyebrows in high places: National Defence lost 24 items under the heading "theft of weapons and accessories."
- The accounts are full of ironies only a taxpayer would appreciate — the agency that stands on guard for thee at Canada's border crossings, for instance, spent \$7.7 million last year on its own "protective services."
- Some of the most fascinating stories yet to be told are listed in the pages of miscellaneous "ex gratia" payments — things like "compensation for dental expenses incurred following an administrative error." Think about that one.

Now that you know some of what happens to the huge chunk of your paycheque that disappears in tax, earn it and weep.

Canada asks allies to join in It stated its case for assistance in southern Afghanistan at an informal NATO conference.

SOURCETAG: 0710250802

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Reuters NO PROMISES: U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates, Canada's Defence Minister Peter MacKay, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Czech Republic's Defence Minister Vlasta Parkanova and Norway's Defence Minister Anne-Grete Strom-Erichsen meet at the start of a NATO defence ministers meeting in Noordwijk yesterday. The United States urged its European allies to supply more troops and equipment to fight Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan at NATO talks yesterday, but Alliance sources said Washington could come away frustrated.

BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS

WORD COUNT: 394

Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit yesterday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

It is part of the federal government's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately yesterday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay said in an interview with The CP.

Canada asks allies to join in It stated its case for assistance in southern Afghanistan at an informal NATO co

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung today, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support — Canadian troops don't have helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47 Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul.

"We are pursuing several avenues to see that that type of lift capacity remains," MacKay said yesterday.

The effort to secure regular alternate airlift capability took on new importance yesterday with a decision ordering Boeing to resubmit its bid on a major contract to supply Chinooks to the U.S. military.

Defence industry officials in Canada say the ruling has the potential of delaying Canada's effort to acquire 16 of the hardy helicopters.

NATO has also signalled it intends to lease 20 helicopters from private companies for the mission in Afghanistan. Those aircraft would be used to ferry supplies, though, and not troops as needed by Canada.

NATO officials said as many as nine alliance countries have volunteered to increase their troop commitments to Afghanistan at their meeting, with four of them saying they'll help in the volatile southern region.

Troops hike Hillier morale

SOURCETAG 0710250800

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Bill Graveland, CP UPDATE: Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, right, receives an update from Capt. Shawn Thompson on Canada's new mine detection unit yesterday in Masum Ghar, Afghanistan.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR

WORD COUNT: 89

Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan yesterday.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — since they were deployed in July.

"It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier in an interview at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

Vimy fights to go beyond the war Play aims to make peace with the past

SOURCETAG: 0710250738

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Entertainment

PAGE: 57

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Brendon Dlouhy, Sun Media Sheldon Elter and Daniela Vlaskalic perform a scene in the play Vimy, by Vern Thiessen, which runs at the Citadel Theatre until Nov. 11.

BYLINE: COLIN MACLEAN

COLUMN: Theatre

WORD COUNT: 460

Verne Thiessen's new play, Vimy begins just after one of the great battles of the First World War.

Four soldiers lie in a field hospital. They come from all parts of Canada and the experiences that led to the moment are all different. The four (and a shadowy fifth) know they have been in something big, but can't put it all together.

"News doesn't travel as fast as it does now," explains Thiessen. "You can't turn on CNN and find out who won. So they don't know what happened."

NURSE ACTS AS A CATALYST

As a catalyst, Thiessen adds yet another character – a nurse named Claire.

He was looking for a character that would, "Crack the reserve of the men.

"I felt that in reality, it would have been very difficult for these men to open up and talk about their experience. Also, I wanted to point out that women played a large role in the battle – and that's something we don't hear a lot about."

Vimy director James MacDonald picks up the thread of the play.

"It's almost a story told in reverse because at the beginning of the play we see them at their worst – wounded, traumatized and confused. Then, through a series of flashbacks, we reveal the heart of the story. The fear, the terror as they go over the top (of the trenches) and into enemy fire," MacDonald explains.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The story of the victory has long fascinated Thiessen, the Governor General's Award-winning playwright (for his Citadel premiered Einstein's Gift) and Citadel playwright-in-residence.

"It's often been described as the most famous battle in Canadian history. Historians have referred to it as a kind of birth of a nation," he says.

If it was a birth – it was a bloody one. The loss was incalculable. In four days, 3,600 Canadian soldiers died, another 5,000 were wounded.

"We were the colonies," observes MacDonald, a one-time history major. "We were looked at as lessers by the British High Command and they would send out their colonials to places like Vimy Ridge or Gallipoli or the Somme to do the heavy lifting."

"I was intrigued by the idea of memory," says Thiessen. "How do we remember things – as a nation and as individuals? We are currently in a war situation in Afghanistan – we live in a city that is filled with soldiers and some of them have come back injured. I wondered, 'What do they think of home and the country they come back to?' "

BATTLE OF VIMY

The Battle of Vimy began on a chilly Easter Monday in 1917.

Four divisions of the Canadian Corps in France did what neither the British nor the French armies had been able to do in more than two years of fighting – they seized and held the best-defended German bastion on the Western Front, a muddy scarp known as Vimy Ridge.

"For the first time," observes the playwright, "you got four Canadian divisions coming together in one battle. I think they used their experiences back home to devise a new kind of battlefield approach. I mean, these guys grew up fixing tractors, they knew how to make war with nothing."

But Thiessen insists he has not written a play about war – any more than Einstein's Gift was a play about the theory of relativity.

In Vimy, the playwright deliberately blurs the line between past and present.

"It's about making peace with the past – about the kind of stories that we as a nation tell ourselves."

KEYWORDS=SHOWBIZ

NATO nine offer to boost troops

SOURCETAG 0710250731

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 51

BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands

WORD COUNT: 289

As many as nine countries have offered to increase their troop strength in Afghanistan, NATO officials said yesterday.

The promise to do more to help defeat the Taliban insurgency includes four countries that have volunteered to send military mentors to help train the fledgling Afghan National Army, said a senior alliance official.

"All the talk around the table was about increasing the commitment," said the official following the first day of an informal meeting of NATO defence ministers in this seaside community near Amsterdam.

NO TALK 'ABOUT DECREASING'

"Nobody was talking about decreasing."

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer wouldn't identify the countries, saying it will be up to individual governments to say what they are prepared to contribute.

"I've noticed offers from nations, including for the southern part of Afghanistan," he told a news conference.

The NATO official said four of the nine countries have said their military personnel will go to the unstable south.

Details will be hammered out at what's called a force-generation conference, where NATO officials will be expecting to see those commitments in writing.

The conference is expected to take place next month in Belgium.

At last year's NATO leaders summit in Riga, Latvia, De Hoop Scheffer made similar optimistic predictions after the 26 alliance members promised at that time to get behind the mission with troops and equipment.

NATO ground forces in Afghanistan swelled to 41,000 from roughly 32,000, but much of that increase came from Britain, the United States, which extended tours of some units already in the country, and newer alliance members including Poland.

Canada's Defence Minister Peter MacKay has yet to comment on the developments.

VERBAL WARNING SHOT

The secretary general's statement came after the Dutch defence minister fired a verbal warning shot across the bow of allies reluctant to share the combat burden in Afghanistan.

Moving troops between the front lines and quieter sectors could appeal to Canada.

When he announced an independent panel to study the future of Canada's mission beyond 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper listed troop rotation as an option worthy of consideration.

Following the meeting, de Hoop Scheffer took a further step back saying that the secretary general does not have the power to order countries to comply. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Visit boosts Hillier

SOURCETAG 0710250730
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 51
ILLUSTRATION: photo of RICK HILLIER In Afghanistan
BYLINE: BILL GRAVELAND, THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 315

Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan yesterday.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment – the Van Doos – since they were deployed in July.

"It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier in an interview with The Canadian Press at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 km west of Kandahar City.

"First of all, it's fundamental for any commander to be able to put a face on the mission and what we ask these great young men and women to do."

Hillier had dinner with the troops when he arrived. He held a question-and-answer session with them. And some of the soldiers lined up to shake hands with him and snap pictures during his visit.

Yesterday, Hillier watched a demonstration of the Canadian Force's new mine-detection unit, the Husky, just a day after one of the units was blown in half by a powerful improvised explosive device – or IED – on a narrow road west of Masum Ghar.

The driver of the Husky, who was not injured in the blast, did the demonstration for Hillier.

"This is the kind of equipment they need to do the job to increase our chances of success on the mission, to reduce the risk to our soldiers and particularly in this kind of threat environment, where the Taliban really are working IEDs and anti-tank mines as a way of attacking our soldiers," he said.

With its lush fields of opium poppies and marijuana, narrow roads and mountainous terrain, the region continues to give the Taliban what amounts to free rein. Their IEDs have inflicted casualties on Canadian troops who are in a seemingly never-ending search for more of the roadside bombs that are planted almost daily.

Hillier said it has not come as a surprise. "This is a standard counter-insurgency campaign and the Taliban are using exactly the kind of tactics that we expect from them." **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Only in Ottawa \$73,000 payoff for low-flying chopper among new fed follies

SOURCETAG 0710250687
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: GREG WESTON
COLUMN: National Affairs
WORD COUNT: 544

Your attention please! The veteran who left his dentures on the food tray in the government cafeteria is asked to pick up his federal compensation cheque for \$1,835 to replace his lost chompers.

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Canada's interests in Afghan region

IDNUMBER 200710250056
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: A15
BYLINE: Anthony Fenton
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 78

Re: "Afghanistan mission sparks debate at UVic," Oct. 19.

The article reported that I said that "Canada was helping the U.S. with its 'imperial policy'" in Afghanistan.

What I actually said was that "imperial policing is what is going on there" and that the "entire war on terror is an exercise in imperialism."

I did not make any reference to "gold buried" in Afghanistan. My point was that there was mounting pressure by corporate Canada to have the Canadian flag "follow the money" into the region dating back to 2000.

Anthony Fenton,

Pitt Meadows.

France and Germany offer trainers for Afghan army

IDNUMBER 200710250034
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, Netherlands
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 84

NOORDWIJK, Netherlands – Nine nations, including Germany and France, pledged to send more military personnel to Afghanistan but U.S. calls for major troop increases were only partly answered at NATO talks yesterday.

Defence Minister Franz Jozef Jung announced Germany would triple the number of military trainers embedded with Afghan army units to more than 200, while French sources said France would send 50 trainers to help develop Afghan fighting capacity in Uruzgan.

Canada has 2,500 combat troops in the southern Afghanistan war zone.

Playground Listings

IDNUMBER 200710250129

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Westcoast Life

PAGE: D29

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Should you eat these? Absolutely not! Thealerina autumnalis is a deadly poisonous mushroom, commonly found in B.C. Learn more about the world of mycology at the Mushroom Show, Sunday at VanDusen Garden. ;

KEYWORDS: 0

SOURCE: Vancouver Sun

WORD COUNT: 933

n children

this week

Haunted Village Wear a costume and explore haunted sites created by Public Dreams Society. Burnaby Village Museum, 6501 Deer Lake, Oct. 26–28, 6–9pm, \$8–12, 604–293–6500.

Halloween Unmasked Performances, Halloween crafts, goodies, ghost–story tour, songs, and more. Place Des Arts, 1120 Brunette, Oct. 26, 1–4 pm, \$7, 604–664–1636.

The Great Big Boo! Halloween musical, followed by trick–or–treat and a chance to meet the cast. Massey Theatre, New West, Oct. 26–28, and Abbotsford Arts Centre, Oct. 29–30; thegreatbigboo.com

Halloweenie Free hot dogs and hot cocoa for children in costume, with trick–or–treat. Kids Market Granville Island, 1496 Cartwright, Oct. 28, 11 am–3 pm, free, 604–689–8447.

Night Of The Mummy Explore the Vancouver Museum by flashlight, participate in an archaeological dig, and examine a real mummy during overnight family adventure. Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut, Oct. 27, \$50, vanmuseum.bc.ca.

Haunted Ship Party Step aboard the haunted ghost ship; children four to ten are invited to dress in their fearsome pirate best for an afternoon of treasures. Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden, Oct. 28, 12 pm, free for kids in costume with paying adult, 604–257–8300.

Horror on the Hill A scary haunted house: The Haunted House of Hamptom. Hampton Park Elementary School, 1760 Paddock Drive, Coquitlam. Oct. 27, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., \$5 each, 604–945–2828 .

Songs in the Key of EEK! Jubilate! Chamber Choir presents a family Hallowe'en concert and costume party. Jericho Arts Centre, 1675 Discovery, Oct. 29, 7:30 pm, \$5–18, 604–526–6396.

n forums

this week

Trekking in Tibet William Jans's multimedia adventure through Laos, Southern China and Tibet, including a trip up Mount Everest. Rio Theatre, 1660 E. Broadway, Oct. 26, 8 pm, 604-209-5050.

Living Sustainably in Community Conference co-sponsored by Langara College, Yarrow EcoVillage, and the Canadian Co-Housing Network features speakers including Cecile Andrews, Gordon Price, Diana Leafe Christian, Mike Carr, Shirley Chan, Gregor Robertson, Kathryn Cholette, and others. Langara College, 100 W. 49th, Oct. 26-28, \$50-100, 604-323-5981, yarrowecovillage.ca.

Fraser Institute Student Seminar Topics include: China's emerging economy, urban planning, health care reform, and the role of government in funding arts and culture. Hyatt Regency Hotel, 655 Burrard St., Oct. 27, 9 am-5 pm, free, 1-800-665-3558 Ext. 571.

Warlords, Women's Rights, and Foreign Troops: An Afghan Experience Talk by Malalai Joya, member of Afghanistan's National Assembly in Kabul. Vancouver Institute, UBC Woodward IRC Lecture Hall, Oct. 27, 8:15 pm, free, 604-822-1444.

Holistic Health and Wellness Clinic Clinic on integrating shiatsu, diet, and martial arts as a path to health and wellness. Phoenix School of Martial Arts, 8285 - 132 St. Surrey, Oct. 27, 9-11 am, \$30, 778-235-1157.

St Roch II Voyage of Rediscovery Ken Burton, captain of the St. Roch II, speaks about the historic 2000 recreation of the St. Roch's 1940s circumnavigation of North America. Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden, Oct. 31, 7:30 pm, by donation, uasbc.com

The Next Big Question The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research presents three experts thinking about big questions: » How do microbes change the world? By Curtis Suttle » What makes people happy? By John Helliwell » How do nature and nurture consort? By Bryan Kolb. Scotiabank Theatre, 900 Burrard, Nov. 1, 4:30 pm, free, register at thenextbigquestion.ca

2007 Hycroft Lecture Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond is B.C.'s first Representative for Children and Youth; she shares her experience & compassion for children, youth and families. University Women's Club, Hycroft, 1489 McRae, Nov. 1, 7 pm, \$30, 604-731-4661.

Bill Clinton The Vancouver Board of Trade hosts the 42nd president of the U.S., who will speak on the challenges of globalization and our growing interdependence. Refreshments at 11 a.m. precede the program. Centre in Vancouver for Performing Arts, 777 Homer, Nov. 1, 12:15-2 pm, boardoftrade.com.

Alternative Medicine Gala Award Dinner Dr. Rogers Prize for Excellence in complimentary and alternative medicine features speaker Andrew Weil on The Future of Medicine and Health Care, followed by the presentation of the national award. Marriott Pinnacle, 1128 W. Hastings, Nov. 1, 6 pm, drrogersprize.org

The Next Big Question Three of the world's best and brightest minds make a case for why the question their research program investigates is The Next Big Question in advanced research. Audience members can join in the discussion. Scotiabank Theatre, 900 Burrard, Nov. 1, 4:30 pm, free, 604-609-6153.

n miscellany

this week

Haunted Burnaby Trolley Tours Trolly tour features visits to ominous-looking buildings, ghostly stories, and history, presented by Burnaby Village Museum. Pick up at Metropolis at Metrotown, to Oct. 28, 8-10:30 pm, \$20, 604-293-6500.

Mushroom Show Displays of mushrooms and other fungi, with their edible, poisonous or dubious status. Speakers, slide shows, books and roving experts on cultivation, preservation, gourmet cooking, medicinal use, hunting, ecology, and cultural use. Bring your own specimens for identification. VanDusen Botanical Garden, Oct. 28, 11 am – 4 pm, \$3, vanmyco.com, 604-878-9878.

Portobello West Biggest market yet features 120 local artists and designers selling artwork and funky fashions. Rocky Mountaineer Station, 1755 Cottrell, Oct. 28, 12–6 pm, free.

Get Ghoulish on Granville Island Features chef Stephen Wong demonstrating Halloween snacks and pre-trick-or-treat meals, like Bat Wings (Teriyaki Chicken Wings), along with pumpkin carving workshops for kids (11:30 am while supplies last). Granville Island, Oct. 27, granvilleisland.com.

Fright Nights at the PNE Admission includes unlimited access to the five haunted houses and eight rides at Playland. Playland at the PNE, to Oct. 31, 6–11 pm, \$20/25, 604-253-2311, pne.ca

Haunted Vancouver Trolley Tours Hear tales of murders and ghosts, visit Mountain View Cemetery and witness an autopsy at the old city morgue. Suitable for ages 10-plus. Vancouver Museum, to Oct. 31, tours depart 6–9:20 pm, \$35–27, 604-734-7368, vanmuseum.bc.ca

Heart of the City Festival More than 55 events at over 25 locations throughout the Downtown Eastside celebrate the artists and activists who thrive there. Various venues, to Nov. 4, mostly pay as you can, 604-254-6911. www.heartofthecityfestival.com

Vancouver Snow Show Fourth annual ski and board expo features more than 70 exhibitors. BC Place, Oct. 27–28, \$5–10, at the door, anwestshows.com/snowshow.

Hunt down gangs as vigorously as terrorists

IDNUMBER 200710250040
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A16
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 157

Re: Guns, gangs, drugs, Oct. 24

We are fighting and killing terrorists in Afghanistan, but we coddle the "terrorists" living among us, those drug-dealing gangs who murder and then laugh at our laws, police and our society in general. These are the organized criminal gangs that do not respect our laws and have no fear of them or of the police.

We must stop playing games with these idiots and vultures who prey on our most vulnerable citizens, especially our children. We must hunt them down just as vigorously as we do those terrorists in Afghanistan. Stop giving them light sentences. Put these pariahs away in jail for a very, very long time — take them out of circulation permanently. If we don't stop them now, I hate to see what our society will be like in the future with more of these criminals on the loose.

Peter J. Capadouca

Burnaby

Sae builds a warehouse with a difference

IDNUMBER 200710250087
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Calgary Business
PAGE: C2
COLUMN: Around Town
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Mikael Kjellstrom, Calgary Herald / Moe Sae of SaeHoldings next to his newly built warehouse at 4404 14th St. N.E. ;
KEYWORDS: SMALL BUSINESS; CALGARY
BYLINE: David Parker
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
NOTE: Inside Business: Commentary – People Business News in Brief
WORD COUNT: 806

Passing by the city-owned McCall Lake Golf Club while driving west along the always busy McKnight Boulevard, I noticed a rather attractive industrial building under construction just off the fairways. It's good-looking warehouse by Sae Holdings on McCall Industrial Park land at 4404 14th St. N.E.

The design by Clem Lau Architects & Designers is an interesting shape, a curved-sided parallelogram so that maximum space could be achieved from the angled shape of the road and golf course boundary. But what really interested me on my tour with owner Moe Sae was his method of construction.

A large warehouse measuring 85,000 square feet with 28-foot clear ceilings, the structure was originally planned to use local suppliers, but when Sae contacted Calgary concrete suppliers, he was told the amount of work on the books meant he would have to wait in line for up to 18 months.

The solution has resulted in a better quality building that's cheaper than expected, and will be completed within the planned time schedule. Hard for me to believe when it was pre-cast in Winnipeg by Homenko Builders, which shipped it to Calgary and provided the crew to assemble it.

Carrying three pieces at a time, 80 truckloads brought the panels and structural steel here, but the crew of four, who were housed in a nearby hotel, had the exterior walls and roof structure up in two months.

The low-E Argon gas-filled windows also came from Winnipeg. One phone call and a representative came to town eager to do business and was able to provide a package with 25-year guaranteed transoms, cheaper than Calgary could offer, Sae says.

Pre-fab panels were cast indoors in a controlled environment and custom-designed to the curved glass and concrete corners. There are 55 operable windows in the building, which has also been fitted with two pre-cast elevator shafts to mezzanine levels that have added another 5,000 square feet to the west end and allows for a further 15,000 square feet of space overlooking the golf course.

Sae is installing 20 loading docks, complete with 40,000-pound air-powered dock levellers. Two of the doors are drive-ins. Built on four acres of land, it is in close proximity to major roadways — McKnight Boulevard, Deerfoot Trail and 32nd Avenue N.E.

It will be available for move-in by January 2008, for lease by one or two large occupants or it can be purchased.

Ross Meredith is the new general manager of the Westin Calgary. For the past five years, he has been at the Sheraton Eau Claire Suites — half of that time as the number two executive. For the past two and a half years, he'd been in the top job, where he managed a great team in a super property.

But Meredith is happy to be able to move from a 320-room hotel to an older property with 523 rooms as it will keep him and his family in Calgary for a few more years. He looks forward to the challenge of re-energizing the Westin in line with Starwood's brand expectations.

The Westin is still undergoing major renovations that has produced a new lobby, Starbucks and Expectations dining room. It will welcome an Urban Keg in the New Year.

Former general manger Jean Luc Barone has been appointed to the same position in the Westin Bayshore in Vancouver.

Congratulations to the team that worked on the Child Development Centre, which has achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The facility supports the healthy development of children and their families and was opened on Oct. 9. It was designed by Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning. Principal Bill Chomik says, "It is a benchmark in high-performance, sustainable facilities that is the result of architects, designers and engineers from diverse disciplines working together to achieve a common goal."

CDC is the most highly rated and largest LEED Platinum building in Canada and first in the world to be built in a cold climate.

Redpoint Media Group has appointed Carol Harrington as the new editor of CalgaryInc. magazine effective Nov. 1. She has served as managing editor of the publication and, before spending time as a freelance writer in Kabul, Afghanistan, was a Calgary-based correspondent for Canadian Press. She started her career as a staff writer for five years with the Calgary Herald.

For those who enjoy voting — and those that would have liked to, but didn't make it to a polling booth — here's another chance that's kind of fun.

Go to www.canadianetourismawards.com and you'll find the finalists in the Canadian Tourism Commission's contest to select the best website design. Local finalists are Sunshine Village, Bellstar Hotels & Resorts and Travel Alberta. Check them out and vote on-line — I like being able to see snow falling at Sunshine. Vote online and give them a boost.

The awards will be presented in Vancouver on Nov. 8.

David Parker appears Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. He can be reached at 830-4622 or e-mail info@davidparker.ca.

Urgent funds sought for bunker–busting bomb

IDNUMBER 200710250043
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A19
KEYWORDS: NUCLEAR REACTORS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 139

Citing an "urgent operational need," the Pentagon is seeking funds to modify B–2 stealth bombers to deliver an experimental, satellite–guided, bunker–busting bomb, officials said Wednesday.

The likely purpose of the new weapon is to strike Iran's underground nuclear facilities, experts said.

"It raises a red flag," said Representative Jim Moran, a Democrat from Virginia who called for hearings on the request. "My immediate assumption is that it is a target in Iran, rather than Iraq or Afghanistan."

The air force has asked Congress for nearly \$88 million to complete development of the so–called Massive Ordnance Penetrator and modify B–2 bombers so that they can deliver it, an air force spokeswoman said.

"This program is an effort to satisfy an urgent operational need for the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, a 30,000 pound (13,608 kilogram) GPS guided penetrator weapon on B–2 for hard and deeply buried" targets, the air force's request budget said.

Nine countries pledge more help to Afghanistan; Germany, France boost number of military trainers

IDNUMBER 200710250042
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A19
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Marcel Antonisse, Agence France–Presse, Getty Images/ NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer spoke at NATO talks in the Netherlands on Wednesday. ;
KEYWORDS: RIOTS; VIOLENCE; YOUTH; ETHNIC GROUPS; FRANCE
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, Netherlands
BYLINE: Mark John and Kristin Roberts
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 388

Nine nations including Germany and France pledged to send more military personnel to Afghanistan, but the U.S. calls for major troop increases were only partly answered at NATO talks on Wednesday.

The Netherlands, under growing public pressure to pull its 1,600 soldiers out of southern Uruzgan, said it still did not exclude a full withdrawal from the increasingly violent battle against Taliban insurgents.

"All options as far as this government are concerned are still open," Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop told a news conference after talks among defence ministers in the Dutch coastal resort of Noordwijk.

A Dutch decision is due next month and could involve cutting its presence rather than a full withdrawal if other nations come forward. The step could influence Canada's decision on renewing a mandate for its 1,700-strong force in early 2009.

Defence Minister Franz Jozef Jung announced Germany would triple the number of military trainers embedded with Afghan army units to over 200, while French sources said France would send 50 trainers to help develop Afghan fighting capacity in Uruzgan.

But Jung rejected U.S. demands for the German trainers to accompany Afghan units into the south, and criticized renewed U.S. calls for NATO allies to provide more troops themselves.

"We need security and reconstruction and development, that is the wider concept. That's why I think these calls simply for more and more military involvement are misguided," Jung said in comments highlighting transatlantic tensions over the mission.

Violence has increased sharply in southern Afghanistan over the past two years, the bloodiest period since the Taliban's radical Islamic government was toppled by U.S.-led coalition forces in late 2001 with some 7,000 killed across the country.

NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told a news conference he heard several potential offers from nations to reinforce NATO's 40,000-strong International Security Assistance Force, but declined to give

details. Van Middelkoop confirmed that Georgia had offered to send 200 troops. Other nations cited as offering personnel were Albania and Croatia. The Czech Republic and Slovakia announced earlier they would add a total of some 160 troops.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who before the meeting accused allies of leaving gaps in the NATO force by not fulfilling pledges of troops and equipment, voiced tempered optimism. "I wouldn't say I'm satisfied, but I would say that today was considerably more positive day than I anticipated."

Truth and unreasonableness in Quebec

IDNUMBER 200710250024
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
COLUMN: Calgary's Eye on National Politics
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 664

The floundering Bloc Quebecois couldn't wait to put their stamp against an "unreasonable accommodation" for visible minorities. They rushed forward a bill this week to block Muslim women from voting behind their burkas.

Never mind that the ruling Conservatives last week proclaimed their intent—to—legislate on this contrived controversy or that Muslim women already comply with face—revealing requirements to obtain a driver's licence or passport, the risk of a covered female face in a ballot booth was so horrifically galling, two federal parties raced to put their name on its prohibition. (Note to the million rural residents in Canada now ineligible to vote because they don't have a street address: Hang in there. Your government will help you after fixing this farcical threat.)

Given the various actions of separatist forces this month with a surprising assist from the provincial Liberals, the only face that needs to be uncovered is that of thinly veiled racism now raging in Quebec politics.

In the scramble for a purified and cleansed Quebec identity, various politicians are proposing or mulling over a shocking series of democratic limitations on anglophones or "foreign nationals," including newcomers from the other nine provinces.

The right to run for office, vote in any election, even pick a neighbourhood to live in would be limited by a person's French—speaking prowess, if assorted kick—around proposals of highly questionable constitutionality come to pass.

The Bloc has been kicking up a daily fuss in the House of Commons this week, demanding that provincial French language handcuffs be applied to all federal employees, lest the few workers now exempt from Bill 101

utter a few words of illegal English in the process of earning an Ottawa—issued paycheque.

That line of attack was so bizarre, even lightweight cabinet minister Josee Verner sounds uncharacteristically forceful in denigrating the Bloc for taking 17 years to finally raise objections to a 30—year—old language situation.

The hullabaloo continued with a Parti Quebecois bill filed in the

National Assembly by leader Pauline Marois proposing Quebec citizenship, which would require French language testing for future election candidates. That went too far even for former PQ leader Bernard Landry, no stranger to ethnic-bashing himself, but it was given the okey-dokey from Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe.

Even while that bill was being ridiculed by federalists in Quebec, the PQ language critic was musing on an open line radio show that anglophones in Montreal might lose the right to vote if Quebec became sovereign. To be fair, he did beat a slight backtrack in the angry aftermath.

Sadly, it's not just a separatist purge of linguistic impurity that should be giving civil rights advocates the shivers. Current Immigration Minister Yolande James, who lives in Montreal, was caught in a memo proposing

immigrants be forced to "live their Quebec values concretely" through forcible confinement to francophone communities. After a few years of French-only isolation in Jonquiere, she figures, the internment would "awaken them to the realities, the language and the ways of Quebec."

I wish I was making this up. Alas, no.

What's worse, all this is playing against the soundtrack of the "reasonable accommodation" hearings of the Cultural Differences Commission, where witnesses sound increasingly unreasonable in accommodating others.

The drift of all this is impossible to miss: non-francophones are not wanted, welcome and may, if Quebec ever achieves sovereign status, be

denied Canadian taken-for-granted freedoms of voting, working, speaking and living according to their desires.

And you thought Afghanistan had trouble with the democratic concept.

Imagine, if you can, Albertans engaging in such aggressive cultural protectionism — rolling out a special oilpatch citizenship and demanding all jobseekers live, speak and limit their religious practices according to established standards backed by a skill-testing question on Ian Tyson music.

There'd be coast-to-coast condemnation against knuckle-dragging rednecks unwilling to accept worldly cultures.

The studied silence from the federal government as Quebec turns increasingly and inwardly xenophobic has been unsettling. Clearly, they don't want to be seen badmouthing the Quebecois as they struggle to define their newly recognized "nation" as an unjust francophone society built on ethnic suspicion and cultural intolerance.

But the emotions, opinions and party positions now dominating political discourse in Quebec smack of a class-divided racism that should not be tolerated — in either official language.

dmartin@cns.canwest.com

General rallies troops

SOURCETAG 0710250952

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 22

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier listens to Canadian troops in Afghanistan yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 226

Saying it's been a boost to his own morale, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier wrapped up two days of visits with Canadian troops in the field in Afghanistan yesterday.

Dressed in combat fatigues and blast goggles, Hillier made his first trip to meet with soldiers of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — the Van Doos — since they were deployed in July.

"It is a morale boost all right, but it is a morale boost for me," said Hillier at the Forward Operating Base at Masum Ghar, about 60 km west of Kandahar City.

"First of all, it's fundamental for any commander to be able to put a face on the mission and what we ask these great young men and women to do."

Hillier had dinner with the troops when he arrived and held a question-and-answer session with them.

And some of the soldiers lined up to shake hands with him and snap pictures during his visit.

Hillier watched a demonstration of the Canadian Force's new mine-detection unit, the Husky, just a day after one of the units was blown in half by a powerful improvised explosive device — or IED — on a narrow road west of Masum Ghar.

The driver of the Husky, who was not injured in the blast, did the demonstration for Hillier.

"This is the kind of equipment they need to do the job to increase our chances of success on the mission, to reduce the risk to our soldiers and particularly in this kind of threat environment, where the Taliban really are working IEDs and anti-tank mines as a way of attacking our soldiers," he said.

Since 2002, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Choppers, trainers on Canuck wish list

SOURCETAG 0710250951
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 22
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands
WORD COUNT: 148

Canada has pointedly asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit yesterday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

Instead of the open-ended requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Only in Ottawa \$73,000 payoff for low-flying chopper among new fed follies

SOURCETAG 0710250944
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 15
BYLINE: GREG WESTON, NATIONAL AFFAIRS
WORD COUNT: 544

Your attention please! The veteran who left his dentures on the food tray in the government cafeteria is asked to pick up his federal compensation cheque for \$1,835 to replace his lost chompers.

Also, for the guy whose pet bison bolted at the sight of the federal food inspectors and hasn't been seen since, the government would like to make it up to you with a cheque for \$1,000.

Finally, this urgent message from Transport Canada for J. McInnis, whoever you are: Gee, fella, sorry about what those low-flying helicopters did to the foxes on your fur farm. Must have made the hair on their backs stand on end, eh? Anyway, here's hoping \$73,127 in compensation makes you feel all warm and fuzzy.

Outfoxed, Buffalo Jumped and Toothless in Seattle — welcome to the federal department of miscellaneous expenditures, dispensing public money by the truckload on all manner of oddball causes most taxpayers probably never imagined plausible.

Oh, sure, we've all heard the horror stories of government squander on useless endeavours like the sponsorship program, and Stephen Harper's media relations office.

But there is nothing like the annual publication of the federal public accounts to remind all taxpayers that what the government taketh with one hand, it taketh the rest with the other one.

Following are some of our favourite moments in federal cheque-writing for the past year, recorded for posterity in the latest public accounts:

– The office of the Governor General spent \$25,000 on "management consulting," apparently to no avail. Michaëlle Jean's junket to Africa set taxpayers back a whopping \$1.5 million, mainly to cover the mountain of chits generated by an entourage just slightly smaller than the average country she visited. Overall, the trip was almost \$300,000 more than the price of sending the prime minister and his army of baggage handlers and other admirers to Russia, London and Paris for the G8 summit.

– Since ordinary Canadians have their tax returns held up to the harsh light of the federal auditors, it may be some small consolation to know that three Canada Revenue Agency employees filed fraudulent expense accounts for more than \$6,000.

– The next time you are scared witless as you try to smuggle that extra bottle of cheap booze through Canadian customs, know that the Canada Border Services Agency was hit with \$265,000 in government credit card fraud.

- While our troops are fighting the war in Afghanistan, the defence department spent \$32 million last year on — furniture.
- Over at Public Works, this past year's books are acknowledging another \$987,000 pilfered in fake sponsorship contracts during the Adscam fiasco. The worst part is the government now expects to recover only \$28,000 of that money.
- The latest public accounts list literally thousands of thefts of government property, none more popular than pilfering laptop computers. It's not just the huge financial loss that shocks — it's the information that has also disappeared. For instance, 24 computers were stolen from the tax department, and two from the RCMP.
- Here's another notation that should raise a few eyebrows in high places: National Defence lost 24 items under the heading "theft of weapons and accessories."
- The accounts are full of ironies only a taxpayer would appreciate — the agency that stands on guard for thee at Canada's border crossings, for instance, spent \$7.7 million last year on its own "protective services."
- Some of the most fascinating stories yet to be told are listed in the pages of miscellaneous "ex gratia" payments — things like "compensation for dental expenses incurred following an administrative error." Think about that one.

Now that you know some of what happens to the huge chunk of your paycheque that disappears in tax, earn it and weep.

Letters to the Editor Column

SOURCETAG 0710250942
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 14
COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
WORD COUNT: 575

THANKS, CALGARY

I want to thank Calgarians for the opportunity to serve for the past six years. I did my best to make Calgary a better city and I would not have been able to share my passion and meet such great people without your support. This has been truly an experience of a lifetime. It's been an honour.

Craig Burrows

Former alderman, Ward 6

(Thanks for serving your city, Craig.)

CBC SAYS THEY WERE RIGHT

Licia Corbella misunderstood an aspect of our reporting of polling data to come out of Afghanistan ("Truth surprises CBC," October 24.) CBC didn't "express surprise" at the data as she claims. Based on separate polling data about Canadians' somewhat negative views of our troops' success in Afghanistan, we concluded, reasonably, some Canadians would be surprised to hear how positively our mission was being received. Judging by countrywide reaction to the data, as represented in news media across the country, we were correct.

John Cruickshank

Publisher, CBC News

(Licia's point was CBC's coverage fomented those "somewhat negative views.")

RETAILERS JUDGED UNFAIRLY

The Oct. 24 TAB editorial cartoon is dispicable. There are thousands of small retailers across the country surviving day-to-day against big box retailers who purchase their inventory from distributors with prices that are fixed at the beginning of each year, and whose wholesale prices are only updated annually. There are also many instances where inventory was purchased in bulk at the beginning of the year when exchange rates were not a favourable. These small retailers would and are happy to reduce their prices where they can, but cannot be expected to sell for less than their cost just because the exchange rate at the bank has changed. All such retailers deserve an apology for being compared with highway robbers. You should be ashamed for not thinking before shooting from the hip

Gordon W. Earl

(Sounds like some retailers are also being short–changed.)

ANSWERS NEEDED

Re: Ezra Levant's Oct. 22 column "Crash detail overlooked." I believe the questions he asked need to be answered and reported.

Diana Devlin–Burrows

(Read on for another view.)

EZRA MISSES MARK

Normally I enjoy Ezra Levant's columns. However, as a bus driver I take exception to his latest. ("Crash detail overlooked," Oct. 22.) This accident involves a school bus striking from the rear, a dump truck parked on the side of the road, an object visible from a good distance away. Clearly peripheral vision was not a factor and therefore neither was wearing a hijab. Other causes may have been driver fatigue, inattention or distraction and the accident investigation will determine which. Whether we as non–Muslims agree or disagree with wearing a hijab in any profession, to suggest this fact was overlooked in this tragic accident out of political correctness is inflammatory and irresponsible. Don't look for demons where none exist.

Eric Reid

(Good advice.)

PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE

Re: "Assistant docs mulled for Alberta," Oct. 17.) Yes, indeed, if we can have practical nurses, so should we be able to have practical doctors or doctor assistants as they may be called. Might it be possible for our provincial institutes of technology to establish a two–year "medical technologist" ready and willing to assist our diminishing number of MDs in taking care of the multitudes of needy sick. However, I strongly believe it is more important for our federal and provincial governments to give greater financial support for our public health–care system, leading to an increase in Alberta's MD population instead of depending on assistants.

H.M.J. Nijssen

(The situation's become critical.)

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THE AFGHAN MISSION: ON THE GROUND Kandahar army chief pleads for fresh firepower

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072980237
DATE: 2007.10.25
PAGE: A16 (ILLUS)
BYLINE: OMAR EL AKKAD
SECTION: International News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 507
WORD COUNT: 493

OMAR EL AKKAD KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Saddled with nearly 30-year-old guns and rockets, many of them remnants from the war with the Soviets and prone to malfunctioning, the Afghan National Army cannot beat the Taliban without an infusion of modern weapons from Canada and its NATO allies, the Afghan army's top commander in Kandahar said yesterday.

Brigadier-General Gul Aqa Naebi, who commands about 12,000 Afghan troops in Kandahar and five other provinces where virtually all the fighting with the Taliban is under way, pleaded for NATO countries to provide his forces with modern fighting equipment such as Canadian rifles and light armoured vehicles.

Gen. Naebi said his troops and the Taliban are effectively fighting one another using the same cache of weapons: AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenades and other spoils of the mujahedeen victory over the Russians in the 1990s, as well as weapons from Iran, Pakistan and other countries that flooded Afghanistan at the time.

"These weapons were first controlled by the mujahedeen, then the Taliban, then the [current] Afghan government," Gen. Naebi said.

"Our enemy has the same weapons as us." But the prospect of Gen. Naebi getting his wish seems slim. Much of the equipment he asks for costs millions of dollars. So far, he said, no NATO countries have given his troops weapons in Kandahar province. He said he was recently promised new Western rifles for his men, and an assistant to the Afghan Defence Minister told him new rifles were in the government's possession, but so far none have come.

As Canadian forces put more focus on mentoring their Afghan counterparts for an eventual handover of security responsibility in the war-torn southern provinces, the Afghan army's role there is expected to expand. Currently, Gen. Naebi said, the army's top priority is securing the major roads between Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

Helmand, the single largest opium-producing region in the world, has been a major source of trouble for the Afghan government. Of 13 districts in the province, the Afghan government controls seven, and the Taliban six, Gen. Naebi said.

On a recent trip to a Kandahar-area firing range, Afghan army soldiers showcased some of the weapons they hope to use to pacify parts of Helmand and other Taliban-controlled areas. The old age and questionable quality of their equipment was clear. One of the Russian rocket-propelled grenades hit its target but didn't

explode; another didn't fire properly, landing only some 20 metres away.

Fortunately for the soldiers, it also didn't explode. With a truck-mounted machine gun, Afghan soldiers use a mix of U.S. and Russian ammunition, causing the weapon to seize up every few rounds. A soldier must then use a metal rod to knock the offending bullet out of the gun.

"The Defence Ministry did a survey of the soldiers in four [southern] provinces this week, asking the soldiers what they wanted," Gen.

Naebi said.

"They didn't want more money, they didn't want more training.

They wanted better weapons."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; weapons

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban; Army

THE AFGHAN MISSION Allies bolster Dutch troops in Afghan south Nine NATO members pledge new soldiers, fearful the Netherlands will soon share Germany's skittishness about riskier assignments

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072980236

DATE: 2007.10.25

PAGE: A16 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS

WORDS: 745

WORD COUNT: 706

ALAN FREEMAN NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS Nine nations have offered up additional troops to back up NATO's military mission in Afghanistan, as defence ministers from the military alliance met yesterday in an effort to keep the Netherlands from bailing out of its role in the volatile south.

Although the total number of new troops on offer to the 41,000-member mission is expected to be small, it may be sufficient to halt the potential pullout of the Dutch and their 1,700 troops in Uruzgan province.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, disclosed the offer of additional troops at a news conference after the opening session of the two-day meeting.

While he wouldn't be specific about numbers, a NATO source said later that nine countries had made offers and, most importantly, four of these included troops for the south.

If the Netherlands decides to abandon Uruzgan, where it is the lead contributing country, there is fear it could encourage Canada to follow in a rush to the exit. The Canadian mission is due to end in February, 2009, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper has promised a parliamentary vote on an extension to the mission, which he supports.

Although NATO made public no details of which countries were offering additional troops, France announced it would send 50 military trainers to serve with the Dutch in Uruzgan. Slovakia and the Czech Republic have promised 160 additional soldiers in the same region and there's talk that the former Soviet republic of Georgia is ready to add 200 of its troops. Georgia would join 10 other non-NATO countries already participating in the coalition.

Despite the offers, there is substantial resistance from big players such as Germany and Italy to moving their large forces from the more peaceful reaches of northern and western Afghanistan.

Germany, whose troops are based in the north, made it clear that it had no intention of shifting south.

In Germany, as in other NATO countries, the Afghan deployment is unpopular and German politicians fear the public's reaction if there are increased casualties.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Allies bolster Dutch troops in Afghan south Nine NATO members pledge new soldiers

"We need security and reconstruction and development," said German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung. "That is the wider concept. That's why I think these calls simply for more and more military involvement are misguided." "We have 3,500 soldiers in Afghanistan and I think our contribution is significant," he told reporters earlier yesterday. Germany has promised to triple the number of trainers it has in Afghanistan – now at 60 – but has indicated that they will work in the north.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said that the numbers will be crunched at a regular force-generation meeting to be held by NATO's military leaders next month.

The reluctance of some of the allies to put their troops at risk has caused tensions within the alliance.

"There is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security," Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop told fellow ministers in a pointed comment.

"Fair risk and burden-sharing remain the leading principles of this alliance," he continued. The Dutch cabinet, which has been mulling the issue all summer in the face of strong public opposition to the mission, is expected to make its decision public next month.

Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay said he saw positive progress at the meeting on the question of providing more troops, even though this was not formally on the agenda. "We're very much in league in making the presentation that stresses the importance of burden-sharing, the importance of each country determining what they are prepared to do and stressing that this is an all-for-one, one-for-all mission," Mr. MacKay told reporters. "NATO members must function together in Afghanistan." Mr. MacKay took the opportunity to have bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Britain, the United States, France, Germany and Afghanistan.

Earlier, Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said he would propose to NATO defence ministers that they consider the idea of rotating troops in and out of dangerous regions of Afghanistan to better share the burden.

"If you look at the necessity for political, military and financial solidarity in Afghanistan, I do think that at a certain stage I would like to see more rotation in Afghanistan," Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said.

"I'll not table a rotation plan, I'll mention it and I hope that me mentioning it and possibly ministers discussing this will have some impact."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Netherlands

SUBJECT TERM: foreign policy; defence; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

THE AFGHAN MISSION: OFFICIAL EMPHASIZES NEED FOR EXPANDED TRAINING

Afghan rebuilding a task for a 'generation' It will take at least that long to bring peace and stability to the war-torn country, NATO Secretary-General asserts

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IDN: 072980235

DATE: 2007.10.25

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS

WORDS: 884

WORD COUNT: 811

ALAN FREEMAN NOORDWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS Nation building in Afghanistan will take "a generation, if not generations," NATO's top official said yesterday, underlining the challenge of bringing peace and stability to the war-torn country.

In an interview with The Globe and Mail, Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer made it clear that he believes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's job in Afghanistan is a long-term one that involves training Afghan security forces, reconstruction and building national institutions.

"Development and nation-building is a matter of at least a generation, if not generations," he said in an interview at the start of a two-day meeting of defence ministers from the alliance of 26 countries.

"My analysis is that NATO will have to be present in Afghanistan in the military sense for the foreseeable future," the former Dutch foreign minister continued, refusing to put any dates on the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said he hopes Canada will stay in Afghanistan past the current deadline of February, 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper now says he'd like Canadian soldiers to remain for two more years but the NATO leader said it's up to Canadians to decide how long their troops should stay in the country.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer called the current stage of the NATO mission "the most difficult phase" as the transition is made to increased training at the same time as there is a continuing need for combat troops.

"We came in after the Taliban had been chased out of the nation for which every Afghan will be grateful still. . . . That was the first phase.

"Now we are in the phase where we have to do two things: reconstruction and development. Also fighting, also combat, particularly in the south.

"That should develop into what I call a third phase. That why I make such an important point of training. Training, training, training." He emphasized the importance of expanding the kind of training that Canadian forces are engaged in with the Afghan National Army – and to a lesser extent, the national police – to assure that Afghanistan can increasingly take charge of its own affairs.

"I hope that more and more, the NATO forces can take the background and more and more we see the Afghan National Army can take the front.

The better we train them, the better we equip them, the better they can do, the better they can take their responsibility as any normal national armed force and any normal police force will do." In last week's Throne Speech, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he believes that Canadian troops still have work to do training Afghan forces in Kandahar and the task will not be completed in 2009.

"Our preference is to continue that track and we believe it should be completed by 2011," he said in his reply to the speech on Oct.

17.

It's expected that the special panel named by Mr. Harper and led by former Liberal foreign minister John Manley will discuss this and other options for the Canadian presence in Afghanistan in its deliberations on the future of the mission. The panel is due to make its recommendations by Jan. 31.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said he hopes that Mr. Manley and his fellow panelists will visit him at NATO headquarters in Brussels or elsewhere if necessary. He said he follows the Canadian political debate closely, but in the end, the outcome is not NATO's to decide.

"It's a sovereign Canadian decision which will be taken at a certain point in Canada on the government proposals, supported I hope by the Parliament," he said.

Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said he sees NATO's and therefore Canada's role as a three-pronged one, involving protection of the Afghan people from the brutality of the Taliban, building the Afghan nation and fighting terrorism.

"And when you realize that we do this with the full mandate of the United Nations, I think that you do it with full legitimacy," he said.

The NATO leader said that despite difficulties, there has been tremendous progress in Afghanistan since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001.

"Six million Afghans are going to school, one-third of them girls.

Eighty per cent of Afghans have access to health care. Thousands of kilometres of roads have been built," he said. "There is a government." His conclusion is that it is worth sending Canadian young men and women to support the coalition in Afghanistan although he recognizes the heavy toll it has taken.

"Every single fatality is one too many. And it is a drama. It is always a drama." Mr. de Hoop Scheffer also strongly denied suggestions that the NATO force in Afghanistan is understaffed and under-equipped.

"If you compare the number of troops we have now – 40,000 – and the number we had half a year ago, we have seen an important increase in the forces." The NATO force now has 90 per cent of what it needs in terms of troops and equipment, he said.

"I will continue with my pleas and my calls to fill everything we need. . . . I will not be satisfied as Secretary-General when the allies will not fill what is required, which is 100 per cent."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Netherlands; Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; conferences; foreign policy; strife; reconstruction; development; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

ORGANIZATION NAME: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

France in Afghanistan

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PAGE: A20
BYLINE: DANIEL JOUANNEAU
SECTION: Letter to the Edit
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE:
WORDS: 117
WORD COUNT: 129

Daniel Jouanneau Ambassador of France to Canada Paul Koring's article, Beleaguered NATO Set To Charter Helicopters (Oct. 24), stating that France "has turned a deaf ear to repeated pleas to send its aircraft to southern Afghanistan" disregards France's commitment in that country.

On Sept. 30, following President Nicolas Sarkozy's instructions, the first batch of six Mirage military jets arrived in Kandahar to provide air support to the troops on the ground.

Following the NATO Riga Summit, critical capabilities have been supplied (particularly the dispatch of two Cougar transport helicopters to Kabul). France has been involved in Afghanistan since Day 1.

More than 1,100 troops are in charge of Kabul's security; 13 French soldiers have been killed in the country.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: France; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: foreign policy; strife; aircraft; war deaths

Climate versus terrorism

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IDN: 072980181
DATE: 2007.10.25
PAGE: A20
BYLINE: ALEX EDDINGTON
SECTION: Letter to the Edit
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Toronto ONT
WORDS: 109
WORD COUNT: 120

Alex Eddington Toronto Regarding Jeffrey Simpson's assertion that Pakistan is "the world's most dangerous country," I would suggest that this depends on the danger (Why Germany Won't Be Replacing Canada In Afghanistan – Oct.

23). If one feels, as I do, that the greatest danger the world faces is human–caused climate change, then perhaps the most dangerous countries are culturally closer to home: those who have not ratified the Kyoto agreement, those who shirk away from honouring it properly, and those (including our own) whose carbon emissions are among the highest in the world.

Compare the number of people killed by climate change to the number killed by terrorism.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

SUBJECT TERM:environment; global warming; terrorism

THEATRE: VERN THIESSEN Playwright finds more than blood in story of Vimy battle

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IDN: 072980030
DATE: 2007.10.25
PAGE: R1
BYLINE: MARSHA LEDERMAN
SECTION: The Globe Review
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Vancouver BC
WORDS: 1181
WORD COUNT: 1161

MARSHA LEDERMAN VANCOUVER When playwright Vern Thiessen was growing up in Winnipeg, he often passed by a big park. It was a great place to explore, and sometimes there were family picnics there. It was (and still is) called Vimy Ridge Memorial Park. But the significance of its name didn't resonate with him when he was a boy.

"I went by there all the time and I had no idea what [the name] referred to at all." Now, he knows.

Thiessen, 43, has written a play about Vimy Ridge – not simply the military battle itself, but the personal battles that haunted Canadian soldiers who survived the terrifying and nation-defining mission. Vimy has its world premiere at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton tonight and is being staged to mark the 90th anniversary of the battle.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge lasted for four bloody days in April, 1917, during the First World War. Four Canadian divisions stormed the strategically important ridge, ultimately capturing it from the Germans. But the victory came at a terrible price: 3,598 Canadians were killed and 7,000 others wounded in the battle.

Vimy is the story of four soldiers recuperating in a field hospital after the battle. A Canadian nurse looks after them, helping them heal physically and emotionally.

Throughout the play, there are revelations about these men – not just about their roles in the battle, but about who they are – and were – as people.

"I really tried to get into the head of the average, everyday people who were there," Thiessen says.

A 2003 day trip from Paris to the Canadian National Vimy Memorial had a profound effect on the playwright.

He found the enormous white stone monument "stunning" and wanted to learn more about the battle and about Canada's role in the war.

Personal interest turned into research for a play. He read books and journals, and listened to archival interviews with soldiers who had been there. But, as in the historical plays he had previously written (Einstein's Gift, The Courier), at some point Thiessen had to abandon the research and concentrate on writing his story.

"You need to get the whole world in your skin, and then you need to leave it behind." Vimy's soldiers are amalgams of the 20 to 40 men Thiessen read about extensively. They represent different parts of Canada, and different cultural groups who were involved in the war. The characters are from Nova Scotia, Alberta, Winnipeg, rural Ontario and Montreal.

They are anglophones, francophones and native Canadians. They are young.

Thiessen is one of Canada's hottest playwrights at the moment.

He divides his time between Edmonton and New York these days, writing for stages in both cities. He has won numerous awards, including the Governor-General's Award for drama in 2003 for *Einstein's Gift*. His 2005 critically acclaimed play *Shakespeare's Will* was mounted at the Stratford Festival this year, was staged in Los Angeles (produced by Leonard Nimoy) and has been optioned for Broadway and London's West End.

He is currently working on a piece set in the U.S. Supreme Court during the 2000 presidential election (George W. Bush versus Al Gore). The play, *A More Perfect Union*, was commissioned by New York's Epic Theater Center. Thiessen remains writer-in-residence at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, where *Vimy* is being staged.

Despite his proclivity to write about history, it wasn't exactly Thiessen's strong point at school. In Grade 10, he signed up for Canadian history, but promptly dropped the course after his teacher handed out a textbook called *Challenge and Survival*, warning that the atmosphere in class would be modelled on that title.

Thiessen thinks that Canadians are now more aware of their country's past than he was growing up, and with *Vimy*, he is not setting out to teach any history lessons or preach any ideology. For him, the play is very much about the personal, not the political. He is interested in history, yes, but much more interested in how history plays out among the human beings who create it. And so *Vimy* is not a giant history lesson but a study of the very young men whose lives were irreversibly changed on that horrific battlefield.

"I was just imagining what these guys in the hospital room would be thinking about after that battle," Thiessen says. "My guess was that they weren't thinking 'Boy, we really smoked out those Huns.' You know, they're going to be thinking about their home and their relationships and their parents or their kids or their loves in the same way I'm sure if there's a [Canadian] soldier in Afghanistan who's in hospital after a battle in Afghanistan, he's not really thinking about the battle; he's thinking about getting a Tim Hortons coffee." Not that Thiessen is making a statement about Canada's role in Afghanistan. "I want to be really clear that the play isn't about Afghanistan, nor am I trying to make any comment on it," he says.

Still, he is not so naive as to think what's happening in Afghanistan does not colour his First World War story in some way. "Obviously current events are going to play on people's perception of the play and so, if people reflect on Afghanistan when they walk out of the play, I'm very happy about that." In fact, Thiessen stipulated in his contract with the Citadel Theatre that a minimum of four young veterans be invited to the play for opening night. "I hope that they take something from the play that is meaningful," he says.

Thiessen went back to the Vimy Memorial this summer, to confirm what he saw on that first trip, and to take a good, hard look at the landscape. "I knew I was getting things right emotionally," he says. "I wanted to make sure that I was getting things right factually as well." Memorials are important things for Thiessen. The 2003 trip to Vimy led directly to the writing of this play, of course, but those childhood picnics, he now realizes, had an impact as well. "I'm sure that at an early age, just having that park [in Winnipeg] put the idea of that event in my mind. So there's something to be said about memorials and memorial parks because even if 30, 40 years later, they finally hit you [and you think], 'Oh yeah, right, there was a park that I spent time in when I was a kid,' they're valuable things. And that's one way that we remember." Fictionalized accounts of historical events are another powerful way people remember. And so now with *Vimy*, Thiessen contributes to the

legacy. He may have missed the history lesson as a child and again as a high-school student, but, as an adult, he is carrying on the work of acquainting Canadians with their past.

Vimy runs at The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton through Nov. 11 (780-425-1820)

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Edmonton; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: theatre; world war i; history; vimy; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Vern Thiessen

Money doesn't buy happiness for military

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COLUMN: James Travers
DATELINE: Ottawa
BYLINE: James Travers
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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 539

How much happiness does big money buy the military? A lot less than it hoped.

Even after Liberal and Conservative cash injections, the forces are struggling to rebuild and renew while fighting a very different and difficult 21st-century war. Equally worrying for the department, the consensus that led successive governments to boost spending to modern highs is cracking as other political priorities emerge.

Senior government officials and academics confirm entrenched problems aren't evaporating with a budget that will top \$18 billion next year, some 27 per cent higher than before 9/11, according to a report released this week. Conflicting visions and trouble balancing recruiting, procurement, logistics and combat readiness still plague a military that needed an international timeout even before the Afghanistan mission.

This is complex stuff made refreshingly simple by Douglas Bland, author of *Canada Without Armed Forces?* and chair of Queen's University's defence management studies program. "The shiniest new destroyer tied up to a dock is not a capability."

His point is that making the military an effective foreign policy tool demands more than buying modern "kit." It also means, among other things, attracting and training more people willing and able to serve at a time when higher numbers are leaving and finding the common ground between the Conservative Canada First platform plank and a future holding more missions to failed and failing states.

Squaring that circle was a prime source of public tension between chief of defence staff General Rick Hillier and Gordon O'Connor, the Tory defence policy architect and the minister shuffled this summer after becoming a political liability. But instead of disappearing with O'Connor, the stress continues as the trickle-down implications of government purchases grow more obvious.

Two multibillion-dollar decisions stand out, both politically driven. Neither the giant C-17 heavy lift transport aircraft nor the so-called Arctic slush breakers were top of the shopping list for Hillier's modern expeditionary military. While each has operational uses, the common value that makes them more attractive to politicians than generals is that they wave the flag.

If the cost-to-benefit ratio seems high to taxpayers, it's stratospheric to an armed forces that knows these good times won't roll much longer. Bland and insiders agree that the political and military communities are now exhausting most of the mutual benefits of rebuilding the armed forces. Or, as Bland puts it, politicians have fulfilled their defence promises and are anxious to move on.

A new order is evolving, one that will limit spending increases as well as the unusually large political space Hillier now fills. That's subtly evident in defence headquarters staff changes that increase bureaucratic control and will eventually decrease the visibility of an institution that, in the jealous eyes of some here, has grown too big for its boots.

Those signals are being sniffed carefully in a capital sensitive to the smallest wind shifts. But what's far more important to Canada and to its ability to forcefully express its foreign policy is finding equilibrium between the attention-grabbing purchases politicians want and the operational spending flexibility the military needs.

Instead of happiness, money only buys the military more chances to make tough choices.

James Travers writes on national affairs.

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Where are we going on Afghanistan?

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / A wounded Canadian soldier crawls for cover seconds after a Taliban ambush in Zhari district of Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday. ;

BYLINE: J.L. Granatstein

SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator

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WORD COUNT: 924

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

The Harper Conservative government then made the war its own when it came to power in January 2006 and soon extended Canada's commitment in Kandahar by a further two years to February 2009.

Moreover, it did so with the support of a vote in Parliament, a move almost unprecedented in a country that since 1945 has almost always sent its troops overseas without the benefit of approval from the House of Commons.

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

Polls done by the big survey companies continue to show Quebec opinion least supportive of the mission and even more so after recent casualties in the Royal 22e Regiment battle group now carrying the load in Kandahar.

Opinion across the rest of the country seems to be holding relatively steady, the polls say.

But a self-selected and very large Internet poll in The Globe and Mail on Labour Day was striking: 85 per cent (or 22,673 individuals who registered their view) said that Canada should not extend its Afghan mission past February 2009.

Only 6 per cent believed that the Canadian troops should remain until the Taliban were defeated, while 9 per cent believed that a decision should be put off until nearer the February 2009 date. That last option is all but impossible given Canada's responsibility to notify NATO of its plans so that some other nation's troops (if they can be found) can take over in Kandahar.

Now, it may be that the vast majority of those calling for Canada to get out of Kandahar in 2009 have been affected by signs that the Harper government itself is looking for a way out of the commitment or, at the most, a change to a different role in a safer part of the country. There needs to be a consensus among the political

parties on the Canadian role, the prime minister said, sounding only slightly different than Mackenzie King's dictum of the 1930s, "Parliament will decide."

But consensus looks difficult to achieve. NDP Leader Jack Layton wants to pull out now, never mind in 2009 and never mind concerns over abandoning the Afghans. (His successful candidate in the Sept. 17 Outremont byelection even slanderously called the United Nations-authorized mission "Harper's war of aggression," arguably the vilest comment of the political season.)

The Bloc Québécois, hitherto a supporter of the Canadian role, wants it to end in 2009. The Liberals, who, it needs to be repeated again and again, first put us into Kandahar, say they, too, want the mission to end in 2009 but, leader Stéphane Dion suggests, he might not vote non-confidence in the government on this issue.

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

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

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

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

The prime minister and his key francophone colleagues have not gone into Quebec to try to bolster support for the mission in a traditionally anti-military society. It's no wonder the polls there are so defeatist. Only in September did the first regular bureaucrats' briefings of the media begin in Ottawa. Only this month did the new foreign affairs minister speak in Montreal on the war. If the prime minister wants to preserve his and his government's credibility and a shred or two of Canada's honour, if he wants to keep alive the idea that Canada isn't getting ready to cut and run, he needs to mount a major political and media campaign on the reasons for Canada's presence and role in Afghanistan. Now. Today. Right away.

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

Several NATO countries agree to increase Afghanistan troops

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WORD COUNT: 163

Continued hammering by Canada and the Netherlands appears to have nudged some NATO allies into doing more in Afghanistan.

Officials with the 26-nation alliance said yesterday there's a tentative commitment by member nations to boost troop strength, particularly to help train the fledgling Afghan National Army. As many as nine alliance countries have agreed to increase their troop commitments, with four saying they'll help battle the insurgent Taliban in the volatile southern region.

Canada is also pressuring NATO members to provide support elements such as helicopters — which Canada lacks — and military trainers.

The Netherlands' Eimert van Middelkoop delivered a barely veiled shot at some of his fellow defence ministers, saying: "There is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security ... It is not about what we are willing to say for a safer and more just world, it ultimately depends on what we are willing to do ..."

Germany, Spain and Italy have refused to let their forces fight in the Taliban heartland.

Ex-PM attends native gala; Says talks are only way to solve Caledonia issue

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ted Brellisford, the Hamilton Spectator / Formerprime minister Paul Martin with Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine at fundraiser. ;
BYLINE: Daniel Nolan
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 607

Former prime minister Paul Martin says negotiations are the only way to resolve the Caledonia standoff, but he questions the Conservative government's treatment of natives by its move to kill the \$5.1-billion Kelowna Accord.

"I'm not quite sure I understand how the Conservative government approaches issues the way it does," Martin told The Spectator in an interview last night before speaking at a native fundraising gala.

"Why for instance cancel the Kelowna agreement ... They were going to give young native Canadians the same kind of education, the same kind of health care that other Canadians get ... All the provinces agreed, the territories agreed, the aboriginal leadership and I don't understand why the Conservatives turned their back on health care and education for aboriginals."

Martin, who has tried to resurrect the accord via a private member's bill, was the guest speaker at a gala for the Dreamcatcher Fund, a three-year-old program set up by Ohsweken-based Grand River Enterprises to assist native athletes and sports teams in Ontario. The accord offered a plan to tackle native health, education and housing standards.

About 1,000 people attended the event at Michelangelo's Banquet Centre, including Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine and actor Lorne Cardinal, a star of the CTV sitcom Corner Gas. GRE head Jerry Montour, who called the gala "the greatest day" of his life, said the fund has helped more than 2,000 individuals and teams.

While critical of the government's killing of the accord, which was brokered a short time before the 2006 election, Martin couldn't fault its approach to resolving the 19-month occupation of a Caledonia housing site. Natives claim it's on Six Nations land, but Ottawa says it was surrendered in the 1840s.

Negotiations are ongoing between Ottawa, Six Nations and Queen's Park. Ottawa has offered \$125 million and recently appointed David Crombie as a liaison between Ottawa and residents.

"I think the appointment of David Crombie is a good appointment," said Martin, who has been championing native issues since stepping down. "I think he's a very fair person and I think what has to happen is that this has to be resolved at the table. We all want to see a solution and it's going to come at the table."

Martin remains a Quebec MP, but says he will not run in the next election. He wants to focus on his aboriginal projects and another trying to protect a Congo basin rainforest.

He believes the Liberal party is in good hands with St phane Dion as its leader, despite the troubles the party and Dion have been facing. Asked if Dion consults him, Martin said he's "occasionally" asked to do something, but said, "A leader runs his own show and Mr. Dion is doing that."

He wasn't interested in commenting on "old feuds" resurrected in former prime minister Jean Chr tien's book, in which he attacked his one-time rival for being disloyal and indecisive, especially on where in Afghanistan Canadian troops should be dispatched. He noted, however, others have spoken up and "all made it very clear that the position that I took was the right one."

He wouldn't say if he's writing his own book, but admitted "at some point I will have to put pen to paper" and that it would be a book that would include his beliefs on where the country should go.

Martin believes he has buried the hatchet with Sheila Copps, who lost a brutal, and some said uncalled for, nomination battle in 2004 with Martin loyalist Tony Valeri. He saw Copps six months ago and they had a "very nice conversation. I think we all understand that you've got to look forward and that's what we're doing."

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Canada presses allies to join southern fight Goaded earns help for training Afghan army

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SECTION: World Wire

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CP Wire Murray Brewster NOORDWIJK, The Netherlands — Canada has asked individual NATO allies to join the fight in southern Afghanistan by providing support elements such as helicopters and military trainers, Canadian defence sources said.

The Germans and French have been the focus of intense lobbying at an informal NATO defence ministers conference in the Netherlands this week.

The pressure appeared to bear fruit Wednesday when NATO officials said there's an overall commitment by alliance members to increase troop strength, particularly in the area of training for the fledgling Afghan National Army.

NATO officials said as many as nine alliance countries have volunteered to increase their troop commitments to Afghanistan at their meeting, with four of them saying they'll help in the volatile southern region.

Instead of the open-ended and ultimately unanswered requests for support that has been issued by Ottawa for nearly a year, Canada now appears to be taking a page out of the Netherlands' diplomatic playbook and pressuring allies directly in bilateral meetings.

Rather than looking for a country to replace Canada on the front lines in Afghanistan, Canadian officials have focused on filling the gaps in the capability to move around the battlefield and to quickly train the Afghan army, the sources said.

It is part of the federal government's evolving strategy on Afghanistan that recently included the appointment of a panel to review Canada's role in the war after its current mandate expires in February 2009.

At the NATO meeting in this picturesque seaside community near Amsterdam, Defence Minister Peter MacKay met separately Wednesday with his French counterpart. The matter of training teams was front and centre in their discussion.

"We've been encouraging others to participate and come forward," MacKay said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

MacKay will hold a bilateral meeting with German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung on Thursday, and is scheduled to leave the NATO meeting late in the day for further talks in Germany.

Government insiders said the push involves potential helicopter support — Canadian troops don't have helicopters of their own in Afghanistan. This could become an even more acute problem as allies with CH-47 Chinooks consider withdrawing them from the country for rest or overhaul.

Eimert van Middelkoop, the Dutch defence minister, delivered a barely veiled shot at the opening of the NATO meeting earlier Wednesday.

"One thing is certain, there is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security," van Middelkoop said in a jab at Germany, Spain and Italy, which have refused to let their forces fight in the heartland of the Taliban insurgency.

"It is not about what we are willing to say for a safer and more just world, it ultimately depends on what we are willing to do.

Fair risk– and burden–sharing will remain leading principles of the alliance." — The Canadian Press

Her soldier brings ring, proposal back home

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.25

PAGE: A9

SECTION: City

WORD COUNT: 240

Kevin Rollason Kevin Rollason Jennifer Yascheshyn knew her boyfriend, Cpl. Brian Alex, was returning home after a four-month tour of duty in Afghanistan, but she didn't know he was carrying a ring.

Yascheshyn ran up to hug Alex as he came down the escalator at Richardson International Airport on Wednesday afternoon when suddenly the member of 17 Wing dropped to his knee and pulled a ring out from his camouflage uniform.

Yascheshyn's face quickly turned crimson, but a second later, after saying "yes," the pair exchanged a kiss while a crowd of family and friends stood by and clapped.

"Everyone knew except for me -- they all played it up so well," a still-stunned Yascheshyn said later.

"I went to run and give him a hug and then he said, 'I have to tell you something.' All I knew was he was coming back on this flight.

"We've talked about it (marriage) before, but I didn't expect it today. I'm so happy!" A smiling Alex said he planned his proposal mission for several weeks, letting family and friends in on the secret and buying a diamond ring overseas.

"I wanted her to be my wife," Alex said, adding future wedding arrangements will be a joint mission now.

"This is the second time I've been back home, but I wanted to do it when I was home for good and wasn't going back for awhile." Yascheshyn said she's already looking toward going somewhere warm for their honeymoon.

The bride-to-be's happy father, Allan, said while the family was hoping the question would be popped, they couldn't divulge any secrets until it actually happened.

"I wish them well in future," he said, his eyes welling with tears.

kevin.rollason@freepress.mb.ca

World Report

IDNUMBER 200710250069

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2007.10.25

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: B2

COLUMN: World Report

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Stuart Price, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / STRIVING FOR A SHAKY PEACE: Nigerian troops join the African Union Mission in Sudan with a pep talk from their general in Graidia, southern Darfur, on Wednesday. The African peacekeeping mission is currently rotating troops who have come to the end of their duty with new men who will serve during the transitional to a UN–led force. One of the Sudan factions, the Islamist Justice and Equality Movement, meanwhile announced it would boycott Darfur peace talks due to open in Libya on the weekend, bringing to seven the number of rebel groups intending to stay away from the new talks with the Sudanese government. ; Colour Photo: Bon appetit ;

SOURCE: Compiled from Star News Services

WORD COUNT: 1123

NORTH AMERICA

BUSH SURPRISES NOBODY WITH TOUGH TALK ON CUBA

WASHINGTON – President George W. Bush on Wednesday urged the world to embrace hardline U.S. policies on Cuba, saying Fidel Castro's fading grip on power offered a chance to replace a "tropical gulag" with a democracy.

"Viva Cuba libre" — long live a free Cuba — Bush said in a speech at the U.S. State Department, his first address since 2003 focused solely on the Americas' last single–party Communist state.

Bush called on the international community to invest economic and political capital in Cuba's pro–democracy movements and scolded countries that do business with Havana as enriching a brutal elite an iron grip on power.

Bush said U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Cuba–born U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez would seek contributions for a billion–dollar "freedom fund" tied to future democratic reforms in Havana.

STORM BLAMED FOR BLAST ON MEXICAN OIL RIG

MEXICO CITY – At least 10 people died in a gas explosion from a leak on an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico, state oil firm Pemex said Wednesday.

State–owned oil monopoly Pemex said in a statement that 58 people had been safely rescued in a lifeboat. It blamed a storm that had knocked two parts of the rig together.

EUROPE

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, STRIKES: NOW AIR FRANCE TROUBLED

PARIS – A strike by Air France cabin staff is set to disrupt the airline's flights in Europe today through Monday, it warned, after pay negotiations broke down.

Air France said domestic and European flights would be worst hit but guaranteed that "about 90 per cent" of them as well as 100 per cent of long-haul flights would go ahead as planned. Air France, one of the world's biggest airlines, flies to Detroit daily.

France's rail system was disrupted for most of the past week due to a strike by train drivers to protest President Nicolas Sarkozy's plans to reform pensions. Civil servants and teachers are also threatening action.

INTERNATIONAL CHILD RING SMASHED, DUTCH SAY

THE HAGUE, Netherlands – Dutch authorities have smashed an international Nigerian child trafficking ring, making 20 arrests in seven countries, the national prosecutor's office said Wednesday.

International gangs smuggled Nigerian children, mostly girls, to the Netherlands from where they were sent to other countries to work as prostitutes, the prosecutor's office said.

Dutch police arrested 13 people in several cities while five additional suspects were arrested in New York, Madrid, Antwerp in Belgium and Britain. Last week a sixth suspect was arrested in Dublin.

During searches in the Netherlands police also found 10 illegal migrants who were handed over to immigration services.

QUEEN MAKES KOFI ANNAN AN HONORARY KNIGHT

LONDON, Eng. – Former UN secretary general Kofi Annan on Wednesday received an honorary knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II in London.

The Ghanaian diplomat was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. He also is a Nobel prizewinner.

EIFFEL'S SKY-HIGH BISTROS POLISHED BY STAR CHEF

PARIS – The Eiffel Tower's haute cuisine restaurant, the Jules Verne, is to reopen in December after several months of renovation works, its new owner, the top French chef Alain Ducasse, said Wednesday.

Ducasse has taken over the two restaurants at the Eiffel Tower, Jules Verne and the mid-range Altitude 95.

Famous for being the only chef to have three restaurants with three stars in the Michelin Red Guide — in Paris, Monaco and New York — Ducasse hopes to draw back French diners, not just tourists, to the Eiffel Tower restaurant.

The Alain Ducasse group operates restaurants, inns, cooking schools and consultancies around the world.

GHOSTS OF KRISTALLNACHT PERTURB CZECH PRESIDENT

PRAGUE, Czech Republic – Czech President Vaclav Klaus called Wednesday for Prague authorities to ban a march planned by right-wing extremists on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the anti-Jewish pogrom by German Nazis in 1938.

"The president calls for all competent authorities not to allow such a politically and morally unacceptable action which would profane the memory of the victims of Nazi crimes," said a statement released by Klaus' office.

Several Czech neo-Nazi groups want to march to Prague's former Jewish ghetto Nov. 10 to oppose the Czech military presence in Iraq.

PARENTS OF LOST GIRL FIGHT PORTUGUESE NEWS REPORTS

MADRID – The parents of British girl Madeleine McCann who disappeared in Portugal rejected Wednesday as "outrageous" the allegations they gave their children sedatives.

"These sort of questions and the publication of them are nonsense and shouldn't be given the time of day," Madeleine's father Gerry McCann told Spanish television station.

The couple urged people in Spain, Portugal and north Africa to call a new 24-hour phone line if they have information about their daughter. The hotline will be operated by private detectives in Spain.

DUTCH SOLDIERS RESTLESS OVER AFGHAN ASSIGNMENT

THE HAGUE, Netherlands – More than four in 10 Dutch soldiers oppose extending their country's mission in Afghanistan, a poll stated. A majority also opposed renewing the mandate of more than 1,500 Dutch troops fighting with Canadians in volatile southern Afghanistan.

GATES URGES INTELLIGENCE NEEDED ON KURDISH ISSUES

NOORDWIJK, Netherlands – Turkish strikes against Kurdish rebels on its border with Iraq made little sense without "good intelligence," said U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates Wednesday.

"Without good intelligence, sending large numbers of troops across the border or dropping bombs doesn't seem to make much sense to me," he told reporters after talks with NATO defence ministers in the Netherlands.

This applied "for anybody" considering such action, he added.

Turkish warplanes reportedly bombed Kurdistan Workers' Party targets along the Iraqi border Wednesday, as the country's leaders met to consider what other measures to take against the Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

AFRICA

MURDER SECT ARRESTED DURING OATH-SWEARING

NAIROBI, Kenya – Kenyan police arrested eight members of a banned sect, blamed for a string of murders and beheadings, while taking an illegal oath in the capital, an official said Wednesday.

The suspects, who belong to the Mungiki sect, were nabbed in the capital's Korogocho slums, a police officer said.

"The sect members had slaughtered a goat ready to undertake what is thought to be an oath associated with Mungiki," he said.

"We also recovered other paraphernalia, including machetes, usually associated with the sect," Ruto

explained.

The new arrests came as a state-run human rights panel said it was probing disappearances and executions of people, whose bodies have been recovered in bushlands in Nairobi's southern outskirts in recent weeks.

Police dismissed the claims, widely reported in local newspapers, that security forces were killing suspects linked to Mungiki, a politically-linked gang that was banned in 2002.

SENEGAL SWOOPS ON FAKES OFFERED BY STREET VENDORS

DAKAR, Senegal – Senegalese police arrested about a hundred suspects and seized some 18,000 counterfeit DVDs, audio CDs, cassettes and videos in a six-week operation against contraband, officers said Wednesday.

The haul valued at \$65,500 came from raids in Dakar and its suburbs, said the head of the anti-piracy unit.

Street vendors, retailers and producers of the pirated copies of local music and foreign-produced movies were among those arrested. Police also seized about 50 computers, scanners and recording equipment.

ASIA

INDIA CONTINUES TESTS ON ROCKET FOR NUKES

NEW DELHI, India – India on Wednesday test-fired its nuclear-capable Agni-1 ballistic missile for the second time in less than a month and said the latest experiment was a "major success."

The Agni-1 has a range of 700 kilometres, making it capable of striking at most targets in rival and neighbouring Pakistan.

AFGHAN GOVERNOR SAFE AFTER SUICIDE ATTACK

KHOST, Afghanistan – The governor of a troubled province in Afghanistan survived a Taliban-style suicide attack Wednesday, police said, but a provincial official collapsed and died while helping the wounded.

MIDEAST

ISRAEL SHELLS GAZA STRIP IN RETRIBUTION FOR ROCKETS

GAZA CITY – Israeli tanks fired into the northern Gaza Strip on Wednesday, killing two Palestinian youths following a series of rocket attacks on the Jewish state, officials said.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said the attack had targeted militants who launched rockets, shortly after three rockets were fired at Israel's southern town of Sderot — strikes that caused no casualties or damage.

Wednesday's deaths bring to 5,901 the number of people killed since the 2000 outbreak of the Palestinian intifada.

Israeli officials have prepared a plan to cut power supplies to the Gaza Strip by two-thirds.

The United Nations has told Israel it must not inflict collective punishment by cutting vital supplies and services.

SkyLink courting NATO

IDNUMBER 200710250049
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: David Pugliese
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 162

OTTAWA – A Canadian company that supplies transport helicopters for military operations in the Sudan says it is ready to provide similar aircraft for the Afghanistan mission and has been talking to NATO about its choppers.

SkyLink Aviation of Toronto is one of several firms from around the world that could provide the choppers NATO is now looking to use in Afghanistan.

"We have been working with NATO and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) providing them the information they would need in order to go out for a commercial lease agreement," said Jan Ottens, SkyLink's general manager.

"The procurement has not come out yet but we are clearly capable and interested in bidding on it."

NATO defence ministers were meeting in the Netherlands today to discuss the helicopter issue and other Afghanistan-related topics.

The aircraft are used for everything from transporting supplies and troops to picking up wounded soldiers.

Officers point out that making more use of helicopters to move around the battlefield would cut down on the need for ground convoys that are favourite targets of suicide bombers and attackers using improvised explosive devices.

Compare war casualties to big city murder stats

IDNUMBER 200710250040
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: Tom McAuley
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 95

Toronto recently recorded its 70th murder of the year. This, in a supposedly liberal democratic, progressive, and enlightened peaceful Canadian city. On the other hand, over five years of war zone fighting in a broken country, 40 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002. That's approximately eight soldiers killed per year in a war zone, compared to upward of 70 per year in a Canadian city.

Will the Liberals and the NDP now be demanding that Canada pull out of Toronto?

TOM McAULEY

Winnipeg, Man.

Unwinnable war

IDNUMBER 200710250054
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
BYLINE: Al Cook
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 62

Your editorial states that the poll found some Afghans "want Canadians out of Afghanistan right away, though it is difficult to fathom why."

Perhaps it will help him or her through this difficulty to have the reason spelled out briefly, in capital letters: because our Canadian soldiers are being killed in an unwinnable war with no end in sight.

Al Cook,

Ottawa

End to violence

IDNUMBER 200710250053
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
BYLINE: Scott Preston
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 142

Re: How to help Afghanistan, Oct. 22.

The Citizen's editorial misses the point.

Once we cut through the spin and the fog of delusions that have greeted the Environics poll results that found Afghans largely support the Canadian presence, it is clear that Afghans want a political solution to the violence, not necessarily a military one, and that security means one thing for NATO, and quite another thing for the Afghans.

Yet, the political option is the path least travelled in Afghanistan to date, despite the results that show 74 per cent of Afghans want a political solution — up to 85 per cent in Kandahar.

The absence of any responsible political voice articulating a coherent policy for

the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), however, means that the military option gains status by default, and this is clearly upsetting to both the Afghan government and the Afghan people.

More politics. Less militarism, please.

Scott Preston,

Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask.

Panel will offer impartial advice to Parliament

IDNUMBER 200710250052
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
BYLINE: Maxime Bernier
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 243

Re: A doomed mission, Oct. 20

Your readers deserve better than Gar Parady's convoluted, confused and cynical attack on the recently announced Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan.

We have always said that our government believes that major military deployments abroad should be subject to parliamentary approval. Last year, we put the extension of our military commitment in Afghanistan to a parliamentary vote and the House of Commons agreed to extend the mission through February, 2009.

That mandate ends roughly 16 months from now. As we move toward a decision on Canada's role beyond February 2009, our government wants a full, open and informed debate about our options.

Given what's at stake — both for our troops and for the Afghan people — we also want the debate to be as non-partisan as possible. We are focussed on helping Afghans. The United Nations-mandated mission, of which Canada is a part, is in Afghanistan at the invitation of a democratically elected government

As such, we are pleased that John Manley, Canada's esteemed former deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister, has agreed to chair the panel. Mr. Manley and his fellow panel members represent a wealth of experience in foreign affairs. Each one of them has demonstrated their commitment to Canada through years of public service.

I have no doubt they will examine the issues honestly, fairly, and expertly — and offer wise, impartial counsel that will help parliamentarians and all Canadians choose the right course for Canada in Afghanistan.

Maxime Bernier,

Ottawa

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Canadian firm keen to supply NATO choppers; Toronto-based company in talks to handle Afghanistan-bound aircraft

IDNUMBER 200710250028
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: (See hard copy for photo description);
BYLINE: David Pugliese
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 430

A Canadian company that supplies transport helicopters for military operations in Sudan says it is ready to provide similar aircraft for the Afghanistan mission and has already been talking to NATO about its choppers.

SkyLink Aviation of Toronto is one of several firms from around the world that could provide the choppers NATO is now looking to use in Afghanistan. The firm has supplied aircraft for operations in Sudan, Iraq and other world hotspots.

"We have been working with NATO and ISAF (by) providing them the information they would need in order to go out for a commercial lease agreement," SkyLink general manager Jan Ottens said. "The procurement has not come out yet, but we are clearly capable and interested in bidding on it."

NATO defence ministers were meeting in the Netherlands yesterday to discuss the helicopter issue and other Afghanistan-related topics.

The lack of helicopters for the Afghanistan mission has been identified as a major problem by Canadian and other NATO officers. The aircraft are used for everything from transporting supplies and troops to picking up wounded soldiers. Officers point out that making more use of helicopters to move around the battlefield would cut the need for ground convoys that are favourite targets of suicide bombers.

Last summer, the Harper government announced it would spend \$4.7 billion to purchase a fleet of 16 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters and put in place a 20-year support package for the aircraft. But that acquisition appears to have bogged down, and air force officials confirmed that formal negotiations have not yet started for the purchase. Informal discussions, however, are continuing with Boeing, the U.S. firm that builds the Chinook.

Delivery of the helicopters will be required within three years of a contract being signed, and military officials have suggested the new choppers will not be available for operations until at least 2011.

The Canadian Forces used to operate Chinook choppers, but those were sold off in the early 1990s by the Conservative government.

With helicopters in short supply in Afghanistan, NATO is looking at leasing about 20 from commercial providers for use in the southern part of the country, where Canadian soldiers are fighting.

Private security firms operating in Afghanistan already use Russian-built and U.S.-built choppers for their missions, and similar privately owned aircraft have also ferried NATO troops from time to time.

Mr. Ottens said a request for the helicopter lease is expected to be released by NATO within the next few weeks.

He estimated that it would cost NATO about \$80 million a year for the helicopters. That figure assumes the military alliance would provide accommodation for the private pilots as well as fuel for the choppers.

ONLINE: THE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Are Canadians doing enough — or too much? Global National's Mike Armstrong reports

It's time to stop the racism now raging in Quebec; Politicians scrambling for identity are attacking democracy

IDNUMBER 200710250005
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
COLUMN: Don Martin
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: The Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 711

The floundering Bloc Québécois couldn't wait to put its stamp against an "unreasonable accommodation" for visible minorities. They rushed forward a bill this week to block Muslim women from voting behind their burqas.

Never mind that the ruling Conservatives last week proclaimed their intent—to—legislate on this contrived controversy or that Muslim women already comply with face—revealing requirements to obtain a driver's licence or passport, the risk of a covered female face in a ballot booth was so horrifically galling, two federal parties raced to put their name on its prohibition. (Note to the million rural residents in Canada now ineligible to vote because they don't have a street address: Hang in there. Your government will help you after fixing this farcical threat.)

Given the various actions of separatist forces this month, with a surprising assist from the provincial Liberals, the only face that needs to be uncovered is that of thinly veiled racism now raging in Quebec politics.

In the scramble for a purified and cleansed Quebec identity, various politicians are proposing or mulling over a shocking series of democratic limitations on anglophones or "foreign nationals," including newcomers from the other nine provinces.

The right to run for office, vote in any election, even pick a neighbourhood to live in would be limited by a person's French—speaking prowess, if assorted kick—around proposals of highly questionable constitutionality come to pass.

The Bloc has been kicking up a daily fuss in the House of Commons this week, demanding that provincial French—language handcuffs be applied to all federal employees, lest the few workers now exempt from Bill 101 utter a few words of illegal English in the process of earning an Ottawa—issued paycheque.

That line of attack was so bizarre, even lightweight cabinet minister Josée Verner sounds uncharacteristically forceful in denigrating the Bloc for taking 17 years to finally raise objections to a 30—year—old situation.

The hullabaloo continued with a Parti Québécois bill filed in the National Assembly by leader Pauline Marois proposing Quebec citizenship that would require French—language testing for future election candidates. That went too far even for former PQ leader Bernard Landry, no stranger to ethnic—bashing himself, but it was given the okeedokee from Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe.

It's time to stop the racism now raging in Quebec; Politicians scrambling for identity are attacking democracy

Even while that bill was being ridiculed by federalists in Quebec, the PQ language critic was musing on an open-line radio show that anglophones in Montreal might lose the right to vote if Quebec became sovereign. To be fair, he did beat a slight backtrack in the angry aftermath.

Sadly, it's not just a separatist purge of linguistic impurity that should be giving rights advocates the shivers. Immigration Minister Yolande James, who lives in Montreal, was caught in a memo proposing immigrants be forced to "live their Quebec values concretely" through forcible confinement to francophone communities. After a few years of French-only isolation in Jonqui re, she figures, the internment would "awaken them to the realities, the language, and the ways of Quebec."

I wish I was making this up. Alas, no.

What's worse, all this is playing against the soundtrack of the "reasonable accommodation" hearings of the cultural differences commission, where witnesses sound increasingly unreasonable in accommodating anti-immigrant sentiment.

The drift of all this is impossible to miss: Non-francophones are not wanted, welcome and may, if Quebec ever achieves sovereign status, be denied Canadian taken-for-granted freedoms of voting, working, speaking and living according to their desires. And you thought Afghanistan had trouble with the democratic concept.

Imagine, if you can, Albertans engaging in such aggressive cultural protectionism — rolling out special oil patch citizenship and demanding all jobseekers live, speak and limit their religious practices according to established standards backed by a skill-testing question on Ian Tyson music.

There'd be coast-to-coast condemnation, a frenzy of national outrage against knuckle-dragging rednecks who apparently married inside their immediate family a tad too often to accept worldly cultures.

The studied silence from the federal government as Quebec turns increasingly and inwardly xenophobic has been unsettling. Clearly they don't want to be seen badmouthing the Quebecois as they struggle to define their newly recognized "nation" as an unjust francophone society built on ethnic suspicion and cultural intolerance.

But the emotions, opinions and positions now dominating political discourse in Quebec smack of a class-divided racism that should not be tolerated — in either official language.

NATO Defence Ministers Spar Over How To Increase Combat Against Taliban

IDNUMBER 200710250155
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: National
SECTION: News
PAGE: A24
COLUMN: World Report
DATELINE: NOORDWIJK, Netherlands
SOURCE: Bloomberg News
WORD COUNT: 151

NOORDWIJK, Netherlands –NATO defence ministers sparred over how to beef up the combat mission against the Taliban in Afghanistan as the Dutch government complained other allies were not pulling their weight. Calling for "fair risk–and burden–sharing," Eimert van Middelkoop criticized European countries such as Germany and France for refusing to send forces to southern Afghanistan. "There is no such thing as a free ride to peace and security," he said. "It's not what we are willing to say for a safer or just world, it ultimately depends on what we are willing to do." The United States, Britain, Canada and Netherlands are bearing the brunt of the fighting. Germany, France, Italy and Spain confine their troops to calmer areas of Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS: ORGANIZATIONS; DEFENCE; WAR; FOREIGN RELATIONS;
AFGHANISTAN;GERMANY; FRANCE; THE NETHERLANDS

It's racism– in any language

IDNUMBER 200710250101
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.25
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A4
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 710

OTTAWA –The floundering Bloc Quebecois couldn't wait to join in the campaign against an "unreasonable accommodation" for visible minorities. They rushed forward a bill this week to block Muslim women from voting behind their burkas.

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KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA