

Table of Contents

<u>South Korean hostage killed; Eight Taliban hostages reportedly freed, Afghan police restrict travel by foreigners</u>	1
<u>We have a mission</u>	3
<u>Hostage found shot dead in Afghanistan; Eight captives released</u>	4
<u>Commander downplays notion of linguistic tension between English and French soldiers in Afghanistan</u>	5
<u>Hostage found dead; 8 others released</u>	7
<u>Churches prepare for July 31 as troops begin to come home</u>	8
<u>Letters Violent crime merits major time</u>	10
<u>Army's \$200M tank plan hits snag; Canadian companies unfit to update Dutch vehicles</u>	13
<u>Korean hostage found dead in Afghanistan</u>	15
<u>What if Canadians are still dying five years from now?</u>	17
<u>Afghan mission likely to fail</u>	18
<u>One hostage killed, 8 freed; Official: Cash helped secure release of some South Koreans in Afghanistan</u>	20
<u>Canadian soldiers deny any English–French rift overseas</u>	22
<u>Tank upgrade hits snag; No Canadian company capable of doing \$200m work at moment</u>	23
<u>Conservatives planning to upgrade Dutch tanks; Tory plan to fix 50 tanks could be stalled by lack of company</u>	25
<u>Change in Afghan mission comes with risk</u>	27
<u>South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Police find bullet–ridden body of Christian aid worker a few hours after Taliban executes him</u>	29
<u>South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Taliban executes leader of Christian aid group; remaining 22 hostages still believed to be alive</u>	31
<u>Taliban murder first Korean hostage</u>	33
<u>Changing lives, one drop at a time</u>	35

Table of Contents

<u>Council dodges decal fallout.....</u>	37
<u>Anti-polio program shows tiny drops could add up to tide of change.....</u>	38
<u>Killing of Korean denounced; Seoul sends envoy to Afghanistan to discuss release of other hostages...40</u>	
<u>Killing of Korean denounced; Seoul sends envoy to Afghanistan to discuss release of other hostages...42</u>	
<u>Taliban kill South Korean hostage; Remaining captives will die if demands are not met, they say.....44</u>	
<u>Canadian aid helps cripple polio in Afghanistan.....</u>	46
<u>Taliban kills one of 23 hostages.....</u>	48
<u>Taliban claim to have killed 1 South Korean hostage while freeing others.....</u>	50
<u>Still no sign of missing brother of B.C. soldier killed this month in Afghanistan.....</u>	51
<u>Anti-Afghan sentiment prompts Quebec City restaurant to opt for name change.....</u>	52
<u>Canadian major downplays notion of rampant linguistic tension in Afghanistan.....</u>	54
<u>War at Home Advisory, July 25, 2007.....</u>	56
<u>INDEX:Defence, International, Social.....</u>	58
<u>Afghan-Kidnappings-Update (details on released hostages).....</u>	59
<u>KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Taliban militants claim they shot and killed one South Korean hostage today while a group of abductees was.....</u>	60
<u>Plan to upgrade tanks hits glitch; No Canadian companies able to quickly revamp used armoured vehicles destined for Afghanistan.....</u>	61
<u>Ottawa.....</u>	62
<u>Ailing Korean hostage slain; Visitors warned not to leave Afghan capital after rebel commander orders attacks on foreigners.....</u>	64
<u>A 'wonderful' man, a simple life; Afghan chose Canada 'for peace,' did not know man who burst into his home and killed him.....</u>	67
<u>Same fight for Calgary, Toronto.....</u>	69
<u>War widows struggle Families suffer long after soldiers killed.....</u>	71

Table of Contents

<u>Korean hostage slain Ransom paid to Taliban for others?</u>	73
<u>S. Korean hostage slain by Taliban</u>	75
<u>Common foe unites franco, anglo Canucks</u>	76
<u>Soldiers get break at pool tourney</u>	77
<u>Hostage found shot to death Eight other captives are released by the Taliban in war-torn Afghanistan</u>	78
<u>AFGHANISTAN UPDATE</u>	79
<u>Taliban free eight captives But South Korean hostage is found slain</u>	80
<u>Leopard tanks hit upgrade barrier</u>	81
<u>Korean hostage found slain</u>	82
<u>Ribbons bought for cops Woman buys 450 magnets</u>	83
<u>U.S. al-Qaida report meant to pressure Musharraf</u>	85
<u>Canadian aid helps defeat polio in Afghanistan</u>	87
<u>Taliban kills South Korean hostage</u>	89
<u>Christian evangelicalism has swept the land of Confucian calm; Tiny South Korea has 12,000 missionaries around the world, second only to the U.S.</u>	90
<u>Christian extremists wear army uniforms</u>	92
<u>On Afghan border, a fight against polio</u>	93
<u>Taliban kill hostage; 3rd deadline passes with no word; Afghan president pledges not to swap prisoners for kidnapping victims</u>	94
<u>AFGHANISTAN: EXECUTION RAISES THE STAKES Taliban kill South Korean as hostage crisis deepens Evangelical's bullet-ridden body turns up, increasing pressure on Kabul to cut a deal</u>	96
<u>HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Canadian NGO workers maintain a low profile Groups remain undaunted by latest abductions; prefer to travel in generic cars, wear traditional clothing to fit in with locals</u>	99
<u>IN BRIEF Search for soldier's brother called off after three days</u>	101

Table of Contents

<u>NATIONAL DEFENCE: DOUBT CAST ON TORY CAMPAIGN PROMISE Hillier cool to Ottawa's reserve plan 'We don't need new units,' top soldier says of 14 proposed urban army outposts.....</u>	102
<u>Taliban kill Korean pastor.....</u>	104
<u>No exit strategy.....</u>	105
<u>Fudging the numbers.....</u>	107
<u>Taliban murder Korean hostage; Trigger-happy terrorists put pressure on foreigners.....</u>	109
<u>Canada can't upgrade Dutch Leopard 2 tanks No company can do heavy armoured vehicle work.....</u>	111
<u>Hostage killed, Taliban free 8 others.....</u>	112
<u>Crass politics.....</u>	113
<u>Taliban order kidnapping offensive; Plans include training children; moves come as first of 23 Koreans held in Afghanistan executed.....</u>	114
<u>U.S. tactics put Britain in 'ethical dilemma'; Report about ally's extreme measures raises spectre of Maher Arar.....</u>	116
<u>An old enemy falls drop by drop; Canadians Help Inoculate Children Against Polio.....</u>	118
<u>Final chronicles of crisis, chaos in Afghanistan.....</u>	120
<u>NOT-SO-DIPLOMATIC START TO CAMPAIGN; Former Ambassador; Conservative On Attack As Candidacy Announced.....</u>	122
<u>TALIBAN KILL SOUTH KOREAN HOSTAGE; Eight Others Said To Be Released After Ransom Payment.....</u>	124
<u>Dutch soldiers have been our loyal allies.....</u>	126
<u>A sad lesson to learn from Koreans.....</u>	127

South Korean hostage killed; Eight Taliban hostages reportedly freed, Afghan police restrict travel by foreigners

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Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday and there were unconfirmed reports that eight other captives had been released, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni. Taliban sources denied the reports.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to South Koreans and to block their entry into the country.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend stressed that the Koreans abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country.

South Korean hostage killed; Eight Taliban hostages reportedly freed, Afghan police restrict travel by foreigners

The series of recent kidnappings prompted the Afghan government to forbid foreigners living in Kabul from leaving the city without police permission.

Police said officials stationed at checkpoints at the city's main gates would stop foreigners from leaving the capital unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance of their travel plans, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

We have a mission

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BYLINE: John J. Wiens
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The very idea of people disagreeing on the point of supporting troops and/or the war in Afghanistan is, in my view, absolutely appalling and unwarranted.

It's obvious that the anti-war people have never talked to the foot soldier who has been there or their commanding officers who do so much to educate the masses as to why we are there.

Yes, we are peacekeepers. Yes, we can, will and do fight. No, we cannot change 2,000 years of history, and nobody said we can or should. Yes, we can make a difference by showing a new and better way of living through education, understanding and belief in them, as a people.

We as Canadians have a mission there, we cannot falter or succumb to the Taliban, al-Qaida or any terrorists.

Let's not forget those who fought for the freedom we enjoy and take for granted. Let's carry on to preserve the freedom for us and others who desire and want it but can't get it on their own.

John J. Wiens

Brussels

Hostage found shot dead in Afghanistan; Eight captives released

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SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Amir Shah

DATELINE: Kabul

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Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage Wednesday, as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings – including an attempt against a Danish citizen Wednesday – police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account. Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to South Koreans and to block their entry into the country.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan. It also stressed that the Koreans abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country. Two Germans were also kidnapped last week. One was found dead and the other apparently remains captive. A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

Commander downplays notion of linguistic tension between English and French soldiers in Afghanistan

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BYLINE: MARTIN OUELLET The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 333

While Canada's two solitudes may exist to a certain degree in Afghanistan, anglophone and francophone soldiers are united when it comes to their ultimate objective, says a Canadian commander at the multinational base in Kandahar.

"It's like a football team," said Maj. Richard Collin, commanding officer of C Company of the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

"There's the offence and the defence. The two don't mix but, as they want to win, they work toward the same goal."

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Collin downplayed the notion that linguistic tensions are surfacing because of the arrival in southern Afghanistan of hundreds of French-speaking soldiers from Quebec.

"Of course there are some people who won't want anything to do with the other group because they don't feel comfortable in English or French," Collin said.

"Sometimes, people feel embarrassed and are scared people will make fun of them, so they just stay in their own little corner."

More and more, French is being heard on the Kandahar base as the Van Doos, based at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City, continue pouring in to the wartorn country.

The new arrivals are not the first Quebec-based soldiers to serve in Afghanistan. A small company of 156 soldiers has been working at the provincial reconstruction team base since November.

And members of the Van Doos were among the first Canadians to arrive in Afghanistan at the start of the war.

Some observers have raised concerns that relations between the francophone soldiers and their Afghan counterparts may be affected by the dearth of French-Pashtu interpreters.

Collin admitted that Canadian Forces have not yet found any such interpreters but said that should not pose a major problem.

"We always manage to get our message across," noting that some of the Pashtu interpreters used so far have not spoken fluent English either.

Collin said there is some joshing between anglophone and francophone soldiers that could offend some sensibilities, but "it's in our interest to get along."

None of the soldiers interviewed on the base mentioned any linguistic– related incidents, and some seemed amused that news of French–English tensions had surfaced thousands of kilometres from home.

Maj. Christian Beaudin of the Royal 22nd Regiment said there may be some "friction" between the two groups but added he doesn't see anything dangerous in that.

Cpl. Jean Provost couldn't quite understand what all the fuss was about.

"Personally, I've never felt cast aside or despised because I'm French," Provost said.

"Anyway, we wouldn't let ourselves be pushed around."

Hostage found dead; 8 others released

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BYLINE: AMIR SHAH The Associated Press
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WORD COUNT: 398

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage Wednesday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen Wednesday — police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

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Two Germans were also kidnapped last week. One was found dead and the other apparently remains captive. A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

Churches prepare for July 31 as troops begin to come home

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Rev. Ken Weir will be ready when troops start trickling back to Canadian Forces Base Gagetown next week from six months of combat duty in Afghanistan.

The priest of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Oromocto said he will be busy helping to meet the spiritual and counselling needs of returning soldiers.

"I have received letters from Afghanistan and they have indicated a need to sit down and talk," Weir said Wednesday.

He's one of a number of church leaders in the model town who are ready to do their part in helping soldiers adjust to the reality of life back in Canada.

For the last several months, Weir's church has been part of a monthly group who met and offered support through prayer to local soldiers serving in the wartorn country and to family members at home.

The vigil, called Neighbours for Peace, has been alternating between local Catholic, United and Anglican churches. Efforts are now underway to involve the Oromocto Baptist Church.

Weir said while the Military Family Resource Centre will be offering a variety of services to help those who need it, there will be some who will seek assistance outside the military circle.

"We're not trying to replace anything the military has to offer, but we're prepared to help those who need help," Weir said. "We have talked about different ways we can offer help. They (the soldiers) will come here for support. I have been in close contact with the families. They keep me posted. When the anxiety level heightens, I am there."

There are 1,150 members with The Second Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (2RCR) battle group now serving in Afghanistan. Approximately 650 of the soldiers are based at CFB Gagetown.

The first group of troops are expected to touch down at the Fredericton International Airport on July 31.

"For some, the (adjustment) will be relatively short, but for others it will be an ongoing process," Weir said.

Rev. Keith Howlett of St. John's Anglican Church in Oromocto said he's not expecting a huge rush of returning soldiers or family members to make their way to him or his church for assistance, but expects there will be a few.

"The church is here to help the best it can," Howlett said. "We will be here. "

Howlett said that over the last few months, his church has played more of a supporting role to the community at large as opposed to those who have been directly impacted by the deployment.

Helping people to remain positive has been a big part of that support effort, he said.

Those involved in the Neighbours for Peace prayer vigil will meet for the last time Aug. 15 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Most, if not all, of the troops are expected to be back in CFB Gagetown at that time.

But Weir said the effort won't end there.

It will simply continue under a different name --- Neighbours for Prayer.

"This is not a Catholic thing. This is a community-based effort," Weir said. "We're pretty excited about it."

The meetings will continue to rotate between the various churches.

"It has had a positive effect in a number of different angles. Not only has it brought the churches together, but the people too."

Letters | Violent crime merits major time

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I would like to comment on the news stories published in The Daily Gleaner in the last week or so.

These stories informed the community of the violent activity that occurred in the form of several swarming-style attacks. The result, of course, is that a few of our fellow community members were seriously hurt, and one of them, quite a young man who was viciously attacked, had to undergo plastic surgery to repair severe damage to his face.

I was quite taken aback to hear that the men who have pleaded guilty to a robbery connected to one of the attacks will probably be sentenced to only three years in prison.

This is totally unacceptable. But at the very least, these individuals must serve their full sentence and not one day less, none of this serving a third of their sentences and then being released. Let them serve their full sentences.

I believe sentences of violent offenders should be for a significant length of time. I fear violent criminals too often get a slap on the wrist for all the trouble they cause their victims and the victims' families.

Michael G. McKay

Fredericton

Harper ill-fitted to lead in war

I have never agreed with the Canadian position taken in Afghanistan.

That said, it is not the purpose of this letter to engage in that debate. I believe that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is unqualified to take Canada to war much less lead Canadians through a war.

The fighting of a war rests on the shoulders of real people both in the war zone and at home. This reality seems alien to Harper and his party. While mandating additional capital expense on military hardware, Harper repeatedly fails to recognize the very real sacrifices of Canadian soldiers and their families.

Harper and Veteran Affairs Minister Greg Thompson brayed about Agent Orange spraying at Base Gagetown while in Opposition. But once in government, neither seems able to bring quick resolution to the file. Harper, National Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day worked very hard to cover up the treatment of Afghan detainees handed over to the Afghani military by their Canadian captors.

I do not believe Canadian soldiers or Canadian citizens support torture under any circumstances. Through their delay and obfuscation of the detainee file, Harper's government has tarnished Canada's reputation and needlessly endangered Canadians.

The families of fallen Canadian soldiers were not paid enough to cover funeral expenses. Instead of burying our fallen with respect and dignity, we discovered that O'Connor buried one family's complaints for almost a year.

We have learned that Harper's government is failing to provide mental health support to our returning troops. For heaven's sake, these are Canadian men and women — sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, dads and moms — who were sent abroad into terrifying conditions at the request of Canada. Is it too much to expect the prime minister and the Canadian government to support our soldiers and their families upon their return?

Harper and his government must understand that part of waging war is compassionately and humanely dealing with the very human fallout of war. Spending billions buying more and more machines does not fix human beings.

If Harper and his government are unable to learn this lesson, then no matter his opinion of the mission in Afghanistan, it is time to support our troops and bring them home.

Rob Moir

Clifton Royal, N.B.

Good job covering assaults

Congratulations to Don MacPherson and The Daily Gleaner for coverage of the recent swarmings in downtown Fredericton.

I was particularly happy to read the front-page coverage July 24 showing photos of three young men in custody, with the headline, Attackers face hard time. The secondary headline on Page 2, says Young men likely staring at federal prison.

Furthermore, your editorial in the same edition compliments city officials for following through and taking charge during this outbreak of violence.

You are to be commended for not only reporting the news but for the leadership and responsibility you have shown in highlighting the gravity of these crimes and putting it clearly in front of all.

The message is that Fredericton will not tolerate thugs and that the price to be paid for these brutal assaults is heavy.

I'm no Canadian Idol judge but, "good on ya."

Bruce Newman

Fredericton

Disappointed in Pope cartoon

I am disappointed that the Daily Gleaner would sink so low as to attack the Catholic faith by the recent publication of an anti-Catholic editorial cartoon in its July 14 edition.

Good does however always comes out of bad, as in the case of Catholics being defended in the letters to the editor section by non-Catholics, one a Protestant minister, no less.

The inference of the cartoon is that the Catholic Church's beliefs are anti-Protestant which is the farthest thing from the truth. The Catholic Church wants nothing more than a re-unification with its Protestant brothers and sisters.

We are, though, required to forgive, and Catholics will forgive the Daily Gleaner in its quest to sell a few more papers at the expense of our beliefs.

Our Lord said, as he was hanging on the cross, "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do;" can we do no less?

Stephen J. McDonald

Fredericton

Safety of great importance

A recent article on workplace injuries, NB workers most likely to be injured on the job, attributed the cause for this to the worker, particularly those in blue collar jobs, women, the obese, smokers and those who found their jobs stressful.

However, no recognition was made of the key role played by workplace organization and work-station design in the prevention of injuries. While training, information, inspections and more are essential to the maintenance of personal safety, alertness, elimination of health and safety hazards and the exposure of workers to the risk of injury should be the primary thrust.

Ergonomics is the application of human-factors engineering to systematically address these issues. If an ergonomic assessment were a mandated requirement for every workstation in New Brunswick, we would quickly realize a dramatic decrease in injuries and deaths. N.B. companies need to know that huge potential gains in total productivity and hence profitability are possible from the application of ergonomics technology.

The N.B. government and all taxpayers would also benefit from this strategy through a significant reduction in hospital and related health-care costs currently accruing from the treatment of these 19,000 injured workers and the deaths of up to 20 each year.

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, the Federation of Labour and Business N.B. should partner to advance this accident prevention strategy. N.B. workers and their families will thank them for their collective initiative.

All accidents are preventable.

Jeremy Rickards

Lower Queensbury, N.B.

Army's \$200M tank plan hits snag; Canadian companies unfit to update Dutch vehicles

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BYLINE: Murray Brewster

DATELINE: OTTAWA

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The Conservative government's \$200–million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag.

There's currently no company in Canada capable of quickly improving up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles in order to meet the rigours and dangers of Afghanistan.

An undetermined portion of the contract will likely have to be carried out overseas, says a senior defence official.

"Obviously, we'd like to do as much of it in Canada as possible but, of course, we currently don't have any capability in Canada to do heavy armoured vehicle work, and so there is consultation with industry taking place," Dan Ross, assistant deputy minister of materiel at National Defence, said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"We're going to have to determine what can be done."

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Works Minister Michel Fortier announced in April that the army's aging Leopard 1 C2 tanks would be replaced at a cost of \$650 million.

Under the program, Canada would borrow 20 armoured vehicles from the Germans and purchase 100 slightly used tanks from the Netherlands. A month later, O'Connor revealed there would be an additional \$650–million, long–term support contract – bringing the total price tag to \$1.3 billion.

As part of the initial purchase phase, roughly \$200 million was set aside to upgrade the used tanks, primarily with air conditioning and better armour meant to withstand roadside bombs. Both O'Connor and Fortier said Canadian industry would see great benefits.

While the government has promised open bidding for both the immediate upgrades and the long–term maintenance contract, it appears there's only one company, located in Quebec, that might be capable of the job.

Rheinmattall Canada, based in Montreal, is in talks with the federal government and Krauss–Maffei–Wegmann – the Leopard's German manufacturer – about becoming involved, said Ross.

But it remains to be seen how much work the company, formerly Oerlikon Canada, can do since its primary job has been to service air–defence vehicles.

It could also turn into a politically touchy situation, as the Conservatives were criticized last week for a trail of feel-good defence spending projects in Quebec.

Ross said the scope of modifications on the slightly used Dutch tanks has not yet been determined because the Defence Department has been concentrating on getting the brand new tanks, borrowed from the German army, into Afghanistan by mid-August.

The army has been operating a troop of 30-year-old Leopard 1 tanks in the fight against the Taliban, but the absence of air conditioning in 55-degree heat and a dwindling supply of spare parts forced Ottawa into the unusual arrangement.

A former tank commander said a Canadian Forces shop facility in Montreal used to have the expertise to handle upgrades on the 60-tonne monsters, but retired colonel Chris Corrigan says it slipped away, especially when the army looked at scrapping the Leopards a few years ago.

"This isn't rocket science, but given that we haven't done it in awhile, it's like ramping up anything," said Corrigan, who spent 35 years in tanks and is now a member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

"Once you lose a capability, it's tough to get it back. It would be like trying to build frigates again. This is an example of the argument people will give you for maintaining a defence industrial base. A nation like Canada needs to be able to service its own armoured vehicles."

Beyond the challenge of finding a Canadian company to do the upgrades, engineers will have to overcome technical hurdles.

German defence sources are skeptical whether an air-conditioning system can be installed on the older A4 variant of the Dutch tanks. "That depends – I'm quite honest – on the auxiliary power unit," said a German army source, who asked not to be identified.

Korean hostage found dead in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)
DATE: 2007.07.26
SECTION: National/World
PAGE: B2
BYLINE: Amir Shah The Associated Press
DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 518

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings – including an attempt against a Danish citizen yesterday – police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission. The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account. Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. At one point, the Taliban demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to South Koreans and to block their entry into the country.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan. It also stressed that the Koreans abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country. Two Germans were also kidnapped last week. One was found dead and another apparently remains captive. A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

The unidentified man "was close to being caught but managed to get away and reach a local police station," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ole Neustrup said. The Dane was first reported to be German, but that report was false, Khan said.

The series of recent kidnappings prompted the Afghan government to forbid foreigners living in Kabul from leaving the city without police permission.

Police said officials stationed at checkpoints at the city's main gates would stop foreigners from leaving the capital unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance of their travel plans, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

What if Canadians are still dying five years from now?

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.07.26

SECTION: Forum

PAGE: 5

WORD COUNT: 314

Some people say it is not possible to support our troops if we do not support war. I disagree. Having lived in a dysfunctional family, I know it is possible to love someone and still not support the decisions that loved one makes.

Recently, I had a short conversation with a soldier who told me he was leaving for Afghanistan in a couple of days. He said we are making a difference there and I want to believe him. I shook his hand, asked him his name and said, "Whatever you experience over there, do not let it steal your soul. I will pray for your safety." I still do.

The question I hope our troops are asking themselves is, are we leaving this part of the world better than we found it?

I had an infestation of ants on a plant and got rid of them, only to see they had moved to another flower. When I got rid of them again, many returned to the first plant. Are the Taliban who are being chased out of Afghanistan setting up bases in Pakistan and biding their time until they can return, stronger than ever?

Might our soldiers end up creating more terrorists than they capture or kill? The Taliban are on familiar terrain. They are used to the climate and they have time on their side. They will wait and wait. They will continue to kill a few allied soldiers and civilians at a time, and they will retreat beyond porous borders and wait some more. There, they will draw more recruits into their addiction to violence. I don't think we can stop them by becoming accustomed to violence ourselves.

I wonder if Canadians will still support this war if our brave sons and daughters are dying in Afghanistan five years from now. May God bless our troops and guide us into the way of peace.

Alice Bell

Kingston

Afghan mission likely to fail

PUBLICATION:	Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)
DATE:	2007.07.26
SECTION:	Forum
PAGE:	5
PHOTO:	The Canadian Press
ILLUSTRATION:	The first group of Canadian soldiers from Quebec arrived in Kandahar, Afghanistan last week. Gordon McGlynn writes that Canada's Afghan intervention is likely to end in humiliating defeat, as did the Soviet intervention of the 1980s.
WORD COUNT:	939

One cannot hope to confront the issues surrounding Canada's military intervention in Afghanistan without first doing what is expected of every citizen in a modern democratic society. Every Canadian who professes to grieve over the loss of our soldiers has a duty to independently seek out the truth (and discard all falsehoods) before finally arriving at a position that is based on hard facts rather than simplistic flag-waving.

It has been argued in these pages that the Canadian public's dwindling support for our adventure in Afghanistan (only seven per cent of those recently polled strongly support the mission) is directly responsible for Canadian troop casualties ("Lack of support for the mission is killing Canadian soldiers, July 18). Those with even the shortest memory of international conflicts will recall hearing this specious argument before. Supporters of the Vietnam War similarly argued that when American citizens exercised their democratic right to dissent, they were undermining troop morale, thereby indirectly killing U.S. soldiers.

Who or what, then, is responsible for our failings in Afghanistan? To begin with, one may reasonably point to Jean Chretien, the prime minister initially responsible for hurriedly cobbling together our ill-advised mission in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11. As long-time Liberal Sheila Copps admitted recently, the decision to commit Canadian troops to Afghanistan was primarily motivated by a desire to stay out of Iraq.

Even worse, no real debate over this policy occurred in the House of Commons, nor was there a parliamentary vote to authorize the use of force in Afghanistan. In fact, we now know that the Chretien government ignored the Canadian military's warnings that it was not ready for a significant mission overseas.

Chretien (and now Prime Minister Stephen Harper) are not solely responsible for this foreign policy miscalculation. Indeed, every Canadian who stood by and watched this undemocratic process unfold must also bear responsibility for the dangerous scenarios our soldiers face every day in and around Kandahar. Who among us can say that they have taken the time to fully inform themselves about this issue – one that has real (and fatal) consequences to people in both Canada and Afghanistan?

The mainstream media is not without blame here. Its widespread failure to take our government to task over this foreign policy blunder makes it complicit in the deaths of our soldiers and innocent Afghan civilians.

That being said, it must be pointed out that those who condemn the media for reporting only the "bad news" profoundly misunderstand the role of the media in a modern democracy, for it is only in truly free societies that public dissent and so-called "bad news" is possible. The degree to which a society is permitted to critique itself (and actively does so) is ultimately a crucial measure of how free that society is.

Both our leaders and our media tell us that our motivations in Afghanistan are purely altruistic: Our troops are fighting and dying to free the oppressed peoples of this foreign land. One may reasonably ask, however, why

this particular land and these particular people? At any given time around the world, thousands of people are being oppressed and killed by brutal regimes, ethnic cleansing and religious conflict. And if, as many have suggested, this war is being fought to free the oppressed women of Afghanistan, we must congratulate ourselves, for this is surely the first conflict in history motivated by such a noble cause.

Realistically, what makes Afghanistan worthy of our intervention?

Although poor to the extreme, Afghanistan does indeed have a significant geo-political role in the world. Situated between the oil- and gas-rich Caspian Sea (now controlled by numerous former Soviet republics) and the Arabian Sea to the south, Afghanistan was the obvious choice for a new natural gas pipeline (the Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline) designed to transport natural gas from the Caspian Sea area out to huge Indian and Asian markets. Afghanistan itself may prove to be oil-rich as well.

Now imagine for a minute that Afghanistan had no geostrategic significance whatsoever and that its primary export was, say, radishes. Under this scenario, how likely is it that our troops would be committed to fight for such a country?

It has been observed recently in these pages that the use of improvised explosive devices against Canadian and other foreign troops in Afghanistan is purely propagandistic and militarily foolhardy. History would suggest otherwise. Countless wars have been lost when over-reaching and overwhelming political might met with organized local resistance whose resilience and resourcefulness had been underestimated.

In the 1980s, the Russians underestimated the strength of the Afghan resistance and the challenges of fighting a war in such difficult terrain, and the results were wasteful and tragic. Gore Vidal's observation that the "United States of Amnesia" conveniently ignores or forgets even recent history may be applied to Canada's mission in Afghanistan. How can we hope to be successful in Afghanistan when even the might of the Russian empire failed to achieve military success in that region?

As both Afghan and Canadian blood continues to be spilled in Afghanistan, Canadians need to open up their minds and their hearts to the fact that this mission was ill-conceived from its inception. Our troops are dying ever more frequently in a battle that, in all likelihood, will end in a humiliating defeat for Canada and the West in general.

Regime change should have no place in Canadian foreign policy.

Gordon Paul McGlynn

Kingston

One hostage killed, 8 freed; Official: Cash helped secure release of some South Koreans in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.07.26

SECTION: World

PAGE: A6

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Amir Shah

WORD COUNT: 587

KABUL – Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage Wednesday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings – including an attempt against a Danish citizen Wednesday – police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account. Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to South Koreans and to block their entry into the country.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan. It also stressed that the Koreans abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country. Two Germans were also kidnapped last week. One was found dead and the other apparently remains captive. A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

The unidentified man "was close to being caught but managed to get away and reach a local police station," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ole Neustrup said. The Dane was first reported to be German but that report was false, Khan said.

The series of recent kidnappings prompted the Afghan government to forbid foreigners living in Kabul from leaving the city without police permission.

Police said officials stationed at checkpoints at the city's main gates would stop foreigners from leaving the capital unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance of their travel plans, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

Elsewhere, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said a soldier was killed in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday by a rocket-propelled grenade. ISAF didn't release the soldier's nationality, but the majority of troops in the east are American.

Britain said one of its soldiers was killed and two others injured when an explosion struck their vehicle in southern Helmand province on Wednesday.

The U.S.-led coalition said 20 suspected Taliban militants were killed Wednesday after a failed ambush on coalition and Afghan troops in Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers deny any English–French rift overseas

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.07.26

SECTION: World

PAGE: A6

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Martin Ouellet

WORD COUNT: 209

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) – While Canada's two solitudes may exist to a certain degree in Afghanistan, anglophone and francophone soldiers are united when it comes to their ultimate objective, says a Canadian commander at the multinational base in Kandahar.

"It's like a football team," said Maj. Richard Collin, commanding officer of C Company of the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

"There's the offence and the defence. The two don't mix but, as they want to win, they work toward the same goal."

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Collin downplayed the notion that linguistic tensions are surfacing because of the arrival in southern Afghanistan of hundreds of French–speaking soldiers from Quebec.

"Of course there are some people who won't want anything to do with the other group because they don't feel comfortable in English or French," Collin said.

"Sometimes, people feel embarrassed and are scared people will make fun of them, so they just stay in their own little corner."

More and more, French is being heard on the Kandahar base as the Van Doos, based at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City, continue pouring in to the war–torn country.

None of the soldiers interviewed on the base mentioned any linguistic–related incidents and some seemed amused that news of French–English tensions had surfaced thousands of kilometres from home.

Cpl. Jean Provost couldn't quite understand what all the fuss was about.

"Personally, I've never felt cast aside or despised because I'm French," Provost said.

"Anyway, we wouldn't let ourselves be pushed around."

Tank upgrade hits snag; No Canadian company capable of doing \$200m work at moment

PUBLICATION:	The Chronicle–Herald
DATE:	2007.07.26
SECTION:	Canada
PAGE:	A6
SOURCE:	The Canadian Press
BYLINE:	Murray Brewster
ILLUSTRATION:	A pair of Canadian Leopard C2 tanks stand guard outside of patrol base in Zhari district, west of Kandahar, on Feb. 2. (MURRAY BREWSTER / CP)
WORD COUNT:	451

OTTAWA – The Conservative government's \$200–million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag.

There's currently no company in Canada capable of quickly improving up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles to meet the rigours and dangers of Afghanistan.

An undetermined portion of the contract will likely have to be carried out overseas, says a senior defence official.

"Obviously, we'd like to do as much of it in Canada as possible but, of course, we currently don't have any capability in Canada to do heavy armoured vehicle work, and so there is consultation with industry taking place," Dan Ross, assistant deputy minister of materiel at National Defence, said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Works Minister Michel Fortier announced in April that the army's aging Leopard 1 C2 tanks would be replaced at a cost of \$650 million.

Under the program, Canada would borrow 20 armoured vehicles from the Germans and purchase 100 slightly used tanks from the Netherlands. A month later, O'Connor revealed there would be an additional \$650–million, long–term support contract – bringing the total pricetag to \$1.3 billion.

As part of the initial purchase phase, roughly \$200 million was set aside to upgrade the used tanks, primarily with air conditioning and better armour, meant to withstand roadside bombs. Both O'Connor and Fortier said Canadian industry would see great benefits.

While the government has promised open bidding for both the immediate upgrades and the long–term maintenance contract, it appears there's only one company, located in Quebec, that might be capable of the job.

Rheinmetall Canada, based in Montreal, is in talks with the federal government and Krauss–Maffei–Wegmann – the Leopard's German manufacturer – about becoming involved, said Ross.

But it remains to be seen how much work the company, formerly Oerlikon Canada, can do since its primary job has been to service air–defence vehicles.

It could also turn into a politically touchy situation, as the Conservatives were criticized last week for a trail of feel–good defence spending projects in Quebec.

The army has been operating a troop of 30-year-old Leopard 1 tanks in the fight against the Taliban, but the absence of air conditioning in 55-degree heat and a dwindling supply of spare parts forced Ottawa into the unusual arrangement.

A former tank commander said a Canadian Forces shop facility in Montreal used to have the expertise to handle upgrades on the 60-tonne monsters, but retired Col. Chris Corrigan says it slipped away, especially when the army looked at scrapping the Leopards a few years ago.

Beyond the challenge of finding a Canadian company to do the upgrades, engineers will have to overcome technical hurdles.

German defence sources are skeptical whether an air-conditioning system can be installed on the older A4 variant of the Dutch tanks. Adding extra armour to withstand Taliban booby traps will also be a complicated, time-consuming task.

Conservatives planning to upgrade Dutch tanks; Tory plan to fix 50 tanks could be stalled by lack of company

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.07.26

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A8

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 291

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"We're going to have to determine what can be done."

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Change in Afghan mission comes with risk

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.07.26

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: National Affairs

BYLINE: Travers, James

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 517

Here's a travel itinerary from hell. What if you bought a ticket to Afghanistan specifically to avoid Iraq only to land in a place a lot like Baghdad?

That's been a subliminal worry since Liberals joined one U.S.-led mission mostly to compensate for refusing conscription into another. Now it's surfacing with an accelerated Conservative plan to shift the Kandahar combat load to Afghans.

First reported in the Toronto Star two weeks ago, it puts new weight on Kabul's army to fight the Taliban, control poppy production as well as the porous Pakistan border and keep Hamid Karzai in power. It's a lot to ask of suspect security forces, but it's what Stephen Harper thinks voters want to hear.

If optimism trumps experience, Canadian troops will be easing from harm's way around the time Parliament decides what to do when the current mission ends. Better domestic politics than foreign policy, the strategy has familiar flaws likely to prove fatal.

Tried in Iraq, it puts unreasonable demands on the fragile institutions of a failed state. Along with expecting a weak army and corrupt police to replace sophisticated NATO forces, it also anticipates a decision the Karzai government isn't ready to make and levels of central control it doesn't have.

It's revealing that the news is breaking in Ottawa, not Kabul or NATO headquarters. In managing polarized public opinion here, minority Conservatives are announcing their plans even if they conflict with international commitments made in London last year to give Afghanistan the help it needs.

That suggests Ottawa is setting policy unilaterally and treating Karzai more as puppet than partner.

Just last week, Britain's defence committee warned the allied effort is falling short. Neither the 37,000 foreign troops on the ground, nor current development efforts, are nearly enough to stabilize the country or make it the model Eastern democracy of Western fantasy.

Canadians will have to decide what, if anything, the new timetable shares with the "cut and run" reflexes Harper so often savages. But parallels with Washington's preferred Iraq exit are obvious and dangerous to Conservatives.

U.S. hopes of declaring victory before heading home turned on training the army and police to succeed where the world's most powerful military failed. Those hopes were dashed by enemies who adjusted by targeting recruits and their families while increasing suicide attacks and kidnappings.

Afghanistan is not Iraq. But insurgencies learn fast from each other and, just as more powerful roadside bombs spread from the Middle East to kill Canadians, deadly innovations will arrive to dissuade Afghans.

Politically, the prime minister's plan is appealing. Opposition parties won't approve another extension to an increasingly deadly full combat mission and Tories aren't willing to jeopardize national, and particularly Quebec, support.

But change brings risk and begs a question. The risk is Afghanistan becomes synonymous in Canadian minds with Iraq. The question is: Why did we go if we're not willing to stay to do the job?

If Karzai's army and police aren't ready to take up NATO slack then the differences between Afghanistan and Iraq will blur and support for the mission will plummet long before Afghanistan can stand alone.

That sort of thing happens when itineraries are chosen less for the destination and more to please an important fellow traveller.

James Travers is a national affairs columnist. Copyright 2007 Torstar Syndication Services.

South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Police find bullet-ridden body of Christian aid worker a few hours after Taliban executes him

IDNUMBER 200707260026

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A12

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / A family member of one of the kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan cries while watching a news report on Wednesday. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; ARMAMENTS; NUCLEAR REACTORS

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Nasrat Shoaib

SOURCE: Agence France-Presse

WORD COUNT: 465

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan, — A deadline imposed on 22 surviving South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban passed early today, hours after the rebels demanded a prisoner swap after killing their first hostage.

There was no immediate news on the fate of the abductees following the deadline and a leading Taliban figure called for more foreign kidnappings.

The South Korean government confirmed the death and appealed for the other hostages to be released unharmed.

"One of our citizens kidnapped in Afghanistan has been confirmed to have been killed on July 25," foreign ministry spokesman Cho Hee-yong told a press briefing today.

"The government once again urges [the kidnappers] to immediately release the hostages and we will continue to do our utmost to win their safe release," the foreign ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the Yonhap news agency.

Police found the bullet-riddled body of the Korean, one of a group of Christian aid workers, a few hours after the Taliban said they had executed him because talks to secure the release of eight insurgent prisoners had stalled.

"We killed one of the Koreans today because the government is not being honest in talks," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP by telephone from an unknown location on Wednesday.

The police chief of Ghazni province, where the Taliban are holding the Koreans, said the badly wounded body was dumped in a remote area several miles from the nearest road.

"We've recovered the body. It had 10 bullet holes," police commander Alishah Ahmadzai said.

In an alarming intervention, the Islamist militia's apparent new military commander used a television

South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Police find bullet-ridden body of Christian aid worker a few

interview to urge rebels to kidnap as many foreigners as possible.

Speaking to Britain's Channel 4 News from an undisclosed location along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, Mansour Dadullah, who took over from his brother Mullah Dadullah killed by coalition troops in May, also said that the Taliban planned to use children to behead hostages.

He advocated kidnapping foreigners to trade them for Taliban captives — Dadullah himself was released from prison by Afghanistan in exchange for a kidnapped Italian journalist earlier this year.

"Of course, kidnapping is a very successful policy and I order all my mujahedeen to kidnap foreigners of any nationality wherever they find them and then we should do the same kind of deal," Dadullah told the broadcaster.

As tensions mounted on Wednesday, the head of the government delegation negotiating the release of the Koreans, Waheedullah Mujadadi, said the Taliban had opened fire on him in a buffer zone between Taliban and government controlled areas.

"I managed to escape the attack. They were trying to kidnap me as well or kill me," he said. The militants set the Wednesday deadline for Afghan authorities to accede to their demands for the release of the jailed Taliban fighters.

"We call on the South Korean government, parliament and its people to pressure the Afghan government to accept our demands or we'll kill more hostages after the deadline passes," Ahmadi said.

An Afghan governor and the Taliban both denied a report by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, quoting an unidentified government official in Seoul, that eight of the Koreans were freed Wednesday.

South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Taliban executes leader of Christian aid group; remaining 22 hostages still believed to be alive

IDNUMBER 200707260025
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final C
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / A family member of one of the kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan cries while watching a news report on Wednesday. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: KABUL
BYLINE: John Hemming
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 457

KABUL — The Taliban have not killed the remaining 22 South Korean Christian volunteers held hostage in Afghanistan despite a deadline passing, a senior official said today.

"I was awake all night and if the Taliban had killed any of them I would have known," said General Ali Shah Ahmadzai, provincial police chief of Ghazni province where the 22 remaining hostages are being held and where one was killed on Wednesday.

The Taliban said the Afghan government had been given until late Wednesday night (2030 GMT) to agree to exchange the group for eight imprisoned rebels, but the deadline passed without word from the kidnappers.

"No, they have not killed any of the hostages and we are trying to contact the Taliban for resumption of talks," the Ghazni police chief told Reuters.

Earlier reports by some media that eight hostages had been released have been denied by officials, negotiators and a spokesman for the Taliban.

The fate of the 22 Christian volunteers had hung in the balance overnight, after the rebels shot dead one hostage and dumped his bullet-ridden body near where the group was seized last week.

He was identified in Seoul as the group's leader, Bae Hyung-kyu, a pastor who would have turned 42 on the day he was murdered.

South Korea's government strongly condemned the murder of Bae, calling it an unforgivable atrocity.

"The government and the people of South Korea condemn the kidnapping of innocent civilians and the atrocity of harming a human life," said Baek Jong-chun, presidential chief national security adviser.

"Harming innocent civilians can never be justified and we will never forgive this kind of inhumane act," he said in a nationally televised statement.

South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Taliban executes leader of Christian aid group; remaining 22 hostages still believed to be alive

The Taliban accused the government and South Korean negotiators of failing to act in good faith after Kabul rejected demands for eight named rebels to be freed from prison.

Initially the Taliban had also insisted South Korea withdraw all its troops serving with an international force in Afghanistan — something Seoul had planned to do before the end of the year anyway.

"Since Kabul's administration did not listen to our demand and did not free our prisoners, the Taliban shot dead a male Korean hostage," Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters by telephone from an unknown location.

Bae had been killed in a desert area close to where the group — 18 women and five men — were abducted on the main road south from Kabul last week.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has pledged not to swap prisoners for hostages after being criticized at home and abroad for releasing five Taliban from jail in March in exchange for an Italian reporter.

The president and ministers have remained silent throughout the latest hostage ordeal, but Seoul said it would soon dispatch a special envoy to step up coordination with Kabul.

The kidnappings have made travel outside major cities risky for the thousands of foreign aid workers and U.N. staff in Afghanistan and may weaken support for military involvement among the more than 30 nations with troops in the country.

The past 18 months has seen rising violence in Afghanistan, with daily clashes between

Taliban insurgents and Afghan and foreign troops. Suicide and roadside bomb attacks have spread to areas previously considered safe.

South Korean hostage killed as deadline passes; Taliban executes leader of Christian aid group; remaining

Taliban murder first Korean hostage

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PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Nasrat Shoaib
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 478

A deadline imposed on 22 surviving South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban passed early Thursday, hours after the abductors demanded a prisoner swap after killing their first hostage.

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"We've recovered the body. It had 10 bullet holes," police commander Alishah Ahmadzai said.

In an alarming intervention, the Islamist militia's apparent new military commander used a television interview to urge rebels to kidnap as many foreigners as possible.

Speaking to Britain's Channel 4 News from an undisclosed location along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, Mansour Dadullah, who took over from his brother Mullah Dadullah killed by coalition troops in May, also said the Taliban planned to use children to behead hostages.

He advocated kidnapping foreigners to trade them for Taliban captives — Dadullah himself was released from prison by Afghanistan in exchange for a kidnapped Italian journalist earlier this year.

"Of course, kidnapping is a very successful policy and I order all my mujahedeen to kidnap foreigners of any nationality wherever they find them and then we should do the same kind of deal," Dadullah told the broadcaster.

As tensions mounted on Wednesday, the head of the government delegation negotiating the release of the Koreans, Waheedullah Mujadadi, said the Taliban had opened fire on him in a buffer zone between Taliban and government controlled areas.

"I managed to escape the attack. They were trying to kidnap me as well or kill me," he said.

The Taliban, who were ousted from power in Afghanistan by U.S.-led forces in late 2001, set the Wednesday deadline for Afghan authorities to accede to their demands for the release of the jailed Taliban fighters.

"We call on the South Korean government, parliament and its people to pressure the Afghan government to accept our demands or we'll kill more hostages after the deadline passes," Ahmadi said.

An Afghan governor and the Taliban both denied a report by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, quoting an unidentified government official in Seoul, that eight of the Koreans were freed Wednesday.

"Talks continue, but no one has been freed so far," said Ghazni governor Mirajuddin Pattan.

Changing lives, one drop at a time

IDNUMBER 200707260177
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
COLUMN: In Afghanistan
KEYWORDS: DISEASES; VACCINES
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 598

The traffic jam at this border crossing is a surreal lineup of emaciated donkeys pulling carts filled with used tires, parent-pushed wheelbarrows transporting malnourished children, and peeling jingle trucks threatening to topple under the weight of their lopsided cargo.

This is the main port of entry between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a chaotic and dangerous gateway for opium exports and al-Qaeda imports that makes most of the Third World look civilized.

But Canada is leading the charge to stop a different plague from sneaking across the political boundary between the two filthy, impoverished regions.

Contaminated water, open sewers and unsanitary conditions make this region one of the last breeding grounds for polio, a potentially paralyzing viral infection on the verge of global eradication. There are four countries in the world where active cases are being discovered, and this border straddles two of them. India and Nigeria complete the list.

But while Canada struggles to wipe out the Taliban, it appears to be having greater success eliminating polio, with a \$5 million Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contribution to a program run by UNICEF and Rotary International.

Modest as that sounds, it makes Canada by far the most generous of the international security force countries here.

The border program swung into gear last year when Afghanistan recorded a sudden spike of 29 polio cases, after seeing only a single-digit count the year before. So far 2007 has seen two cases, both in this area.

The vaccine is simple enough to deliver. Two-drop doses delivered by mouth two or three times to children under six puts resistance to the highly infectious disease in place for life.

The trick is finding the kids and convincing their parents to allow the vaccination to be administered amid a campaign of misinformation and fear. Some elders and religious figures whisper that the vaccine is ineffective or causes impotence.

The free-flowing border crossing seemed a logical catchment area. In periodic blitzes of this city, 7,000 health workers go door-to-door looking for young children to vaccinate.

On my Tuesday morning visit, the log sheet showed the half dozen workers, each paid \$3 per day, had already inoculated more than 200 babies and toddlers. The parents seemed remarkably calm when officials pried open their children's mouths without warning or permission papers and delivered the drops. After spending an hour monitoring the program, I didn't see one parent refuse the vaccination, although plenty of kids were raising howls of protest.

All told, the program delivers about 10,000 doses a month at a border open 12 hours per day. After receiving the drops, each child has its finger marked with a black stain that supposedly lasts for a week until a second dose is given.

"It's important to get every child because 1,000 others can be infected from every confirmed case," says UNICEF southern director Sam Mawunganidze.

In my view, this initiative is precisely the sort of humanitarian effort Canadians are talking about when they tell pollsters their support for the military mission is contingent upon improving Afghan living conditions.

While CIDA has, rightly or wrongly, been criticized for being slow off the mark in Kandahar, it seems to be finding niches where modest dollars, funnelled through established agencies, are having a larger impact.

The problem is that active agencies are in decline here, scared off by security concerns, even while demand for their help is escalating, says Mawunganidze. That makes it a challenge for CIDA, which prefers to contract out its good deeds locally, to find partners for its programs.

But delivering a big bang for our foreign aid bucks, in tandem with an effective show of military force, is the only way this mission can hope to have a happy ending. There are signs Canada is starting to make waves here — even if it's only one drop at a time.

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Council dodges decal fallout

IDNUMBER 200707260167

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: The Editorial Page

PAGE: A18

KEYWORDS: INFRASTRUCTURE; PROVINCIAL MUNICIPAL FINANCES; MUNICIPAL TAXES

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 266

The decal debacle at City Hall is a reminder that municipal politics and politicized issues don't mix. Calgary council should be commended for side-stepping the political landmine that blew up in Toronto, which flip-flopped on the Support Our Troops ribbons.

Toronto initially agreed to put the stickers on emergency vehicles, resulting in a spectacular reversal in a later vote on extending their use.

A public backlash, including threats from tourists to boycott the "centre of the universe," led councillors to unanimously agree the stickers should stay, even though they originally decided to have the decals removed.

As Calgary's Mayor Dave Bronconnier pointed out, taxpayer-funded vehicles aren't meant to be used as billboards to promote a message not all taxpayers are comfortable with.

Some argue the decal's wording "Support Our Troops" is a benign enough statement for patriotic Canadians to support.

Perhaps, however, the slogan's underlying message is one directed at Canadian troops in Afghanistan. With soldiers dying and in harm's way daily in their fight against Taliban insurgents, the mission has polarized Canadians.

During debate over whether to accept a donation of 5,000 decals from a local businessman to be displayed on municipal vehicles, Bronconnier skilfully offered an alternative to council: Accept the donation, but sell the yellow ribbons at city facilities to raise money for military families. Aldermen agreed.

In the end, the donor revoked his offer, saying he will help families himself by donating the decals directly to the Calgary Military Family Resource Centre.

However, the message isn't lost. Municipal property is non-partisan and must be seen to remain neutral. Calgary took a strong position on a contentious issue and found a peaceful resolution, thanks to the mayor's light-bulb moment.

Anti-polio program shows tiny drops could add up to tide of change

IDNUMBER 200707260131
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
COLUMN: Don Martin
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Don Martin, CanWest News Service / A child is administered the polio vaccine in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: DISEASES; VACCINES
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 606

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – The traffic jam at this border-crossing is a surreal lineup of emaciated donkeys pulling carts filled with used tires, parents pushing wheelbarrows transporting malnourished children and peeling jingle trucks threatening to topple under the weight of their lopsided cargo.

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Killing of Korean denounced; Seoul sends envoy to Afghanistan to discuss release of other hostages

IDNUMBER 200707260128

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Early

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Bae Ho-jung, the father of Bae Hyung-Kyu, rests his head on a Bible in Jeju, South Korea, after learning that his son was killed by the Taliban. Kidnappers threatened to kill the other 22 hostages if their demands were not met. ; Photo: Journal Stock / Bae Hyung-Kyu ;

KEYWORDS: FAMILY REUNIONS

DATELINE: SEOUL

SOURCE: Agence France-Presse; With files from Reuters

WORD COUNT: 501

SEOUL – South Korea today bitterly denounced the killing of one of its hostages by Afghanistan's Taliban and said it was sending a senior presidential envoy to try to free the 22 remaining captives.

"Along with the Korean people, the government strongly protests their act of brutality in killing an innocent civilian," said a statement from the office of President Roh Moo-Hyun.

"The Korean government clearly states that the organization responsible for the abduction will be held accountable for taking the life of a Korean citizen.

"The killing of an innocent citizen cannot be justified under any circumstance or for any reason, and any such inhumane act cannot be tolerated."

The foreign ministry identified the victim as Bae Hyung-Kyu, pastor of the Saem-Mul Presbyterian church and leader of the group of young aid workers — mostly women — who were seized last Thursday.

Bae, who was killed on his 42nd birthday, co-founded the church in 1998. He had done volunteer work in Bangladesh in April and planned to visit Africa to help the poor after the Afghanistan mission.

Bae, a married man with a nine-year-old daughter, was from a devout Christian family from the island province of Jeju. He went to theology school and became a pastor about six years ago.

"He was close to many members of the church, because he was always generous enough to help with the prayers of each of the 300 members of the youth division," Yonhap news quoted an acquaintance as saying.

He is believed to have suffered from a respiratory ailment but he was well enough to lead the group abroad, a Saemmul church official said.

The government said Baek Jong-Chun, chief presidential secretary for foreign and security policy, would leave later today for Afghanistan as a special presidential envoy.

The South Koreans, in their 20s and 30s, were seized while en route from Kandahar to Kabul by bus. They were to provide free medical services in the wartorn nation.

Spokesmen for the Taliban have demanded the release of their own captives in exchange for the Koreans. They set a now-expired deadline of 2030 GMT Wednesday for Afghan authorities to accede to their demands, or see more Koreans killed.

Hope turned to grief late Wednesday for more than 1,000 people who gathered at the Saem-Mul church in Bundang just south of Seoul for an overnight prayer vigil.

First came an unconfirmed report, later denied by Afghan and Korean officials, that eight hostages had been freed.

Then the Taliban's announcement of Bae's killing was confirmed.

"No! No!" shouted some. Many others wept.

In the southern island of Jeju the victim's mother Lee Chang-Suk, 68, burst into tears at a church where she had spent the night in prayer when official confirmation came through.

The grief-stricken father, Bae Ho-Jung, 72, rested his head on a Bible on hearing the news at the church.

"I want to believe that it is a wrong report. I want to pray today," Yonhap news agency quoted him as saying before the official confirmation.

"It is so heartbreaking. Reverend Bae went out to do good but such a bad thing happened," a Saem-Mul church member told AFP on condition of anonymity.

About 20 relatives of the other abductees watched TV reports in the office of a church-affiliated group. Some cried in shock, calling out the names of their family members. Others fainted.

Bae is the third Korean victim of Islamic militants in as many years.

A translator for a Korean military supply provider for the U.S. army was beheaded in Iraq in 2004 by insurgents.

In February, a South Korean soldier at the U.S. Bagram air base in Afghanistan was killed in a bomb attack while U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney was visiting.

Killing of Korean denounced; Seoul sends envoy to Afghanistan to discuss release of other hostages

IDNUMBER 200707260127

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Bae Ho-jung, the father of Bae Hyung-Kyu, rests his head on a Bible in Jeju, South Korea, after learning that his son was killed by the Taliban. Kidnappers threatened to kill the other 22 hostages if their demands were not met. ; Photo: Journal Stock / Bae Hyung-Kyu ;

KEYWORDS: FAMILY REUNIONS

DATELINE: SEOUL

SOURCE: Agence France-Presse; With files from Reuters

WORD COUNT: 496

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Taliban kill South Korean hostage; Remaining captives will die if demands are not met, they say

IDNUMBER 200707260112

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A10

Photo: Yonhap, Reuters / This picture released last week in Seoul via Yonhap News Agency shows the group of South Korean Christians before leaving for Afghanistan.

ILLUSTRATION: Taliban kidnappers killed one of 23 South Korean hostages and will slaughter the rest if their demands are not met, a Taliban spokesman said. The face of one of the group was obscured in the original photo for reasons that were not clear. ;

DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Francis Silvaggio

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 417

KABUL, Afghanistan — The hostage standoff in Afghanistan took a critical turn yesterday as police recovered the bullet-ridden body of one of the 23 South Korean aid workers snatched by the Taliban last week.

"We killed one of the Koreans today because the government is not being honest in talks," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

The rebels had briefly claimed that the man was shot because he had fallen ill and the hostage-takers were unable to get him to a hospital. Police commander Ali Shah Ahmadzai, however, said the man had been shot 10 times in the head, chest and stomach.

By late afternoon, South Korea's Yonhap news agency was reporting that eight of the hostages had been released, but both the government and the terrorists denied the reports.

The Korean evangelical Christian missionaries, including 18 women, were abducted last Thursday when their bus was stopped along the main highway connecting Kabul and Kandahar.

In all, 26 foreigners have been captured by rebels over a single week. Nevertheless, heading into yesterday, there was optimism among government officials and negotiators about the chances of a peaceful resolution to the standoff. South Korean officials were said to be meeting with Taliban rebels, who have been agitating for the release of eight insurgent prisoners.

Still, the tension escalated throughout the day as the Taliban's deadline for the prisoner release approached.

"We call on the South Korean government, parliament and its people to pressure the Afghan government to accept our demands or we'll kill more hostages after the deadline passes," Ahmadi said after the first Korean hostage was executed.

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Koreans, said the Taliban had opened fire on him in a buffer zone between Taliban and government-controlled areas.

"I managed to escape the attack. They were trying to kidnap me as well or kill me," he said. Other hostages, however, were more fortunate.

A Danish reporter and his Afghan companion were abducted overnight Tuesday while sleeping in the province of Kunar, but were released several hours later.

"I was in a house and there was a brief exchange of fire. Following the exchange, armed Taliban took me," Khawja Najibullah, a Dane of Afghan origin, told reporters after his release.

"I told them 'I am a Muslim, I pray.' Then they freed me," he added.

Officials, meanwhile, continue to try to secure the release of a German hostage, one of two foreigners taken in Ghazni last Thursday. One man has been killed and the rebels say the surviving one is seriously ill and slipping in and out of consciousness due to diabetes. The Koreans represent the biggest group of foreigners to be abducted during the Taliban's insurgency.

Canadian aid helps cripple polio in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707260104
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 573

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Taliban kills one of 23 hostages

IDNUMBER 200707260043
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B9
DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Francis Silvaggio
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 444

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The Koreans represent the biggest group of foreigners to be abducted during the Taliban's insurgency, which has been running for nearly six years.

Any prisoner exchange would run counter to President Hamid Karzai's pledge not to allow the practice after his government in March freed five Taliban militants in exchange for an Italian reporter.

Taliban claim to have killed 1 South Korean hostage while freeing others

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 130

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) _ Taliban militants claim to have shot and killed one South Korean hostage on Wednesday, while a group of abductees was freed and taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Purported Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi claimed that one of the hostages had been shot and killed around 4 p.m. local time, and a police official who asked not to be identified said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Some of the 23 South Korean hostages, meanwhile, had been freed and were taken to a U.S. base in Ghazni, two western officials said on condition of anonymity. The officials did not know how many had been freed.

The South Korean news agency Yonhap said eight Koreans had been freed.

Still no sign of missing brother of B.C. soldier killed this month in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 145

CLINTON, B.C. (CP) _ Another day of searching in the B.C. Interior has failed to turn up any sign of the missing brother of an Abbotsford, B.C., soldier killed this month in Afghanistan.

Clinton RCMP say police dogs and rescue teams expanded the search Tuesday around Loon Lake, where 26-year-old Beric Bason was last seen on Sunday.

Cpl. Pete Bes says police and searchers were also on the lake checking the shoreline, the shallows and the south side of the lake which is only accessible by boat.

They also worked from the Loon Lake Resort and expanded the search up the mountain sides in the rugged terrain on the north side of the lake.

Bes says police are also continuing to follow leads from possible sightings of the man but no team dive has been brought in to search the lake.

Bason is the brother of Master Cpl. Colin Bason, who was one of six Canadian soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan three weeks ago.

Anti-Afghan sentiment prompts Quebec City restaurant to opt for name change

DATE: 2007.07.25
KEYWORDS: BUSINESS FOOD RETAIL POLITICS
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 365

MONTREAL (CP) _ The war in Afghanistan has far-reaching consequences, right down to a Quebec City restaurant owner who is feeling the heat of an antiwar sentiment in this province.

Tired of verbal abuse being directed at himself and his restaurant, Ahmad Nasranee decided it was easier to change the name of Le Kaboul Restaurant than put up with more slurs.

“In the last six months, I've had some problems,” Nasranee said in a telephone interview. “Some people didn't like the restaurant name and they said unappreciated words like ‘Leave Quebec, go back to Kabul’.”

So about 10 days ago, Le Kaboul became Shahi Masala. So far, so good, Nasranee said Wednesday.

The verbal tirades would include people yelling into the restaurant or at Nasranee directly on the terrace. It's an incident that would repeat itself as often as eight times a month, Nasranee said.

“I never thought it would happen to me,” Nasranee said.

Le Kaboul, which Nasranee opened in November 2005, has always had good business. But the problems started as Quebec soldiers began to be deployed in Afghanistan.

“People made reservations and when soldiers would die, they'd call to cancel their reservations,” said Nasranee, who said he felt as he was being found guilty for the soldiers' deaths.

“I felt bad about that but it's not my fault,” Nasranee said.

Quebec City is near CFB Valcartier, home to the famed Royal 22nd Regiment which is also known as the Van Doos. Quebec-based soldiers are making their way to Kandahar, with another wave leaving on Wednesday.

Nasranee says he thinks the media has a big role to play in the public's perception and that what is shown on television paints all Afghans with the same brush.

“But all people are not the same,” Nasranee said.

Eric Lanoix, who runs the popular Khyber Pass restaurant in Montreal, says neither of his establishments have encountered any problems.

His father-in-law, who founded the restaurants, was concerned there would be some backlash after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

“But people were very courteous and there was no problems,” Lanoix said.

Despite his personal experience, Nasranee does not believe he's been the victim of a hate crime, attributing the problem to just a handful of people.

Nasranee came to Canada from Afghanistan in 2000 and then sponsored his wife, sister and two brothers to come here.

He said his brother had cautioned him not to name the restaurant after their hometown because some people would take offense.

It cost him about \$12,000 to change the name of the restaurant but it's not a big deal, Nasranee said.

“My regular customers feel bad that I had to change the name of the restaurant,” he said, “But I just wanted to buy myself some peace.”

Canadian major downplays notion of rampant linguistic tension in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 393

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) _ While Canada's two solitudes may exist to a certain degree in Afghanistan, anglophone and francophone soldiers are united when it comes to their ultimate objective, says a Canadian commander at the multinational base in Kandahar.

“It's like a football team,” said Maj. Richard Collin, commanding officer of C Company of the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

“There's the offence and the defence. The two don't mix but, as they want to win, they work toward the same goal.”

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Collin downplayed the notion that linguistic tensions are surfacing because of the arrival in southern Afghanistan of hundreds of French-speaking soldiers from Quebec.

“Of course there are some people who won't want anything to do with the other group because they don't feel comfortable in English or French,” Collin said.

“Sometimes, people feel embarrassed and are scared people will make fun of them, so they just stay in their own little corner.”

More and more, French is being heard on the Kandahar base as the Van Doos, based at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City, continue pouring in to the war-torn country.

The new arrivals are not the first Quebec-based soldiers to serve in Afghanistan. A small company of 156 has been working at the provincial reconstruction team base since November. And members of the Van Doos were among the first Canadians to arrive in Afghanistan at the start of the war.

Some observers have raised concerns that relations between the francophone soldiers and their Afghan counterparts may be affected by the dearth of French-Pashtu interpreters.

Collin admitted that Canadian Forces have not yet found any such interpreters but said that should not pose a major problem.

“We always manage to get our message across,” noting that some of the Pashtu interpreters used so far have not spoken fluent English either.

Collin said there is some joshing between anglophone and francophone soldiers that could offend some sensibilities, but “it's in our interest to get along.”

None of the soldiers interviewed on the base mentioned any linguistic-related incidents and some seemed amused that news of French-English tensions had surfaced thousands of kilometres from home.

Maj. Christian Beaudin of the Royal 22nd Regiment said there may be some ``friction" between the two groups but added he doesn't see anything dangerous in that.

``It's all part of the game," he said, smiling. ``The Francos on one side, the Anglos on the other, they're going to have a go at each other. But that's normal. It's part of our culture."

Cpl. Jean Provost couldn't quite understand what all the fuss was about.

``Personally, I've never felt cast aside or despised because I'm French," Provost said. ``Anyway, we wouldn't let ourselves be pushed around."

War at Home Advisory, July 25, 2007

DATE: 2007.07.25
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 928

UNDATED EDITORS:

The Canadian Press began moving a series of stories on Sunday that look at the impact of Canada's military operations in Afghanistan on domestic life.

The series, called the War at Home, explores the issues facing families of soldiers who have been deployed to Afghanistan and the effect both physically and psychologically that combat has had on military personnel when they return home.

While these stories are being sent out as a series, they are also suitable for use as individual spot news items and features. They also stand for use in weekend editions being planned for July 28 and 29.

All stories from the series, which runs from Sunday to Wednesday, will move by noon EDT.

And a War at Home graphic logo is moving to help tie the stories together should you wish to use them in series form.

These stories will be illustrated with CP Photos, Graphics, Video and QuickFacts.

Here is a list of stories in the series with the dates they move.

Sunday, July 22:

UNDATED _ About once a week, David would quietly leave his office, drive a half-hour away and change out of his uniform before sitting down with a doctor for a regular appointment. For months, the young soldier ventured far from his military base in Edmonton to seek help for a problem that had robbed him of his sense of humour and left him haunted by memories of comrade's bodies being loaded into helicopters in the deserts of Afghanistan. It was a hassle, but was the only way he felt he could get the treatment he needed without facing repercussions from a military he and others say is sometimes failing soldiers traumatized by the rigours of war. 2,200 words. By Alison Auld. With CP Photos, CP Graphic, QuickFacts. BC-War-at-Home-Stress.

Monday, July 23:

OROMOCTO, N.B. _ In the homes of two military families in New Brunswick, clocks serve both as timekeepers and imaginary pathways to the daily lives of loved ones in a dangerous and faraway land. Kim Timon and Tina McKellar keep clocks in their homes near Canadian Forces Base Gagetown set permanently to Afghanistan time so they and their children can visualize what their husbands or fathers might be doing while stationed in Kandahar. ``For the kids especially, it's really neat to have a clock on the wall so they always know what time it is for daddy," says Timon looking at a wall clock with the word ``Afghanistan" printed beneath it. ``They get up in the morning and they say, `We're just waking up and daddy's day is just ending.' It keeps us all in touch with what he is doing." 1,000 words. By Chris Morris. With CP Photos, Video. BC-War-at-Home-Families.

TORONTO _ Efforts by the Canadian Forces to boost the number of women, visible minorities, aboriginals and disabled people within its ranks has resulted in the military losing ground in finding recruits from those designated groups. The military's employment equity plan, obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act, reveals few jobs within the military are near ``acceptable" representation of women, visible minorities, Aboriginals and people with disabilities. 1,000 words. By Steve Rennie. With CP Graphic. War-at-Home-Recruits.

Tuesday, July 24:

TORONTO _ Cpl. Denver Williams has an almost clinical way of describing how the shrapnel pierced the knuckle of his left pinky finger and exited through his palm, leaving him unable to grip a hammer or even make a fist. He removes a beige apparatus from his forearm. It has wires he can tighten like guitar strings to pull his ring and pinky fingers toward his palm. Gingerly, and with effort, he curls his ring finger. ``That's about it right there, and that's with aid," Williams says. These small triumphs help Williams, 30, through his recovery from a suicide bomber's attack that made a claw of his hand and nearly cost him both legs. 1,000 words. By Steve Rennie. With CP Photo, Graphic, Video. BC-War-at-Home-Wounded.

OTTAWA _ Soldiers returning to civilian life after being wounded in Afghanistan face the possibility of being unemployed and without medical benefits for months following their discharge because of a gap in the bureaucracy between the military and Veterans Affairs Canada. Applications for programs and services under the newly enacted Veterans Charter are not considered until after a soldier, sailor or aircrew member is released and that ``typically results in a delay of several months before eligibility is determined and benefits are received," says documents released to The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act. 1,000 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-War-at-Home-Benefits.

Wednesday, July 25:

UNDATED _ It's the smallest tasks that Charmaine Tedford sometimes finds the most difficult. Shovelling snow, making dinner or helping with math homework were all things her husband Sgt. Darcy Tedford would handle on the homefront before he was killed while serving in Afghanistan. For Julie Mason, it's hearing her three year old say she wants to die so she can be reunited in heaven with her dad, Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh, who died almost a year ago in the country. Whether mundane or heartbreaking, they are just some of the challenges a growing number of military widows are facing as they adjust to life without their spouses. 1,000 words. By Alison Auld. See CP Photo. BC-War-at-Home-Widows.

If you have any questions about CP's War at Home series, please contact Atlantic Bureau Chief Kevin Ward at (902) 422-8496 or by e-mail at [kward\(at\)cp.org](mailto:kward(at)cp.org).

CP HALIFAX

INDEX:Defence, International, Social

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 146

CLINTON, B.C. – Another day of searching in the B.C. Interior has failed to turn up any sign of the missing brother of an Abbotsford, B.C., soldier killed this month in Afghanistan.

Clinton RCMP say police dogs and rescue teams expanded the search Tuesday around Loon Lake, where 26-year-old Beric Bason was last seen on Sunday.

Cpl. Pete Bes says police and searchers were also on the lake checking the shoreline, the shallows and the south side of the lake which is only accessible by boat.

They also worked from the Loon Lake Resort and expanded the search up the mountain sides in the rugged terrain on the north side of the lake.

Bes says police are also continuing to follow leads from possible sightings of the man but no team dive has been brought in to search the lake.

Bason is the brother of Master Cpl. Colin Bason, who was one of six Canadian soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan three weeks ago.

(BN)

Afghan–Kidnappings–Update (details on released hostages)

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 68

KABUL, Afghanistan — Six South Korean women and two men have been released by the Taliban and taken to the main U–S base in Afghanistan's Ghazni province.

However, Afghan police say they have recovered the bullet–riddled body of one of the 23 South Korean aid workers taken hostage last Thursday.

Police say the male victim had 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach.

The group was kidnapped while riding a bus on the Kabul–Kandahar highway.

(AP)

RxH

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Taliban militants claim they shot and killed one South Korean hostage today while a group of abductees was

DATE: 2007.07.25

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 93

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Taliban militants claim they shot and killed one South Korean hostage today while a group of abductees was freed and taken to a U-S military base.

A police official who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation says militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Western officials say some of the 23 Korean hostages, meanwhile, have been freed and were taken to a U-S base in Ghazni.

The officials did not know how many had been freed, but a South Korean news agency says eight Koreans have been freed.

(AP)

SAF

Plan to upgrade tanks hits glitch; No Canadian companies able to quickly revamp used armoured vehicles destined for Afghanistan

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A21
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 232

The Conservative government's \$200-million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag.

No company in Canada is able to quickly revamp up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles to meet the rigours of Afghanistan so some work may be done overseas.

"Obviously, we'd like to do as much of it in Canada as possible but, of course, we currently don't have any capability in Canada to do heavy armoured vehicle work, and so there is consultation with industry taking place," says Dan Ross, an assistant deputy minister at National Defence.

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Works Minister Michael Fortier announced in April the army's aging Leopard 1 C2 tanks would be replaced for \$650 million.

Under the program, Canada would borrow 20 armoured vehicles from the Germans and buy 100 used tanks from the Netherlands. A month later, O'Connor revealed an additional \$650 million, long-term support contract – bringing the pricetag to \$1.3 billion.

As part of the initial purchase, about \$200 million was set aside to upgrade the used tanks with air conditioning and armour to withstand roadside bombs. O'Connor and Fortier said Canadian industry would see great benefits.

While the government promised open bidding for the upgrades and maintenance, only one company, Rheinmetall Canada in Montreal, appears capable of the job.

The army has been operating 30-year-old Leopard 1 tanks in Afghanistan, but the absence of air conditioning and a dwindling supply of spare parts forced Ottawa into the unusual arrangement.

Ottawa

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DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 319

Mulroney sings

Harper's praises

Former prime minister Brian Mulroney said yesterday history would record Stephen Harper's Conservative government as very successful in its 18 months in office.

"Judging from Prime Minister Harper's first – I guess I could call it 'term' in office, in the sense that there appears to be a break coming – I think he's done exceptionally well," Mulroney said, notwithstanding the Tories' public support has stalled at around 30 per cent. "In fact, I would say that his government is probably off to the best start of any government that I can remember in my lifetime."

Mulroney, 68, was in Ottawa to tape interviews for the September release of his memoirs.

Alberta

Health board fired after report critical of safety

Health Minister Dave Hancock fired the board of Alberta's east central health region after a report of compromised patient safety.

The Health Quality Council yesterday released its findings of alarming equipment sterilization deficiencies and the outbreak of an antibiotic-resistant superbug at St. Joseph's General Hospital in Vegreville.

The 25-bed hospital was closed in March for weeks except to emergency patients, and hundreds were tested for exposure to HIV or hepatitis from unsterilized equipment.

Saskatchewan

School bus driver to face preliminary hearing

Donna Gerlinsky, 63, charged with impaired and dangerous driving of a Saskatoon school bus, will face a preliminary hearing in February.

Police say a driver was taking children home from school in May when witnesses allege the bus went off its route and was driven wildly. Children had posted "Help, call 911" signs in the bus windows.

Quebec

Ottawa

Anti-Afghan sentiment prompts name change

The war in Afghanistan has far-reaching consequences for a Quebec City restaurant owner.

Tired of slurs, Ahmad Nasranee decided to rename Le Kaboul Restaurant to Shahi Masala. "In the last six months, I've had some problems. Some people didn't like the restaurant name and they said unappreciated words like 'Leave Quebec, go back to Kabul'."

Quebec City is near CFB Valcartier, home to the Van Doos troops, now en route to Kandahar.

Ontario

Police issue warrant

in attempted murder

Stratford police have a man in custody and are looking for another after an alleged murder attempt.

Police say they found a man, 46, severely beaten with serious stab wounds early yesterday. He is in serious condition in hospital.

Police have issued a Canada-wide warrant for Patrick Atchison, 26.

From the Star's wire services

Ailing Korean hostage slain; Visitors warned not to leave Afghan capital after rebel commander orders attacks on foreigners

IDNUMBER 200707260078
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA01
ILLUSTRATION: ap photo A relative of a South Korean kidnapped in Afghanistan weeps in Seoul yesterday after TV news reports confirmed that one of the 23 hostages was dead. ;
BYLINE: Amir Shah
SOURCE: Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 618

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a male hostage yesterday, one of 23 South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban last week.

The Taliban had threatened to kill the hostages, abducted last Thursday, unless its demand for the release of 23 jailed militants was met.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings – including an attempt to abduct a Danish citizen yesterday – police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The announcement came as the Taliban's new military commander, Mansour Dadullah, said its fighters have been instructed to kill as many foreigners as possible, Agence France-Presse reported. He advocated kidnapping foreigners to trade them for Taliban captives – Dadullah himself was released from prison by Afghanistan in exchange for a kidnapped Italian journalist earlier this year.

The body of the South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes – to the head, chest and stomach – in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where the group was seized last week while riding a bus, according to a police report.

An Afghan police official, who asked not to be identified, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

A South Korean public broadcaster, KBS, identified the victim as 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu.

A Western official said reports had circulated yesterday that eight of the hostages had been released. But he said those reports had never been confirmed.

Marajudin Pathan, the governor of Ghazni province, said the militants were still holding the remaining 22 South Korean hostages.

"No one has been released, and there has not been any exchange," Pathan told Associated Press over the phone. "They are still in Taliban custody."

Ailing Korean hostage slain; Visitors warned not to leave Afghan capital after rebel commander orders attacks on foreigners

Pathan said authorities were in contact with the kidnappers early today trying to secure the Koreans' freedom.

A "last deadline" of early this morning passed without word from the kidnappers or the Afghan government.

The militants gave a list of eight Taliban prisoners who they want released in exchange for eight Koreans, Pathan said.

The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the release of the South Koreans.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm this account.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright.

The captives, including 18 women, were kidnapped while on a bus trip through Ghazni province on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to South Koreans and to block their entry into the country.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan.

It also stressed that the abducted Koreans were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war–ravaged country.

Two Germans were also kidnapped last week.

One was found dead and the other apparently remains captive.

A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

The unidentified man "was close to being caught but managed to get away and reach a local police station," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ole Neustrup said.

The Dane was first reported to be German but that report was false, he said.

The series of recent kidnappings prompted the Afghan government to forbid foreigners living in Kabul from leaving the city without police permission.

Police said officials stationed at checkpoints at the city's main gates would stop foreigners from leaving the capital unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance of their travel plans, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

Elsewhere, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said a soldier was killed in eastern Afghanistan yesterday by a rocket–propelled grenade.

ISAF didn't release the soldier's nationality, but the majority of troops in the eastern area are American.

Ailing Korean hostage slain; Visitors warned not to leave Afghan capital after rebel commander ordered attacks

Britain said one of its soldiers was killed and two others injured when an explosion struck their vehicle in southern Helmand province yesterday.

The U.S.-led coalition said 20 suspected Taliban militants were killed yesterday after a failed ambush on coalition and Afghan troops in volatile Kandahar province.

A 'wonderful' man, a simple life; Afghan chose Canada 'for peace,' did not know man who burst into his home and killed him

IDNUMBER 200707260035
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
ILLUSTRATION: Abdul Raqib Qadiri held two jobs and sent money to relatives.;
BYLINE: Robyn Doolittle
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 385

After the Taliban kidnapped his brother, Abdul Raqib Qadiri fled to Canada as a refugee. Last week, tragedy found Qadiri once again.

Qadiri, 42, was slain in his east Toronto apartment. His young killer, a neighbour Qadiri did not know, took his own life shortly after.

"He was a wonderful man who led a simple life. His only crime was being in the wrong place at the wrong time," said Qadiri's friend, Aaron Amadi, alongside grieving family in Pickering.

"He came to Canada for peace and he deserves to be remembered," said Amadi, 23

It was initially unclear if Qadiri knew his assailant, Srigajananth Srinivasan. But a week-long investigation indicates Qadiri was an innocent victim.

Police told Qadiri's family Srinivasan, 20, suffered from severe depression and had a breakdown before the July 17 assault. That day, Srinivasan ran out of his apartment and found Qadiri's door ajar.

A neighbour told the Qadiri family he saw the attack and called police. By the time he returned, Srinivasan had barricaded himself inside, still stabbing Qadiri. It was not until police arrived and tried to break down the door that Srinivasan ran to the window, kicked out the air conditioner and jumped to his death.

Qadiri was alive when police found him, but died shortly after.

"He was the most wonderful, caring, positive, generous person you could imagine. He didn't deserve this, but there's no one to blame. (His killer) was sick. I feel bad for his mother," said Nilufer Rassul, Qadiri's cousin.

Qadiri was born and raised in Afghanistan. He left briefly in the mid-'80s after getting a full scholarship at a prestigious Moscow university, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering.

In 1996, the Taliban took over Afghanistan and Qadiri fled. For four years, he lived underground in various countries, eventually reaching Canada in the fall of 2000.

A 'wonderful' man, a simple life; Afghan chose Canada 'for peace,' did not know man who burst into his home

Since then, he had been taking classes to have his degree recognized, working full-time as a construction worker and downtown hot dog vendor, sending \$300 a month to family in Kabul.

Now, Qadiri's friends worry his relatives back home will starve. "They relied on him for food. He was all they had," Amadi said.

Qadiri was "an average guy," who enjoyed spending time with friends and hoped to marry. One of his proudest moments, Amadi said, was earning Canadian citizenship last year.

Rassul, 23, remembers her cousin's generosity, saying no matter how rough things were for him, he always insisted on buying her family's groceries if he bumped into them in the store, or clothing if he ran into them in the mall.

Relatives have to struggle to cover funeral costs and plan to open a trust fund to accept donations. The family can be contacted at supportqadirifamily @ hotmail.com.

Same fight for Calgary, Toronto

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DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A06
BYLINE: Christopher Hume
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 551

Toronto's battles with the provincial and federal governments continue unabated, but in the meantime the war to stop civic decline has reached a critical point.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has made it clear he's in the enemy camp, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper is blissfully unaware that the fighting has started.

So far, it seems the odds are stacked against the city, but it's important to understand, this is happening right across Canada.

What has become apparent in the last decade is that Canada is a country with a reality problem. We are a nation divided; instead of trying fruitlessly to save Afghanistan, we should focus on the federation.

Toronto's woes are well known: the TTC must cut back, raise fares, or both. Cost of basic services such as water will increase. Even the untouchable police may be required to tighten their well-padded belts.

Sadly, local civic leaders are anything but. Listening to the nonsense spouted by councillors such as Denzil Minnan-Wong and Rob Ford, one can only cringe.

Similarly, the talk about the province "bailing out" Toronto is cringeworthy. There's no bailout here, only a need for Queen's Park to abide by its own rules and treat the city fairly and intelligently.

Lest anyone think we are alone in dealing with a premier who is years behind the times in his understanding of the world, consider the case of Calgary, the largest city in Canada's richest province, Alberta. It is also the place where Mayor David Bronconnier has been engaged in a pitched battle with the Ed Stelmach Conservative government for months.

The issues are instantly familiar: inadequate funding, Tory downloading and broken provincial promises. This in a province where the Heritage Fund has just hit \$16.6 billion, the largest amount in its 31-year history.

Is it any wonder the decades-old Tory dynasty in Alberta is threatened for the first time in recent memory? Indeed, Ralph Klein's old seat in Calgary went Liberal in the provincial election last month. The defeat was widely viewed as a rebuke of the Tories for their failure to deal with that city's needs.

Torontonians know all about provincial indifference. But having thrown out Ontario's Tories, they are stuck with a Liberal regime that has done little to undo damage inflicted by its predecessors.

In the meantime, Queen's Park is busy fighting its own battle with Ottawa over the "fiscal imbalance." How ironic that the McGuinty Liberals should complain about federal practices that resembles nothing so much as their own. Do unto others as they would do unto you.

"We are not in the same dire financial straights as Toronto," says Calgary finance manager Mansur Kanji. "But the city is not getting its fair share from the province. The province has the responsibility to invest and help us build the civic infrastructure. It's been hard to accommodate the kind of growth that is happening here now. The people of Calgary really support the mayor on this issue."

One thing McGuinty did get right, however, was that Toronto councillors will have to make some "hard decisions." The fact is property taxes must be increased. There's no way around this, despite the posturing at city hall.

Of course this terrifies municipal politicians, most of whom care less about the city than their tiny part of it. Worse still, many, especially those from places such as Etobicoke and Scarborough, have yet to grasp that amalgamation made them part of Toronto nearly a decade ago.

Time moves slowly here; is it any wonder we're falling behind?

Christopher Hume can be reached at [chume @ thestar.ca](mailto:chume@thestar.ca)

War widows struggle Families suffer long after soldiers killed

SOURCETAG 0707260416

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Lifestyle

PAGE: 25

ILLUSTRATION: 1. 2 photos by CP Julie Mason poses with her family in this undated handout photo in Shilo. 2. Whether mundane or heartbreaking, they are just some of the challenges a growing number of military widows are facing as they adjust to life without their spouses.

BYLINE: ALISON AULD, CP

WORD COUNT: 592

It's the smallest tasks that Charmaine Tedford sometimes finds the most difficult.

Shovelling snow, making dinner or helping the kids with homework were all things her husband, Sgt. Darcy Tedford, would be part of at home before he was killed in Afghanistan last October.

For Julie Mason, it's the pain of hearing her three-year-old say she wants to die so she can be reunited in heaven with her dad, Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh, who suffered a fatal gunshot wound almost a year ago in Afghanistan.

From the mundane to the heartbreaking, they are just some of the challenges a growing number of Canadian military widows are facing as they adjust to life without their spouses and, for many, the fathers of their children.

"It's been my life everyday, especially with my three-year-old who'll say, 'I miss daddy and I want to see him,'" Mason, 29, said from her home near the base in Shilo, Man., where Walsh was stationed.

"The questions will be forever, they will never end and you hope as a parent that you have half the right answers."

Mason, a cheerful and down-to-earth mother of three, said one of the toughest parts of dealing with the death of her husband is witnessing her young children come to grips with the loss and trying to explain why their father isn't coming home.

TRUTH

When Walsh, 33, was accidentally shot by a comrade inside their military vehicle on a routine patrol outside Kandahar last August, Mason decided to tell the truth to her seven-year-old daughter, Avery.

"We told her exactly what happened," she said. "We haven't spoken about it since, but when we told her what happened, she said, 'OK, I'm going back to play with my friends.'"

But managing information can be a tricky balance, said Mason, who had to decide how much to tell Avery versus what she should tell her three-year-old daughter, Jordan, and the couple's 18-month-old son, Ben.

CEMETERY

The difficulty is getting a handle on whether they truly understand the situation and how they might express that, something Mason said became achingly clear when Jordan mentioned dying.

"At first I almost lost my mind because that's the last thing you want to hear your three-year-old say, but at the same time I know she wasn't fully understanding what she was saying," she said. "She understands that's where dad is and she wanted to go and be with him."

Kerry Arnold found herself wrestling with something similar when she and her 23-month-old son, Connor, would pass by a cemetery in their hometown of Petawawa, Ont.

Arnold, whose 32-year-old husband Cpl. Glen Arnold was killed in Afghanistan by a suicide bomber last September, listened as her son called out for daddy as they recently passed by a line of headstones.

The toddler, she explained, associated every graveyard with his father.

"He was saying, 'Daddy, daddy, daddy,' and I had to say, 'No, that's not where daddy is buried,' and he got upset with me because I didn't stop," Arnold, 34, said from her home. "Connor doesn't understand."

Grieving the loss of the 66 Canadian soldiers and aircrew who have been killed in the central Asian country since 2002 can be a complicated and difficult process for families because the deaths are so public, and relatives have to face their grief over and over again with each new casualty.

Arnold's seven-year-old daughter races to tell her every time she hears on TV that another soldier has been killed, sending her back to the morning almost a year ago when a military padre appeared on her doorstep to deliver the dreaded news, leaving her screaming at him to go away.

"It's so emotionally draining," she said as Connor babbled sweetly in the background. "I can be out shopping and hear it and I just get drained and want to go to sleep."

Dealing with the emotional fallout is only one part of the new reality for many military widows who now have to run their households, take care of their kids and do everything from managing finances to buying and assembling a lawn mower.

"It's been my life everyday, especially with my three-year-old who'll say, 'I miss daddy and I want to see him.'"

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Korean hostage slain Ransom paid to Taliban for others?

SOURCETAG 0707260400

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 13

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Ahmad Masood, Reuters An Afghan policeman stands guard at a checkpoint on the Kabul–Kandahar highway yesterday. Police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave Kabul without their permission. 2. photo by Kim Ho–Chun, Reuters Bae Ho–jung, the father of Bae Hyeong–gyu prays after he had watched news about his slain son, in Jeju, south of Seoul.

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 317

Afghan police discovered the bullet–riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen yesterday — police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

The South Korean church that the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan. It also stressed that the Koreans abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war–ravaged country.

Elsewhere, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said a soldier was killed in eastern Afghanistan

yesterday by a rocket-propelled grenade. ISAF didn't release the soldier's nationality, but the majority of troops in the east are American.

Britain said one of its soldiers was killed and two others injured when an explosion struck their vehicle in southern Helmand province yesterday. KEYWORDS=WORLD

S. Korean hostage slain by Taliban

SOURCETAG 0707260818

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 32

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 192

Afghan police found the bullet-riddled body of a male hostage yesterday, one of 23 South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban last week.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen — police said foreigners were not allowed to leave Kabul without permission.

The South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where the group was seized July 19 while riding a bus, police officer Abdul Rahman said.

A police official said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot. A South Korean public broadcaster, KBS, identified the victim as pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, 42.

Marajudin Pathan, the governor of Ghazni province, said the militants were still holding the remaining 22 South Korean hostages. "No one has been released."

Pathan said authorities were in contact with the kidnappers. The militants gave a list of eight Taliban prisoners they want released in exchange for eight Koreans, he said.

A Danish reporter of Afghan origin escaped a kidnap attempt in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, the Danish Foreign Ministry said.

Because of the kidnappings, officials stationed at Kabul's main gates will stop foreigners from leaving unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Common foe unites franco, anglo Canucks

SOURCETAG 0707260817

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 32

BYLINE: MARTIN OUELLET, CP

DELINE: KANDAHAR

WORD COUNT: 227

While Canada's two solitudes may exist to a certain degree in Afghanistan, anglophone and francophone soldiers are united when it comes to their ultimate objective, says a Canadian commander at the multinational base in Kandahar.

"It's like a football team," said Maj. Richard Collin, commanding officer of C Company of the Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos. "There's the offence and the defence. The two don't mix but, as they want to win, they work toward the same goal."

Collin downplayed the notion that linguistic tensions are surfacing because of the arrival in southern Afghanistan of hundreds of French-speaking soldiers from Quebec.

More and more, French is being heard on the Kandahar base as the Van Doos, based at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City, pour in to the war-torn country.

The new arrivals are not the first Quebec-based soldiers to serve in Afghanistan. A small company of 156 has been working at the provincial reconstruction team base since November. And members of the Van Doos were among the first Canadians to arrive in Afghanistan at the start of the war.

Some observers have raised concerns that relations between the francophone soldiers and their Afghan counterparts may be affected by the dearth of French-Pashtu interpreters. Collin admitted Canadian Forces has not yet found any such interpreters but said that should not pose a major problem. "We always manage to get our message across."

No soldiers interviewed knew of linguistic-related incidents. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Soldiers get break at pool tourney

SOURCETAG: 0707260816

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 28

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Greg Henkenhaf, Sun Media Bill Caukwel is hoping to cue up financial assistance for families of Canadian soliders with a pool tournament this weekend in Oshawa.

BYLINE: SHARON LEM, TORONTO SUN

WORD COUNT: 194

Bill Caukwel never met his grandfather, who died at Vimy Ridge during World War I.

But he remembers what war did to his family and wants to help families of Canadian soldiers wounded or killed in Afghanistan by staging a fundraising pool tournament this weekend.

"My mom never knew her dad. It was a devastating loss for her and the entire family, growing up without a father and husband," Caukwel said.

"Back then, there were no social services so my grandmother took in people's laundry and did what she had to in order to raise my mom and my uncle."

Charles Watson, a soldier in the 75th Overseas Battalion A Company, was one of 3,598 Canadian soldiers killed at Vimy Ridge. His body was never recovered.

"I've never been in the forces but my grandfather gave his life at Vimy Ridge and I know the pain that my mom and grandmother went through," Caukwel said.

Since the Canadian military deployed to Afghanistan in early 2002, 66 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed. "Kids today have so much more information about the world and what's going on. These young people are making conscious decisions to go to a war ... and we should do what we can to help," Caukwel said.

The tournament starts Saturday at Maple Leaf Billiards on Trewillegar Ave. in Oshawa. Proceeds will go to the Sapper Mike McTeague Wounded Warrior Fund. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Hostage found shot to death Eight other captives are released by the Taliban in war-torn Afghanistan.

SOURCETAG 0707260464

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 277

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen yesterday — police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim — identified by South Korea's Foreign Ministry as Bae Hyung-kyu, 42 — was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said police officer Abdul Rahman.

"The killing of an innocent civilian cannot be justified under any circumstance or for any reason," Baek Jong-chun, chief presidential secretary for security affairs, said in a statement. The kidnappers "will be held accountable for taking the life of a Korean citizen."

A police official, who asked not to be identified, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

AFGHANISTAN UPDATE

SOURCETAG 0707260463

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Reuters HAPPIER TIMES: This picture shows South Korean Christians posing for a group photograph before leaving for Afghanistan. Taliban kidnappers killed one of the 23 South Koreans hostages, a Taliban spokesperson said. The face of the person in the middle was digitised at source. 2. photo of DAVID MILIBAND

BYLINE: SUN MEDIA NEWS SERVICES

WORD COUNT: 365

– Canada's Conservative government's \$200-million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag. There's no company in Canada capable of quickly improving up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles in order to meet the rigours and dangers of Afghanistan. An undetermined portion of the contract will likely have to be carried out overseas, says a senior defence official.

– The war in Afghanistan has far-reaching consequences, right down to a Quebec City restaurant owner who is feeling the heat of an antiwar sentiment in this province. Tired of verbal abuse being directed at himself and his restaurant, Ahmad Nasranee decided it was easier to change the name of Le Kaboul Restaurant than put up with more slurs. "In the last six months, I've had some problems," Nasranee said in a telephone interview. "Some people didn't like the restaurant name and they said unappreciated words like 'Leave Quebec, go back to Kabul.' " So about 10 days ago, Le Kaboul became Shahi Masala. So far, so good, Nasranee said.

– Britain's foreign minister and Afghanistan's leader backed the Afghan government's efforts to root out deep corruption that is driving people to side with the Taliban. Britain's David Miliband held talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul and later in Helmand with the southern province's governor and army chiefs. Britain has 7,100 troops based in Afghanistan, mostly in the Taliban stronghold of Helmand. Miliband later flew to Pakistan, where, in talks today, he will encourage President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to fight militants and target radical schools as well as reinforce vital cooperation with Britain on counter-terrorism.

– German magazine Stern said its reporter Christoph Reuter, who had been missing in Afghanistan, had contacted the weekly and said that at no time had he been taken hostage. Earlier, the magazine had said it was "very worried" about Reuter following reports a German reporter and his Afghan translator had been kidnapped in the eastern province of Kunar. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Taliban free eight captives But South Korean hostage is found slain

SOURCETAG 0707260713

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 52

BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 282

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings – including an attempt against a Danish citizen yesterday – police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district, in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released. One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two men were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified. No other officials would confirm the account.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright.

The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

Britain, meanwhile, said one of its soldiers was killed and two others injured when an explosion struck their vehicle in southern Helmand province yesterday.

The U.S.–led coalition said 20 suspected Taliban militants were killed yesterday after a failed ambush on coalition and Afghan troops in Kandahar province. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Leopard tanks hit upgrade barrier

SOURCETAG 0707260576

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 16

BYLINE: CP

DELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 240

The Conservative government's \$200-million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag.

There's currently no company in Canada capable of quickly improving up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles in order to meet the rigours and dangers of Afghanistan.

An undetermined portion of the contract will likely have to be carried out overseas, says a senior defence official.

"Obviously, we'd like to do as much of it in Canada as possible but, of course, we currently don't have any capability in Canada to do heavy-armoured vehicle work, and so there is consultation with industry taking place," said Dan Ross, assistant deputy minister of materiel at National Defence.

"We're going to have to determine what can be done."

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Works Minister Michel Fortier announced in April the army's aging Leopard 1 C2 tanks would be replaced at a cost of \$650 million.

Under the program, Canada would borrow 20 armoured vehicles from the Germans and purchase 100 slightly used tanks from the Netherlands. A month later, O'Connor revealed there would be an additional \$650-million, long-term support contract — bringing the total pricetag to \$1.3 billion.

As part of the initial purchase phase, roughly \$200 million was set aside to upgrade the used tanks, primarily with air conditioning and better armour, meant to withstand roadside bombs. Both O'Connor and Fortier said Canadian industry would see great benefits.

While the government has promised open bidding for both the immediate upgrades and the long-term maintenance contract, it appears there's only one company, located in Quebec, that might be capable of the job. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Korean hostage found slain

SOURCETAG 0707260575

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 16

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Kim Ho-Chun, Reuters Bae Ho-jung, the father of Bae Hyeong-gyu, one of 23 kidnapped South Koreans in Afghanistan, prays after he had watched news about his son. Militants said the man was killed because he was sick and unable to walk.

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 172

Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage yesterday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen yesterday — police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released.

One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An official involved in the negotiations said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages.

The militants are demanding the release of rebels or the remaining hostages would be killed.

A deadline for the release passed yesterday without word from the kidnappers or the Afghan government.
KEYWORDS=WORLD

Ribbons bought for cops Woman buys 450 magnets

SOURCETAG 0707260552

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Jim Wells, Sun Media Marilyn Ermter and Det. Mike ter Kuile — who is a CIMIC Liaison Officer 41 Brigade reservist with the Calgary Highlanders and might be headed to Afghanistan in 2008 — hold up some of the 450 'Support Our Troops' decals Ermter is donating to Calgary police for their cruisers after the Calgary Police Association said it would give a ribbon to any member wanting one.

BYLINE: SHAWN LOGAN, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 337

Angered over the city's stance against putting yellow ribbon decals on the civic fleet, a Calgary woman has purchased 450 magnetic decorations to adorn police vehicles.

Self-proclaimed military brat Marilyn Ermter, 68, said after hearing the Calgary Police Association (CPA) planned to provide yellow ribbon car magnets to any of its members who decided to defy the city edict, she decided to show support her own way.

"Nobody's for a war. What this program is about is individuals who are over there fighting for us," said Ermter, who has volunteered with city cops since 1988 and whose father, uncle and brother all served in the Canadian Forces.

"If we can put on signs for the Calgary Flames, why can't we do it for those men and women who are looking after our country?"

The retiree spent yesterday at the Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC), rounding up 450 of the \$5 magnets she will turn over to the CPA next Tuesday, the same day it plans on holding a "yellow ribbon checkstop" at its downtown headquarters.

CPA president Al Koenig said he's more than happy to accept the donation.

"She phoned me out of the blue and you could have knocked me over with a feather," he said.

"I told her we have 450 vehicles and she said she'd buy all of them — she thinks it's a great cause."

Ermter will deliver the magnets to the association's office at 428 6 Ave. S.E. the day of the checkstop, which will tag any vehicle, whether it's a squad car or civilian vehicle, with decals or magnets.

Koenig said police brass have shown no indication whether they will reprimand cops who put the ribbons on their vehicles and it will be up to individual members whether they don the symbol and risk disciplinary action.

Meanwhile, to help give further aid to troops abroad, city police will be able to donate money earned from overtime and court appearances to the Military Family Resource Centre as part of an initiative between the

Calgary Police Service and CPA.

Ermter said she has no problem getting involved with the campaign and remains shocked the city opted not to deck out city vehicles with 5,000 donated decals, choosing to sell the yellow ribbons at city facilities to raise funds.

"When you look at buses, they're plastered inside and out with signs, so I don't know why one little ribbon is a big deal," she said.

"It's just a way to say we support the guys and women who are putting their lives on the line for us."

KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

U.S. al-Qaida report meant to pressure Musharraf

IDNUMBER 200707260077
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A11
COLUMN: Barry Cooper
BYLINE: Barry Cooper
SOURCE: Special to The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 731

Ever since 9/11, the American government has issued regular warnings that follow-on attacks by al-Qaida were pending. The latest came last week, when it issued a National Intelligence Estimate on the current terrorist threat.

NIEs are produced by the National Intelligence Council, a body that co-ordinates the judgments and appraisals of the 16 intelligence agencies that comprise the American "intelligence community."

The classified version is for the exclusive use of policy-makers; the unclassified one has several other uses.

The current estimate is no different. It contains the rather startling proposition that in Pakistan, al-Qaida has regenerated its operational capability to something like its pre-9/11 level.

Equally alarming, if true, is that al-Qaida plans to use its Iraqi affiliate to attack the American homeland.

Both, of course, are possible — Hegel once joked that it was possible for the Sultan to become Pope — but neither is likely. What, then, are the Americans really up to?

Any discussion of the current "homeland" terrorist threat must begin with the fact that there have been no al-Qaida attacks for the past six years.

As in other walks of life, when authoritative predictions never happen, the source loses credibility. Moreover, government warnings of terrorist attacks are necessarily suspect because, if a counter-terrorism agency has penetrated a terrorist outfit sufficiently to gain genuine knowledge of terrorist intentions, the last thing it would do would be to let them know it knows, thus giving them an opportunity to plug the leak.

On the other hand, if American intelligence regarding a potential attack is poor, which analysts call "chatter," then issuing a warning might make sense. The problem here is that an organization with the ability to accomplish another 9/11 attack would not chatter, so only amateurs are likely to pay attention and perhaps call off an operation.

This consideration leads to another. When the NIE discussed al-Qaida, it didn't have the pre-9/11 organization in mind. That al-Qaida — the real al-Qaida or "AQ-1" — may remain a dangerous tactical inspiration but it does not pose a strategic threat to anyone.

The men hiding out in the mountains along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, AQ-1, no longer are capable of recruiting, training and supporting agents who have the necessary skills to carry out attacks that will result in

significant policy shifts in the target country.

Nor can the Iraqi affiliate act abroad. It may be competent enough to pose a serious threat to coalition troops in that country, but it lacks the surveillance, communication and camouflage skills to do anything serious in New York, Washington or San Francisco.

For the past five years at least, it has been clear that AQ-1 is more concerned with operational security than operational success. The first priority of Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Mohammed Atef and perhaps a couple of dozen others, is simply to stay alive. They have done so chiefly by refusing to admit new people into the inner core, because that would also open the possibility of recruiting counter-terrorism agents.

The success of AQ-1 in resisting penetration is measured by the inability of the Americans to shut it down. But the cost has been that the real al-Qaida has grown less capable because it has refused to replace its losses.

In fact, when the NIE mentioned al-Qaida, it really was referring to training camps where young men are turned into paramilitaries.

They become shooters and more or less competent at setting off explosives, rather like the Taliban. As with the Iraqi affiliate of al-Qaida, they have none of the skills of the team that completed the complex and clandestine mission on 9/11.

A clue to the real significance of the NIE is a story earlier leaked to the press about a 2004 American plan to invade the Pakistan side of the border in search of AQ-1.

The operation was called off when President Pervez Musharraf said that Pakistan would do the job. The NIE reminded him of his promise. The storming of the Red Mosque by Pakistani security forces and the arrest or killing of several jihadist militants was perhaps a signal that at long last the Musharraf government is beginning to move against the Islamists that it had nourished and sheltered for so many years.

Issuing the NIE report — as with the presence of three U.S. carrier battle groups in the region — has the intent of putting pressure on Pakistan. It remains to be seen what, if anything, Pakistan can do about the al-Qaida leadership still up there in the mountains.

Cooper is a political science professor at the University of Calgary and a fellow of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

Canadian aid helps defeat polio in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707260010
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: C10
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CanWest News / A child gets vaccinated against polio ;
DATELINE: SPIN BOLD AK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 604

SPIN BOLD AK, Afghanistan — The traffic jam at this border crossing is a surreal lineup of emaciated donkeys pulling carts filled with used tires, parent–pushed wheelbarrows transporting malnourished children, and peeling jingle trucks threatening to topple under the weight of their lopsided cargo.

This is the main port of entry between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a chaotic and dangerous gateway for opium exports and al–Qaida imports that makes most of the Third World look civilized.

But Canada is leading the charge to stop a different plague from sneaking across the political boundary between the two filthy and impoverished regions.

Contaminated water, open sewers and generally sanitary–free conditions make this region one of the last breeding grounds for polio, a potentially paralyzing viral infection on the verge of global eradication.

There are only four countries in the world where active cases are still being discovered, and this border straddles two of them. India and Nigeria complete the list.

But while Canada struggles to wipe out the Taliban, it appears to be having greater success eliminating polio, with a \$5–million Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contribution to a program run by UNICEF and Rotary International. Modest as that sounds (the funds wouldn't be enough to buy two Light Armoured Vehicles), it makes Canada by far the most generous of the international security force countries here.

The border program swung into gear last year when Afghanistan recorded a sudden spike of 29 polio cases, after seeing only a single–digit count the year before. So far 2007 has seen only two cases, both in this area.

The vaccine is simple enough to deliver. Two–drop doses delivered by mouth two or three times to children under the age of six puts resistance to the highly infectious disease in place for life.

The trick is finding the kids and convincing their parents to allow the vaccination to be administered amid a campaign of misinformation and fear. Some elders and religious figures whisper that the vaccine is ineffective or causes impotence.

The free–flowing border crossing seemed a logical catchment area. In periodic blitzes of this city, 7,000 health workers go door–to–door looking for young children to vaccinate.

On my Tuesday morning visit, the log sheet showed the half dozen workers, each paid \$3 per day, had already inoculated more than 200 babies and toddlers.

The parents seemed remarkably calm when officials pried open their children's mouths without warning or permission papers and delivered the drops. After spending an hour monitoring the program, I didn't see one parent refuse the vaccination, although plenty of kids were raising howls of protest.

All told, the program delivers about 10,000 doses a month at a border open 12 hours per day.

After receiving the drops, each child has its finger marked with a black stain that supposedly lasts for a week until a second dose is given.

"It's important to get every child because 1,000 others can be infected from every confirmed case," says UNICEF southern director Sam Mawunganidze.

In my view, this initiative is precisely the sort of humanitarian effort Canadians are talking about when they tell pollsters their support for the military mission is contingent upon improving Afghan living conditions.

While CIDA has, rightly or wrongly, been the butt of criticism for being slow off the mark in Kandahar, it seems to be finding niches where modest dollars, funnelled through established agencies, are having a larger effect.

The problem is that active agencies are in decline here, scared off by security concerns, even while demand for their help is escalating, says Mawunganidze. The latest kidnapping of South Korean humanitarian workers is not likely to improve the region's image.

That makes it a challenge for CIDA, which prefers to contract out its good deeds locally, to find partners for its programs.

But delivering a big bang for our foreign aid bucks, in tandem with an effective show of military force, is the only way this mission can hope to have a happy ending.

There are signs Canada is starting to make waves here — even if it's only one drop at a time.

Taliban kills South Korean hostage

IDNUMBER 200707260003
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Francis Silvaggio
SOURCE: Global National
WORD COUNT: 297

KABUL, Afghanistan — The hostage standoff in Afghanistan took a critical turn Wednesday as police recovered the bullet-ridden body of one of the 23 South Korean aid workers snatched by the Taliban last week.

"We killed one of the Koreans today because the government is not being honest in talks," Taliban spokesperson Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

The rebels had briefly claimed that the man was shot because he had fallen ill and the hostage-takers were unable to get him to a hospital. Police commander Ali Shah Ahmadzai, however, said the man had been shot 10 times in the head, chest and stomach.

By late afternoon, South Korea's Yonhap news agency was reporting that eight of the hostages had been released, but both the government and the militants denied the reports.

The Korean evangelical Christian missionaries, including 18 women, were abducted last Thursday when their bus was stopped along the main highway connecting Kabul and Kandahar.

In all, 26 foreigners have been captured by rebels during a single week. Nevertheless, heading into Wednesday, there was optimism among government officials and negotiators about the chances of a peaceful resolution to the standoff. South Korean officials were said to be meeting with Taliban rebels, who have been agitating for the release of eight insurgent prisoners.

Still, the tension escalated throughout the day as the Taliban's deadline for the prisoner release approached.

"We call on the South Korean government, parliament and its people to pressure the Afghan government to accept our demands or we'll kill more hostages after the deadline passes," Ahmadi said after the first Korean hostage was executed.

Waheedullah Mujadadi, the head of the government delegation attempting to negotiate the release of the Koreans, said the Taliban had opened fire on him in a buffer zone between Taliban and government-controlled areas.

"I managed to escape the attack. They were trying to kidnap me as well or kill me," he said.

Christian evangelicalism has swept the land of Confucian calm; Tiny South Korea has 12,000 missionaries around the world, second only to the U.S.

IDNUMBER 200707260067
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A21
KEYWORDS: FOREIGN RELATIONS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS; FAMILY REUNIONS; KOREANWAR; SUMMIT CONFERENCES; FOREIGN AID; ARMAMENTS; AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: SUKI KIM
SOURCE: Washington Post
WORD COUNT: 777

The Taliban's abduction of 23 South Korean Christian missionaries in Afghanistan and the discovery of one of their bodies yesterday has put South Korea's evangelical fervour under a microscope.

Despite its long-standing shamanist, Buddhist and Confucian roots, South Korea has about 12,000 Christian missionaries in 173 countries, second only to the United States. Today, almost half of South Korea's population is Christian. I remember looking through the window of our fifth-floor apartment in Seoul as a child and finding the night sky peppered with bright-red neon crosses.

When I moved to the United States in my teens, the first faces to greet me were those of the Korean American evangelical Christians at John F. Kennedy International Airport, eagerly awaiting new arrivals with Bibles and taped sermons.

The hostages, members of Saemmul Church from Bundang, near Seoul, appear to have been somewhat naive. They were travelling from Kabul to Kandahar on one of the most dangerous routes in Afghanistan. They rode a charter bus often used by foreigners, immediately attracting attention, and they did not alert local police to their presence for fear of being questioned about their identity papers, the bus driver has said.

Photos of some of the missionaries, mostly women in their 20s and 30s, have surfaced on the Internet. They are seen giddily posing in front of the government sign at Seoul's Incheon International Airport warning about the dangers of travel to Afghanistan.

This is not the first time South Korean missionaries have endangered themselves by entering war zones to gain converts. In April 2004, seven missionaries were kidnapped in Iraq (they were released within hours). In June that year, Kim Sun-il, a 33-year-old translator who had hoped to do missionary work in Iraq, was taken hostage and beheaded. Last summer, more than 1,000 Korean Christians, including many children, entered Kabul for a peace rally, only to be deported. Proselytizing is illegal in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have threatened to kill missionaries; yet South Korean Christians can't seem to take no for an answer.

It is peculiar that a country claiming to pride itself on its 5,000-year-old philosophical traditions has embraced Christianity with such unabashed eagerness. Roman Catholicism on the Korean Peninsula dates to the late 18th century, and the first Protestant missionaries from the United States arrived a century later. Unlike the Philippines, the most Christian country in Asia, South Korea was never colonized by a Christian nation. Many scholars, somewhat unconvincingly, theorize that Koreans turned to Christianity as a way of fighting for independence from on-and-off conquerors China and Japan, neither of which took to Christianity with similar zeal.

My deeply Confucian grandfather used to scoff at churches as the foreign devil. When my grandmother became ill and asked to be taken to a local minister who was said to have brought medicine from the United States, he reluctantly accompanied her after carefully wrapping the Bible the minister had given my grandmother with newspaper, lest someone in the neighbourhood see him carrying it. At the door of the church, family members say, he turned his back, letting her limp across the threshold alone.

People such as my grandfather are ever fewer in today's Korea. It is said that South Korean missionaries will go to the ends of the Earth in search of those most unwilling to be converted. As Christianity has taken firmer hold in the past few decades, riding the boom that has turned South Korea into one of the world's leading economies, competition among churches has turned fierce. Deploying missionaries abroad has become one of the quickest ways for a church to broaden its reputation and attract members. The more volatile the area, the holier the mission.

In highly wired South Korea, the debate is heating up online. President Roh Moo-hyun, who is Catholic, issued a statement this week asking bloggers to stop lashing out at the missionaries for bringing the nation to a standstill. His government is being criticized for not adding Afghanistan to its list of no-travel zones earlier. Some devout Christians are calling the abductees martyrs, evoking the self-glorification of extreme Islamist jihadists. The head of Saemmul Church has been forced to apologize to the nation for sending ill-prepared congregants on such a mission.

Yet no one is questioning why South Korea, once pegged the Land of the Morning Calm for its Confucian virtue, is rapidly reinventing itself as the most evangelical Christian nation in the world.

Suki Kim, a 2006 Guggenheim fellow, is the author of the novel *The Interpreter*.

Christian extremists wear army uniforms

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PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A20
KEYWORDS: RELIGION
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 123

To answer James Morton "Where are Christian mobs?" (Letters, July 24), how about the Christian fundamentalists and neo-conservatives in the United States whose passion for their crusades has killed thousands of people (and counting) in Iraq and Afghanistan? Or all of the American soldiers in those countries talking about doing "God's work"?

Granted that it's not Christianity's fault; not all of the soldiers have the Christian mindset. But Robert Jensen's article "Behind the Red Mosque tragedy" (Comment, July 21) is right: Extremism of Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Christian or any other faith all share a common faith of violence and intolerance, and that is truly frightening.

Nabil Hasnany

Pierrefonds

On Afghan border, a fight against polio

IDNUMBER 200707260047
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A16
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: DON MARTIN, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / A child is given an oral polio vaccine this week in Spin Boldak. ;
KEYWORDS: DISEASES; VACCINES; DISABLED
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDACK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: DON MARTIN
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 235

The traffic jam at this border crossing is a surreal lineup of emaciated donkeys pulling carts filled with used tires, parent-pushed wheelbarrows transporting malnourished children, and peeling jingle trucks threatening to topple under the weight of their lopsided cargo.

This is the main port of entry between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a chaotic and dangerous gateway for opium exports and Al-Qa'ida imports that makes most of the developing world look civilized.

But Canada is leading the charge to stop a different plague from sneaking across the political boundary between the two filthy and impoverished regions.

Contaminated water, open sewers and generally septic conditions make this region one of the last breeding grounds for polio, a potentially paralyzing viral infection on the verge of global eradication.

There are only four countries in the world where active cases are still being discovered, and this border straddles two of them. India and Nigeria complete the list.

While Canada struggles to wipe out the Taliban, it appears to be having greater success eliminating polio, with a \$5-million Canadian International Development Agency contribution to a program run by UNICEF and Rotary International. Modest as that sounds (the funds wouldn't be enough to buy two light armoured vehicles), it makes Canada by far the most generous of the international security force countries here.

The border program swung into gear last year when Afghanistan recorded a sudden spike of 29 polio cases, after seeing only a single-digit count the year before.

So far, 2007 has seen only two cases, both in this area.

Taliban kill hostage; 3rd deadline passes with no word; Afghan president pledges not to swap prisoners for kidnapping victims

IDNUMBER: 200707260046
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A16
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: HAN JAE-HO, REUTERS / South Koreans in Seoul participate in a candlelight vigil yesterday demanding the safe return of kidnapped South Koreans and withdrawal of the country's troops in Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; HOSTAGES; BOMBINGS
DATELINE: GHAZNI, Afghanistan
BYLINE: AHMAD MASOOD
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 408

Taliban insurgents shot dead a South Korean hostage in Afghanistan yesterday and threatened to kill 22 others, but a deadline passed this morning without word from the kidnappers or the Afghan government.

A Taliban spokesperson had said the government had been given until 1 a.m. to release rebels from prison or the remaining 22 South Korean Christian volunteers would be killed.

"Yes, they have killed one of the hostages and efforts are under way to have the others released," said the Qarabagh district chief in Ghazni province, Khowja Seddiqi.

The body of the South Korean was found with bullet wounds. He was identified in Seoul as the group's leader, Bae Hyung-kyu, a pastor who would have turned 42 on the day he was murdered.

The Taliban accused the government and South Korean negotiators of failing to act in good faith after Kabul rejected a demand for eight named rebels to be freed from prison.

"Since Kabul's administration did not listen to our demand and did not free our prisoners, the Taliban shot dead a male Korean hostage," Qari Mohammad Yousuf told Reuters by telephone from an unknown location.

"If the administration of Kabul is not ready to release our hostages, then by 1 a.m. the rest of the hostages will be killed," he said. "That time is the last deadline."

Yousuf said the South Korean had been killed in a desert area in the Qarabagh district of Ghazni close to where the 23 church volunteers – 18 women and five men – were abducted on the main road south from Kabul last week.

He rejected South Korean media reports that the Taliban planned to free eight of the captives.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has pledged not to swap prisoners for hostages after being criticized at home

Taliban kill hostage; 3rd deadline passes with no word; Afghan president pledges not to swap prisoners for kidnapping victims

and abroad for releasing five Taliban from jail in March in exchange for an Italian reporter.

But the president and ministers have remained silent throughout the latest hostage ordeal.

The kidnappings have made travel outside major cities risky for the thousands of foreign aid workers and UN staff in Afghanistan and may weaken support for military involvement among the more than 30 countries with troops in the country.

In the past 18 months, there has been rising violence in Afghanistan, with daily clashes between Taliban insurgents and Afghan and foreign troops. Suicide and roadside bomb attacks have spread to areas previously considered safe.

A NATO soldier was killed yesterday in a rocket-propelled grenade attack, the alliance said. A French and a British soldier were also killed in two separate attacks.

Anxious family members of the South Korean hostages gathered at the offices of a non-governmental agency in Seoul to follow developments on television. Sounds of crying emerged when the news came out that one of the hostages had been killed.

AFGHANISTAN: EXECUTION RAISES THE STAKES

Taliban kill South Korean as hostage crisis deepens

Evangelical's bullet-ridden body turns up, increasing pressure on Kabul to cut a deal

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072070222

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: A1 (MAP)

BYLINE: PAUL KORING

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: STAFF REUT AP AFP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 821

WORD COUNT: 767

PAUL KORING With reports from Reuters, AP and AFP KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Taliban extremists killed a Korean hostage yesterday, escalating a high-stakes demand that the Afghan government capitulate and release imprisoned insurgents.

Police found the bullet-riddled body of the Korean man yesterday evening. A South Korean public broadcaster, KBS, identified the victim as 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, leader of a group of 23 Christian evangelicals touring war-torn Afghanistan when they were seized last Thursday.

There were reports as many as eight other Koreans had been released, but Mirajuddin Pathan, governor of Ghanzi province, where the body was found, denied them, saying, "No one has been released, and there has not been any exchange. They are still in Taliban custody." Mr. Pathan said authorities were in contact with the kidnappers, trying to secure the Koreans' freedom. The militants gave a list of eight Taliban prisoners whom they want released in exchange for eight Koreans, he said. The Taliban at one point had demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said by telephone from an unknown location that a new deadline had been set in the hostage-taking.

"If the administration of Kabul is not ready to release our hostages, then by 1 a.m., local time, the rest of the hostages will be killed," he said.

However, the deadline passed without reports of further deaths among the hostages.

The discovery of the corpse near Mushaki, not far from where the bus carrying the Koreans was stopped July 19, confirmed an earlier claim by Mr. Yousuf, who said the hostage had been executed. He initially blamed the killing on the failure of President Hamid Karzai's government to meet an earlier deadline. But he also claimed, in another telephone call, that the man had been killed because he was sick and couldn't walk.

Whatever the reason, the execution dramatically raised the stakes.

Far more than the middle-aged German engineer killed last week, the Koreans – 18 of whom are young women – are likely to engender widespread public attention, giving the Taliban a powerful negotiating hand.

Mr. Karzai, who released five Taliban prisoners this year to secure the release of an Italian journalist, insisted then that there would be no more deals to free hostages. However, an Afghan official involved in the negotiations said earlier that a large sum of money would be paid to free the hostages. No other officials would confirm this account. Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright.

Taliban insurgents have been instructed to kidnap as many foreigners as possible, the Islamist militia's new military commander said in an interview broadcast yesterday.

Speaking to Channel 4 News from an undisclosed location along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, Mansour Dadullah, who took over from his brother Mullah Dadullah after he was killed by coalition troops in May, said he advocated kidnapping foreigners to trade them for Taliban captives. Mansour Dadullah was one of those released in exchange for the Italian journalist.

Mr. Karzai's refusal to deal with the Taliban if they kill the Korean hostages in succession may pose a severe test, especially if international pressure to negotiate a deal becomes intense.

Today, South Korea denounced the killing of one of its hostages and said it was sending a senior presidential envoy to try to free the 22 remaining captives.

"The South Korean government bitterly deplores the killing of a South Korean national by kidnappers in Afghanistan. The kidnappers blamed for the killing will never avoid all responsibility for that inhumane act," said the statement from the office of President Roh Moo-Hyun.

"Murder of an innocent civilian can never be justified," it added.

Mr. Bae, 42, co-founded the Saemmul Presbyterian Church in 1998 and is a pastor there; he has a young daughter, the Korea Times said. He had done volunteer work in Bangladesh in April and planned to visit Africa to help the poor after the Afghanistan mission.

More than 1,000 people were gathered yesterday at the church in Bundang just south of Seoul when the Taliban's announcement of Mr.

Bae's killing was confirmed.

"No! No!" shouted some. Many others wept.

Mr. Bae is the third Korean victim of Islamic militants in as many years.

A series of recent kidnappings prompted the Afghan government to forbid foreigners living in Kabul from leaving the city without police permission.

Police said officials stationed at checkpoints at the city's main gates would stop foreigners from leaving the capital unless they informed officials 24 hours in advance of their travel plans, said Esmatullah Dauladzai, Kabul's provincial police chief.

South Korea, which has a non-combat contingent of about 200 medics and support troops on a U.S. base, had previously announced it was pulling out by the end of the year.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; hostages; kidnapping; murder; south koreans

PERSONAL NAME: Bae Hyung-kyu

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

AFGHANISTAN: EXECUTION RAISES THE STAKES Taliban kill South Korean as hostage crisis deepens

HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN Canadian NGO workers maintain a low profile Groups remain undaunted by latest abductions; prefer to travel in generic cars, wear traditional clothing to fit in with locals

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072070221

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: A11 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: ALEX DOBROTA

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 654

WORD COUNT: 644

ALEX DOBROTA Whether travelling in unmarked sedans, donning the traditional shalwar kameez or secretly planning itineraries, Canadian non-governmental organization workers in Afghanistan are opting for a low profile to ward off kidnappings.

Their approach seems to differ sharply from that of many Canadian business representatives who operate in the war-torn country and who rarely hesitate to hire armed bodyguards to escort them on their travels.

Both groups agreed, however, that the threat of kidnappings has always existed across much of the Afghan countryside, where the local police and army wield little authority.

"It's one third good management, one third local goodwill and one third, in the end, it's good luck," said one NGO worker who spoke on condition of anonymity so as not to attract unwanted attention to herself or her organization.

Those comments came as purported Taliban members killed one of 23 South Korean hostages kidnapped as they were riding a bus from Kandahar to the capital city of Kabul.

While the NGO workers interviewed insisted they remain undaunted by the latest abductions, they also said they will likely increase their security measures.

These include travelling in generic sedans, like Toyota Corollas, a popular car in Afghan cities, one Canadian NGO worker said.

It can also mean changing cars when using the same route. The NGO workers interviewed said they avoid riding in SUVs or expensive cars. They rarely talk about their travel plans and try to avoid travelling in convoys, so as not to present an obvious target to potential kidnappers.

"They're out there in the mountains, they're out there in that area and observing what's going on the road, who is passing by," said the Canadian NGO worker. "So we travel very low-profile." Before setting off, they

perform what they call a "recce," meaning a reconnaissance procedure that involves calling local police commanders for advice about the different districts that span the itinerary.

Often, NGO representatives travel with Afghan interpreters who can navigate through the network of local leaders and police commanders.

Because gaining the trust of the locals is essential for the success of most NGO projects, their workers do not usually rely on armed escorts.

On the other hand, companies that decide to take advantage of the growth potential of the Afghan market often set aside a budget for security, said Aziz Amiri, the head of the Canada Afghanistan Business Council. The group represents about 40 businesses in Canada, ranging from manufacturing companies to import-export ventures, several of which have branches in Afghanistan.

When venturing into the Afghan countryside, their officials are often accompanied by an armed private escort hired through local security companies, Mr. Amiri said.

"It's a give and take. They have to pay security, but in return they can make more money in Afghanistan than anywhere else." HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN June 27, 2004 The Taliban stopped a bus in Zabul province, kidnapped 17 civilians, and killed 16 of them. They were allegedly taken because they had been carrying voter registration cards.

June 16, 2005 The Taliban attacked a district headquarters building in Mian Nisheen, Kandahar province, kidnapping 23 police officers, including the district chief.

Nov. 29, 2005 The Taliban attacked a police headquarters in Zabul Province, on or about Nov. 29, 2005, kidnapping 16 police officers and setting fire to the building.

Aug. 20, 2006 The Taliban attacked a security team in Panjwai, Kandahar province, killing four police officers and one Afghan soldier, wounding four other soldiers and two officers, and kidnapping three other officers.

March 5, 2007 Armed assailants fired on a group of government-backed tribal militia members in Khost province, killing two, injuring two others, and kidnapping six. No group claimed responsibility, although it was widely believed the Taliban was responsible.

July 19, 2007 23 South Koreans were kidnapped while riding through Ghazni province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway.

U.S. NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER |ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

SOURCE: |GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan |SUBJECT TERM:strife; kidnapping; hostages; murder; south koreans; security; foreign aid; works; chronology |ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

IN BRIEF Search for soldier's brother called off after three days

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072070206

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: S2

BYLINE:

SECTION: British Columbia N

SOURCE: CP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Clinton ONT

WORDS: 71

WORD COUNT: 77

CP Clinton Police have called off the search around Loon Lake in the Interior for the younger brother of a soldier killed this month in Afghanistan.

Beric Bason was said to be intoxicated when he walked away from the Loon Lake Resort, east of Clinton, Sunday.

His family recently buried his older brother, Master Corporal Colin Bason, killed along with five other Canadian soldiers by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan three weeks ago.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: British Columbia; Clinton

SUBJECT TERM:missing persons

PERSONAL NAME: Beric Bason

NATIONAL DEFENCE: DOUBT CAST ON TORY CAMPAIGN PROMISE Hillier cool to Ottawa's reserve plan 'We don't need new units,' top soldier says of 14 proposed urban army outposts

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072070174

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 829

WORD COUNT: 839

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Canada's top soldier appears to have sidelined the Conservative government's election promise to create 14 new army reserve units across the country that would be the first line of defence in case of natural or other disasters.

"We're not in the business of creating new reserve units," Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier told the CBC. "We have sufficient units. . . . We don't need new units." The 14 "territorial defence battalions" were a key element of the Tories' Canada First defence plan as laid out in the 2006 election campaign. Under the proposal, each unit would be made up of 100 regular troops and 400 reservists.

The units were to be established in urban areas across the country.

During the campaign, Gordon O'Connor, who went on to become Defence Minister, called them "the first line of response to any disaster." Tory campaign material referred to them as "new" defence battalions.

Gen. Hillier, who has tussled with Mr. O'Connor before, appears to have won an internal battle to halt the establishment of new reserve units and instead will concentrate on improving existing units.

"I guess there's been a bureaucratic struggle inside the department and it seems to me that Hillier has persuaded the minister and his advisers that it doesn't make sense [to set up new units]," said Jack Granatstein, a military expert and professor emeritus of history at York University.

A Defence Department official insisted that there was "no disagreement" between Mr. O'Connor and Gen. Hillier. "They're on the same page," said the official, who declined to be identified by name. "There is no disagreement." But the official did concede that the plan, when finally announced, would not result in the creation of new reserve units. "It's not new units. It's reorganizing the reserve." Mr. Granatstein said he thought the original plan outlined during the election campaign was "a bad idea" particularly because the core of each new battalion was to include 100 regular soldiers, which the Forces could not afford to spare. A later version of the plan talked of the core being made up of full-time reservists, which was less of a problem. Other critics have noted that reservists are above all needed to augment regular forces abroad, particularly in Afghanistan, rather than manning new battalions that would be waiting for forest fires, floods or ice storms to strike at home.

In the CBC interview, Gen. Hillier praised the role of the reserve, particularly in the Afghan mission.

"Just for the Afghanistan mission alone, between those getting ready and those on mission, we have almost 900 reservists involved.

. . . We simply could not do the international missions either without the reserve component. They're absolutely essential." In the interview, Gen. Hillier also said that there were no plans to revive the Airborne Regiment, which was disbanded in 1995 after a Somali teen was beaten to death by members of the regiment during a peacekeeping operation in Somalia. The general said the Forces were meeting the capability for airborne troops through existing infantry units and the newly formed Canadian Special Operations regiment.

Gen. Hillier's criticism of new units was limited to reserves and not related to the establishment of rapid-deployment units for the regular forces, like the air force unit announced last week by Mr. O'Connor for the CFB Bagotville in Quebec.

Conservative's defence promises PROMISE STATUS To build three armed icebreakers capable of crashing through six-metre-thick ice, to be based at a "new military/civilian deep-water docking facility" near Iqaluit for a northern sovereignty mission Prime Minister Stephen Harper this month announced \$3.1-billion for six to eight Canadian-made patrol ships capable of operating in ice up to a metre thick. Recruit 13,000 additional regular forces and 10,000 reserve forces Since April, the Canadian forces have put uniforms on roughly 3,400 soldiers. Increase defence spending by \$5.3-billion over five years Included in the government's first budget in March, 2006. An Arctic National Sensor System, including underwater surveillance technologies Mr. Harper is planning a northern tour this summer as part of an Arctic sovereignty campaign. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle squadrons at CFB Comox and Goose Bay for Arctic air surveillance In the past few weeks, Ottawa has announced a \$121-million plan for B.C.'s 19 Wing Comox. An Arctic training centre near Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, "on the Northwest Passage" Since the election, military officials have suggested that Resolute is a better location. To use the proposed "airborne battalion and airlift capacity stationed at CFB Trenton to provide a rapid emergency response capability throughout the Arctic Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said on Saturday that an air force unit capable of rapid deployment will be established at CFB Bagotville in northeastern Quebec.

New fixed-wing search-and-rescue aircraft for 440 Squadron at Yellowknife No formal action. Unnati Gandhi, Rick Cash

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; internal security; disasters; election promises; political; statements; list

PERSONAL NAME: Rick Hillier; Gordon O'Connor

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Conservative Party of Canada

Taliban kill Korean pastor

IDNUMBER 200707260113
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters /;
DATELINE: Kabul, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Hamilton Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 170

The tortured waiting continued yesterday for the families of 23 South Korean aid workers held by insurgents demanding the release of Taliban prisoners.

Following the discovery of the bullet-riddled body of one captive, a Taliban spokesman said the Afghan government had been too slow in responding to their demands.

Reports that eight other hostages had been freed could not be confirmed.

The South Koreans are members of a Protestant church group who were on a 10-day relief mission; most are women in their 20s and 30s, and some are nurses and teachers. They were abducted last Thursday while travelling on a public bus on the main highway from Kabul to Kandahar.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the kidnappers, said that a hostage was killed because the government had not agreed to an initial release of eight Taliban prisoners in exchange for eight Koreans. He said more hostages would be killed if the government was not more cooperative.

The Associated Press, citing KBS, the South Korean public broadcasting network, reported that the slain hostage was a 42-year-old pastor.

No exit strategy

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PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A16
SOURCE: New York Times
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 401

The American people have only one question left about Iraq: What is President Bush's plan for a timely and responsible exit?

That is the essential precondition for salvaging broader American interests in the Middle East and for waging a more effective fight against al-Qaeda in its base areas in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And it is exactly the question Bush, his top generals and his diplomats so stubbornly and damagingly refuse to answer.

Tuesday provided two more frustrating and shameful examples of this denial.

One was a new war plan drawn up by America's top military commander and top diplomat in Baghdad that will keep American troops fighting in Iraq at least until 2009.

The other was yet one more speech by Bush that claimed Iraq was the do-or-die front in the war on terrorism — rather than a rallying point for extremists and a never-ending drain on the resources America needs to fight that fight.

The war plan drawn up by General David Petraeus and ambassador Ryan Crocker simply assumes that a large-scale United States military presence in Iraq will continue for at least two more years.

So much for Bush's soothing incantations about a relatively short-term "surge" of additional troops. The plan ignores the fact that the volunteer army cannot sustain a prolonged escalation without grievous losses in quality, readiness and morale.

Even more unrealistically, the plan assumes that with two more years of an American blank cheque, Iraqi politicians will somehow decide to take responsibility for their political future — something they've refused to do for the last four years.

Petraeus and Crocker may feel they have little choice but to project the administration's flawed policies to their logical, or illogical, conclusions.

Bush does have a choice and a clear obligation to re-evaluate strategy when everything, but his own illusions, tells him it is failing. Instead, he spoke yesterday as if the latest National Intelligence Estimate had not found al-Qaeda's top leadership regrouped and resurgent in its old strongholds along the Pakistani-Afghan frontier. Or as if the latest bleak assessment of the Iraqi government's political and economic failures had never been issued.

Bush proposed no realistic new plan for more effectively fighting al-Qaeda in its heartland or for exiting from

the tragic misadventure in Iraq.

Instead he offered the familiar, simplistic and misleading arguments that he used to drag the country into this disastrous war to start.

Prolonging the war for another two years will not bring victory.

It will mean more lives lost, more damage to America's international standing and fewer resources to fight the real fight against terrorists.

If Bush's advisers can't tell him that, Congress will have to – with a veto– proof majority.

Fudging the numbers

IDNUMBER 200707260114
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A10
COLUMN: Don Martin
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 591

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

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

This was the only time a Canadian soldier in the huge convoy had fired off a round in the almost two weeks we were on the road — and even then the soldier got a tongue-lashing from the commanding officer for shooting without sufficient cause.

But soldiers told me they could empathize with the itchy trigger finger. Most have spent almost six months in Afghanistan without taking a single shot in anger. They can't believe how little combat they've seen.

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

The short answer from the Canadian military is odd: no comment.

They won't disclose precise numbers, approximate numbers, reveal whether the Taliban toll is single digits, double digits or in the hundreds. Just tell me we've killed more of them than they've killed of our soldiers, I plead. Sorry, battle group spokesman Capt. Martell Thompson says, we don't discuss enemy numbers.

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

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

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

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

their extremist brethren.

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

This partly reflects Canada's changing role from that of military force attacking on its own initiative to that of assisting Afghan soldiers enforce their combat priorities.

Even so, Canadians have just two confirmed and photographed Taliban kills to their credit in the past month, a sobering contrast to nine fallen soldiers at the hands of insurgents during the same time frame.

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

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

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

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

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

Don Martin filed this column for CanWest News Service from Ghorak, Afghanistan. E-mail: dmartin@canwest.com.

Taliban murder Korean hostage; Trigger-happy terrorists put pressure on foreigners

IDNUMBER 200707260085

PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star

DATE: 2007.07.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: B2

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Getty Images pool photo / TENSE: A relative of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan waits for news Wednesday in Seoul, South Korea. Militants claimed to have killed one hostage while others were set free. ;

DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Francis Silvaggio

SOURCE: CanWest Global

WORD COUNT: 433

KABUL, Afghanistan – The hostage standoff in Afghanistan took a critical turn Wednesday as police recovered the bullet-riddled body of one of the 23 South Korean aid workers snatched by the Taliban last week.

"We killed one of the Koreans today because the government is not being honest in talks," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told Agence France-Presse by telephone from an undisclosed location.

The rebels had briefly claimed that the man was shot because he had fallen ill and the hostage-takers were unable to get him to a hospital.

Police commander Ali Shah Ahmadzai, however, said the man had been shot 10 times in the head, chest and stomach.

By late afternoon, South Korea's Yonhap news agency was reporting that eight of the hostages had been released, but both the government and the militants denied the reports.

The Korean evangelical Christian missionaries, including 18 women, were abducted last Thursday when their bus was stopped along the main highway connecting Kabul and Kandahar.

In all, 26 foreigners have been captured by rebels over a single week.

Nevertheless, heading into Wednesday, there was optimism among government officials and negotiators about the chances of a peaceful resolution to the standoff. South Korean officials were said to be meeting with Taliban rebels, who have been agitating for the release of eight insurgent prisoners.

Still, the tension escalated throughout the day as the Taliban's deadline for the prisoner release approached.

"We call on the South Korean government, parliament and its people to pressure the Afghan government to accept our demands or we'll kill more hostages after the deadline passes," Ahmadi said after the first Korean hostage was executed.

Waheedullah Mujadadi, the head of the government delegation attempting to negotiate the release of the Koreans, said the Taliban had opened fire on him in a buffer zone between Taliban and government-controlled areas.

"They were trying to kidnap me as well or kill me," he said.

SOME SET FREE

Other hostages, however, were more fortunate. A Danish reporter and his Afghan companion were abducted overnight Tuesday while sleeping in the province of Kunar but were released several hours later.

"I was in a house and there was a brief exchange of fire. Following the exchange, armed Taliban took me," Khawja Najibullah, a Dane of Afghan origin, told reporters after his release.

"I told them 'I am a Muslim, I pray.' Then they freed me," he added.

Officials, meanwhile, continue to try to secure the release of a German hostage, one of two foreigners taken in Ghazni last Wednesday. One man has been killed and the rebels say the surviving one is seriously ill and slipping in and out of consciousness due to diabetes.

The Koreans represent the biggest group of foreigners to be abducted during the Taliban's insurgency. Any prisoner exchange would run counter to President Hamid Karzai's pledge not to allow the practice after his government in March freed five Taliban militants in exchange for an Italian reporter. – With files from Agence France Presse

Canada can't upgrade Dutch Leopard 2 tanks No company can do heavy armoured vehicle work

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: A7

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 293

CP Wire Murray Brewster OTTAWA — The Conservative government's \$200-million plan to refurbish almost half of the 100 surplus Leopard 2 tanks being purchased from the Dutch has hit a snag.

There's currently no company in Canada capable of quickly improving up to 40 Leopard 2A4 armoured vehicles in order to meet the rigours and dangers of Afghanistan.

An undetermined portion of the contract will likely have to be carried out overseas, says a senior defence official.

"Obviously, we'd like to do as much of it in Canada as possible but, of course, we currently don't have any capability in Canada to do heavy armoured vehicle work, and so there is consultation with industry taking place," Dan Ross, assistant deputy minister of materiel at National Defence, said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"We're going to have to determine what can be done." Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Public Works Minister Michel Fortier announced in April that the army's aging Leopard 1 C2 tanks would be replaced at a cost of \$650 million.

Under the program, Canada would borrow 20 armoured vehicles from the Germans and purchase 100 slightly used tanks from the Netherlands.

A month later, O'Connor revealed there would be an additional \$650-million, long-term support contract — bringing the total pricetag to \$1.3 billion.

As part of the initial purchase phase, roughly \$200 million was set aside to upgrade the used tanks, primarily with air conditioning and better armour, meant to withstand roadside bombs. Both O'Connor and Fortier said Canadian industry would see great benefits.

While the government has promised open bidding for both the immediate upgrades and the long-term maintenance contract, it appears there's only one company, located in Quebec, that might be capable of the job.

Rheinmetall Canada, based in Montreal, is in talks with the federal government and Krauss-Maffei-Wegmann — the Leopard's German manufacturer — about becoming involved, said Ross.

— Canadian Press

Hostage killed, Taliban free 8 others

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.07.26

PAGE: A11

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 285

CP Wire Amir Shah KABUL — Afghan police discovered the bullet-riddled body of a South Korean hostage Wednesday as the Taliban released eight other captives who were taken to a U.S. military base, officials said.

Because of a recent spike in kidnappings — including an attempt against a Danish citizen Wednesday — police announced foreigners were no longer allowed to leave the Afghan capital without their permission.

The male South Korean victim was found with 10 bullet holes in his head, chest and stomach in the Mushaki area of Qarabagh district in Ghazni province, the region where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped last week, said Abdul Rahman, a police officer.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said militants told him the hostage was sick and couldn't walk and was therefore shot.

Two western officials said some of the 23 hostages had been released.

One of the officials, who asked not to be identified because he wasn't authorized to share the information, said six females and two males were taken to the main U.S. base in Ghazni.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations earlier said a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages.

The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have either kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban at one point demanded 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped July 19 while riding a bus through Ghazni province on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare. Fourteen Koreans apparently remain in Taliban hands.

South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan in the wake of the kidnappings.

— Associated Press

Crass politics

IDNUMBER 200707260050
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
BYLINE: Michael Green
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 179

Re: Canada eyes cut in combat, July 22.

There have been reports suggesting the Harper government is dramatically rethinking or altering its commitment to the mission in Afghanistan prior to February 2009.

Coincidence or not, such policy announcements from both Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier appear poorly timed at best, or worse yet are nothing more than crass political opportunism.

For the first time it is a Quebec-based regiment, the Vandoos, that is being deployed and will be placed in harm's way. I am left wondering if the Conservative government's recent musings on the issue have more to do with the prospect of losing voter support in Quebec where support for the Afghan mission is at its lowest than it does with any principled desire to end the current combat role for Canadian troops serving in a war zone.

Indeed, with a federal election looming on the horizon, the prospect of seeing body bags with Quebecers arriving home will do nothing but exacerbate the Conservatives' already dismal electoral chances in that province.

Michael Green, Ottawa

Taliban order kidnapping offensive; Plans include training children; moves come as first of 23 Koreans held in Afghanistan executed

IDNUMBER 200707260033
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 634

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Taliban insurgents have been instructed to kidnap as many foreigners as possible, the Islamist militia's new military commander said yesterday, just as the group's followers in Afghanistan demanded a prisoner swap after killing one of 23 South Koreans it was holding.

Speaking to Britain's Channel 4 News from an undisclosed location along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, Mansour Dadullah, who took over from his brother, Mullah Dadullah, who was killed by coalition troops in May, also said the Taliban planned to use children to behead hostages.

He advocated kidnapping foreigners to trade them for Taliban captives — Mr. Dadullah himself was released from prison by Afghanistan in exchange for a kidnapped Italian journalist earlier this year.

"Of course, kidnapping is a very successful policy, and I order all my mujahedeen to kidnap foreigners of any nationality wherever they find them, and then we should do the same kind of deal," Mr. Dadullah told the broadcaster.

He added that the Taliban wanted to "give children a military education — we want to train them against cruel invaders and infidels, so when we need them, they will join this struggle." "We want to use children to behead infidels and spies so that they will become brave." Mr. Dadullah also claimed that a "spectacular" outrage would take place in Britain, following three failed car bombings in London and Glasgow about a month ago.

He said that he was in close contact with al–Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and added that between the Taliban and al–Qaeda, "we don't keep count of weapons, money or anything. Our aim is the same. We help them and they help us." In Seoul today, South Korea bitterly denounced the killing of one of its hostages by the Taliban, and said it was sending a senior presidential envoy to try to free the 22 remaining captives.

"The South Korean government bitterly deplores the killing of a South Korean national by kidnappers in Afghanistan," said a statement from the office of President Roh Moo–Hyun. "The kidnappers blamed for the killing will never avoid all responsibility for that inhumane act. Murder of an innocent civilian can never be justified." The foreign ministry identified the victim as Bae Hyung–Kyu, pastor of the Saem–Mul Presbyterian church and leader of the group of young aid workers who were seized last Thursday.

Mr. Bae, 42, co–founded the church in 1998 and has a young daughter, the Korea Times said.

The South Koreans, mostly women in their 20s and 30s, were taken hostage while en route from Kandahar to Kabul by bus. They were to provide free medical services in the war-torn nation.

Spokesmen for the Taliban have demanded the release of their own captives in exchange for the Koreans. They gave Afghan authorities a day to accede to their demands, or see more Koreans killed.

Hope turned to grief late yesterday for more than 1,000 South Koreans who gathered at the Saem-Mul church in Bundang, just south of Seoul. A report that eight hostages had been freed was later denied by Afghan officials.

Then the Taliban's announcement of Mr. Bae's killing was confirmed.

"No! No!" shouted some. Many others wept.

Mr. Bae is the third Korean victim of Islamic militants in as many years.

Afghan police found Mr. Bae's bullet-riddled body a few hours after the Taliban said they had executed him because talks to secure the release of eight insurgent prisoners had stalled.

"We killed one of the Koreans today because the government is not being honest in talks," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi said by telephone from an unknown location yesterday.

In a related development, Islamic militants fired rockets into a town in northwest Pakistan early yesterday, killing at least nine civilians and injuring 41 amid a wave of violence sweeping the country.

The attack, close to the Afghan border, was the latest in Pakistan since the army stormed a pro-Taliban mosque in Islamabad earlier this month, and came one day after Abdullah Mehsud, a former Guantanamo detainee and top Taliban militant, blew himself up after being cornered by security forces.

U.S. tactics put Britain in 'ethical dilemma'; Report about ally's extreme measures raises spectre of Maher Arar

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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen; with files from The Times, London
WORD COUNT: 897

A scathing new British report about how the United States has exploited British intelligence information to seize individuals and fly them to secret prisons for terrorism interrogations echoes the troubling case of Canada's Maher Arar.

An investigation by the parliamentary intelligence and security committee has found the U.S. ignored British security officials' insistence that no actions were to be taken against the individuals based on information they shared. But the three men with British connections were still swept up in the CIA's "rendition" program in 2002 and taken to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and other "black" holding centres in Europe. U.S. officials, the report said, knew the British had no intention of arresting them.

"What the rendition program has shown is that in what it refers to as 'the war on terror,' the U.S. will take whatever action it deems necessary, within U.S. law, to protect its national security from those it considers to pose a serious threat," said the report, released yesterday. "The U.K. now has some ethical dilemmas with our closest ally," and chief international partner in counter-terrorism operations.

In the 2002 Arar affair, incorrect information given to U.S. authorities by an inexperienced RCMP anti-terrorism team, which characterized Mr. Arar as an Islamic extremist, very likely set off a chain of events that led to his October 2002 U.S. rendition to a Syrian prison, where he was held for a year and tortured.

The Syrian-Canadian was arrested while travelling through New York's Kennedy airport on his way back to Canada from Europe. When the RCMP learned Mr. Arar was being detained in New York, an RCMP officer informed a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent the Mounties had insufficient evidence to arrest and charge him. He added it was likely Mr. Arar would not be refused entry if he were returned to Canada.

A few days later, U.S. officials bundled Mr. Arar on a plane and sent him to Syria.

Justice Dennis O'Connor, who headed the three-year Arar inquiry into the scandal, concluded in September that the former Ottawa software engineer had no links to terrorism. His exhaustive report also stressed there was no evidence that Canadian officials "participated or acquiesced" in the U.S. decision to send Mr. Arar to Syria.

Among his many other criticisms, Judge O'Connor faulted the RCMP for not following its own protocols, which required it to assess the release of information to third parties on a case-by-case basis and attach

U.S. tactics put Britain in 'ethical dilemma'; Report about ally's extreme measures raises spectre of Maher Arar

formal caveats for its use. The information supplied to the FBI was unscreened, inaccurate and carried no caveats.

In the British experience, however, the U.S. still ignored such caveats, according to the British report. The British parliamentarians also concluded there was no evidence of any security agency there being directly involved in the U.S. renditions and that there was evidence the men were tortured.

Still, it criticized the British domestic security service, MI5, and the secret foreign intelligence service, MI6, for failing to warn government ministers when they discovered that the CIA had begun to exploit British intelligence material to detain and imprison terrorist suspects.

The report said problems for the British intelligence agencies began in 2002 when U.S. President George W. Bush gave U.S. intelligence services new powers to fight al-Qaeda. The British began to realize the Americans were not confining their "rendition" actions to combatants captured in Afghanistan, but were detaining suspects from different parts of the globe.

In two cases, MI5 shared intelligence with the Americans on Bisher al-Rawi, an Iraqi national who arrived in Britain in 1984, and Jamil el-Banna, a Jordanian-Palestinian who had refugee status in Britain.

MI5 did not intend the men to be arrested and, under a carefully worded caveat, prohibited any action being taken against them on the basis of the security service's intelligence.

However, the caveat was ignored and the two men were arrested in The Gambia in 2002 and taken, possibly via Afghanistan, to Guantanamo Bay in a rendition operation.

MI5 told the committee it was the first time, "when suddenly we found that people were ... being taken."

In late 2002, MI6 and MI5 became aware of another case involving the transfer of an individual to a third country. They were told about it by the U.S. because the suspect was thought to be planning attacks in Britain.

But Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, then MI5 director-general, told the committee: "With hindsight, we realize that (they) intended to render him without due process. We did not fully understand that."

The report said that after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the U.S., MI5 and MI6 were under considerable pressure. However, it concluded the agencies, "should have detected the emerging pattern of renditions sooner and used greater caution in working with the U.S. at an earlier stage." Ministers, it added, should also have been told what was going on.

Again, like the RCMP and Canada in the Arar case, the committee detailed the extraordinarily close intelligence relationship between Britain and the U.S., which made it all the more difficult for either MI5 or MI6 to limit the intelligence-sharing.

Sir John Scarlett, chief of MI6, told the committee: "The global resources of the CIA, FBI and the National Security Agency are vast ... the U.K. agencies' long-developed relationships with U.S. intelligence agencies give them vital access to U.S. intelligence and resources. It is neither practical, desirable, nor is it in the national interest for U.K. agencies to carry out (counter-terrorism) work independently of the U.S. effort."

An old enemy falls drop by drop; Canadians Help Inoculate Children Against Polio

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PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: National
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 563

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan –The traffic jam at this border crossing is a surreal lineup of emaciated donkeys pulling carts filled with used tires, parents pushing wheelbarrows carrying malnourished children, and peeling jingle trucks threatening to topple under the weight of their lopsided cargo.

This is the main port of entry between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a chaotic and dangerous gateway for opium exports and al-Qaeda imports that makes most of the Third World look civilized.

But Canada is working to stop a different plague from sneaking across the political boundary between the two filthy and impoverished regions.

Contaminated water, open sewers and generally sanitary-free conditions make this one of the last breeding grounds for polio, a potentially paralyzing viral infection on the verge of global eradication.

There are only four countries in the world where active cases are still being discovered, and this border straddles two of them. India and Nigeria complete the list.

While Canada struggles to wipe out the Taliban, it appears to be having greater success eliminating polio, with a \$5-million Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) contribution to a program run by UNICEF and Rotary International. Modest as that sounds (the funds wouldn't be enough to buy two Light Armoured Vehicles), it makes Canada by far the most generous of the international security force countries here.

The border program took effect last year when Afghanistan recorded a sudden spike of 29 polio cases, after seeing only a single-digit count the year before. So far 2007 has seen only two cases, both in this area.

The vaccine is simple enough to deliver. Two-drop doses delivered by mouth two or three times to children under the age of six put resistance to the highly infectious disease in place for life.

The trick is finding the kids and convincing their parents to allow the vaccination to be administered amid a campaign of misinformation and fear. Some elders and religious figures whisper that the vaccine is ineffective or causes impotence.

The free-flowing border crossing seemed a logical catchment area. In periodic blitzes of this city, 7,000

health workers go door-to-door looking for young children to vaccinate.

On my Tuesday morning visit, the log sheet showed the half dozen workers, each paid \$3 per day, had already inoculated more than 200 babies and toddlers.

The parents seemed remarkably calm when officials pried open their children's mouths without warning or permission papers and delivered the drops, although plenty of kids were raising howls of protest.

All told, the program delivers about 10,000 doses a month at a border open 12 hours per day.

After receiving the drops, each child has its finger marked with a black stain that supposedly lasts for a week until a second dose is given.

"It's important to get every child because 1,000 others can be infected from every confirmed case," says UNICEF southern director Sam Mawunganidze.

This initiative appears to be precisely the sort of humanitarian effort Canadians are talking about when they tell pollsters their support for the military mission is contingent upon improving Afghan living conditions.

While CIDA has, rightly or wrongly, been the butt of criticism for being slow off the mark in Kandahar, it seems to be finding niches where modest dollars, funnelled through established agencies, are having a larger impact.

The problem is that active agencies are in decline here, scared off by security concerns, even while demand for their help is escalating, says Mr. Mawunganidze.

The latest kidnapping of South Korean humanitarian workers is not likely to improve the region's image.

That makes it a challenge for CIDA, which prefers to contract out its good deeds locally, to find partners for its programs.

But delivering a big bang for our foreign aid bucks, in tandem with an effective show of military force, is the only way this mission can hope to have a happy ending.

KEYWORDS: DISEASES; VACCINES

Final chronicles of crisis, chaos in Afghanistan

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PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.07.26
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 436

Richard Johnson has been in Afghanistan for two months. This is an edited version of his last blog entry before returning home.

Having avoided getting sick for the whole trip I finally lost the germ roulette and caught something in my last two days here. I wouldn't mind, but this cough is making it really hard to smoke. Yesterday morning I tracked down the Padre — Major Kevin Klein — who had given the memorial service at Ma'Sum Ghar for the six Canadian soldiers killed by an IED on July 4.

I didn't feel I had done him any justice at all when I drew him before, and I wanted to do something a little more representational of his character. He is a great big tall fellow, and he exudes honest warmth and good humour.

He is a Christian minister but he administers to any faith in the service.

In the afternoon I continued my love–hate relationship with the Role 3 hospital. I had arranged an interview time with one of the nurses yesterday, which with my spastic schedule I forgot all about. She thankfully was very understanding when I arrived an hour late.

As we finished the interview I overheard that there were U.S. casualties arriving.

I sought out the civilian surgeons and they helped me get clearance to shoot photos while they worked the cases.

There were two wounded U.S. soldiers. Both were survivors of a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attack which had killed their buddy. The one I chose to study was awake and alert but silent. He lay staring at the ceiling as the two Canadian nurses worked on cleaning his various wounds before surgery.

He had shrapnel wounds all over his body including a piece that had gone up through his jaw. His X-rays showed a scene like a starry night sky of white RPG shards. I had taken 30 or 40 photographs before my camera died. I had stupidly left my spare and my batteries on charge back at the tent.

I ran the eight blocks to pick up the batteries. As I did so I remembered I had another trip organized that day.

I had previously arranged to go and visit the Russian village just outside the wire.

To do this I had had to get in touch with the U.S. Army Command sergeant major at Camp Sherzai. He would be there to pick me up in 10 minutes. I ran the eight blocks back to the hospital and told them that I would not be attending the surgery after all. Sorry guys, my fault.

This is probably my last but one post in my Afghan Journal. Yesterday was a perfect example of how many stories there are here. So much drama, so many lives in crisis. I could have stayed another two months and never stopped drawing or writing.

NATIONALPOST.COM

Check out more of graphic editor Richard Johnson's handiwork and read past dispatches from Afghanistan on his blog, Kandahar Journal, at nationalpost.com

NOT-SO-DIPLOMATIC START TO CAMPAIGN; Former Ambassador; Conservative On Attack As Candidacy Announced

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DATE: 2007.07.26

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SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: Don Martin, CanWest News Service /Canada is helping to fight polio in Afghanistan but there is a problem finding the children to inoculate and getting parents' permission. ; Black & White Photo: Phil Carpenter, CanWest News Service / Former diplomat Gilles Duguay, right, is joined by Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon to announce his candidacy yesterday. ;

DATELINE: MONTREAL

BYLINE: Andy Riga

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 430

MONTREAL – During 35 years as a diplomat representing Canada around the world, Gilles Duguay had to tiptoe around controversies and avoid ruffling feathers.

Yesterday, on his first day as a politician, the Conservative candidate in the federal riding of Outremont let loose, using colourful and decidedly undiplomatic language to lambaste opponents.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Duguay said Stephane Dion, as a powerful Liberal minister in the late 1990s, must have been aware of sponsorship scandal misdeeds, a charge Mr. Dion, now Liberal leader, has repeatedly denied.

"I think he must have known what was going on around him," he said of Mr. Dion. "Don't let him come and say that it was others, that he had nothing to do with it."

Mr. Duguay described Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe as a "Duception artist" trying to trick Quebecers into believing that some dark force akin to Darth Vader "wants to invade" Quebec. But "there is no attack on Quebec," Mr. Duguay said. "Don't be afraid."

He also said the New Democratic Party's star Outremont candidate — former provincial Liberal minister Thomas Mulcair — could only win "by some miracle" and should have stayed in provincial politics where he could have accomplished things.

Mr. Duguay made the comments at a press conference at which his candidacy was unveiled by Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Quebec lieutenant.

Mr. Duguay said he was inspired to enter politics by Mr. Harper's "intellectual leadership" and by the Conservative motion recognizing Quebec as a nation. He faces an uphill battle if he hopes to capture the riding, where a byelection is expected soon.

Outremont has long been a Liberal stronghold, though the party's margin of victory has dropped. In last year's election, the Liberals beat the Bloc by 2,500 votes. The Conservatives came fourth, after the NDP.

Mr. Duguay said he will use up "four or five pairs of shoes" pounding the pavement to make himself known in the riding.

Aside from Mr. Mulcair, Mr. Duguay faces Liberal Jocelyn Coulon, a university professor and inter-national-affairs commentator; and the Bloc's Jean-Paul Gilson, a psychoanalyst.

A lawyer and university professor, Mr. Duguay, 70, entered the diplomatic service in 1967. He has served as ambassador to Cameroon, Morocco, Romania and Bulgaria. He is expected to focus on his international expertise during the byelection.

A draft version of his campaign Website — which was briefly online on Tuesday — featured photos of Mr. Duguay with prominent figures, including Richard Nixon, Queen Elizabeth II, Hillary Clinton, Francois Mitterrand, Pierre Trudeau and Lucien Bouchard.

Mr. Harper must announce a date for the Outremont vote by Saturday. Two other Quebec ridings will also be up for grabs: Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, formerly held by the Bloc's Yvan Loubier; and Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean, currently held by Michel Gauthier of the Bloc. Mr. Gauthier has said he will quit on Sunday.

The three byelections are expected to take place on the same day in September.

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

TALIBAN KILL SOUTH KOREAN HOSTAGE; Eight Others Said To Be Released After Ransom Payment

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EDITION: National

SECTION: World

PAGE: A13

ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: Kim Ho-Chun, Reuters / Bee Ho-jung, father of one of the 23 South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan, prays in Jeju, south of Seoul, after hearing the Taliban killed one of the hostages yesterday. The militants said they executed the man after losing patience with the Afghan government. South Korea has banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan. ;

DATELINE: KABUL

BYLINE: Tom Coghlan

SOURCE: The Daily Telegraph, with files from news services

WORD COUNT: 566

KABUL – Taliban militants yesterday executed one of 23 South Korean Christian missionaries abducted last week in southern Afghanistan, while eight other hostages were said to have been released after the payment of a ransom.

After a day of conflicting reports, the bullet-riddled body of the South Korean man was found as darkness fell. The Taliban said they had killed him after losing patience with the Afghan government and a South Korean team of negotiators.

"We recovered the body of a South Korean man with 10 bullet wounds from the Qara Bagh district where the kidnappers are holding the hostages. He had bullets from head to toe," said General Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the Ghazni police chief.

A police official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the situation, said insurgents had told him the hostage was sick and could not walk, and was therefore shot.

An Afghan official involved in the negotiations told The Associated Press a large sum of money would be paid to free eight of the hostages. The official spoke on condition he not be identified, citing the matter's sensitivity. No other officials would confirm the account.

Foreign governments are suspected to have paid for the release of hostages in Afghanistan in the past, but have kept it quiet or denied it outright. The Taliban originally demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the Koreans.

Announcing the South Korean's death, a Taliban spokesman set a final deadline for the release of eight Taliban fighters held prisoner by the government. "If the administration of Kabul is not ready to release our [Taliban] hostages, then by 1 a.m. local time the rest of the hostages will be killed. That time is the last deadline," he said.

The South Korean party, which includes 18 women, are evangelical Christians who were reportedly hoping to

conduct missionary and aid work in Kandahar, southern Afghanistan. They were kidnapped from a hired bus on the road between Kabul and Kandahar last Thursday.

The Taliban initially demanded that South Korea withdraw the 200 troops it has stationed in Afghanistan. That demand was changed to the release of Taliban prisoners after South Korea confirmed its troops were already scheduled to leave by the end of the year. On Tuesday, Afghan officials and the Taliban both expressed optimism a peaceful resolution could be reached. However, the rhetoric from the Taliban grew increasingly belligerent.

After a week in which 26 foreigners were kidnapped in Afghanistan, the Kabul authorities have banned foreigners from travelling outside the capital unless they tell the government 24 hours in advance of their plans.

South Korea has also banned its citizens from travelling to Afghanistan. Seoul also asked Kabul not to issue visas to them and block their entry into the country.

The church the abductees attend has said it will suspend at least some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan. It also stressed the people abducted were not involved in any Christian missionary work, saying they only provided medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country.

Relatives of the hostages gathered at the offices of a nongovernmental agency in Seoul to watch developments on television. They did not speak to reporters, but there were sounds of crying when news came that one of the hostages had been killed.

About 1,000 people gathered in suburban Seoul around Saemmul church, which sent the volunteers to Afghanistan, to pray for their safe return.

KEYWORDS: WAR; FOREIGN RELATIONS; FOREIGN AID; KOREAN WAR; FAMILY REUNIONS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS; HOSTAGES; AFGHANISTAN

Dutch soldiers have been our loyal allies

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BYLINE: Henk Gel

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Re: Our Troops' Role, Editorial, July 24.

Aren't there a number of Dutch soldiers present in Afghanistan? And wasn't the contribution of the Dutch highly praised recently by Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President? Didn't a recent British report state that the Canadians, together with the Dutch, are carrying most of the load in Afghanistan?

The Dutch have suffered far fewer fatal casualties than the Canadians, but what would the Canadians do without the active presence and support of the Dutch and other NATO soldiers? Is it also possible that in our eagerness to declare our soldiers "heroes," we fail to mention that there are also heroes of different nationalities who deserve to be recognized?

Henk Gel, Calgary.

KEYWORDS: OIL INDUSTRY

A sad lesson to learn from Koreans

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Re: Taliban Vows To Kill Korean Hostages, July 23.

Jack Layton and the NDP believe that Canada — and presumably the other countries with troops in Afghanistan — should be doing more in aid and reconstruction, and have less of a military presence in that country. So, just what are Jack and his crew doing about the 23 South Korean aid workers who — unprotected by any military presence — were kidnapped and are now threatened with death by Taliban terrorists?

Paul D. Mack, Oshawa, Ont.

KEYWORDS: 0