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# WIDOWS OF WAR; Spouses of troops killed in conflict left to pick up the pieces and explain to their young children

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Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / Charmaine Tedford blows a kiss in October at an interment ceremony for Sgt. Darcy Tedford at the National Military Cemetery in Ottawa. Widows face a number of challenges, some mundane and all heartbreaking, as they adjust to life without their spouses who are among 66 Canadian troops killed in Afghanistan since 2002. ; Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / Julie Mason (centre), holding her son Benjamin Walsh, with daughters Avery Mason, 6, and Jordan Walsh, 2, wait for the casket of Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh to be taken off the plane in Trenton last Aug. 12. ;

**BYLINE:** ALISON AULD

**SOURCE:** Canadian Press

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 1151

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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.

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.

WIDOWS OF WAR; Spouses of troops killed in conflict left to pick up the pieces and explain to their young children

"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.

The difficulty too 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.

Tedford, whose two daughters are five and seven, said she and many of the women on the base in Petawawa where her husband was stationed are used to having their spouses away on tours for a fixed, finite amount of time.

They can be "single moms for six months" and put off things around the house until their husbands return, but when that six-month rotation turns into a year after a death, Tedford said the reality sinks in and the responsibilities can be overwhelming.

"It's the simplest daily tasks that you shared with your spouse, that you don't realize how much they did for you," she said. "I cut the grass when he was alive, but he might have been cooking supper or bathing the kids. It was a division of labour and now it's me doing it all."

Tedford remembers buying a barbecue and getting the store clerks to load it into her car. She drove home,

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pulled in to her driveway and realized she had no idea how she would get it out of the vehicle, let alone put it together.

"I had to go and ask one of his friends, 'Can you come help me take a stupid barbecue out of the car? Can you help me put it together because I can't do that and watch the kids and a dog all at the same time?'" she said. "It's very frustrating."

Arnold, who started a support group on the base, also knows the frustration of having to rely on others for help, since her husband did everything from hanging out the laundry and doing the dishes to repairing things around the house.

"When he was alive I shovelled the driveway once and he gave me trouble for it," she said, laughing. "I never cut the grass until he went on tour. Thank God I've got good neighbours."

In addition to the practical concerns of maintaining a house, the women said they are also focused on keeping the memory of their loved one alive for very young children who may have little sense of who their fathers were.

For Mason, the fear is that her youngest will eventually lose any recollections he had of his father, who deployed when Ben was just six months old. She found herself playing videos of her husband every day and talking about him constantly, as if to keep him alive through the threads of her memories.

"I can't even put into words what it does to your heart to think that your children will forget who their father is," she said. "That was the biggest fear for me, that they were going to forget. I just realized there comes a point that the picture will just be a picture to them and there will be no memories that go with that picture."

"That was one of the hardest steps for me."

Still, the three women have filled their homes with photos of their lost husbands and created rituals in remembrance of the men, whether it's blowing them a kiss in heaven at bedtime or making crafts to place on their graves on Father's Day.

"Every night before he goes to bed he gives his picture a kiss and then he turns it to me to kiss it and he gives him a kiss when he gets up in the morning," said Arnold of her son.

"I have pictures of him everywhere — on my key chain, in the house and our wedding picture is on his headstone. I always want them to know who he was."

# Difficult to stop troop deaths, new chief says

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The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar yesterday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there."

The need to reduce Canadian losses has put greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

Laroche's concerns about future casualties echoes comments made by politicians in recent weeks.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly but that it won't alter its plan to maintain the current operation until 2009.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Laroche was met at the plane by Grant. Laroche officially takes over command next week.

Laroche holds degrees in business administration and has served on peacekeeping missions in Cyprus in 1981 and 1992 and Bosnia–Herzegovina in 1997 and 1999.

# Muslim world distrusts U.S. motives

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Here's a bit of modern-day heresy: U.S. President George W. Bush actually has some rather sound instincts about the Muslim world. He has visited mosques more often than any of his predecessors, and he frequently talks of winning Muslim hearts and minds. So why are those hearts and minds so estranged today? What went wrong?

The problem is that Bush has relied on ill-informed advisers and out-of-touch experts. By substituting their false expertise for his own sensible intuitions, he has failed to understand the Muslim world — which means he has failed to understand the arena in which the first post-9/11 presidency will be judged. Instead of seriously explaining Muslim societies that are profoundly split in complex ways, Bush's aides have offered a fatally flawed stereotype of Islam as monolithic and violent.

These missteps have helped squander the potential goodwill of people in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan — all countries that pose major threats to U.S. security, and all countries that once saw themselves as U.S. friends. (When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, I was the administrator in charge of South Waziristan, the lawless border region of Pakistan where Osama bin Laden is now said to be hiding, and I saw how Muslims appreciated U.S. support.) Today, rather than opening his hand to the people of Pakistan, Bush is marching in lockstep with the country's fading dictator, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who is mockingly referred to as "Busharraf."

Errors like this are tragic — and avoidable. Galvanized by the need to help Americans better understand the Muslim world, I travelled last year to the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia, accompanied by a group of American researchers. We conducted questionnaires and interviews; we met with presidents, prime ministers, sheiks and students; we visited mosques, madrassas and universities. During our travels, we found something far more subtle than the Bush administration's caricature. Americans often hear of a faith neatly split between "moderates" and "extremists."

In fact, we discovered three broad categories of Muslim responses to the modern world: the mystics, the modernists and the literalists.

The first category is the most tolerant and the least political, defined by a mystical and universalist world view that embraces difference rather than resisting it. Muslims in this group look to sages such as the great Sufi poet Rumi for inspiration. "I go to a synagogue, church and a mosque, and I see the same spirit and the same altar," Rumi once said. You'll find today's mystics in such places as Iran, Morocco and Turkey.

Then there's the modernist position, one taken by Muslims who seek to adapt to Western modernity, synthesize it with their faith traditions and live in dialogue with it. Some of the most prominent Muslim thinkers in recent times have belonged to this school, such as Muhammad Abduh, the liberal Egyptian religious scholar who led a drive in the late 19th century to shake the dust off Islamic institutions and dogmas that he believed were lagging behind the times. Some of the most important Muslim politicians, such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the staunchly secularist founder of modern Turkey, have felt similar impatience with the faith's old ways. You'll still find plenty of modernists in Turkey today, as well as such countries as Jordan and Malaysia.

In fact, a few decades ago it seemed that these forward-looking interpretations would become the dominant expression of Islam, and reform-minded Muslim countries seemed poised to join the community of nations.

For me, the quintessential modernist was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. The urbane, sophisticated Jinnah believed ardently in women's rights and minority rights, and in 1947, he almost single-handedly created what was then the largest Muslim nation on Earth.

For Pakistanis, he is George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson rolled into one. He founded a new country without compromising his principles or breaking the law, rejected hostage-takings, hijackings and assassinations, and he idolized Abraham Lincoln.

Jinnah is a far cry from our third category, the literalists. This group also arose in the 19th century, but it draws its ethos, attitudes and rhetoric from one central perception: that Islam is under attack. It sees Western ideas such as liberalism, women's rights and democracy as threats, not opportunities. In response to the incursions into the Muslim world of the great Western empires, this group sought to draw firm boundaries around Islam and prevent it from being infected by alien influences.

The literalist world view has inspired a range of Muslim activists, from the Taliban to mainstream political parties such as South Asia's Jamaat-i-Islami, which participate in elections while producing influential tracts on Islam. While this entire school's theology is profoundly traditional, only a tiny minority of the group advocates terrorism. The vast majority of Muslim literalists simply want to live according to what they see as the best traditions of their faith.

But you're more likely to see media images of bearded young men wearing skullcaps and yelling "God is great" and "Death to the Great Satan" than you are to see scholars at work. The angry activists are now on the ascendancy, according to our study. The reasons for their rise are complex: the incompetence and corruption of modernist Muslim leaders from Egypt to Pakistan to Southeast Asia; the widening gap between a crooked elite and the rest of the population; the absence of decent schools, economic opportunities and social welfare programs; and the failure of modernist leaders to douse burning regional conflicts such as Chechnya, Kashmir and Palestine.

So the U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan poured gallons of fuel on a worldwide fire. Bush's wars gave the literalists support for their claim that Islam is under siege; the crude Muslim-bashing of some of Bush's supporters helps the literalists argue that Islam is also being attacked by the Western media, which many Muslims believe represents the thinking of the West's citizenry.

In this context, parodies of the Prophet Muhammad or the cloddish Republican talking point branding Muslims as "Islamofascists" helped convince wavering Muslims that their faith was truly a target. Remember Jerry Falwell's post-9/11 abuse of the Prophet, in which the late televangelist dismissed the man whom Muslims named as their foremost role model in our questionnaires as a "terrorist"? Such slurs helped boost Pakistani religious parties in the 2002 elections in Northwest Frontier Province, where the clerics had never before won more than a few seats. Overnight, the Taliban found a friendly base.

Americans who think that all Muslims hate the United States may be surprised to hear that many Muslims believe they have it precisely backward. Our questionnaires showed that Muslims worldwide viewed Islamophobia in the West as the No. 1 threat they faced. Many Muslims told us that the Western media depict them as terrorists or likens them to Nazis. Such widespread perceptions let literalist clerics argue that Islam must defend itself against a rapacious West — something the mystics and modernists were incapable of doing.

Today, all these factors have coalesced to convince ordinary Muslims — from Somalia to Indonesia — that Islam is indeed threatened and that the United States is leading the charge.

As a Muslim, I grieve the fact that modernist leaders such as Jinnah have become irrelevant. And as someone living in the United States, I fear that the danger of another terrorist strike is as high as ever.

Our study did suggest ways to make progress. With a wiser strategy and a mighty reduction of hubris, the United States could still improve its relations with the Muslim world. Americans need to accept that the Muslim literalists are here to stay, that their position is deeply felt and that it deserves to be engaged with.

U.S. policy-makers need to keep an eye on the mystics and modernists, too; they are not the problem, but continued attacks on Islam will push many of them into supporting the literalists.

To change the tenor of Washington's conversations with the Muslim world, symbolic gestures are important, such as Bush's visits to American mosques. But we need substantive action, too. For one thing, U.S. diplomats should make an effort to come out from their embassy fortresses and meet with cultural and religious leaders. That simple step would do much to make friends for America.

Beyond that, Washington's interaction with Muslim nations needs to be better thought out. We need to marginalize the violent fringe and build deeper ties with mainstream literalists who are suspicious of the West but shun violence. Take U.S. aid to Pakistan, which has added up to about \$10 billion since 9/11. Much of this goes toward buying gunships and tanks, which ordinary Pakistanis say are used against them.

In other words, U.S. aid is being used in ways that boost anti-Americanism — hardly a smart policy. Instead, the United States should stipulate that half of its aid go to building up Pakistan's tattered educational structures, with a special focus on madrassas that eschew violence. Overnight, hearts and minds would begin to change; Muslims hold education especially dear, and if governments won't provide it, parents will be tempted to go to whomever will.

Bush does not have much time left, but he can still avert disaster. Above all, we should start with dialogue. We might wind up with friendship.

Akbar Ahmed is the Ibn Khaldun chairman of Islamic studies at American University and the author, most recently, of *Journey Into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*.

# Hosseini tells tale of 2 women

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## A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

by Khaled Hosseini

(Viking Canada, 367 pages, \$34 hardcover)

Being a woman, it seems, can be a hazard to your health and eventually your life.

In Khaled Hosseini's latest bestseller, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the Afghan-born Californian tells the story of two women whose lives become fatefully intertwined when each of them ends up married to Rasheed, a shoe merchant from Kabul who is a ruthless abuser.

Various excerpts in the book describe how women must submit to men. In one instance, when Mariam, a new bride, is given her first burqa by her husband, he insists women who are married must be completely covered and says he's embarrassed when he sees a woman wearing only a head scarf.

"But I'm a different breed of man, Mariam. Where I come from, one wrong look, one improper word and blood is spilled. Where I come from, a woman's face is her husband's business only. I want you to remember that. Do you understand?"

When Mariam's food preparation is not to Rasheed's liking, he pushes the plate away, spilling rice and sauce on the floor. As Mariam picks up the grains of rice, Rasheed pries open her mouth and shoves in pebbles, ordering her to chew. She cries and blood flows from her mouth, but he orders her to keep chewing.

"Now you know what your rice tastes like. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food and nothing else," Rasheed said, referring to their numerous attempts to have children and Mariam's unfortunate miscarriages.

Despite the harsh realities which can make for a gritty read, the book is a captivating tale, pulling the reader in right from the beginning.

It starts with the story of Mariam as a young girl living with her mother. From the outset, it's clear Mariam is inferior because she is a "harami" — the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy man and one of his housekeepers. Mariam attempts to become a part of her father's life but is rebuked and ultimately feels betrayed when she is

married off at 15 to Rasheed. After many unsuccessful attempts at trying to conceive, Rasheed turns elsewhere and Laila is introduced into the family dynamic.

Laila loses her parents in the post-Soviet aftermath and clashes between moderates and the Mujahedeen. She is left to choose between prostitution and marriage to survive.

The story then focuses on the lives of Mariam and Laila — although born in different times and circumstances, their lives become very similar. There are heartbreaking moments of sacrifice but also loving moments of tenderness as they grow up together.

Hosseini is skilled as a storyteller in pulling at his readers' heartstrings just as he did in his first book, *The Kite Runner*, published in 2003. That book, which sold millions of copies, is told from the perspective of a young boy growing up in Afghanistan.

Hosseini's success as an author has led to a permanent hiatus from his daily job as a physician in San Jose, Calif. He is now concentrating on his writing and enjoying his good fortune. Earlier this month, Hosseini was on a book tour and visited Toronto and Ottawa.

In both books, readers are exposed to a condensed version of the turbulent country's history from the Soviet invasion, the civil war with Islamic fundamentalists, the terrifying reign of the Taliban and post-Taliban reconstruction. But all along never forgetting the beauty of a country that has been ravished by war for more than two decades.

Take for instance the title of the latest book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, which comes from a 17th century poem by Persian writer Saib-e-Tabrizi. The title describes the splendour of the ancient city of Kabul.

Although *A Thousand Splendid Suns* may at times have readers shaking their heads at the appalling treatment of women and humanity, the book will hook you, making it difficult to put down. It's definitely a worthwhile read.

Liz Monteiro is a Record reporter.

#### KHALED HOSSEINI

Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 in Kabul. His family moved to Paris in 1976, then to California in 1980. The title of his latest book is from the poem *Kabul* by the 17th-century Persian writer Saib-e-Tabrizi:

"Every street of Kabul is enthralling to the eye

"Through the bazaars, caravans of Egypt pass

"One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs

"And the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls."



# Expect more Cdn. deaths in Afghanistan: new commander; Use of roadside bombs, suicide bombers seen as increasing threat

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

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The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar yesterday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there."

The need to reduce Canadian losses has put greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

Laroche's concerns about future casualties echoes comments made by politicians in recent weeks.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly but that it won't alter its plan to maintain the current operation until 2009.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Laroche was met at the plane by Grant.

Expect more Cdn. deaths in Afghanistan: new commander; Use of roadside bombs, suicide bombers seen as

# Wife of South Korean hostage victim pleads for release of captives; 22 remaining hostages believed to be safe but officials expecting prolonged negotiations

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The wife of a captive South Korean pastor killed in Afghanistan made a tearful appeal yesterday for the release of the remaining 22 hostages.

"I sincerely hope that the pain the families are already having ... won't deepen with more sadness," Kim Hee-yeon, wife of Bae Hyung-kyu who was found dead with multiple gunshots, told reporters. "I sincerely hope there won't be any more victims."

Bae was the leader of a 23-member South Korean group seized by Taliban on July 19 while riding a bus in southern Afghanistan. His body was found Wednesday.

The 42-year-old victim, a deputy pastor and a founder of Saemmul Presbyterian Church, led the church's volunteer work in Afghanistan. In addition to his wife, he is survived by a young daughter.

"It was unbelievable news. I wish I could see him once again," Kim said, wiping tears from her swollen eyes and dressed in black.

She also asked for help from the U.S. and the Afghan governments to free the hostages, faltering several times trying to hold back tears as she read a prepared statement.

South Korean officials said the remaining hostages were believed safe, but did not rule out the possibility of negotiations with Taliban being drawn out.

"We wish this situation would be resolved in a short period of time, but we also cannot help but consider it will take a long-term period of time. We're preparing for every possible scenario," said presidential spokesman Chun Ho-sun.

President Roh Moo-hyun sent his national security adviser to Afghanistan as his envoy to accelerate efforts to win the release of the hostages.

Baek Jong-chun, the envoy, is expected to meet Afghan President Hamid Karzai and other top officials on the crisis.

"Sending a presidential special envoy at this moment means the president is doing his best," Chun said.

# N.B. shooter finds targets at British event; Travis Surette of Shediac Cape follows in his father's footsteps

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280097  
**PUBLICATION:** Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**SECTION:** Sports  
**PAGE:** C1  
**BYLINE:** Times & Transcript Staff  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**WORD COUNT:** 319

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Master Cpl. Travis Surette sure made his mark at the British National Rifle Association Service Competitions here this month.

Surette, who grew up in Shediac Cape and is now stationed with the 3rd Royal Canadian Regiment at CFB Petawawa, Ont., came home with plenty of hardware from the international military shooting competition as a member of the Canadian Forces combat shooting team.

He won gold in the Bisley Bullet match and the BSA match and came in second in the Henry Whitehead Cup. Surette was also a member of the four-man Canadian team, which won gold in the Roberts combat snap shooting match.

Surette's Canadian team also placed third in the Hamilton Leigh match.

His silver finish came in the Henry Whitehead Cup, a match of continuous movement and fire practices, simulating an advance on combat. The team members needed to complete a 1.5 kilometre run in 10 minutes carrying all their kit to qualify and advance to the next stage of the competition.

They crossed the finish line in time to climb a muddy, rain-soaked hill, load ammunition and turn on scopes and move from target ranges of 500 metres down to 100 metres, firing in the prone position.

At the end of the advance combat competition, each team member was scored on hits for a total of 160 points.

The Canadian Forces combat shooting team featured 14 members drawn from the Canadian Navy, Army and Air Force units from across the country.

Teams from Australia, Oman, Ireland and the Falkland Islands also participated in the prestigious shooting competition held at the historic National Shooting Centre at Bisley in Surrey, England.

The Canadian team competed in combat rifle and pistol events both as individuals and in teams using the Canadian Forces issued 5.56 millimetre C7 rifle and 9 mm Browning pistol.

"These competitions are a true testament to the calibre of the soldiers serving in the Canadian Military," said Canadian team captain, Capt. Christopher Strain.

Surette has already completed a tour of Afghanistan and is scheduled to return there again next year.

N.B. shooter finds targets at British event; Travis Surette of Shediac Cape follows in his father's footsteps

His father, Ron, is a six-time winner of the Queen's Medal for target shooting and is a member of both the Canadian Forces Sports Hall of Fame and New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame.

# Expect deaths, commander says

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**PUBLICATION:** The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)

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**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)

**WORD COUNT:** 59

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The proliferation of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar on Friday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

# Military widows struggle with new reality; A growing number of soldiers' wives are adjusting to life without their spouses

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B5

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Alison Auld

**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press

**ILLUSTRATION:** Julie Mason (centre) holding her son Benjamin Walsh, with daughters Avery, 6, and Jordan, 2, waits for the casket of husband Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh to be taken off the plane in Trenton in August 2006. Whether mundane or heartbreaking, military widows are facing a number of challenges as they adjust to their lives. For Mason, it's hearing her younger daughter say she wants to die so she can be reunited in heaven with her dad.

**WORD COUNT:** 1054

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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.

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.

The difficulty too 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.

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.

Tedford, whose two daughters are five and seven, said she and many of the women on the base in Petawawa where her husband was stationed are used to having their spouses away on tours for a fixed, finite amount of time.

They can be "single moms for six months" and put off things around the house until their husbands return, but when that six-month rotation turns into a year after a death, Tedford said the reality sinks in and the responsibilities can be overwhelming.

"It's the simplest daily tasks that you shared with your spouse, that you don't realize how much they did for you," she said. "I cut the grass when he was alive, but he might have been cooking supper or bathing the kids. It was a division of labour and now it's me doing it all."

Tedford remembers buying a barbecue and getting the store clerks to load it into her car. She drove home, pulled in to her driveway and realized she had no idea how she would get it out of the vehicle, let alone put it together.

Military widows struggle with new reality; A growing number of soldiers' wives are adjusting to life without the

"I had to go and ask one of his friends, can you come help me take a stupid barbecue out of the car? Can you help me put it together because I can't do that and watch the kids and a dog all at the same time?" she said. "It's very frustrating."

Arnold, who started a support group on the base, also knows the frustration of having to rely on others for help, since her husband did everything from hanging out the laundry and doing the dishes to repairing things around the house.

"When he was alive I shovelled the driveway once and he gave me trouble for it," she said, laughing. "I never cut the grass until he went on tour. Thank God I've got good neighbours."

In addition to the practical concerns of maintaining a house, the women said they are also focused on keeping the memory of their loved one alive for very young children who may have little sense of who their fathers were.

For Mason, the fear is that her youngest will eventually lose any recollections he had of his father, who deployed when Ben was just six months old. She found herself playing videos of her husband every day and talking about him constantly, as if to keep him alive through the threads of her memories.

"I can't even put into words what it does to your heart to think that your children will forget who their father is," she said. "That was the biggest fear for me, that they were going to forget. I just realized there comes a point that the picture will just be a picture to them and there will be no memories that go with that picture."

"That was one of the hardest steps for me."



# Korean hostages in bad health: Taliban

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B2

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press

**BYLINE:** Amir Shah

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 420

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A purported Taliban spokesman warned yesterday that some of the 22 South Korean hostages were in bad health, saying hours after the kidnappers' latest deadline passed that the captives were crying and worried about their future.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the kidnappers, told The Associated Press by phone that the group still insisted on exchanging Taliban prisoners for the captives, who could be killed if the demand was not met. Ahmadi spoke several hours after the passage of the most recent Taliban deadline but said the militia had not set a new one.

Some of the South Koreans were "not in good condition," Ahmadi said. "I don't know if the weather is not good for them, or our food. The women hostages are crying. The men and women are worried about their future."

One hostage, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found dead of multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh, the district where the hostages were being held.

Local tribal elders and clerics continued telephone negotiations with the captors, and were struggling with conflicting demands that included ransom as well as the release of Taliban prisoners.

"There are still a lot of problems among them," Qarabagh police chief Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi said. "One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and yet another wants a deal for money."

Ahmadi denied that.

"The Taliban are not asking for money. We just want to exchange our prisoners for Korean hostages. ... When they release the Taliban, we will release the hostages," he said.

It remained unclear how many militants the Taliban want freed, or which ones.

Meanwhile, a South Korean presidential envoy arrived for talks with President Hamid Karzai and other top officials, and Afghan officials said they remained upbeat about the chances of freeing the hostages without further bloodshed.

"We hope we will have a good result, but I don't know if they will be released today. I don't think they will be," said Shirin Mangal, a spokesman for the governor of Ghazni province, where the Koreans were taken.

In Seoul, a foreign ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity, said the captives were still believed to be safe and that officials were trying to get medicine and other items

delivered to them.

Ahmadi said the hostages were being held in small groups in various locations and were being fed bread, yogurt and rice.

"What should happen is that these people should be released, unconditionally, immediately and unharmed, back to South Korean authorities, so they can return back to their families," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in Washington.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped while travelling by bus on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare.

# Laroche: More losses likely in Afghanistan

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A10

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

**WORD COUNT:** 261

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war–torn country.

Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar on Friday as he arrived to replace Brig.–Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine–month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there."

The need to reduce Canadian losses has put greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

Laroche's concerns about future casualties echoes comments made by politicians in recent weeks.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly but that it won't alter its plan to maintain the current operation until 2009.

Sixty–six Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

# Fatalities in Afghanistan likely to increase, commander says

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A6

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

Brig.–Gen. Guy Laroche speaks to reporters at the Kandahar airfield Friday night.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Laroche is the new commander of Joint Task Force (Afghanistan). (MARTIN OUELLET / CP)

**WORD COUNT:** 302

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Sixty–six Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Fatalities in Afghanistan likely to increase, commander says

Laroche was met at the plane by Grant, who will leave Afghanistan soon. Laroche officially takes over command of the mission next week.

Laroche holds degrees in business administration and has served abroad on peacekeeping missions in Cyprus in 1981 and 1992 and Bosnia–Herzegovina in 1997 and 1999.

'Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there.'

# RCMP official: Can't quit Afghanistan now

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A6

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

**ILLUSTRATION:** Canadian soldiers stand guard at a roadblock after a suicide car bomb explosion in Kandahar province, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. (Allauddin Khan / AP); Canadian soldiers stand guard at a roadblock after a suicide car bomb explosion in Kandahar province, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. (Allauddin Khan / AP)

**WORD COUNT:** 463

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Afghanistan is in the "middle of an insurgency" and countries like Canada that are rebuilding it shouldn't make a hasty exit, says the RCMP officer helping train Afghan police recruits.

The war-torn country risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self-sufficient, said RCMP Supt. David Fudge.

Fudge is a police officer with 30 years of experience and his job is to help train Afghan police recruits who are often illiterate and arrive in tattered clothes and flip-flops.

He has been on the job in Afghanistan for a year as part of Canada's provincial reconstruction team, a multi-level unit that includes soldiers, police officers and officials from Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency.

"Afghanistan is in the middle of an insurgency," Fudge said in an interview at the unit's headquarters, about 18 kilometres from the multinational base in Kandahar.

"The job is not done yet. And if we leave too early, we very much stand the risk of going back to ground zero or even worse, as we've seen in Haiti, where we had to go back and start rebuilding from zero again."

Fudge said the foundations of a civil society have been progressively established in Afghanistan since the international community began working on reconstruction in 2002.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is slated to end in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond that date if he doesn't have a consensus from the four main political parties in Ottawa, a difficult goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition.

However, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province has stated that Canada would be making a serious mistake by pulling its troops out by 2009 due to the terrorist threat.

Fudge refused to comment on the political decision involving Canada's participation in Afghanistan, but he did say the giant task of stabilization won't be completed before the deadline set by Ottawa.

"You don't crack that problem overnight," he said. "You don't rebuild overnight, you have 70 per cent of the people here who are illiterate."

"We have to plant the seed for long-term success, to teach Afghans to manage themselves ... give them a decent place to come to work." In the last year, the police contingent headed by the RCMP has trained 600 recruits for the Afghan national police. It will take another 3,200 trained recruits to ensure adequate policing and surveillance in Kandahar, Fudge said.

Afghan police face chaos, bribes from drug traffickers and even the possibility of being shot at by the international forces that are supposed to be their allies. They also can face hostility from the local population.

"We're trying to improve the image of the Afghan national police in the public eye," Fudge said. "It's going to take a long time, yes. I would say at least one generation, if we do it right."

Fudge said there were no police stations when he arrived but "I'm proud to say we have five stations under construction right now. Actually, two are finished."

# Some of 22 hostages "not in good condition"; Captives crying, worried about future, Taliban warns

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A3

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press

**BYLINE:** Amir Shah

**ILLUSTRATION:** Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry as they watch a TV news program about the kidnappings in Sunnam, South Korea, on Friday. (The Associated Press); Foreign Muslims pray for the release of 22 South Koreans kidnapped a week ago by the Taliban in Afghanistan and mourn for slain pastor Bae Hyung–kue at the Seoul Central Mosque in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. (Lee Jung–hun / YONHAP); Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry as they watch a TV news program about the kidnappings in Sunnam, South Korea, on Friday. (The Associated Press); Foreign Muslims pray for the release of 22 South Koreans kidnapped a week ago by the Taliban in Afghanistan and mourn for slain pastor Bae Hyung–kue at the Seoul Central Mosque in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. (Lee Jung–hun / YONHAP)

**WORD COUNT:** 488

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The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped while travelling by bus on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare.

Their church said the captives were not involved in any Christian missionary work in Afghanistan and had provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people.

The widow of the slain pastor made a tearful appeal Friday for the release of the remaining hostages, saying she does not want other families to experience her grief.

"I sincerely hope that the pain the families are already having enough won't deepen with more sadness," Kim Hee–yeon told reporters. "I sincerely hope there won't be any more victims."

# [YONHAP) Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry as they watch a TV news program about the kidnappings in Sungnam, South Korea, on Friday....]

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry as they watch a TV news program about the kidnappings in Sungnam, South Korea, on Friday. (The Associated Press); Foreign Muslims pray for the release of 22 South Koreans kidnapped a week ago by the Taliban in Afghanistan and mourn for slain pastor Bae Hyung–kue at the Seoul Central Mosque in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. (Lee Jung–hun / YONHAP); Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cry as they watch a TV news program about the kidnappings in Sungnam, South Korea, on Friday. (The Associated Press); Foreign Muslims pray for the release of 22 South Koreans kidnapped a week ago by the Taliban in Afghanistan and mourn for slain pastor Bae Hyung–kue at the Seoul Central Mosque in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. (Lee Jung–hun / YONHAP)

# Canadian aid helps cripple polio in Afghanistan

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** Opinion

**PAGE:** A7

**COLUMN:** Political analysis

**BYLINE:** Don Martin

**DATELINE:** SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 600

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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 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. 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.

Don Martin writes for the Calgary Herald.

# Rambo Rick has a new strategy

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** Opinion

**PAGE:** A7

**COLUMN:** The Meddler

**BYLINE:** Holman, Alan

**WORD COUNT:** 752

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Canada has, apparently, revised its military mission in Afghanistan. It is stepping back and encouraging Afghan forces to bear more responsibility for taking the fight to the Taliban, and presumably suffer more casualties.

Surely the Afghan army should be the lead force in the defence of its own country. But until very recently most NATO forces in Afghanistan didn't think it was capable. It was felt, still felt by some, that the Afghan forces lack the leadership, the training and the equipment necessary to do the job.

The interesting thing about this change is that the announcement didn't come from the prime minister, who has shown a great deal of interest in the Afghan mission, nor from the minister of defence, but from General Rick 'Rambo' Hillier in a newspaper interview two weeks ago.

Sitting down for a cozy, exclusive interview with Bruce Campion-Smith of the Toronto Star's Ottawa bureau, the general outlined, quite literally, using a pen and a pad, how Canada's mission would evolve.

It was Gen. Hillier who announced Canada's strategy for its withdrawal from Afghanistan, not the political leadership. This announcement comes just a few weeks before the recall of Parliament where it is anticipated the issue of Canada's continued presence in Afghanistan is to be debated.

This is not the first time Gen. Hillier has stepped in to fill what some might consider to be a void. It was Gen. Hillier who signed a protocol with the Afghans concerning the disposition of Taliban prisoners captured by Canadian forces. The protocol was signed with little or no input from Canadian diplomats and it proved to be lacking critical details on the treatment these prisoners would receive in the hands of the Afghans. This led to charges of prisoner abuse.

Presumably Rambo Rick had the acquiescence of the prime minister when he announced our exit strategy. It is a strategy strikingly similar to what the Americans are using to extricate themselves from the mess they created in Iraq. This similarity is not surprising since Gen. Hillier spent a significant period with the American military in Texas, and on foreign policy, the prime minister tends to follow many American initiatives.

The 'new' strategy will be for Canadian troops to provide increased training and mentoring for the Afghan army. The emphasis will shift from fighting, to training, to development work.

Gen. Hillier told the Star that Canadians have worked with one of the Afghan battalions and they have improved dramatically. "Our soldiers were telling me it's like looking in a mirror and seeing our own tactics and drills and skills being implemented by these guys."

"They're very professional," said the general, "They've actually been very successful in most operations against the Taliban."

This is not dissimilar to what the American military said when they changed their tactics in Iraq. But what soon happened there was the insurgency shifted its focus from the American to the Iraqi troops, particularly new recruits. Things don't look quite as rosy these days.

Gen. Hillier and the Afghans should expect a similar shift in focus by the Taliban. We have seen that what works in Iraq, i.e. more powerful mines and suicide bombers, soon gets imported to Afghanistan.

The Canadian public should continue to be skeptical of military rhetoric about the Afghan mission, particularly about the time frame of Canada's participation. Those who argue that Canadian troops should stay until there is a successful, stable, democratic government in Kabul often point to the decades Canadian peacekeepers spent in Cyprus.

This ignores major differences in the two missions. Cyprus was a peacekeeping mission mandated by the United Nations, not NATO, to help enforce a negotiated treaty between two warring factions. Regardless of the rationale, the Afghanistan mission was an act of war against a sovereign nation.

Canada's peacekeeping efforts won widespread approval, both at home and abroad. The same cannot be said of the Afghan mission. Many countries, including most NATO nations, don't agree with, and didn't participate in, the invasion of Afghanistan.

Even with the new touchy-feely tone to the Canadian efforts in Kandahar province, Canadians should be cautious about extending the mission beyond 2009. If it is the noble effort NATO claims, then others will step up to the plate. If not, then maybe it's not so noble.

As to the argument about spreading democracy, Canada has opted to be an example of a functioning multicultural democracy. Exporting, and imposing, our democratic values and institutions is not traditional Canadian foreign policy. Hopefully it never will be.

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

# Layton's glib tongue won't suffice

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** Editorial

**PAGE:** A6

**COLUMN:** Letters to the editor

**WORD COUNT:** 273

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Editor:

All right, class, this morning we are going to examine the benefit of withdrawing troops from Afghanistan and taking the road of the NDP to negotiate a settlement with the Taliban.

The Taliban, as you'll recall, recently kidnapped and threatened to kill 23 Korean Christian missionaries. Part of the reason for their arrest, I believe, was because they had their Bibles with them and the Taliban, as well as many other Arab countries, see that as a crime.

To date the Taliban has an excellent record for carrying out its threats. I am curious about how Mr. Layton would go about his plan to negotiate with such an august, trusting and much-loved group as the Taliban? Will the Taliban even agree to meet with Layton? Will any agreement garnered from these high-level talks benefit anyone but the Taliban? Will the Taliban agree to discontinue the massacre of teachers, nurses, doctors, aid workers and Christians? Will the Taliban allow schools to remain open especially for females? This is to say nothing about hospitals. And finally, who will be there to ensure the security of the NDP negotiators since they demand our combat troops be withdrawn?

Surely the glib tongue of Mr. Layton will not suffice. At the same time, we must examine how any withdrawal will be viewed by those civilian aid workers, NGOs and people of Afghanistan who have worked with the aid workers, the UN and NATO civilians and military who have worked to make Afghanistan at least a little safer for women, young ladies, girls, students and others.

Lloyd C. McKenna,

Charlottetown

# Canada shouldn't leave Afghanistan too quickly: RCMP official

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** International

**PAGE:** C9

**SOURCE:** CP

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

**DATELINE:** Kandahar, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 390

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Afghanistan is in the "middle of an insurgency" and countries like Canada that are rebuilding it shouldn't make a hasty exit, says the RCMP officer helping train Afghan police recruits.

The war-torn country risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self-sufficient, said RCMP Supt. David Fudge. Fudge is a police officer with 30 years of experience, and his job is to help train Afghan police recruits, who are often illiterate. He has been on the job in Afghanistan for a year as part of Canada's provincial reconstruction team.

"Afghanistan is in the middle of an insurgency," Fudge said in an interview at the unit's headquarters, about 18 kilometres from the multinational base in Kandahar. "The job is not done yet. And if we leave too early, we very much stand the risk of going back to ground zero or even worse, as we've seen in Haiti, where we had to go back and start rebuilding from zero again."

Fudge said the foundations of a civil society have been progressively established in Afghanistan since the international community began working on reconstruction in 2002.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is slated to end in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond that date if he doesn't have a consensus from the four main political parties in Ottawa, a difficult goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition. However, the newly-appointed police chief of Kandahar province has stated that Canada would be making a serious mistake by pulling its troops out by 2009 due to the terrorist threat.

Fudge refused to comment on the political decision involving Canada's participation in Afghanistan, but he did say the giant task of stabilization won't be completed before the deadline set by Ottawa.

"You don't crack that problem overnight," he said. "You don't rebuild overnight, you have 70 per cent of the people here who are illiterate. We have to plant the seed for long-term success, to teach Afghans to manage themselves ... give them a decent place to come to work."

In the last year, the police contingent headed by the RCMP has trained 600 recruits for the Afghan national police. It will take another 3,200 trained recruits to ensure adequate policing and surveillance in Kandahar, Fudge said.



# Afghans negotiate with Taliban to free Korean hostages; Deadline has passed

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** International

**PAGE:** C8

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** Kabul, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 500

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Afghan elders on Friday negotiated with Taliban to win the release of 22 kidnapped South Koreans, as the latest militant deadline passed without word on their fate or news of progress.

A South Korean presidential envoy was due to arrive Friday for talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and other top officials on the crisis.

No breakthrough came in a round of telephone calls late into Thursday night that resumed Friday, officials said. Negotiators were struggling with conflicting demands made by the kidnappers, including the release of Taliban prisoners and ransom money.

"We hope we will have a good result, but I don't know if they will be released today. I don't think they will be," Shirin Mangal, a spokesman for the governor of Ghazni province where the captives were taken, said Friday.

A noon deadline Friday – the latest of several ultimatums given by the captors – came and went without fresh word of the hostages' fate. Calls to a Taliban spokesman went unanswered.

Previous deadlines have passed without incident.

In Seoul, a South Korean Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity, said the captives were still believed to be safe and that officials were trying to get medicine and other items delivered to them.

Baek Jong–chun, a senior South Korean official, was expected to meet Karzai and other high–level officials to discuss specific measures to free the hostages, the official said.

Local tribal elders and religious clerics who have respect among the people of the Qarabagh district where the Koreans were taken have been conducting negotiations by telephone with the captors for several days.

"There are still a lot of problems among them," Qarabagh police chief Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi said Friday.

"One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and yet another wants a deal for money," he said earlier.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the hard–line Islamist Taliban, on Thursday reiterated a demand for the release of Taliban prisoners, and a threat to kill more of the hostages.

One of the group of abducted Koreans, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found slain with multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh.

"If Kabul administration does not solve our problem ... then we do not have any option but to kill Korean hostages," Ahmadi said by phone from an undisclosed location.

"The Taliban are not asking for money. We just want to exchange our prisoners for Korean hostages. ... When they release the Taliban, we will release the hostages," he said.

The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the South Koreans, though it is not clear how many militants the Taliban want freed or which ones.

Ahmadi said the hostages were being held in small groups in different locations and were being fed on bread, yogurt and rice.

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

Their church said the abductees were not involved in any Christian missionary work in Afghanistan, and had provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war-ravaged country. It said it will suspend some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said it supports efforts to free the South Koreans.

"What should happen is that these people should be released, unconditionally, immediately and unharmed, back to South Korean authorities, so they can return back to their families," he said.

# Victim's wife makes appeal for release of hostages

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** International

**PAGE:** C8

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** Seoul, South Korea

**ILLUSTRATION:** Kim Hee-yeon, widow of slain South Korean pastor BaeHyung-kyu, who was among the 23 South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan, cries during a news conference asking for the release of the remaining 22 South Korean hostages in Sungnam, south of Seoul, South Korea, Friday. – Photo by The Associated Press

**WORD COUNT:** 282

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The wife of a captive South Korean pastor killed in Afghanistan made a tearful appeal today for the release of the remaining 22 hostages.

"I sincerely hope that the pain the families are already having ... won't deepen with more sadness," Kim Hee-yeon, wife of Bae Hyung-kyu who was found dead with multiple gunshots, told reporters. "I sincerely hope there won't be any more victims."

Bae was the leader of a 23-member South Korean group seized by Taliban on July 19 while riding a bus in southern Afghanistan. His body was found Wednesday.

The 42-year-old victim, a deputy pastor and a founder of Saemmul Presbyterian Church, led the church's volunteer work in Afghanistan. In addition to his wife, he is survived by a young daughter.

"It was unbelievable news. I wish I could see him once again," Kim said, wiping tears from her swollen eyes and dressed in black.

She also asked for help from the U.S. and the Afghan governments to free the hostages, faltering several times trying to hold back tears as she read a prepared statement.

South Korean officials said the remaining hostages were believed safe, but did not rule out the possibility of negotiations with Taliban being drawn out.

"We wish this situation would be resolved in a short period of time, but we also cannot help but consider it will take a long-term period of time. We're preparing for every possible scenario," said presidential spokesman Chun Ho-sun.

President Roh Moo-hyun sent his national security adviser to Afghanistan as his envoy to accelerate efforts to win the release of the hostages.

Baek Jong-chun, the envoy, is expected to meet Afghan President Hamid Karzai and other top officials on the crisis.

"Sending a presidential special envoy at this moment means the president is doing his best," Chun said. "I can't dare to be optimistic about tangible results, but I can tell you that we're doing our best at the highest level."

# More violence near Pakistan mosque; 13 killed in bombing at hotel

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

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** A7

**SOURCE:** AP

**BYLINE:** Sadaqat Jan

**DATELINE:** Islamabad, Pakistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Pakistani security officials and volunteers search for bodies at the site of a bomb explosion in Islamabad, Pakistan Friday. A suspected suicide bombing tore through a hotel in the Pakistani capital, killing at least 13 people and injuring 71 others, police and government officials said. – Photo by The Associated Press

**WORD COUNT:** 505

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A suspected suicide bomber killed 13 people at a hotel near Islamabad's Red Mosque on Friday as the government reopened the religious complex for the first time since a bloody army raid ousted Islamic militants from the site.

Hundreds of students clashed with security forces outside the mosque and occupied it for several hours before being dispersed.

They denounced President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and demanded the return of a pro-Taliban cleric who was detained during the siege earlier this month.

The bomb struck the Muzaffar Hotel, in a downtown market area about a half-kilometre from the mosque. Local television showed victims – many of them bleeding or badly burned, with their clothing in tatters – being carried from the wreckage to waiting ambulances.

Amir Mehmood, a witness, said he saw blood, body parts, and shreds of a Punjab police uniform inside the hotel.

Khalid Pervez, Islamabad's top administrator, said 13 people were killed, including seven police, and 71 were wounded.

Kamal Shah, another top Interior Ministry official, said initial reports suggested it was a suicide attack targeting police.

Authorities recovered human remains that led them to suspect the bombing had been carried out by a suicide attacker, a senior police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

There was no claim of responsibility, but Islamic militants will be suspected in what is the latest in a series of attacks in Pakistan since the July 10 army raid at the mosque left at least 102 people dead.

Neighbouring shops and food stalls also were hit by the blast.

"I heard the blast and I came running. A policeman got blown into the air and landed away from the blast site," said another witness, Imtiaz Ahmed.

The bombing came soon after police fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters who called for hardline cleric Abdul Aziz lead the prayers at the mosque.

The demonstrators threw stones at an armoured personnel carrier and dozens of police in riot gear on a road outside the mosque.

After the demonstrators disregarded calls to disperse peacefully, police fired tear gas, scattering the crowd.

Friday's crowd shouted support for the mosque's former deputy cleric, Abdul Rashid Ghazi, who led the siege until he was shot and killed by security forces after refusing to surrender.

Ghazi was the public face of a vigilante, Islamic anti-vice campaign that had challenged the government's writ in the Pakistani capital. "Ghazi, your blood will lead to a revolution," the protesters chanted.

Police stood by on the street outside the mosque, but did not enter the courtyard where the demonstration was taking place.

In a speech at the mosque's main entrance, Liaqat Baloch, deputy leader of a coalition of hardline religious parties, the Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal, condemned Musharraf as a "killer" and declared there would be an Islamic revolution in Pakistan.

"Maulana Abdul Aziz is still the prayer leader of the mosque. The blood of martyrs will bear fruit. This struggle will reach its destination of an Islamic revolution.

"Musharraf is a killer of the constitution. He's a killer of male and female students. The entire world will see him hang," Baloch said.

Security was tightened in Islamabad ahead of the mosque's reopening, with extra police taking up posts around the city and airport-style metal detectors put in place at the mosque entrance used to screen worshippers for weapons.

In the southwestern city of Quetta, meanwhile, gunmen opened fire on the vehicle of the official spokesman for a provincial government in Pakistan on the border with Afghanistan, killing him, police said.

# City dedicates street to fallen soldier

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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	The Telegram (St. John's)
<b>DATE:</b>	2007.07.28
<b>SECTION:</b>	Provincial
<b>PAGE:</b>	A4
<b>SOURCE:</b>	The Telegram
<b>BYLINE:</b>	Holly Hill
<b>ILLUSTRATION:</b>	Ruby Line in Mount Pearl was renamed Friday in honour of fallen soldier warrant officer Richard Nolan, who was serving with the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan when he was killed Sept. 3rd, 2006 while serving overseas. – Photo by Keith Gosse/The Telegram
<b>WORD COUNT:</b>	428

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Morene Nolan described Friday's street-naming ceremony in Mount Pearl as the perfect way to remember her "boy."

"The ceremony was beautiful," she said, as she wiped away tears. "It was so touching. He will certainly be remembered. Rick grew up on the next street over, so he spent a lot of time here."

But the tears weren't only tears of sadness. The Nolan family were both proud and honoured to be commemorating the late Warrant Officer Richard Francis Nolan, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in September 2006.

Family and friends gathered on the parking lot of the Church of the Good Shepherd Friday for the ceremony to change the name of the Mount Pearl section of Ruby Line to Richard Nolan Drive.

In 2006, when the alignment of the street changed, the city initiated a contest to rename the street. They received 43 submissions, but one particular entry, by Tyler Somerton, caught their eye – to rename the street after the war hero.

Nolan grew up in Mount Pearl. He attended school at Mary Queen of the World and was involved in the community and air cadets.

In 1987, at the age of 19, he joined the Canadian Forces. Among his postings, he served in the Gulf War in 1990 and in Yugoslavia in 1992. He had his first posting to Afghanistan in 2003.

His sister Bernice Miller said Nolan's family is thankful the city of Mount Pearl is honouring her brother's memory.

"There is only one other thing that we would rather be doing today and that is helping Rick celebrate his birthday. Today, July 27, would have been Rick's 40th birthday," she said.

Miller described her deceased brother as adventurous, selfless and fully committed.

"If you look up the word hero in the dictionary, the definition would read: a person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life – Rick is a hero in every sense of the word," she said as she spoke to the crowd.

Mount Pearl Mayor Steve Kent said the ceremony showed who Nolan truly was and the difference he made in many lives.

Kent said the city has never held such a large street dedication.

"Today was a special day for the family, but it was also a special day for our community and we are very pleased to commemorate someone who was very active in our community growing up ... He had a real connection to our community and we are very proud to honour his contribution to not only our community, but to our country,"

Messages came from officers of the Royal Canadian Regiment and from Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier, thanking the city for remembering Nolan and referring to him as a proud soldier and national treasure.

Morene Nolan said she hopes no other family has to lose a loved one in battle.

"I see people with children (serving) in Afghanistan here today. I hope they all come back safely and no one has to go through what we went through."

hhill@thetelegram.com

# Senator suggests more naval, air force support; Former Mulroney chief to present new options at Tory caucus retreat

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**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A12

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Larry MacDougal, CanWest News Service / Canadian Forces CF-18 Hornets were deployed in the 1999 NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia. Conservative Senator Hugh Segal says Canada should use them in Afghanistan. ;

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 637

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OTTAWA — An influential Conservative senator is suggesting that Canada alter its military role in Afghanistan after February 2009 by reducing its ground forces while increasing its naval and air force support — which would include patrols over the troubled country in manned and unmanned Canadian aircraft.

Hugh Segal, a former chief of staff for Brian Mulroney, said yesterday that he will present ideas for the country's military commitment at the Conservative caucus retreat in Prince Edward Island in August.

"The bottom line is that at some point, Afghanistan has to be run by the Afghans and we have to ask ourselves as a NATO partner: How do we calibrate our presence going forward so that it is sustainable and how do we not desert our core national security obligation?" said Segal.

"One of the choices obviously is to use more air surveillance and to use more naval in some of the adjacent areas to make sure there aren't any large concentrations of Taliban or al-Qaeda forming ... and that does not necessarily require endless convoys on the ground and endless boots on the ground in an endless sort of process that seems to have no apparent end."

Canada's CF-18 fighter jets were a part of the 1999 NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia, taking part in the 78-day aerial bombardment of the war-torn country in order to stop the violence directed at ethnic Albanian Muslims in Kosovo.

Segal said there has been some upgrading of the CF-18 in terms of its avionics suites and smart munitions. "It would be the enhanced use of technology to increase our tactical options and perhaps reduce the size of our deployment without necessarily reducing our strategic capacity," said Segal.

Segal's comments came as news broke that the Taliban have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack an American aircraft over Afghanistan. The Daily Telegraph reported yesterday that the failed attempt came from a weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran and represents an increase in the capability of the terrorists.



Segal says Prime Minister Stephen Harper's commitment — that Canada's mission in Afghanistan after February 2009 will only move ahead with parliamentary consensus — means that the Conservatives need agreement from just one other party in Parliament. The NDP is calling for Canada's immediate withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan.

Lauding Harper's promise of a debate in Parliament on Canada's mission, Segal said he hopes there will be a wide range of issues and options discussed before the country's future mission is decided upon.

"It is also a point of pressure upon all the major political parties because you can't just take the easy way out. You can't because the public is looking for more, and I think part of why the public is looking for more in a thoughtful process on the part of all of us is because we've lost 67 Canadians and so their sacrifice is a huge engagement we have to embrace in terms of what it was for and what does it mean," said Segal.

Appointed to the Senate by former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, Segal is one of the more non-partisan politicians on Parliament Hill. He wants to discuss his proposal, and other options, with the Grits.

"I am trying to open up the debate by suggesting that it is not just 'stay with what we have or go.' There are other options for all of NATO, including Canada, for sustaining the course of the strategic mission. The thing that bothers me the most is the extent [that] 'mission creep' becomes a given and then becomes non-debatable," said Segal.

He described 'mission creep' as the notion of Canada having a perpetual support role in Afghanistan — that three to five more years of the same military engagement after 2009 would be the only way to uphold our NATO commitment.

# Three NATO soldiers killed in Afghanistan

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**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A12  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 169

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KABUL (AFP) — Three NATO soldiers and an Afghan trooper were killed along with several insurgents in Afghanistan yesterday, while a helicopter gunship made a forced landing, the alliance said.

The deaths among the troops from the NATO–led International Security Assistance Force bring the number of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan this year to 124.

ISAF does not release the nationalities of the soldiers killed before their native country has been notified. "I can confirm the death of two ISAF soldiers in eastern Afghanistan [yesterday]," a spokesman in the ISAF headquarters in Kabul said.

An official statement from the military force said a third NATO soldier was killed in the south of the country.

A second spokesman for the troops in eastern Afghanistan, Stern Berg, said 13 ISAF soldiers were injured in addition to 24 militants who were "killed or wounded."

"Two ISAF soldiers and an Afghan army soldier have been killed, 13 ISAF soldiers and a civilian have been wounded in the operation," said Berg.

The force also said in a press statement that an ISAF AH–64 Apache attack helicopter made a "precautionary landing" in eastern Kunar province bordering Pakistan today.

# Taliban extend South Korean hostage deadline

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A13

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Korea Pool, Reuters / Kim Hee-yeon, wife of pastor Bae Hyung-gyu who was kidnapped and killed by the Taliban, weeps next to Bae's older brother during a news conference in Seongnam, south of Seoul, yesterday. ;

**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan

**SOURCE:** Agence France-Presse

**WORD COUNT:** 365

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan (AFP) — Taliban terrorists said yesterday it had given Afghanistan more time to allow an envoy from Seoul to join talks for the release of 22 South Korean hostages but again threatened to kill them all.

The South Korean envoy was due to arrive in Kabul to seek an urgent hearing with Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai and U.S.-led forces following a desperate appeal by one of the captive Christian aid workers for help.

The Taliban had set a midday yesterday deadline to arrange the release of the remaining 22 Christian aid workers now in their ninth day of captivity. The leader of the group has already been killed. The Islamic guerrillas are insisting on the release of eight Taliban prisoners held in Afghanistan in return for the aid workers' freedom, although Seoul has said the rebels' demands are "considerably fluid and not unified."

"We call on the government to give more value to the negotiations and speed up the process of releasing our suggested prisoners," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP from an unknown location after the limit expired.

"They requested more time. They say they have a new Korean envoy involved in the negotiation process. But if we feel they are not honest in releasing our prisoners we will kill all of the hostages," he said. There was no official confirmation that the envoy had arrived.

Deputy interior minister Munir Mohammad Mangal confirmed the Afghan government requested an unlimited deadline from the kidnappers, adding that the terrorists demands were shifting and they needed more time to study them.

MPs and council members from southern Ghazi province where the Koreans were seized had met with the kidnappers, as requested by the Taliban, Mangal added.

"We are trying to win the safe and sound release of the Koreans. Our negotiations still continue," he told reporters.

Officials say they don't want to break President Hamid Karzai's pledge not to release more rebel prisoners after his government in March released five Taliban in exchange for an Italian reporter.

One of the hostages earlier made an emotional plea for help in a reported telephone interview with U.S. television network CBS, apparently conducted in the presence of her captors.

"We are in a very difficult time. Please help us," said the woman, who CBS said gave her name as Yo Cyun-ju, after the interview shown Thursday organized by a Taliban commander.

# UNESCO fears damage from Seven–Wonder status

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**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Travel  
**PAGE:** C4  
**SOURCE:** New York Times Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 321

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While Brazilians celebrate the fact that the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro was named one of the new seven wonders of the world July 7, UNESCO, which awards World Heritage status to historical sites and helps countries protect them, is worried about the ramifications of the contest.

"We believe there is a risk that these sites will become tourist attractions like Disneyland," said UNESCO spokeswoman Sue Williams, adding, "The campaign seemed quite commercially driven and another way to lure in more tourist dollars."

More than 100 million votes from all over the world were tallied before the Zurich–based New7Wonders campaign announced the results. The process took eight years, and in the final months led to governments' campaigning for their particular monuments. The other winners were the Great Wall of China, the Colosseum in Rome, the Taj Mahal in India, the ruins of Petra in Jordan, Machu Picchu in Peru and the Chichen Itza pyramid in Mexico.

"We have a different goal than UNESCO" said Tia Viering, a spokeswoman for New7Wonders ([www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com)). "We want to raise people's awareness of these cultures and monuments," she said, "and take them out of the dusty corners of academia." To that end, Bernard Weber, the Swiss–Canadian author and filmmaker behind the campaign, has said he hopes to open a museum with models of each of the sites, to publish photography books, and even to help preserve monuments, starting with rebuilding the Buddha statues in Afghanistan that the Taliban destroyed.

Christian Manhart, head of communications for the World Heritage section of UNESCO, said, "For the moment we are concerned because we have no insurance from them that they will do projects according to internationally recognized conservation standards."

New7Wonders' new campaign has just begun: choosing a new list of the seven natural wonders of the world. Results are to be announced July 8 next year.

# Starving refugees a challenge for relief agencies in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280099  
**PUBLICATION:** The Leader–Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: CanWest / A two–year–old waits for treatment on a weigh scale because there were no beds available. ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 869

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KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan — With crying babies filling every bed, she waits for treatment in a plastic tub dangling beneath a weigh scale, weakly trying to smile.

The reading above the two–year–old's failing body could well be her tombstone. It puts her at seven kilograms. The pediatric chart I consulted said the average weight for a healthy female her age should be about 12 kilograms. The doctors here peg her chances of survival at 60 per cent.

Kids are starving in Kandahar and the surrounding refugee camps. And the allegation levelled by the Senlis Council, an international think tank now branching into humanitarian relief, is that the Canadian government won't help and doesn't care.

Such incendiary accusations must be proven, so the Swiss–funded agency, founded by Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald, provided a fast driver and an armed guide so I could tour the darkest underbelly of Kandahar's missing social safety net.

Our day–long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. Sadly, it does not appear overcrowded: These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled to 22 in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis. "It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is two years old and that's not sufficient."

We move around the ward, each room with a handful of soiled beds and floors puddled with urine. The Pakistan–trained pediatrician is curiously detached as he examines babies clinically near death. "This one weighs four kilograms and should be nine." He pauses to gently prod the screaming infant's grotesquely distended stomach. "It doesn't look good."

He puts infants on a supplement–laced, antibiotics–enhanced milk feeding program when they arrive, to treat

what are invariably multiple health problems.

It takes a week to know if a child can be saved. About 65 per cent survive and are discharged within 20 days.

But ask Sidiq about a wish list from Canada and he pauses. True, he needs more medication for parents to take with them after their child is discharged. But he's not inclined to condemn Canada or any other country for failing to help enough. "I'd suggest help fighting illiteracy so the mothers know how to care for their child."

Ironically, perhaps, that's a key CIDA program in the city.

Our next stop is the Marghar refugee camp, 18 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City. My guide nervously fingers the trigger on his AK-47 as we approach the camp, muttering about Taliban roaming nearby.

"Don't worry," he grins, "before they kill you, they'll have to kill me." Funny. I'm still worried.

An elder waves us inside a mud hut to talk about the 8,000 people living on this rocky mountain slope. They used to be nomads who roamed southern Afghanistan plains to find green pasture for their herds. But as one drought year became six, their livestock livelihood was decimated and their temporary villages grew permanent. Preferring not to accept this sad fact, the national and provincial governments have tried repeatedly to bulldoze the settlements.

There is no electricity, schools, health care or sanitation facilities and only two wells for the entire camp. People work at occasional day jobs in gardens or as day labourers in the city. But the elders say things are more desperate now, more than a year after United Nations aid stopped coming.

"You could search this entire camp and won't find two bags of flour," says the elder. There are no signs of toys or a single diversion for the kids, so I sparked a near riot by handing out pencils, pens and candy.

We then retreat back inside Kandahar City, with the car sputtering alarmingly on bad gasoline along the Taliban-infected route, to visit a sprawling mud-hut village of about 500 refugees, most of them kids.

Beyond the mosques, which provide some religious training, there are no regular schools for the children. There are health clinics nearby, but the elders say they cannot afford to pay for drugs. I stuff a wad of Afghan money into the hands of one man who said his wife suffered open infected wounds but that he lacked the money to fill her prescription. I've no idea if it was enough.

We end the day on a upbeat note at another Kuchi tribe on the edge of a river, downstream from Kandahar. The children appear better fed, goats wander the compound, and the parents show plenty of affection and concern for their children. The proof is in how they line up for hepatitis B vaccinations for themselves and their children in a pilot project by the Senlis Council.

Even so, the whole day was an unsettling and depressing experience. In a land where life is cheap, the Kandahar region's starving refugees are the fire sale. Thousands are clearly unwanted, denied government assistance and trapped in hopeless, lifelong situations.

Could Canada make a difference? Absolutely. Should it do more? Seems obvious to me — darned right.

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

"I haven't been to many places, but from what I've read, I don't think we're any worse off than any other Third World country. There are hungry children all over the world."

How sadly true.

And that puts Canada in the dilemma of having to pick where it feeds the world from its severely limited financial ration.



# Afghan army urged to do more

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**PAGE:** A9  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 297

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KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — The danger to Canadian soldiers fighting here will remain high until the fledgling Afghan army shoulders more responsibility for the security of its country, Canada's new base commander said upon arriving here Friday.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who arrived around midnight to start a nine-month posting, predicted his troops will continue the "outstanding" work of the previous rotation, with a renewed emphasis on redevelopment work and humanitarian efforts.

But he did admit there's no easy solution to the plague of roadside bombs and suicide bombers that have pushed the Canadian death toll to 66 soldiers, a third of these in the past six months.

"Very few casualties are based on face-to-face engagement," he told reporters.

"What we've been dealing with since the beginning, essentially, are IEDs (improvised explosive devices). And you know it's difficult in the sense that IEDs are something that, even though you're well prepared, the risk is always there."

A priority for this rotation will be to continue training Afghan soldiers for the deadly business of combat against the Taliban insurgency, said Laroche, whose job will include leading the deployment of Quebec's Royal 22nd regiment, colloquially known as the Van Doos, until next February.

"The way to essentially reduce the risk is to have more Afghans doing the work," he said. "With Afghan security forces doing most of the work, we'll be there to support as we have done in the past."

The Afghan army has reached battalion strength of roughly 500 soldiers in the south. Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor predicted last weekend that a successful boost in local soldiers could set the stage for Canada to scale back its military role.

Laroche is a 28-year veteran of the Canadian Forces and served under the United Nations banner in Cyprus and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also had a role in dealing with the 1990 Mohawk uprising at the Kahnawake reserve south of Montreal.

# Hostage exchange may be in the works

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**PAGE:** B5  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Yousuf Azimy  
**SOURCE:** Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 247

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan — The remaining 22 South Koreans held hostage in Afghanistan are alive, a Taliban spokesman said on Friday, and the group will not set further deadlines as it negotiates with the government on freeing them.

A government official also said the Christian volunteers, whose leader was killed two days ago by their Taliban captors, were alive, adding an Afghan delegation was in talks with the militants.

"They are alive and fine," Munir Mangal, a deputy interior minister who also heads an Afghan team trying to secure the freedom of the hostages, told reporters in Ghazni. Medicines had been sent for some of the captives who are ill, he added.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf said the government had assured the group it would release eight members of the Taliban as part of an exchange deal for the freedom of a similar number of the hostages.

"They are alive. The talks are going on and we are not giving further deadlines for the government has assured us that it wants to resolve the issue through talks," he told Reuters by phone from an undisclosed location.

South Korea's chief presidential national security adviser, Baek Jong–chun, arrived in Afghanistan on Friday to step up efforts to free the hostages, an Afghan official said.

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

One German and four Afghans snatched separately are also still being held hostage by the Taliban.

# Bombing at Red Mosque kills seven police, four others

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**PAGE:** C9  
**BYLINE:** Khalid Qayum  
**SOURCE:** Bloomberg News  
**WORD COUNT:** 485

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As many as 13 people were killed in a bombing near Pakistan's Red Mosque in the capital Islamabad, about two weeks after the army ended a siege by Islamists at the complex that threatened President Pervez Musharraf's authority.

The bomb killed seven policemen and four civilians outside a hotel in the Aabpara market after police used tear gas to break up protests at the mosque, Amin Rasul, a duty officer in the police emergency section, said in a telephone interview today. The bomb was detonated near officers who were deployed in the area to respond to the demonstrations, he said.

Islamabad's top administrator, Khalid Pervez, later told the Associated Press that 13 people were killed.

Demonstrators had forced out a cleric appointed by Pakistan's government to lead Friday prayers at the mosque. Clashes at the mosque between militants and security forces during a July 10-11 raid that ended the siege left more than 100 people dead.

The bomb blast may be linked to the protest at the mosque, Interior Secretary Kamal Shah told GEO television channel, without elaborating. Police are investigating whether it was a suicide attack, Shah said. The market is about 500 yards (455 meters) from the mosque.

Since the end of the standoff between the militants and the army at the Red Mosque, about 150 people have been killed, mostly security forces personnel in terrorist attacks in the country.

At least 19 people were injured in today's blast, most of them police officers, Raja Ilyas, a duty officer at the city's Polyclinic hospital, said in a telephone interview. Pervez told AP that 71 people were wounded.

The Red Mosque protesters, including Islamic students and people from the surrounding areas, have vacated the mosque after talks with police, Interior Secretary Shah said.

Some students, who had refused to leave or had clashed with police earlier, were arrested, he said.

The government cleric, Muhammad Ashfaq, left the complex after protesters demanded the government reinstate former chief cleric Maulana Muhammad Abdul Aziz.

Aziz, who wanted to impose Islamic law in Islamabad, has been under arrest since fleeing the mosque during the siege. His brother and former deputy chief cleric at the Red Mosque, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, was killed in the raid by the army.

The mosque standoff increased pressure on Musharraf, who has been condemned by Islamic parties for backing the U.S.-led campaign against terrorism. The Supreme Court last week rejected his suspension of the country's top judge in March, an ouster that sparked the most serious protests since he took power in a 1999 military coup.

Opposition to Musharraf's rule has intensified, with criticism focused on his dual role as president and army chief as he seeks another five-year term.

Musharraf's anti-terrorism strategy is failing, U.S. intelligence officials said in a report published July 17. The U.S. urged him to crack down on militants in the area along the border with Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda has gained strength in the "safe haven" it has established in the western tribal region, 16 U.S. intelligence agencies said in the report.

# Purported Taliban spokesman says some South Korean hostages are in bad health

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**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 659

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KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) \_ A purported Taliban spokesman warned Friday that some of the 22 South Korean hostages were in bad health, saying hours after the kidnappers' latest deadline passed that the captives were crying and worried about their future.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the kidnappers, told The Associated Press by phone that the group still insisted on exchanging Taliban prisoners for the captives, who could be killed if the demand was not met. Ahmadi spoke several hours after the passage of the most recent Taliban deadline but said the militia had not set a new one.

Some of the South Koreans were ``not in good condition," Ahmadi said. ``I don't know if the weather is not good for them, or our food. The women hostages are crying. The men and women are worried about their future."

One hostage, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found dead of multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh, the district where the hostages were being held.

Local tribal elders and clerics continued telephone negotiations with the captors, and were struggling with conflicting demands that included ransom as well as the release of Taliban prisoners.

``There are still a lot of problems among them," Qarabagh police chief Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi said. ``One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and yet another wants a deal for money."

Ahmadi denied that.

``The Taliban are not asking for money. We just want to exchange our prisoners for Korean hostages. ... When they release the Taliban, we will release the hostages," he said.

It remained unclear how many militants the Taliban want freed, or which ones.

Meanwhile, a South Korean presidential envoy arrived for talks with President Hamid Karzai and other top officials, and Afghan officials said they remained upbeat about the chances of freeing the hostages without further bloodshed.

``We hope we will have a good result, but I don't know if they will be released today. I don't think they will be," said Shirin Mangal, a spokesman for the governor of Ghazni province, where the Koreans were taken.

In Seoul, a Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity, said the captives were still believed to be safe and that officials were trying to get medicine and other items delivered to them.

Ahmadi said the hostages were being held in small groups in various locations and were being fed bread, yogurt and rice.

“What should happen is that these people should be released, unconditionally, immediately and unharmed, back to South Korean authorities, so they can return back to their families,” State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in Washington.

The South Koreans, including 18 women, were kidnapped while travelling by bus on the Kabul–Kandahar highway, Afghanistan's main thoroughfare.

Their church said the captives were not involved in any Christian missionary work in Afghanistan and had provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war–ravaged country. It said it will suspend some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan.

The widow of the slain pastor made a tearful appeal Friday for the release of the remaining hostages, saying she does not want other families to experience her grief.

“I sincerely hope that the pain the families are already having enough won't deepen with more sadness,” Kim Hee–yeon told reporters. “I sincerely hope there won't be any more victims.”

In southern Helmand province, meanwhile, as many as 50 suspected militants and 28 civilians were killed when international and Afghan troops clashed with Taliban insurgents and called in air strikes, Gereshk district chief Abdul Manaf Khan said.

Khan identified the foreign troops as NATO forces, but NATO's International Security Assistance Force said it did not have any information about the incident.

Violence has risen sharply in Afghanistan the last two months. More than 3,500 people, mostly militants, have been killed in insurgency–related violence this year, according to an AP tally of casualty figures provided by western and Afghan officials.

Repeated incidents of civilian fatalities have hurt public support for the foreign military mission in Afghanistan and has prompted Karzai to plead with NATO and U.S. forces to take care to avoid civilian casualties. The U.S. and NATO blame the Taliban, saying the militants often launch attacks from civilian homes.

# 50 Taliban, 28 civilians reported killed in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province

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**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 72

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) \_ Clashes in southern Afghanistan have reportedly killed at least 50 suspected militants and dozens of civilians.

Local officials and villagers say NATO and Afghan troops began fighting Taliban insurgents Thursday night in Helmand province and called in air strikes.

NATO forces told residents of Kumbarak village to leave their homes because of the fighting.

A local district chief says villagers told him 28 civilians had died, including women and children.

Clashes were still continuing Friday morning.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force says it doesn't have any information.

# Afghans negotiate with Taliban to free Korean hostages

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**DATE:** 2007.07.27  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 532

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KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) \_ Afghan clerics and tribal elders on Friday intensified negotiations for the release of 22 South Koreans kidnapped a week ago by the Taliban, as the latest of several deadlines set by the militants approached.

Talks with the captors went until late Thursday and resumed early Friday morning, said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, police chief of Ghazni province where the hostages were taken.

“Everything is going very well,” he said.

But another official involved in the negotiations said they were difficult because of conflicting demands by the South Koreans' captors.

“There are still a lot of problems among them,” police chief Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi of the Qarabagh district in Ghazni said Friday.

“One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and yet another wants a deal for money,” he said earlier.

Ahmadzai said the Taliban had told negotiators the hostages were being given food and water, and that their health was fine.

In Seoul, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said the South Korean government believed there was no serious problem with the hostages' safety, and that it was trying to deliver them medicine and daily necessities. The spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity citing protocols, said the government is “maintaining multisided contacts” with the hostage-takers.

The Taliban on Thursday reiterated their demand that jailed militants be freed in exchange for the captives it seized on July 19, and set the latest of several deadlines \_ noon Friday (0730 GMT) \_ for the condition to be met or more hostages would be killed.

One of the group of abducted Koreans, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found slain with multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh.

Relatives of the abductees appealed anew for their relatives' release.

“Please send our lovely children home,” said Kim Kyung-ja, mother of hostage Lee Sun-young.

Local tribal elders and religious clerics who have respect among the people of Qarabagh have been conducting negotiations by telephone with the captors for several days.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the hard-line Islamist Taliban, said they had been contacted by Afghanistan's deputy interior minister, Maj. Gen. Muhammad Munir Mangal, who said the government would



make a decision regarding the militants' demands by noon Friday.

“If Kabul administration does not solve our problem ... then we do not have any option but to kill Korean hostages,” Ahmadi said.

“The Taliban are not asking for money. We just want to exchange our prisoners for Korean hostages. ... When they release the Taliban, we will release the hostages,” Ahmadi said by phone from an undisclosed location.

The Taliban at one point demanded that 23 jailed militants be freed in exchange for the South Koreans. It is not clear how many militants the Taliban want freed or which ones.

Ahmadi said the hostages were being held in small groups in different locations and were being fed “the same food that our villagers have \_ bread, yogurt, rice.”

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

Their church said the abductees were not involved in any Christian missionary work in Afghanistan, and had provided only medical and other volunteer aid to distressed people in the war–ravaged country. It said it will suspend some of its volunteer work in Afghanistan.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said it supports efforts to free the South Koreans.

“What should happen is that these people should be released, unconditionally, immediately and unharmed, back to South Korean authorities, so they can return back to their families,” he said.

# Tillman–Friendly Fire

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SAN FRANCISCO — Documents obtained by The Associated Press show U–S Army doctors were suspicious about the close proximity of the three bullet holes that killed former N–F–L player Pat Tillman.

Tillman died in Afghanistan in 2004.

Documents show the doctors believe the bullet holes were so close together it appeared the Army Ranger was cut down by an M–16 fired from a mere ten metres or so away.

Ultimately, the Pentagon did conduct a criminal investigation, and asked Tillman's comrades whether he was disliked by his men and whether they had any reason to believe he was deliberately killed.

The Pentagon and the Bush administration have been criticized in recent months for lying about the circumstances of Tillman's death.

The military initially told the public and the Tillman family that he had been killed by enemy fire.

(APB)

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# Conservatives ask too much of defence spending

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**BYLINE:** James Travers  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
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Not much about Stephen Harper's government is as simple or complex as its support for the military. Since promising in the last election to boost defence budgets by more than \$5 billion, Conservatives have been even more generous, ordering planes, ships and even tanks while talking about restoring pride and more muscular offshore missions. What isn't clear is how that spending fits the forces into a coherent foreign policy.

Critics insist the reason is obvious: This prime minister's international priorities are pleasing Washington and playing diaspora politics at home. Neither requires a sophisticated, overarching strategy.

Mostly true, that analysis shortchanges Harper's multi-tasking. He's maximizing the bang in every buck by simultaneously raising force capability and his party's prospects of winning elections.

That's hardly unique. Along with paving roads, spreading defence dollars is a time-tested way to prime the partisan pump.

Still, Conservatives are spreading them awfully thick. Harper is spending what passes for a summer vacation making serial announcements in political hot spots while Gordon O'Connor is taking special care of Quebec.

With by-elections coming there, the defence minister is using \$200 million to reopen a Quebec Royal Military College campus that Liberals closed and is injecting an estimated \$85 million annually into the local economy of the separatist Saguenay region by creating an air force unit for rapid foreign deployment.

Memory also recalls O'Connor in Quebec City announcing that rather than ridding the army of what Gen. Rick Hillier had previously declared a millstone, Canada will spend \$1.3 billion buying and refitting used tanks.

That pleases the military pro-tank faction, the arms industry that once kept O'Connor on its lobbying payroll, and those voters willing to accept that all defence spending is wise.

But easy money and old-school politics often mix badly. Without a firm policy framework, the combination of free spending, Conservative determination to be seen keeping even foolish campaign commitments and the inevitable stress of the Afghanistan mission are creating visible pressures.

This week, Hillier rippled the surface by saying the military isn't interested in creating the 14 territorial defence battalions Conservatives promised.

Officially, the government and the general are aligned; unofficially, the Hillier and O'Connor relationship is

just "civil."

One reason is that in May the minister shattered both a public service protocol and the military honour code by publicly humiliating his defence chief over slim funeral compensation for bereaved families.

Another is that O'Connor sees the military through a Cold War prism while the vision Hillier originally sold to Liberals looks forward and was conceived in the context of integrated foreign and defence policies.

Then, the common thread was a stronger role for Canada in stabilizing and rebuilding failed states. Now, the mantra is: The military manages violence for Canadians.

That isn't necessarily inconsistent with lighter, faster, more modern armed forces. But building and deploying them effectively demands fiscal discipline and a tight focus.

Both are missing in action. Conservatives are asking too much of defence spending in expecting it to rebuild the military while re-electing the party. Worse, they are asking too little from themselves in not forcing offshore policies through the crucible of public examination.

Harper is understandably open and proud of military spending. Only the ultimate purpose is an enigma.

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

# A growing toll on battlefield brains; From Afghanistan to Iraq, bomb blasts are causing the U.S., British and Canadian troops who survive them a staggering number of brain injuries. Military doctors warn we've only just started to suffer the effects

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**ILLUSTRATION:** LUSTRATION BY JON KRAUSE NEWSART;  
**BYLINE:** Olivia Ward  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
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On a dusty road near Kandahar, a Canadian soldier crawls from his bomb-battered vehicle as his bleeding colleagues are carried away on stretchers. Dizzy, his ears ringing, he dusts himself off and shakes his head in amazement that he has escaped injury.

Or has he?

"Everyone knows that traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability in both civilian and military trauma," says Canadian military trauma surgeon Homer Tien. "It takes a huge toll."

Since the days of World War II and Vietnam, protective body armour and medical treatment received by Western troops have brought a quantum leap in survival rates of wounded soldiers.

But researchers have found that even those who walk away from an explosion may be suffering from traumatic brain injury, which has been tagged "a silent epidemic" in the United States.

Military doctors have found that mild or serious brain injury is afflicting substantial numbers of soldiers who survive the ever more powerful bombs, or "improvised explosive devices," planted by militants in Afghanistan and Iraq .

This week, a presidential panel charged that the military health care system was no longer able to meet the demands of the contemporary battlefield – including the mounting number of traumatic brain injuries.

It recommended sweeping changes to upgrade treatment and benefits of affected veterans.

So concerned is the U.S. Congress that it has authorized \$450 million for care and research into head injuries, whose treatment may cost millions more over the next few decades.

Up to January 2007, more than 2,000 brain injuries were recorded by the U.S. military. But doctors treating veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan say figures are several times higher.

Canada, which is just beginning to focus on the seriousness of the problem, is no exception.

In Afghanistan, among Canadians killed between February and July 2006, brain injury and bleeding were leading causes of death, according to a study by Tien and two Canadian forces colleagues.

But those who die, or suffer severe head injury, are easier to classify as brain-damaged than soldiers who walk away from the blasts.

"People who have experienced a mild head injury might not know at first, because of medical or tactical considerations," says Col. Jonathan Jaffin, acting commander for U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. "It is important for commanders to be aware of (those injuries) because it can have great bearing on a soldier's readiness to go back to active duty."

According to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., which routinely evaluates combat casualties for brain injury, 59 per cent of those exposed to a blast are diagnosed with traumatic brain injury – 56 per cent moderate to severe, and 44 per cent mild.

As the bombs used to attack the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan pack bigger explosive punches, those numbers could escalate.

"A blast creates a sudden increase in air pressure by heating and accelerating air molecules, and immediately thereafter, a sudden decrease in pressure that produces intense wind," writes American physician Susan Okie in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Rapid pressure shifts can injure the brain, without any visible head wound. They can also cause fatal or damaging brain swelling, or drive fragments of metal through the skull. Specialists in battlefield medicine say it's the "invisible" or closed head injuries that are the most difficult to treat.

Brain swelling that results from car crash or sports injuries responds well to medication and surgical techniques. But the damage caused by explosions is a special challenge.

"When the sound wave moves through the brain it seems to cause little gas bubbles to form," neurologist P. Stephen Macedo told the Washington Post. "When they pop, it leaves a cavity. So you are littering people's brains with these little holes."

And, says Sunil Ram, an Ontario-based international security and defence analyst, "everyone in the blast zone is a potential casualty. When you look at Canadian casualties in Afghanistan, more than half of those who die are killed by IEDs. But depending on the munition and the environment, the blast wave is catching everyone within a 200- to 500-metre range."

Advanced body armour saves lives by protecting soldiers' bodies, says Dr. Ronald Glasser, author of Wounded: Vietnam to Iraq, in an essay in the Washington Post.

But he says, "neurologists worry ... at least 30 per cent of the troops who've engaged in active combat for four months or longer in Iraq and Afghanistan ... risk potentially disabling neurological disorders from the blast waves of IEDs and mortars, all without suffering a scratch."

Those who are worst hit may lose consciousness, or suffer seizures and convulsions. Moderately affected troops may experience vomiting, numbness in the arms and legs, and nausea.

A growing toll on battlefield brains; From Afghanistan to Iraq, bomb blasts are causing the U.S., British and Canadian

But mild brain injuries can cause memory loss, sleep disturbances, confusion, dizziness and blurred vision – symptoms that zealous soldiers or their superiors might shrug off as unimportant. They may also be classified as psychological.

"Events that cause head injury are the same ones that cause post-traumatic stress disorder. And some people have components of both," says Jaffin.

Most mild brain injuries get better without treatment, he adds. But as with sports injuries, those who go back to their activities too soon risk more serious problems.

Victims of worse brain injuries need careful long-term care, which is costly and requires close monitoring and treatment of blast victims. In moderate as well as severe cases, the brain's attempts to heal itself can cause epilepsy, as it "miswires" neural circuits. In other cases, victims suffer personality changes that make them unable to lead a normal life.

Glasser, who treated soldiers wounded in Vietnam, contends that the real toll of war now goes far beyond the death count.

"The real risk to our troops is no longer the numbers of dead but the numbers ending up on orthopedic wards and neurosurgical units."

Even for those with milder head injuries, long term monitoring is crucial, says Tien. So is research on the effects of the trauma.

"The challenge is to find out about those who are further from the centre of the explosion," he says. "A blast wave hits and a soldier may be knocked unconscious for two seconds. Then he gets up and says 'I feel great.' Even a CAT scan may be negative. But the question is, will he develop a problem in the future?"

# Correction

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280110  
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**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
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Canadian military officials honoured the wishes of the family of Master-Cpl. Anthony Klumpenhauer in identifying him following his death in Kandahar last April. Incorrect information was published in a July 27 article about delays in identifying a NATO soldier killed in Afghanistan this week. The article also incorrectly referred to a December, 2005 news release from the U.S. military about injuries suffered by three Canadian soldiers. No JTF2 soldier died in that incident. The Star regrets the errors.



# Starving children a challenge for Afghan refugee agencies

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280040

**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** D5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: CanWest News Service / A group of boys clown for the camera in front of the mud hut where they live ; Photo: A year-old baby faces almost certain death from malnutrition ;

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** BDon Martin

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 871

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KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan — With crying babies filling every bed, she waits for treatment in a plastic tub dangling beneath a weigh scale, weakly trying to smile.

The reading above the two-year-old's failing body could well be her tombstone. It puts her at seven kilograms. The pediatric chart I consulted said the average weight for a healthy female her age should be about 12 kilograms. The doctors here peg her chances of survival at 60 per cent.

Kids are starving in Kandahar and the surrounding refugee camps. And the allegation levelled by the Senlis Council, an international think-tank now branching into humanitarian relief, is that the Canadian government won't help and doesn't care.

Such incendiary accusations must be proven, so the Swiss-funded agency, founded by Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald, provided a fast driver and an armed guide so I could tour the darkest underbelly of Kandahar's missing social safety net.

Our day-long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. Sadly, it does not appear overcrowded: These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled to 22 in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis. "It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is two years old and that's not sufficient."

We move around the ward, each room with a handful of soiled beds and floors puddled with urine. The Pakistan-trained pediatrician is curiously detached as he examines babies clinically near death. "This one weighs four kilograms and should be nine." He pauses to gently prod the screaming infant's grotesquely distended stomach. "It doesn't look good."

He puts infants on a supplement–laced, antibiotics–enhanced milk feeding program when they arrive, to treat what are invariably multiple health problems.

It takes a week to know if a child can be saved. About 65 per cent survive and are discharged within 20 days.

But ask Sidiq about a wish list from Canada and he pauses. True, he needs more medication for parents to take with them after their child is discharged. But he's not inclined to condemn Canada or any other country for failing to help enough. "I'd suggest help fighting illiteracy so the mothers know how to care for their child."

Ironically, perhaps, that's a key CIDA program in the city.

Our next stop is the Marghar refugee camp, 18 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City. My guide nervously fingers the trigger on his AK–47 as we approach the camp, muttering about Taliban roaming nearby.

"Don't worry," he grins, "before they kill you, they'll have to kill me." Funny. I'm still worried.

An elder waves us inside a mud hut to talk about the 8,000 people living on this rocky mountain slope. They used to be nomads who roamed southern Afghanistan plains to find green pasture for their herds. But as one drought year became six, their livestock livelihood was decimated and their temporary villages grew permanent. Preferring not to accept this sad fact, the national and provincial governments have tried repeatedly to bulldoze the settlements.

There is no electricity, schools, health care or sanitation facilities and only two wells for the entire camp. People work at occasional day jobs in gardens or as day labourers in the city. But the elders say things are more desperate now, more than a year after United Nations aid stopped coming.

"You could search this entire camp and won't find two bags of flour," says the elder. There are no signs of toys or a single diversion for the kids, so I sparked a near riot by handing out pencils, pens and candy.

We then retreat back inside Kandahar City, with the car sputtering alarmingly on bad gasoline along the Taliban–infected route, to visit a sprawling mud–hut village of about 500 refugees, most of them kids.

Beyond the mosques, which provide some religious training, there are no regular schools for the children. There are health clinics nearby, but the elders say they cannot afford to pay for drugs. I stuff a wad of Afghan money into the hands of one man who said his wife suffered open infected wounds but that he lacked the money to fill her prescription. I've no idea if it was enough.

We end the day on an upbeat note at another Kuchi tribe on the edge of a river, downstream from Kandahar. The children appear better fed, goats wander the compound and the parents show plenty of affection and concern for their children. The proof is in how they line up for hepatitis B vaccinations for themselves and their children in a pilot project by the Senlis Council.

Even so, the whole day was an unsettling and depressing experience. In a land where life is cheap, the Kandahar region's starving refugees are the fire sale. Thousands are clearly unwanted, denied government assistance and trapped in hopeless, lifelong situations.

Could Canada make a difference? Absolutely. Should it do more? Seems obvious to me — darned right.

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

"I haven't been to many places, but from what I've read, I don't think we're any worse off than any other Third World country. There are hungry children all over the world."

How sadly true. And that puts Canada in the dilemma of having to pick where it feeds the world from its severely limited financial ration.

# Bombing near mosque kills 13

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**EDITION:** Final  
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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Reuters / Men charge towards the police during clashes outside the Red Mosque in Islamabad ;  
**BYLINE:** Khalid Qayum  
**SOURCE:** Bloomberg News  
**WORD COUNT:** 641

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As many as 13 people were killed in a bombing Friday near Pakistan's Red Mosque in the capital Islamabad, about two weeks after the army ended a siege by Islamists at the complex that threatened President Pervez Musharraf's authority.

The bomb killed seven police officers and four civilians outside a hotel in the Aabpara market after police used tear gas to break up protests at the mosque, Amin Rasul, a duty officer in the police emergency section, said in a telephone interview Friday.

The bomb was detonated near officers who were deployed in the area to respond to the demonstrations, he said.

Islamabad's top administrator, Khalid Pervez, later told the Associated Press that 13 people were killed.

Demonstrators had forced out a cleric appointed by Pakistan's government to lead Friday prayers at the mosque. Clashes at the mosque between militants and security forces during a July 10–11 raid that ended the siege left more than 100 people dead.

The bomb blast may be linked to the protest at the mosque, Interior Secretary Kamal Shah told GEO television channel, without elaborating. Police are investigating whether it was a suicide attack, Shah said. The market is about 455 metres from the mosque.

Since the end of the standoff between the militants and the army at the Red Mosque, about 150 people have been killed, mostly security forces personnel in terrorist attacks in the country. At least 19 people were injured in Friday's blast, most of them police officers, Raja Ilyas, a duty officer at the city's Polyclinic hospital, said in a telephone interview. Pervez told AP that 71 people were wounded.

The Red Mosque protesters, including Islamic students and people from the surrounding areas, have vacated the mosque after talks with police, Interior Secretary Shah said. Some students, who had refused to leave or had clashed with police earlier, were arrested, he said. The government cleric, Muhammad Ashfaq, left the complex after protesters demanded the government reinstate former chief cleric Maulana Muhammad Abdul Aziz.

Aziz, who wanted to impose Islamic law in Islamabad, has been under arrest since fleeing the mosque during the siege. His brother and former deputy chief cleric at the Red Mosque, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, was killed in the raid by the army.

The mosque standoff increased pressure on Musharraf, who has been condemned by Islamic parties for backing the U.S.-led campaign against terrorism. The Supreme Court last week rejected his suspension of the country's top judge in March, an ouster that sparked the most serious protests since he took power in a 1999 military coup.

Opposition to Musharraf's rule has intensified, with criticism focused on his dual role as president and army chief as he seeks another five-year term.

Musharraf's anti-terrorism strategy is failing, U.S. intelligence officials said in a report published July 17.

The U.S. urged him to crack down on militants in the area along the border with Afghanistan. Al-Qaida has gained strength in the "safe haven" it has established in the western tribal region, 16 U.S. intelligence agencies said in the report.

Earlier Friday, gunmen killed a government spokesperson for the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, GEO television channel reported. The spokesperson, Raziq Bugti, died instantly when the attackers fired on his car in Quetta, the provincial capital, the broadcaster reported, citing police. There was no information on the gunmen's identities or motive, GEO said.

At least 26 Pakistanis were killed in Baluchistan in a July 20 car bombing that targeted a convoy carrying Chinese workers in the town of Hub. No Chinese worker was hurt in that attack.

China last month called for protection of its citizens working in Pakistan after students from the Red Mosque kidnapped seven Chinese people they accused of running a brothel near the complex in the capital. Police negotiated their release. The Chinese government said they were operating a clinic.

Musharraf's administration accused terrorists of using such attacks to try to damage the country's economy and relations with China, Pakistan's biggest trading partner after the U.S.

# New commander admits grim reality of insurgency

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 13

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 202

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The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar yesterday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there."

The need to reduce Canadian losses has put greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Liberal is a chopper blockhead

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**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
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**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
**COLUMN:** Editorial  
**WORD COUNT:** 277

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If there is one area of many that the federal Liberals have no right to complain about, it's helicopters.

And yet, that's exactly what Foreign Affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh did while commenting on the recent bomb attack that narrowly missed Canada's top military man in Afghanistan, Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant.

Why is Grant travelling around in armoured vehicles rather than choppers? Because Canada is the only NATO country with a major contingent of soldiers in Afghanistan that has no helicopters. When troops are injured we must ask the Americans, Dutch or British for help.

"Our military, when we've sent them into harm's way, we should provide them with whatever they require," said Dosanjh, about the need for helicopters.

He must think Canadians are stupid.

The Liberals committed our troops to fight in Afghanistan and extended our mission to Afghanistan's most dangerous area without helicopters. Why didn't Dosanjh insist on getting helicopters during his party's 13 years in power?

When it comes to helicopters, the Liberal record is one of embarrassment, waste, mismanagement and even death.

In 1993, when Jean Chretien became prime minister, he did a heinous and a most uncharacteristic thing — he lived up to one of his pre-election promises and scrapped the Conservative government's contract to buy 50 Agusta-Westland EH-101 helicopters slated to replace our Labradors and Sea Kings in 1999.

The cancellation cost taxpayers more than \$500 million in contract penalties.

Hundreds of hi-tech jobs were also lost because Canada, along with Britain and Italy, would have been one of the builders of the choppers.

Worse yet, in October 1998, six airmen were killed when their 32-year-old Labrador helicopter crashed near Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula.

One of them, Master Cpl. David Gaetz, kept a secret journal of the aircraft's mechanical problems to be opened only after his death, which he believed was highly likely owing to the state of the choppers in which he had to fly.

A Liberal complaining about our lack of helicopters is not unlike a child who kills his parents and cries about being an orphan. It is hypocrisy and it is absurd.



# Canucks targeted in blast General escapes injury from suicide car bomber; South Korean hostages still being held

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**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 12

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 254

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A suicide car bomber detonated near a Canadian military convoy yesterday southeast of Kandahar City, but there were no reports of injuries.

Military sources said that Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, the commander of Canada's current mission in Afghanistan, was riding in one of the three vehicles in the convoy at the time of explosion.

When the suicide car bomb blew up about 18 km southeast of the Canadian base, the force of the blast caused one of the vehicles to roll into a ditch, Maj. Chip Madic said.

## FOUR TROOPS

There were at least four troops inside the vehicle. Military officials said Grant was not in that vehicle.

Meanwhile, a top South Korean official headed to Afghanistan yesterday on a mission to secure the release of 22 Christian volunteers held captive by Taliban kidnappers after the militants killed a hostage.

A local police chief said negotiations with the Taliban captors have been difficult because their demands were unclear. "One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and yet another wants a deal for money," said Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi.

After conflicting reports that possibly eight of the other hostages had been released, presidential spokesman Chun Ho-sun said the 22 South Koreans were still believed held but were not suffering health problems.

The kidnappers "will be held accountable for taking the life of a Korean citizen," Baek Jong-chun, South Korea's chief presidential secretary for security, said before leaving for Afghanistan.

## 60 KILLED

On Wednesday, authorities found the bullet-riddled body of Bae Hyung-kyu near where the South Koreans were abducted July 19.

Elsewhere, U.S. and Afghan troops fought two separate battles with militants in southern Afghanistan, killing more than 60 suspected insurgents.

Canucks targeted in blast General escapes injury from suicide car bomber; South Korean hostages still being held

A NATO soldier was also killed following a clash with militants in southern Afghanistan, the alliance said in a statement. The soldier's nationality was not revealed.

# Shape-up call; Michael Byers nudges Canada toward greatness

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Weekend Review  
**PAGE:** C9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: BOOK COVER: Intent for a Nation: What IsCanada For? by Michael Byers ; Colour Photo: Doug Struck, Special to the Vancouver Sun / Michael Byers, aboard the Canadian Coast Guard Icebreaker Amundsen in January. His book, Intent for a Nation, is enlivened by his observations from trips to the Arctic and the Middle East. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**BYLINE:** James Applegate  
**SOURCE:** Special to the Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 882

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## INTENT FOR A NATION: WHAT IS CANADA FOR?

By Michael Byers

Douglas &McIntyre,

248 pages (\$32.95)

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In nearly every aspect of foreign policy — from terrorism to Afghanistan to nuclear proliferation — Canada can do better, much better. That's the thrust of Intent for a Nation, a wide-ranging and optimistic critique of Canada's role in the world by Vancouver international law expert Michael Byers.

He points out that this country has a proud record of peacekeeping and promoting human rights yet has failed to protect individuals like Maher Arar against torture in recent years. What's more, our peacekeeping soldiers could fit in a school bus, and while Ottawa reneges on our Kyoto commitments, Arctic ice is melting like never before.

It shouldn't be this way. Byers writes that as Canadians, "we should dare to dream great dreams. As Canadians, we should dare to make them happen."

A West Coast alternative to public intellectuals like Michael Ignatieff, Byers is the academic director of the University of B.C.'s Liu Institute for Global Issues. He teaches political science and discusses foreign affairs on radio and TV.

In Intent for a Nation, he livens up the political analysis by deftly folding in anecdotes. To investigate climate change in the Arctic, he hops aboard the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker Amundsen. In the Middle East, he teaches war law to lawyers in the Israeli Defence Forces.

He argues that in order to evaluate our policies, we Canadians should know our own history. "In 1948, McGill law Prof. John Humphrey helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." And in 1956, Lester Pearson, who later became prime minister, effectively invented peacekeeping during the Suez Crisis.

In 1997, Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy convinced other nations to sign the Ottawa Landmines Convention. With international-law experts Philippe Kirsch and John Holmes and former United Nations ambassador Paul Heinbecker, he also helped to establish — and, later, strengthen — the International Criminal Court.

Under the UN, another Canadian, Lt.-Gen. Romeo Dallaire, bravely headed the tiny peacekeeping mission against genocide in Rwanda; later, Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour became the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Intent for a Nation probably paints an overly rosy view of our past. (Vancouver Sun columnist Barbara Yaffe, noting Byers's left-leaning perspective, has called it "one of the most enlightening reads I've lately come across.") Still, this sets high standards as Byers critiques recent foreign-policy episodes and unearths darker nuggets.

For example, despite the spirit of the landmines convention, Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan benefited from mines laid around their camp by Americans in 2002. Furthermore, planes linked to the CIA landed in Canada more than 55 times in December 2005, after the Washington Post had revealed the existence of secret CIA prisons in Eastern Europe and elsewhere that allow torture.

Potentially violating international law, Canada's taxpayer-subsidized RADARSAT satellites could feed the Pentagon intelligence for the war in Iraq or other pre-emptive wars. Worse, under the joint Canada-U.S. Binational Planning Group, Canada could lose sovereign control over its own military operations and foreign policy. Canadian military subservience is likely with the Stephen Harper government, since it is uncritical of continental integration, Byers argues; a majority Harper government might belatedly join missile defence.

He warns that Canada, "once proudly independent, is in danger of allowing itself to be suffocated in America's militaristic embrace."

Of course, Afghanistan is the most important expression of our current foreign policy. Byers's arguments about the war are too complex. He offers six reasons for supporting it but ultimately favours eight that oppose it. Most readers simply want to know: Are we reducing terrorism? Are we helping the Afghan people? Can we win?

One critical point, though: Because of Afghanistan, Canada's armed forces are not available to stop genocide in Darfur or stabilize Lebanon.

As for helping the Afghan people, Byers reminds us that Canada is spending 10 times more on fighting than on reconstruction. Beyond that, there are no guarantees that our aid dollars reach those who need them most in a country where corruption is legendary.

He offers several intriguing explanations for why Canada fails to realize its potential. First, he claims Ottawa is full of gutless politicians and bureaucrats. Second, he suggests Canadians suffer from a long-standing inferiority complex and fail to recognize their own power. Third, we fear diverging from U.S. policies lest we suffer economic retaliation.

You may wonder if the optimistic tone of Intent for a Nation is justified. In arguing that the glass is half-full, Byers urges readers to get inspired by Canadians who are making a difference by acting as global citizens — people like Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who campaigns on climate change and Arctic pollution;

former senator Douglas Roche, now in his late 70s, who works tirelessly against nuclear weapons; and Matthew Gillard, who, while a student at UBC in 2004, convinced the Canadian government to release \$20 million for peacekeeping in Darfur.

Byers says Canada needs both visionary individuals and the transformative power of ideas to realize its potential greatness. "All we have to do," he writes, "is to imagine something different — better laws, a better country, even a better world — and then translate our ideas into action. Can we do it?"

James Applegate is a Vancouver writer specializing in peace and security issues.

# Missionaries respond to people in need

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
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**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** C3  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**BYLINE:** Gary Chiang  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 187

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Re: Fervour and naiveté lead 'missionaries' into harm's way, Jonathan Manthorpe, July 27

To describe a group of people who went to a needy country to provide medical and child-care services as performing "outlandish feats of holiness" is disrespectful. I cringe to think what Jonathan Manthorpe thinks about non-denominational aid workers who risk their own lives to save the lives of people in war-torn countries who would not otherwise receive medical care.

Manthorpe is welcome to visit my church, Newbern Memorial Chinese Alliance Church, in two weeks to meet our own missionaries who will have returned from Panama where they organized a summer program for children who wouldn't have otherwise had the money to attend. You see, handing out Bibles, displays of faith and quests for holiness were not the reasons the Korean missionaries boldly went to Afghanistan. As do doctors and teachers, they saw people in need and responded quickly to care for them as any of us should out of love and compassion.

Does Manthorpe want us to believe this is foolish and naïve? If so, shame on him.

Gary Chiang

Vancouver

# Troop decals go to cabinet

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Westcoast News  
**PAGE:** B2  
**KEYWORDS:** !@DATELINE=CALGARY  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 154

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CALGARY — The provincial cabinet will discuss next week whether to place Support our Troops ribbon decals on provincial government vehicles, with Premier Ed Stelmach backing the idea.

Provincial sherriffs requested the decals be planted on their cruisers, so their request will be forwarded to cabinet, said Tom Olsen, the premier's director of media relations.

"The premier personally supports the troops, but he doesn't see it as supporting the war (in Afghanistan)," Olsen said.

Stelmach doesn't have a Support the Troops ribbon on his vehicles, he added, but may do so in the future.

Colleen Rowe, executive director of the Calgary Military Family Resource Centre, was delighted by the premier's support.

"The visibility piece makes it less isolating for the families," she said.

Rowe said she's hopeful the province will go ahead with the decision. The full Tory caucus will likely vote on the issue later before a final decision is made.

Calgary council voted just a few days ago against placing the ribbons on municipal vehicles. Mayor Dave Bronconnier and some aldermen insist it's a personal decision that should be left to individuals.

# Bomb blast kills 13 near Pakistan's Red Mosque; Market attack launched after police used tear gas against protesters who forced out government cleric

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A15

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Aamir Qureshi, Agence France–Presse / Pakistanistudents paint a wall of the Red Mosque in Islamabad Friday. Police are investigating an explosion near the mosque that killed at least 13 people. ;

**KEYWORDS:** CHURCHES; BOMBINGS; CRIME; PAKISTAN

**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD

**BYLINE:** Khalid Qayum

**SOURCE:** Bloomberg

**WORD COUNT:** 390

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ISLAMABAD — As many as 13 people were killed in a bombing near Pakistan's Red Mosque in the capital Islamabad, about two weeks after the army ended a siege by Islamists at the complex that threatened President Pervez Musharraf's authority.

The bomb killed seven policemen and four civilians outside a hotel in the Aabpara market after police used tear gas to break up protests at the mosque, Amin Rasul, a duty officer in the police emergency section, said in a telephone interview Friday.

The bomb was detonated near officers who were deployed in the area to respond to the demonstrations, he said.

Islamabad's top administrator, Khalid Pervez, later said 13 people were killed.

Demonstrators had forced out a cleric appointed by Pakistan's government to lead Friday prayers at the mosque.

Clashes at the mosque between militants and security forces during a July 10–11 raid that ended the siege left more than 100 people dead.

The bomb blast may be linked to the protest at the mosque, Interior Secretary Kamal Shah told GEO television channel, without elaborating.

Police are investigating whether it was a suicide attack, Shah said.

The market is about 450 metres from the mosque.

Since the end of the standoff between the militants and the army at the Red Mosque, about 150 people have been killed, mostly security forces personnel in terrorist attacks in the country.

Bomb blast kills 13 near Pakistan's Red Mosque; Market attack launched after police used tear gas against



At least 19 people were injured in today's blast, most of them police officers, Raja Ilyas, a duty officer at the city's Polyclinic hospital, said in a telephone interview. Pervez told AP that 71 people were wounded.

The Red Mosque protesters, including Islamic students and people from the surrounding areas, have vacated the mosque after talks with police, Interior Secretary Shah said.

Some students, who had refused to leave or had clashed with police earlier, were arrested, he said.

The government cleric, Muhammad Ashfaq, left the complex after protesters demanded the government reinstate former chief cleric Maulana Muhammad Abdul Aziz.

Aziz, who wanted to impose Islamic law in Islamabad, has been under arrest since fleeing the mosque during the siege.

His brother and former deputy chief cleric at the Red Mosque, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, was killed in the raid by the army.

The mosque standoff increased pressure on Musharraf, who has been condemned by Islamic parties for backing the U.S.-led campaign against terrorism.

The Supreme Court last week rejected his suspension of the country's top judge in March.

The judge's ouster sparked the most serious protests since he took power in a 1999 military coup.

Opposition to Musharraf's rule has intensified, with criticism focused on his dual role as president and army chief as he seeks another five-year term.

Musharraf's anti-terrorism strategy is failing, U.S. intelligence officials said in a report published July 17.

The U.S. urged him to crack down on militants in the area along the border with Afghanistan.

Al-Qaida has gained strength in the "safe haven" it has established in the western tribal region, 16 U.S. intelligence agencies said in the report.

# Bomb blast kills 13 near Pakistan's Red Mosque; Market attack launched after police used tear gas against protesters who forced out government cleric

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280024

**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final C

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A15

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Aamir Qureshi, Agence France–Presse / Pakistanistudents paint a wall of the Red Mosque in Islamabad Friday. Police are investigating an explosion near the mosque that killed at least 13 people. ;

**KEYWORDS:** CHURCHES; BOMBINGS

**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD

**BYLINE:** Khalid Qayum

**SOURCE:** Bloomberg

**WORD COUNT:** 366

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ISLAMABAD — As many as 13 people were killed in a bombing near Pakistan's Red Mosque in the capital Islamabad, about two weeks after the army ended a siege by Islamists at the complex that threatened President Pervez Musharraf's authority.

The bomb killed seven policemen and four civilians outside a hotel in the Aabpara market after police used tear gas to break up protests at the mosque, Amin Rasul, a duty officer in the police emergency section, said in a telephone interview Friday.

The bomb was detonated near officers who were deployed in the area to respond to the demonstrations, he said.

Islamabad's top administrator, Khalid Pervez, later said 13 people were killed.

Demonstrators had forced out a cleric appointed by Pakistan's government to lead Friday prayers at the mosque.

Clashes at the mosque between militants and security forces during a July 10–11 raid that ended the siege left more than 100 people dead.

The bomb blast may be linked to the protest at the mosque, Interior Secretary Kamal Shah told GEO television channel, without elaborating.

Police are investigating whether it was a suicide attack, Shah said.

The market is about 450 metres from the mosque.

Since the end of the standoff between the militants and the army at the Red Mosque, about 150 people have been killed, mostly security forces personnel in terrorist attacks in the country.

Bomb blast kills 13 near Pakistan's Red Mosque; Market attack launched after police used tear gas against

At least 19 people were injured in today's blast, most of them police officers, Raja Ilyas, a duty officer at the city's Polyclinic hospital, said in a telephone interview. Pervez told AP that 71 people were wounded.

The Red Mosque protesters, including Islamic students and people from the surrounding areas, have vacated the mosque after talks with police, Interior Secretary Shah said.

Some students, who had refused to leave or had clashed with police earlier, were arrested, he said.

The government cleric, Muhammad Ashfaq, left the complex after protesters demanded the government reinstate former chief cleric Maulana Muhammad Abdul Aziz.

Aziz, who wanted to impose Islamic law in Islamabad, has been under arrest since fleeing the mosque during the siege.

His brother and former deputy chief cleric at the Red Mosque, Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, was killed in the raid by the army.

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Musharraf's anti-terrorism strategy is failing, U.S. intelligence officials said in a report published July 17. The U.S. urged him to crack down on militants in the area along the border with Afghanistan.

# Children starving in Kandahar area; Refugees in camps around city have little access to food, sanitation and government aid

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280016  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Don Martin, CanWest News Service / A girl in arefugee camp near Kandahar city waits as doctors inject her with the hepatitis B vaccine. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** FOREIGN AID; WAR  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 828

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KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan — With crying babies filling every bed, she waits for treatment in a plastic tub dangling beneath a weigh scale, weakly trying to smile.

The reading above the two-year-old's failing body could well be her tombstone. It puts her at seven kilograms. The pediatric chart I consulted said the average weight for a healthy female her age should be about 12 kilograms. The doctors here peg her chances of survival at 60 per cent.

Kids are starving in Kandahar and the surrounding refugee camps. And the allegation levelled by the Senlis Council, an international think tank now branching into humanitarian relief, is that the Canadian government won't help and doesn't care.

Such incendiary accusations must be proven, so the Swiss-funded agency, founded by Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald, provided a fast driver and an armed guide so I could tour the darkest underbelly of Kandahar's missing social safety net.

Our day-long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. Sadly, it does not appear overcrowded: These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled to 22 in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis.

"It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is two years old and that's not sufficient."

We move around the ward, each room with a handful of soiled beds and floors puddled with urine. The Pakistan-trained pediatrician is curiously detached as he examines babies clinically near death.

"This one weighs four kilograms and should be nine." He pauses to gently prod the screaming infant's grotesquely distended stomach. "It doesn't look good."

He puts infants on a supplement-laced, antibiotics-enhanced milk feeding program when they arrive, to treat what are invariably multiple health problems.

It takes a week to know if a child can be saved. About 65 per cent survive and are discharged within 20 days.

But ask Sidiq about a wish list from Canada and he pauses. True, he needs more medication for parents to take with them after their child is discharged. But he's not inclined to condemn Canada or any other country for failing to help enough.

"I'd suggest help fighting illiteracy so the mothers know how to care for their child."

Ironically, perhaps, that's a key CIDA program in the city.

Our next stop is the Marghar refugee camp, 18 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City. My guide nervously fingers the trigger on his AK-47 as we approach the camp, muttering about Taliban roaming nearby.

"Don't worry," he grins, "before they kill you, they'll have to kill me." Funny. I'm still worried.

An elder waves us inside a mud hut to talk about the 8,000 people living on this rocky mountain slope. They used to be nomads who roamed southern Afghanistan plains to find green pasture for their herds. But as one drought year became six, their livestock livelihood was decimated and their temporary villages grew permanent.

Preferring not to accept this sad fact, the national and provincial governments have tried repeatedly to bulldoze the settlements.

There is no electricity, schools, health care or sanitation facilities and only two wells for the entire camp. People work at occasional day jobs in gardens or as day labourers in the city. But the elders say things are more desperate now, more than a year after United Nations aid stopped coming.

"You could search this entire camp and won't find two bags of flour," says the elder. There are no signs of toys or a single diversion for the kids, so I sparked a near riot by handing out pencils, pens and candy.

We then retreat back inside Kandahar City, with the car sputtering alarmingly on bad gasoline along the Taliban-infected route, to visit a sprawling mud-hut village of about 500 refugees, most of them kids.

Beyond the mosques, which provide some religious training, there are no regular schools for the children. There are health clinics nearby, but the elders say they cannot afford to pay for drugs. I stuff a wad of Afghan money into the hands of one man who said his wife suffered open infected wounds but that he lacked the money to fill her prescription. I've no idea if it was enough.

We end the day on a upbeat note at another Kuchi tribe on the edge of a river, downstream from Kandahar. The children appear better fed, goats wander the compound, and the parents show plenty of affection and concern for their children. The proof is in how they line up for hepatitis B vaccinations for themselves and their children in a pilot project by the Senlis Council.

Even so, the whole day was an unsettling and depressing experience. In a land where life is cheap, the Kandahar region's starving refugees are the fire sale. Thousands are clearly unwanted, denied government assistance and trapped in hopeless, lifelong situations.

Children starving in Kandahar area; Refugees in camps around city have little access to food, sanitation and

Could Canada make a difference? Absolutely. Should it do more? Seems obvious to me — darned right.

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

"I haven't been to many places, but from what I've read, I don't think we're any worse off than any other Third World country. There are hungry children all over the world."

How sadly true. And that puts Canada in the dilemma of having to pick where it feeds the world from its severely limited financial ration.

# Afghan war losing appeal; With massive coverage of soldiers' deaths eroding public support, the Tories are signalling a move to more of a training and diplomatic emphasis that one military historian senses is 'cutting and running'

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A4

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Shah Marai, Agence France–Presse, Getty Images Files/ Prime Minister Stephen Harper shakes hands with Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul on March 14, 2006. ; Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters files / Pallbearers carry the coffin of Master Cpl. Colin Bason of B.C., one of six Canadians killed in southern Afghanistan on July 4. ; Photo: Vancouver Sun files / Reservist Daniel Mazurek, 24, shown with Harper in Afghanistan, graduated high school in Surrey, ;

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 1191

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OTTAWA — On March 13, 2006, against a backdrop of armoured vehicles at Kandahar Air Field, Stephen Harper told an assembly of hundreds of Canadian and international soldiers — and a country that had just elected him listening back home — that Canada would not "cut and run" from Afghanistan as long as he was prime minister.

Last June 22, Harper told a press conference on Parliament Hill that unless the House of Commons reaches a "consensus" on the future of the mission, it will end as scheduled in February 2009.

So, what happened in those intervening 15 months to soften the prime minister's resolve?

Only Harper himself knows for sure, but one fact is clear: 50 Canadian soldiers lost their lives on Afghan soil in that interval.

The signals Harper is sending about Canada's future military involvement in Afghanistan are as clear as a Kandahar sandstorm. Still, this much is apparent: Canada's new government now envisions a less robust military commitment to Afghanistan, less fighting, more training of Afghan security forces, and greater emphasis on the diplomatic front. In other words: less dying.

"I sense cutting and running," says Canadian military historian and author Jack Granatstein. "We are clearly preparing to end or greatly minimize our combat role. It's obviously too politically damaging.

"I don't think Canadian public opinion can withstand massive coverage of every death."

Afghan war losing appeal; With massive coverage of soldiers' deaths eroding public support, the Tories are

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said last weekend that Canadian troops are all but done as warriors when he remarked that he expects newly trained Afghan troops may be able to take over leading security duties from Canada as early as next year. The suggestion was immediately shot down by military analysts at home, and called into question by Canadian Forces commanders in Kandahar.

The suggestion that Canadian soldiers now seem to face less fighting — and, by extension, less death — comes as support for the mission wanes in public opinion polls. Moreover, the Conservatives' political opposition, especially the Liberals and NDP, have made it clear they aren't interested in reaching any "consensus" on extending the mission beyond February 2009.

That has left Harper with only one path: try to sell a softer version of the mission to Parliament, so he can keep some sort of Canadian military footprint on Afghan soil, while priming the public and Canada's NATO allies for the inevitable end of combat operations.

"I don't have any doubt that he's been damaged by the casualty returns. I think a change in role before an election will probably help," says Granatstein.

It was the previous Liberal government that committed Canada to the Kandahar combat mission in 2005. Even though former defence minister Bill Graham toured the country giving speeches about the dangers that lay ahead for this deployment to the heart of Taliban country, no one really paid attention to the warnings that Canadians should brace for casualties.

When Harper touched down in Afghanistan in March 2006, just five weeks after being sworn in as Canada's 22nd prime minister, he had already dealt with the deaths of two Canadian military personnel on his watch less than two weeks earlier. By then, the Canadian death toll stood at 10 soldiers and one diplomat: a suicide bombing in Kandahar claimed the life of senior Foreign Affairs official Glyn Berry eight days before Harper won power in the Jan. 23, 2006 federal election.

The death of Pte. Robert Costall on March 29, 2006 in a firefight with the Taliban also marked the beginning of a downward political spiral for the Conservatives.

The Tories moved quickly to staunch the flow of political blood that would inevitably accompany future deaths. For a short time, they banned news cameras from the Canadian Forces base in Trenton, Ont., where the bodies of dead soldiers arrive back in Canada. That caused a massive backlash from the Conservative backbenchers and within the Canadian Forces itself, where the ban was seen as disrespectful to the battlefield sacrifices of young soldiers — not to mention too uncomfortably close to a similar ban by the Bush administration on photographing coffins of U.S. personnel being repatriated from Iraq.

The government relented, but as the death toll continued to climb — it has now reached 66 soldiers in addition to Berry — so, too, did the political cost.

Though history offers a sense of proportion (more than 40,000 Canadians were killed in the Second World War), that is cold comfort, politically, for the Conservatives.

"It doesn't appear to matter. The coverage wasn't the same in the Second World War or Korea or the First World War. The immediacy of coverage on the national news every night is impossible to overcome," Granatstein says.

If the media focus on combat deaths is bad for the government's political fortunes, the scarcity of information the government is offering to the Canadian public about the mission is also eroding support. This criticism comes not only from the political opposition, but also from military pundits who have traditionally been supportive of Canada's intervention in Afghanistan.

Afghan war losing appeal; With massive coverage of soldiers' deaths eroding public support, the Tories are



"What is needed is regular briefings like we had during Kosovo," says Alain Pellerin, head of the Conference of Defence Associations.

Pellerin says the government tends to restrict communications to news releases issued at the time of a Canadian casualty, typically reaffirming the importance of the mission and the soldier's part in it.

"Between these dates when people get killed there's no flow of information," he says. "Because there is a vacuum, there is a lot of speculation."

That's what happened after the Tory defence minister predicted in a television interview last week that, by years' end, Canada would have trained an extra 3,000 Afghan soldiers in the south and could take a step back and become more of a reserve force.

Military analysts and the Liberal opposition criticized that as a rosy assessment that bore little resemblance to the realities on the ground.

O'Connor's prediction seemed to fly in the face of the official numbers that NATO and the Afghan government have set for the desirable size of an indigenous security force — 70,000 soldiers and 62,000 policemen. The alliance is roughly half way toward meeting those predictions.

Canada's Commons defence committee commented in its latest Afghanistan report last month that a lack of information about the mission can fuel public intolerance.

"In the end, the committee came to think that uninformed impatience at home might have some adverse impact on our national will and, therefore, have a negative influence on our determination to what is required to achieve strategic objectives set by government," the committee noted.

Chris Alexander, the former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan who is now a senior United Nations representative in Kabul, told the committee it could take upwards of a decade to rebuild Afghanistan, citing the reconstruction that continues to this day in the Balkans after its implosion in the early 1990s.

But it appears that a majority of Canadian parliamentarians would not buy an argument from Harper that Canada must stay the course, and not cut and run.

"He will try to get a new mandate but it will be a different mandate. Our combat role will end as of Feb '09. It sounds like we're staying there, but we're staying in a different way," predicts Granatstein.

But, the historian noted, such a response would not be good for Canada.

"It reinforces the 'all we do is peacekeeping' mythology. To have a government forced out of a combat role by a sort of know-nothing, 'anything the Americans do must be bad' attitude is really damaging to our sense of self."

# Soldiers, families take deployment in stride; More city-based troops head to Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280191

**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A2

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Larry Wong, The Journal / Major Regis Bellemare plays with his 16-month-old daughter Lenya at a ceremony for Edmonton-based soldiers deploying to Afghanistan in August held at Edmonton Garrison on Friday. ;

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; ARMED FORCES; AFGHANISTAN

**DATELINE:** EDMONTON

**BYLINE:** Jim Farrell

**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal

**WORD COUNT:** 218

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EDMONTON – There was some fear amid the friends and family who gathered Friday to mark the latest deployment of Edmonton Garrison troops to Afghanistan.

But a casual observer wouldn't have known it from the casual demeanor and smiling faces of the 76 soldiers and their kin.

Deaths and injuries among Canadian troops have soared recently in the Kandahar area.

Yet Donna Fiessel, standing beside her husband, said it's basically another deployment. This will be M. Cpl. Chance Fiessel's third tour of Afghanistan since 2002.

"It's his job," Donna said. "It's a war but it's also possible to get hit by a car crossing the street."

These soldiers, who will leave Edmonton in the next three weeks, will be part of a Canadian contingent of 2,300 troops.

Four soldiers from Edmonton Garrison were among the six, plus an Afghan interpreter, killed July 4 when an explosive device destroyed a supposedly mine-proof patrol vehicle.

Despite that, the troops demonstrated a continued trust in their armour, their professionalism and their luck.

"I feel very confident in our vehicles," said Lt. Col. Pascal Demers, commanding officer of Lord Strathcona's Horse.

Within a month or two of arriving in Kandahar the 51 tank crew members of this latest deployment will receive the Leopard 2 A6M tank, which Demers calls the best-protected tank in the world.

The remaining 25 soldiers are combat engineers who will ride in Badgers, engineering vehicles that sport hydraulic shovels, winches or bulldozer blades attached to an armoured Leopard chassis.

Cpl. Jason Loykowski, a Calgary reservist, volunteered for this mission.

"I'm proud of him but I'm apprehensive," Loykowski's mother Annette said. "I tried to talk him out of it."

Loykowski's girlfriend Katelyn Thomas said: "I try not to follow the news."

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# Afghan army urged to shoulder load, commander says; New military chief takes over Kandahar base

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**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: supplied / Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 327

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KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The danger to Canadian soldiers fighting in Afghanistan will remain high until the fledgling Afghan army shoulders more responsibility for the security of its country, Canada's new base commander said upon arriving here Friday.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who arrived around midnight to start a nine-month posting, predicted his troops will continue the "outstanding" work of the previous rotation, with a renewed emphasis on redevelopment work and humanitarian efforts.

But he admitted there's no easy solution to the plague of roadside bombs and suicide bombers that have pushed the Canadian death toll to 66 soldiers, a third of those in the past six months.

"Very few casualties are based on face-to-face engagement," he told reporters. "What we've been dealing with since the beginning, essentially, are IEDs (improvised explosive devices). And you know it's difficult in the sense that IEDs are something that, even though you're well-prepared, the risk is always there."

A priority for this rotation will be to continue training Afghan soldiers for the deadly business of combat against the Taliban insurgency, said Laroche, whose job will include leading the deployment of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment — known as the Van Doo — until next February.

"The way to essentially reduce the risk is to have more Afghans doing the work," he said. "With Afghan security forces doing most of the work, we'll be there to support as we have done in the past."

The Afghan army has reached battalion strength of roughly 500 soldiers in the south. Defence Minister Gordon

O'Connor predicted last weekend that a successful boost in Afghan soldiers could set the stage for Canada to scale back its military role.

Laroche, a 28-year veteran of the Canadian Forces, has served under the United Nations banner in Cyprus and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also had a role in dealing with the 1990 Mohawk uprising at the Kahnawake reserve south of Montreal.

He replaces Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who narrowly escaped injury Thursday when his three-vehicle convoy was attacked by a suicide bomber on a major road 18 kilometres southeast of Kandahar City.

# Riot erupts at Red Mosque; 13 killed by apparent suicide blast; Pakistani gov't erred in reopening site for Friday prayers

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280171

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**PAGE:** A7

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Aamir Qureshi, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / Protesters occupy Pakistan's Red Mosque on Friday, painting the walls in their original colour and wrecking the official reopening of the complex after a bloody army assault on militants. ;

**KEYWORDS:** CHURCHES; BOMBINGS; RELIGION; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN; PAKISTAN

**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, Pakistan

**SOURCE:** Los Angeles Times

**WORD COUNT:** 339

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – The Red Mosque became a flashpoint for renewed violence Friday as Pakistani authorities attempted to reopen it for Muslim prayers, with militants battling police and an apparent suicide blast nearby killing at least 13 people.

The mosque in the heart of the capital was the scene just over two weeks ago of a raid by commandos who seized the compound from the heavily armed followers of a pair of radical clerics. More than 100 people died, and a wave of reprisal attacks by militants in subsequent days left another 180 people dead.

The confrontation with militants, including hard-core Taliban– and al–Qaida–allied extremists based in the tribal areas straddling the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, has placed heavy new pressure on President Pervez Musharraf.

The Pakistani leader was struggling already with a burgeoning pro–democracy movement and the Supreme Court's reinstatement this month of the chief justice, whom he had suspended in an apparent effort to fend off legal challenges to his re–election plans.

Pakistani authorities had expressed hopes that renovating the mosque and reopening it for prayers would soothe militants' anger and lay the episode to rest. This proved to be a major miscalculation.

Protesters, many of them clad in traditional prayer caps, ejected a government–appointed cleric when he attempted to preside over Friday prayers. A crowd outside the compound hurled stones at riot police, who responded with volleys of tear gas.

As worshippers flooded the compound, protesters scaled rooftops to inscribe the mosque's Urdu–language name, Lal Masjid, on its dome. In a gesture of defiance, they splashed red paint on the walls of the mosque, which was named for its original red–brick exterior. Others raised the mosque's onetime standard, a black flag inscribed with the Muslim declaration of faith.

The explosion, which took place several hours into the confrontation, occurred on the edge of busy Aabpara Market, a few hundred yards from the mosque compound.

A senior Interior Ministry official, Kamal Shah, told reporters the blast was believed to have been a suicide attack, with security forces as its principal target.

Police said about 50 protesters were arrested.

# Starving refugees challenge aid groups; Unwanted thousands trapped in hopeless, lifetime nightmare

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280230

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Early

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**COLUMN:** In Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A group of young boys clown around for the camera in front of the mud hut where they live in a refugee camp. ; Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A girl in a refugee camp grins as a doctor injects her with hepatitis B vaccine. ; Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A one-year-old, weighing just four kilograms, faces almost certain death from malnutrition. ;

**KEYWORDS:** FOREIGN AID

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY

**BYLINE:** Don Martin

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 880

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Our day-long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. Sadly, it does not appear overcrowded: These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled to 22 in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis. "It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is two years old and that's not sufficient."



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Starving refugees challenge aid groups; Unwanted thousands trapped in hopeless, lifetime nightmares

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

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**PAGE:** A3

**COLUMN:** In Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A girl in a refugee camp grins as a doctor injects her with hepatitis B vaccine. ; Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A group of young boys clown around for the camera in front of the mud hut where they live in a refugee camp. ; Photo: Don Martin, Calgary Herald / A one-year-old, weighing just four kilograms, faces almost certain death from malnutrition. ;

**KEYWORDS:** FOREIGN AID

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY

**BYLINE:** Don Martin

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 880

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With crying babies filling every bed, she waits for treatment in a plastic tub dangling beneath a weigh scale, weakly trying to smile.

The reading above the two-year-old's failing body could well be her tombstone. It puts her at seven kilograms. The pediatric chart I consulted said the average weight for a healthy female her age should be about 12 kilograms. The doctors here peg her chances of survival at 60 per cent.

Kids are starving in Kandahar and the surrounding refugee camps. And the allegation levelled by the Senlis Council, an international think-tank now branching into humanitarian relief, is that the Canadian government won't help and doesn't care.

Such incendiary accusations must be proven, so the Swiss-funded agency, founded by Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald, provided a fast driver and an armed guide so I could tour the darkest underbelly of Kandahar's missing social safety net.

Our day-long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. Sadly, it does not appear overcrowded: These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled to 22 in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis. "It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is two years old and that's not sufficient."

We move around the ward, each room with a handful of soiled beds and floors puddled with urine. The Pakistan-trained pediatrician is curiously detached as he examines babies clinically near death. "This one weighs four kilograms and should be nine." He pauses to gently prod the screaming infant's grotesquely distended stomach. "It doesn't look good."

He puts infants on a supplement-laced, antibiotics-enhanced milk feeding program when they arrive, to treat what are invariably multiple health problems.

It takes a week to know if a child can be saved. About 65 per cent survive and are discharged within 20 days.

But ask Sidiq about a wish list from Canada and he pauses. True, he needs more medication for parents to take with them after their child is discharged. But he's not inclined to condemn Canada or any other country for failing to help enough. "I'd suggest help fighting illiteracy so the mothers know how to care for their child."

Ironically, perhaps, that's a key Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) program in the city.

Our next stop is the Marghar refugee camp, 18 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City. My guide nervously fingers the trigger on his AK-47 as we approach the camp, muttering about Taliban roaming nearby.

"Don't worry," he grins, "before they kill you, they'll have to kill me." Funny. I'm still worried.

An elder waves us inside a mud hut to talk about the 8,000 people living on this rocky mountain slope. They used to be nomads who roamed southern Afghanistan plains to find green pasture for their herds. But as one drought year became six, their livestock livelihood was decimated and their temporary villages grew permanent. Preferring not to accept this sad fact, the national and provincial governments have tried repeatedly to bulldoze the settlements.

There is no electricity, schools, health care or sanitation facilities and only two wells for the entire camp. People work at occasional day jobs in gardens or as day labourers in the city. But the elders say things are more desperate now, more than a year after United Nations aid stopped coming.

"You could search this entire camp and won't find two bags of flour," says the elder. There are no signs of toys or a single diversion for the kids, so I sparked a near riot by handing out pencils, pens and candy.

We then retreat back inside Kandahar City, with the car sputtering alarmingly on bad gasoline along the Taliban-infected route, to visit a sprawling mud-hut village of about 500 refugees, most of them kids.

Beyond the mosques, which provide some religious training, there are no regular schools for the children. There are health clinics nearby, but the elders say they cannot afford to pay for drugs. I stuff a wad of Afghan money into the hands of one man who said his wife suffered open infected wounds, but that he lacked the money to fill her prescription. I've no idea if it was enough.

We end the day on an upbeat note with another Kuchi tribe on the edge of a river, downstream from Kandahar. The children appear better fed, goats wander the compound and the parents show plenty of affection and concern for their children. The proof is in how they line up for hepatitis B vaccinations for themselves and their children in a pilot project by the Senlis Council.

Even so, the whole day was an unsettling and depressing experience. In a land where life is cheap, the Kandahar region's starving refugees are the fire sale. Thousands are clearly unwanted, denied government assistance and trapped in hopeless, lifelong situations.

Could Canada make a difference? Absolutely. Should it do more? Seems obvious to me — darned right.

Starving refugees challenge aid groups; Unwanted thousands trapped in hopeless, lifetime nightmar102e

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

"I haven't been to many places, but from what I've read, I don't think we're any worse off than any other Third World country. There are hungry children all over the world."

How sadly true. And that puts Canada in the dilemma of having to pick where in the world it feeds from its severely limited financial ration.

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# Heat-seeking missile added to Taliban arsenal

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280220  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A7  
**KEYWORDS:** ARMAMENTS; TERRORISM; AIRLINES; DEFENCE INDUSTRY; STRATEGICDEFENCE INITIATIVE; NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Thomas Coghlan  
**SOURCE:** The Telegraph  
**WORD COUNT:** 234

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Taliban terrorists have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack a western aircraft over Afghanistan for the first time.

The attack with a weapon, believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran, represents a worrying increase in the capability of the militants which western commanders had long feared.

The Telegraph has learned that the Taliban attempted to bring down an American C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over the south-western province of Nimroz on July 22.

The crew reported a missile system locked on to their aircraft and a missile was fired.

It closed in on the large C-130 aircraft, pursuing it as the pilots launched a series of violent evasive manoeuvres and jettisoned flares to confuse the heat sensors in the nose of the missile.

Crew members said they saw what they believe was a missile passing very close to the aircraft. The C-130 was not damaged in the attack.

NATO officials refused Friday to confirm or deny that such an attack had taken place.

"If there was such an incident of the type you describe in Nimroz, it is classified," said a NATO spokesman. "I can't release it, if in fact it did occur."

However, a surface-to-air missile alert was put out for western aircraft travelling in southwestern Afghanistan in the last week, which affected both civilian and military aircraft.

It was confirmed by civilian air operators in Helmand Province. It remains in place.

Western military commanders have been aware of concerted efforts by the Taliban to obtain shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles -- so-called Manpads (man portable air defence system).

The recent attack was probably with a Sam-7 shoulder-launched missile, an elderly model of Soviet or Chinese origin. Though relatively primitive, they are still a potent weapon, particularly against low-flying helicopters.

# Afghan air patrols proposed; Reduce ground forces, says Tory senator

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**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A8  
**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA  
**DELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 427

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An influential Conservative senator is suggesting that Canada alter its military role in Afghanistan after February 2009 by reducing its ground forces while increasing its naval and air force support — which would include patrols over the troubled country in manned and unmanned Canadian aircraft.

Hugh Segal, a former chief of staff for Brian Mulroney, said Friday that he will present the new options for the country's military commitment at the Conservative caucus retreat in Prince Edward Island in August.

"The bottom line is that at some point, Afghanistan has to be run by the Afghans and we have to ask ourselves as a NATO partner: How do we calibrate our presence going forward so that it is sustainable and how do we not desert our core national security obligation?" said Segal.

"One of the choices obviously is to use more air surveillance and to use more naval in some of the adjacent areas to make sure there aren't any large concentrations of Taliban or al-Qaeda forming . . . and that does not necessarily require endless convoys on the ground and endless boots on the ground in an endless sort of process that seems to have no apparent end.

"It would be the enhanced use of technology to increase our tactical options and perhaps reduce the size of our deployment without necessarily reducing our strategic capacity," said Segal.

Segal's comments came as news broke that Taliban militants have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack an American aircraft over Afghanistan for the first time. The Daily Telegraph reported Friday that the failed attempt came from a weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran and represents a worrying increase in the capability of the militants.

Appointed to the Senate by former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, the affable Segal is one of the more non-partisan politicians on Parliament Hill. He also wants to discuss his proposal, and other options, with the Grits.

"I am trying to open up the debate by suggesting that it is not just 'stay with what we have or go.' There are other options for all of NATO, including Canada, for sustaining the course of the strategic mission. The thing that bothers me the most is the extent (that) 'mission creep' becomes a given and then becomes non-debatable," said Segal in an interview with CanWest News.

He described 'mission creep' as the notion of Canada having a perpetual support role in Afghanistan — that three to five more years of the same military engagement after 2009 would be the only way to uphold our NATO commitment.



# Afghan air patrols proposed

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**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A8  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 227

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# U.S. pilots evade heat-seeking missile; Taliban use weapon for first time

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280215

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Early

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**KEYWORDS:** ARMAMENTS; TERRORISM; AIRLINES; STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** Thomas Coghlan

**SOURCE:** The Telegraph

**WORD COUNT:** 376

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The recent attack was probably with a Sam-7 shoulder-launched missile, an elderly model of Soviet or Chinese origin. Though relatively primitive, they are still a potent weapon, particularly against low-flying helicopters, such as the workhorse Chinook transporters used by British forces in the southern Helmand

province. The C-130 attacked in Nimroz was flying at 3,000 metres at the time of the attack, which is within the 2.5- to five-kilometre range of a shoulder-launched missile system such as the Sam-7.

Though the West supplied hundreds of sophisticated Stinger heat-seeking missiles to the Afghan Mujaheddin in the 1980s, they are not thought to be still usable because of the deterioration of their sophisticated electronics and battery systems.

As a contingency in 2002, the U.S. government offered an amnesty on Stingers and successfully bought back many of the missiles still in the arsenals of Afghan warlords for \$40,000 US a missile.

To date, the Taliban has shot down a number of western helicopters, but only through the use of unguided rocket-propelled grenades, which have a range of only 500 metres.

# Disgraced B.C. bishop dies in Toronto of heart attack

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280214

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A10

**KEYWORDS:** CLERGY; MARRIAGE; RELIGION; HOMOSEXUALITY; GAY RIGHTS; ASSAULT; DEATHS; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA; ONTARIO

**DATELINE:** TORONTO

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**NOTE:** Obituary of Hubert O'Connor.

**WORD COUNT:** 156

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Former Roman Catholic Bishop Hubert O'Connor, convicted in 1996 of raping one native teenage girl and indecently assaulting another, has died of a heart attack.

O'Connor died in Toronto on Tuesday at age 79, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said in a news release.

O'Connor resigned as bishop of the diocese of Prince George, B.C., when he first faced sex charges in 1991. When he was convicted in 1996 he was then the highest-ranking Catholic in the world to be found guilty of sex offences.

Both incidents took place in the 1960s, while O'Connor was a priest and principal of the Cariboo Indian Residential School near Williams Lake, B.C. Members of the four native bands in the area had accused O'Connor and other members of his order of physical, sexual and mental abuse.

Sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison, O'Connor applied for day parole in 1997, and was turned down. The parole board called him "an unmanageable risk" who viewed his victims with contempt.

# Bush, Brown to break bread at Camp David; New British PM pays first official visit to president

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**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A18  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Gordon Brown; Photo: George W. Bush ;  
**KEYWORDS:** PRESIDENTS; FOREIGN RELATIONS  
**DATELINE:** UNITED NATIONS  
**BYLINE:** Steven Edwards  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 488

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When Britain's Gordon Brown meets U.S. President George W. Bush on Sunday for the first time as prime minister, pundits will analyze their every public word for evidence of a loosening of the two countries' "special relationship."

But while Brown faces domestic pressure, driven by the unpopularity of the Iraq war, to distance himself from Bush, the new British leader says he nevertheless seeks to retain strong ties with the United States.

Battered in the polls, Bush will find a way that allows him to do both, analysts say.

"The very last thing the Bush administration wants is to hobble its way towards the end of the presidency and be seen to have even lost Great Britain," said Robin Shepherd, an international affairs analyst with the London-based think-tank Chatham House.

"So the administration will be well aware of what it has to say and what it has to do in order to make life easy for Gordon Brown at their meeting."

A weakening of the relationship is also the last thing Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to see, says Paul Quirk, professor of political science at the University of British Columbia.

"Stephen Harper has a lot of reason to hope that Brown sticks with the lines he has taken publicly, and stays close to Bush," he said. "Harper's own credibility is hurt if the main ally in Iraq and a central one in Afghanistan bugs out."

Bush will host Brown, who succeeded Tony Blair as prime minister last month, at a dinner Sunday at Camp David, the official presidential retreat. The pair will hold a joint press conference the next day, before Brown flies to New York to meet UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon.

He has already made official visits to Washington and Germany.

Washington also noted some of Brown's appointments and their statements suggested he was less keen than Blair to stand "shoulder-to-shoulder" with Bush.

David Miliband, Brown's foreign secretary, once expressed reservations about the invasion of Iraq. Another senior foreign office appointment, Mark Malloch Brown, was openly hostile to the Bush administration as United Nations deputy secretary general.

Less than two weeks ago, Malloch Brown said Britain would no longer be "joined at the hip" with the United States. Days earlier, Douglas Alexander, Brown's international development secretary, gave a speech in Washington in which he praised multilateralism — a doctrine Bush and Blair rejected when they launched the Iraq invasion.

At his first press conference Tuesday, Brown said the relationship between him as prime minister and the U.S. president "will be strengthened in the months and years to come." Miliband, who will join Brown on the U.S. trip, spoke Friday of the two countries' "shared values, shared interests."

Shepherd said any statements critical of Washington came from "junior ministers" and aimed at winning back Labour party supporters who'd turned elsewhere over Iraq.

He also said Alexander's Washington speech hadn't been out of line with current U.S. debate.

"This is the way the mainstream in America has been going for some time — that you have to use the multilateral institutions to promote America's interests," he said.

One casualty of the new regime, however, will be the chumminess Bush and Blair shared.

"If he tried that, the British would collapse in laughter and satire about how Brown is imitating Blair," said Shepherd.

# At least a dozen killed in Islamabad bombing; Attack targets Pakistani police reinforcements

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**IDNUMBER** 200707280198

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A19

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Adrees Latif, Reuters / A boy mourns while gripping the rubble outside the Red Mosque, after it reopened to the public for prayers in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on Friday. At least 75 people holed up in the mosque died in a bloody two-day battle with Pakistani security forces earlier this month. ;

**KEYWORDS:** CHURCHES; BOMBINGS; RELIGION

**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

**BYLINE:** Naveed Ahmad and Tom Lasseter

**SOURCE:** McClatchy Newspapers

**WORD COUNT:** 370

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A bomb targeting police reinforcements ripped through a hotel restaurant in the Pakistani capital on Friday, killing at least 13 people and wounding more than 61, as troops fought hundreds of protesters in a melee at the newly reopened Red Mosque nearby.

The blast, suspected to be the work of a suicide bomber, was the latest in a string of explosions and attacks that have rocked Pakistan, a U.S. ally, since a commando assault at the Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque, killed at least 75 people holed up there in a bloody two-day battle with Islamic militants earlier this month.

The police had staged in a large group at the Muzzafargarh restaurant on Friday, ready to move if called to the protest. Instead, they were left picking up pieces of their friends from the street amid torn uniforms and shards of glass.

The bloodshed, and increasing confrontation between hard-line Islamic factions and the government of U.S.-backed president Pervez Musharraf, has many in Pakistan and Washington fearing that the country is at the edge of upheaval.

A recent U.S. intelligence report identified Pakistan's western tribal areas that border Afghanistan as a main haven for Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership, prompting several American officials, including the White House spokesman, to say that U.S. strikes into Pakistan were possible.

The protest on Friday took place at the Red Mosque, which a little more than two weeks ago was the scene of the pitched battle between government forces and militants led by a senior cleric.

Musharraf's government had hoped Friday would be a day of reconciliation, as hundreds of worshippers came to the mosque, which had been repainted off-white and renamed Jamia Masjid — the Main Mosque.

Instead, the crowd forced the government-approved imam to leave, seized the mosque while yelling "Death to Musharraf, Death to America" and calling for Islamic revolution, and then began splashing red paint on its minarets.

Young men wrote the name Lal Masjid on the mosque's outer walls and demanded that the government reinstate former head cleric Maulana Abdul Aziz, who was captured in a woman's burqa while fleeing the fighting earlier this month, to give Friday prayers, the main weekly service for Muslims. A black flag with crossed swords was hoisted up above the mosque.



# Sheriffs seek troop decals for cars; Stelmach favours 'show of support' for soldiers

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**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** City &Region

**PAGE:** B3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Herald Archive, CanWest News Service / TimGoddard, father of Capt. Nichola Goddard, pictured, who died in Afghanistan, says the decal issue shouldn't become a "political football." ;

**BYLINE:** Jason Fekete and Colette Derworiz

**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald

**WORD COUNT:** 464

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Calgary may have rejected putting Support Our Troops decals on city vehicles, but the provincial cabinet will consider the tribute on Tuesday.

Provincial sheriffs requested the decals be planted on their cruisers, so Service Alberta Minister Lloyd Snelgrove will bring forward the request to cabinet, said Tom Olsen, the premier's director of media relations.

The government has no policy on stickers or decals, so Tuesday's meeting will see cabinet debate in a broader context whether any potential decision to go ahead with the controversial move will include just sheriffs' cruisers or all government vehicles.

"The premier is in favour of it," Olsen said. "But he thinks it's not an endorsement of the war. It's a show of support of the people who are fighting the war overseas."

Tuesday's vote will come a week and a day after Calgary city council voted against placing the ribbons on municipal vehicles, with Mayor Dave Bronconnier and 10 aldermen suggesting there are other ways to show support for the troops than putting 5,000 ribbons on city vehicles.

While the decision has riled past and present members of the military and their families, two Calgary fathers whose children have died in Afghanistan said they believe it's a personal choice to display the ribbon.

"It's just a material thing to me," said Gaetan Dallaire, whose son, Pte. Kevin Dallaire, was killed on Aug. 3, 2006. "It's whatever you hold in your mind or in your heart that counts the most."

Another Calgarian, Nichola Goddard, became the first female Canadian soldier to die in combat when she was killed on May 17, 2006.

Goddard's father, Tim, said it's best to allow Calgarians to make their own decision about whether to put a decal on their vehicles.

"It strikes me that 5,000 of those decals that people buy and put on their vehicles are a lot stronger statement than 5,000 put on buses or C-Trains," he said in a recent interview. "It's more powerful if people say, 'I want to put this on my vehicle' and people will notice more."

"The danger of putting them on city (vehicles) is that they just become part of the background. Nobody thinks of them being there for the reason they should be there."

So Goddard said he didn't have any problems with council's decision.

"Let's not make it a political football in Calgary," he said. "People should show support if they feel support, not show support because they are told to by somebody else."

However, the executive director of the Calgary Military Family Resource Centre said other military families are upset by council's decision not to put decals on the backs of city vehicles.

"It's unilaterally in support of having their sons, daughters, husbands and wives recognized in that way for their role," said Colleen Rowe, who said the centre is also getting "massive" support from civilians who visit.

"From my perspective, it's simple — the more visibility, the better," she said.

The full Tory caucus will likely vote on the issue before a decision is made.

Also on Tuesday, the city's police association will hand out the decals in its parking lot to show their support for the troops.

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# Liberal is a chopper blockhead

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280415

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

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**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion

**PAGE:** 16

**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA

**COLUMN:** Editorial

**WORD COUNT:** 277

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If there is one area of many that the federal Liberals have no right to complain about, it's helicopters.

And yet, that's exactly what Foreign Affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh did while commenting on the recent bomb attack that narrowly missed Canada's top military man in Afghanistan, Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant.

Why is Grant travelling around in armoured vehicles rather than choppers? Because Canada is the only NATO country with a major contingent of soldiers in Afghanistan that has no helicopters. When troops are injured we must ask the Americans, Dutch or British for help.

"Our military, when we've sent them into harm's way, we should provide them with whatever they require," said Dosanjh, about the need for helicopters.

He must think Canadians are stupid.

The Liberals committed our troops to fight in Afghanistan and extended our mission to Afghanistan's most dangerous area without helicopters. Why didn't Dosanjh insist on getting helicopters during his party's 13 years in power?

When it comes to helicopters, the Liberal record is one of embarrassment, waste, mismanagement and even death.

In 1993, when Jean Chretien became prime minister, he did a heinous and a most uncharacteristic thing — he lived up to one of his pre-election promises and scrapped the Conservative government's contract to buy 50 Agusta-Westland EH-101 helicopters slated to replace our Labradors and Sea Kings in 1999.

The cancellation cost taxpayers more than \$500 million in contract penalties.

Hundreds of hi-tech jobs were also lost because Canada, along with Britain and Italy, would have been one of the builders of the choppers.

Worse yet, in October 1998, six airmen were killed when their 32-year-old Labrador helicopter crashed near Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula.

One of them, Master Cpl. David Gaetz, kept a secret journal of the aircraft's mechanical problems to be opened only after his death, which he believed was highly likely owing to the state of the choppers in which he had to fly.

A Liberal complaining about our lack of helicopters is not unlike a child who kills his parents and cries about being an orphan. It is hypocrisy and it is absurd.

# Liberal is a chopper blockhead

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**SOURCETAG** 0707271941  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
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**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 14  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
**COLUMN:** Editorial  
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**SOURCETAG** 0707280192

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion

**PAGE:** A12

**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA

**COLUMN:** Editorial

**WORD COUNT:** 278

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Worse yet, in October 1998, six airmen were killed when their 32-year-old Labrador helicopter crashed near Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula.

One of them, Master Cpl. David Gaetz, kept a secret journal of the aircraft's mechanical problems to be opened only after his death, which he believed was highly likely owing to the state of the choppers in which he had to fly.

A Liberal complaining about our lack of helicopters is not unlike a child who kills his parents and cries about being an orphan. It is hypocrisy and it is absurd.



# Hostage situation worsening Some of the South Korean hostages are said to be in poor health and fearful.

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280183

**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A10

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by AP ANGUISH: Kim Hee-yeon, widow of slain South Korean pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, who was among the 23 South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan, cries during a news conference in Sungnam, south of Seoul, South Korea, asking for the release of the remaining 22 South Korean hostages.

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**WORD COUNT:** 396

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A purported Taliban spokesperson warned yesterday that some of the 22 South Korean hostages were in bad health, saying hours after the kidnappers' latest deadline passed the captives were crying and worried about their future.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the kidnappers, told Associated Press by phone the group still insisted on exchanging Taliban prisoners for the captives, who could be killed if the demand was not met. Ahmadi spoke several hours after the passage of the most recent Taliban deadline but said the militia had not set a new one.

Some of the South Koreans were "not in good condition," Ahmadi said. "I don't know if the weather is not good for them, or our food. The women hostages are crying. The men and women are worried about their future."

One hostage, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found dead of multiple gunshots Wednesday in Qarabagh, the district where the hostages were being held.

Local tribal elders and clerics continued phone negotiations with the captors, and were struggling with conflicting demands that included ransom as well as the release of Taliban prisoners.

"There are still a lot of problems," Qarabagh police Chief Khwaja Mohammad Sidiqi said. "One says, 'Let's exchange them for my relative,' the others say, 'Let's release the women,' and another wants money."

Ahmadi denied that.

"The Taliban are not asking for money. We just want to exchange our prisoners for Korean hostages. When they release the Taliban, we will release the hostages," he said.

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## INSURGENT ATTACKS A THREAT IN AFGHANISTAN

Hostage situation worsening Some of the South Korean hostages are said to be in poor health and fearful. 123

– The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country. Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay. "Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche said after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

– Afghanistan is in the "middle of an insurgency" and countries like Canada that are rebuilding it shouldn't make a hasty exit, says the RCMP officer helping train Afghan police recruits. The war-torn country risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self-sufficient, said RCMP Supt. David Fudge. Fudge is a police officer with 30 years of experience and his job is to help train Afghan police recruits who are often illiterate and arrive in tattered clothes and flip-flops. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# New commander takes over mission in Afghanistan

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280662

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 59

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Martin Ouellet, CP Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche speaks to reporters at the Kandahar airfield last night. Laroche is the new commander of the Joint Task Force in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 269

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The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar yesterday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll, but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well prepared, the risk is always there."

The need to reduce Canadian losses has put greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

Laroche's concerns about future casualties echoes comments made by politicians in recent weeks.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said his government doesn't treat military deaths lightly but that it won't alter its plan to maintain the current operation until 2009.

Sixty-six Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Laroche was met at the plane by Grant, who will leave Afghanistan soon. Laroche officially takes over command of the mission next week.

Laroche holds degrees in business administration and has served abroad on peacekeeping missions in Cyprus in 1981 and 1992 and Bosnia–Herzegovina in 1997 and 1999. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Troops upbeat about mission Set to head to Kandahar

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280638

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 21

**ILLUSTRATION:** 2 photos by David Bloom, Sun Media 1. Alexane Bellemare, 3, sits on her dad Major Regis Bellemare's shoulders as they take part in a departure ceremony for 76 members of 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group at the Edmonton Garrison yesterday afternoon. 2. Cpl. Nathan Mills helps his son Caleb Mills, 4, into a Leopard C2 tank on display prior to a departure ceremony at Edmonton Garrison yesterday.

**BYLINE:** GLENN KAUTH, SUN MEDIA

**WORD COUNT:** 265

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Soldiers were shaken yesterday by a bomb attack on a convoy carrying Canada's top commander in Afghanistan on Thursday, but members of an Edmonton-based military unit set to head to Kandahar next month say recent events haven't shaken confidence in their upcoming mission.

"As a military guy, you kind of steel yourself to all that stuff," Maj. Trevor Gosselin, who will be leading a tank operation in southern Afghanistan, said of this week's attack, from which mission commander Brig.-Gen Tim Grant escaped unhurt.

## SIX-MONTH TOUR

"I'm in a leadership position where if I'm scared, you don't show it," Gosselin said.

Gosselin, 41, along with 75 other Edmonton-based soldiers, are gearing up for their six-month deployment alongside a crew of largely Quebec-based soldiers over the coming weeks. The crew includes a tank squadron as well as a group from an armoured engineer troop.

Yesterday, many of them gathered with their families at the Edmonton Garrison for an official farewell ceremony.

The troops include 22-year-old Lieut. Jack Nguyen, who will be leading a contingent of four tanks.

While Canadian tank troops have suffered several bombing attacks in recent months, Nguyen said the updated Leopard vehicles the military is set to use there will be better able to withstand attacks.

Nguyen, who has been in the military since he was 17, added the prospect of his first military deployment is a "humbling" experience.

"It gives a reality to all the training we're doing and a sense of purpose as well," said Nguyen.

For his uncle Van Hong, Nguyen's deployment leaves him with mixed feelings.

"We're excited but also scared. We want to support him because he likes what he's doing. But it's a little nerve racking," said Hong, who added he questions the military's strategy in Afghanistan.

"They're dealing with ghosts," he said of the Taliban. "You don't know who they are."

#### FIRST COMBAT MISSION

For Gosselin, next month's deployment will mark his first combat mission following earlier peacekeeping roles in places like Kosovo in the 1990s.

While his wife Kim said she's nervous, she's been busy trying to prepare for Gosselin's departure.

"I have to trust that the training was not only adequate but superior," she said. KEYWORDS=EDMONTON

# Liberal is a chopper blockhead

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280626

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion

**PAGE:** 10

**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA

**COLUMN:** Editorial

**WORD COUNT:** 277

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If there is one area of many that the federal Liberals have no right to complain about, it's helicopters.

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Worse yet, in October 1998, six airmen were killed when their 32-year-old Labrador helicopter crashed near Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula.

One of them, Master Cpl. David Gaetz, kept a secret journal of the aircraft's mechanical problems to be opened only after his death, which he believed was highly likely owing to the state of the choppers in which he had to fly.

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# Hostages in rough shape

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280536

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 33

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Korea Pool, AP Kim Hee-yeon, widow of slain South Korean pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, who was among the 23 South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan, cries during a news conference in Sungnam, south of Seoul, asking for the release of the remaining 22 South Korean hostages.

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**WORD COUNT:** 141

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A purported Taliban spokesman warned yesterday that some of the 22 South Korean hostages were in bad health, saying the captives were crying and worried about their future.

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One of the hostages, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found dead of multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh, the district where the hostages were being held.

Local tribal elders and clerics continued telephone negotiations with the captors, and were struggling with conflicting demands that included ransom as well as the release of Taliban prisoners. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# RCMP says stick it out in Kandahar

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280535

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 32

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo by Omar Sobhani, Reuters Afghan policemen search a vehicle in Afghanistan yesterday. RCMP Supt. David Fudge says Afghanistan risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self-sufficient. 2. photo of RCMP SUPT. DAVID FUDGE Helps train Afghan police recruits

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR

**WORD COUNT:** 381

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Afghanistan is in the "middle of an insurgency" and countries like Canada that are rebuilding it shouldn't make a hasty exit, says the RCMP officer helping train Afghan police recruits.

The war-torn country risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self-sufficient, said RCMP Supt. David Fudge.

Fudge is a police officer with 30 years experience and his job is to help train Afghan police recruits who are often illiterate and arrive in tattered clothes and flip-flops.

He has been on the job in Afghanistan for a year as part of Canada's provincial reconstruction team, a multi-level unit that includes soldiers, police officers and officials from Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency.

"Afghanistan is in the middle of an insurgency," Fudge said in an interview at the unit's headquarters, about 18 km from the multinational base in Kandahar.

"The job is not done yet. And if we leave too early, we very much stand the risk of going back to ground zero or even worse, as we've seen in Haiti, where we had to go back and start rebuilding from zero again."

Fudge said the foundations of a civil society have been progressively established in Afghanistan since the international community began working on reconstruction in 2002.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is slated to end February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond that date if he doesn't have a consensus from the four main political parties in Ottawa, a difficult goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition.

However, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province has stated that Canada would be making a serious mistake by pulling its troops out by 2009 due to the terrorist threat.

Fudge refused to comment on the political decision involving Canada's participation in Afghanistan, but he did say the giant task of stabilization won't be completed before the deadline set by Ottawa.

"You don't crack that problem overnight," he said. "You don't rebuild overnight, you have 70% of the people

here who are illiterate.

"We have to plant the seed for long-term success, to teach Afghans to manage themselves ... give them a decent place to come to work."

In the last year, the police contingent headed by the RCMP has trained 600 recruits for the Afghan national police. It will take another 3,200 trained recruits to ensure adequate policing and surveillance in Kandahar, Fudge said.

Afghan police face chaos, bribes from drug traffickers and even the possibility of being shot at by the international forces that are supposed to be their allies. They also can face hostility from the local population.

"We're trying to improve the image of the Afghan national police in the public eye," Fudge said. "It's going to take long time, yes." KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Liberal is a chopper blockhead

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**SOURCETAG** 0707280515

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.07.28

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion

**PAGE:** 14

**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA

**COLUMN:** Editorial

**WORD COUNT:** 277

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# Brig.-Gen. says more Canadian deaths to come

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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GUY LAROCHE In Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 196

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The increased number of insurgent attacks in Afghanistan will make it difficult to prevent the number of Canadian deaths in the conflict from rising, says Canada's new military commander in the war-torn country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche made the comment in Kandahar yesterday as he arrived to replace Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who is leaving after a nine-month stay.

"Reducing losses is always difficult," Laroche told reporters after he climbed off a transport plane that brought him to his new command.

He said the situation on the ground does little to suggest there will be a lessening of fatalities with the arrival of a new contingent of soldiers who will take on the mission for the next six months.

Combat missions will take a toll but an increased threat is being posed by the more frequent use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers, Laroche suggested.

Eighteen of the 23 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the last six months were felled by roadside bombs and there is nothing to suggest the insurgents will let up, Laroche said.

"We had very few losses following the engagements but we must deal with the IEDs," Laroche said. "Even if we are very well-prepared, the risk is always there."

There is now greater emphasis on training the Afghan National Army.

"It is necessary to do that so that the Afghan security forces can take on a larger role," Laroche said. "In this case, we are in a supporting role."

However, Canadian troops will remain on the ground "and the risks will always be there."

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Doctors in war-torn Kandahar struggle to feed starving children; Think tank says Canada doesn't care. Two babies to a cot in overcrowded hospital

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A17  
**KEYWORDS:** INFANT MORTALITY  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** DON MARTIN  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 513

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With crying babies filling every bed, she waits for treatment in a plastic tub dangling beneath a scale, weakly trying to smile.

The reading above the 2-year-old's failing body could well be her tombstone. She weighs seven kilograms. The pediatric chart I consulted said the average weight for a healthy female her age should be about 12 kilograms. The doctors here peg her chances of survival at 60 per cent.

Kids are starving in Kandahar and the surrounding refugee camps. The Senlis Council, an international think tank now branching into humanitarian relief, says the Canadian government won't help and doesn't care.

Such incendiary accusations must be proved, so the Swiss-funded agency, founded by Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald, provided a fast driver and an armed guide so I could tour the underbelly of Kandahar.

Our day-long trek began at the malnourishment ward in Kandahar's main hospital, where the children's wing is so full, they put two babies to a cot. These babies, all of them over a year old, are barely newborn size.

Dr. Mohammed Sidiq tells me the number of starvation cases in his ward has almost doubled in the past year, but he isn't about to declare a crisis. "It may just be that it's easier to get into the city for treatment now," he shrugs.

Nor is it about a scarcity of food. "They have food, but don't know how to utilize it. We've found mothers breastfeeding until their child is 2 years old, and that's not sufficient."

We move around the ward, each room with a handful of soiled beds and floors puddled with urine. The Pakistan-trained pediatrician is curiously detached as he examines babies clinically near death. "This one weighs four kilograms and should be nine." He pauses to prod the screaming infant's grotesquely distended stomach. "It doesn't look good."

He puts infants on a supplement-laced, antibiotics-enhanced feeding program when they arrive, to treat multiple health problems.

About 65 per cent survive and are discharged within 20 days.

Doctors in war-torn Kandahar struggle to feed starving children; Think tank says Canada doesn't care. Two babies to a cot in overcrowded hospital 137

But ask Sidiq about a wish list from Canada and he pauses. True, he needs more medication for parents to take with them after their child is discharged. But he's not inclined to condemn Canada or any other country for failing to help enough. "I'd suggest help fighting illiteracy so the mothers know how to care for their child."

Ironically, perhaps, that's a key CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) program in the city.

Our next stop is the Marghar refugee camp. My guide nervously fingers the trigger on his AK-47 as we approach the camp, muttering about Taliban roaming nearby.

"Don't worry," he grins, "before they kill you, they'll have to kill me." Funny. I'm still worried.

An elder waves us inside a mud hut to talk about the 8,000 people living on this rocky mountain slope.

There is no electricity, no school, no health care or sanitation facilities and only two wells for the entire camp. The elders say things are more desperate now, more than a year after United Nations aid stopped coming.

In a land where life is cheap, Afghanistan's starving refugees are the fire sale. Thousands are clearly unwanted, denied government assistance and trapped in hopeless, lifelong situations.

Could Canada make a difference? Absolutely.

But the Kandahar pediatrician makes an interesting observation.

"I haven't been to many places, but from what I've read, I don't think we're any worse off than any other Third World country. There are hungry children all over the world."

How sadly true. And that puts Canada in the dilemma of having to pick where it feeds the world from its severely limited

financial ration.



# Taliban fire missile at plane; Surface-to-air heat-seeker. Weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran

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**DATE:** 2007.07.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A14  
**KEYWORDS:** ARMAMENTS; TERRORISM; AIRLINES  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** THOMAS COGHLAN  
**SOURCE:** London Daily Telegraph  
**WORD COUNT:** 492

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Taliban militants have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack a Western aircraft over Afghanistan for the first time.

The attack with a weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran represents a worrying increase in the capability of the militants, which Western commanders had long feared.

The Daily Telegraph has learned the Taliban attempted to bring down an American C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over the southwestern province of Nimroz on July 22. The crew reported a missile system locked on to their aircraft and that a missile was fired.

It closed in on the large C-130 aircraft, pursuing it as the pilots launched a series of violent evasive manoeuvres and jettisoned flares to confuse the heat sensors in the nose of the missile.

Crew members said they saw what they believe was a missile passing close to the aircraft.

The C-130 was not damaged in the attack.

NATO officials yesterday refused to confirm or deny such an attack had taken place.

"If there were such an incident of the type you describe in Nimroz, it is classified," a NATO spokesperson said.

"I can't release it, if in fact it did occur."

However, a surface-to-air missile alert was put out for Western aircraft travelling in the south-west of Afghanistan in the past week, which affected both civilian and military aircraft.

It was confirmed by civilian air operators in Helmand Province. It remains in place.

Western military commanders have been aware of concerted efforts by the Taliban to obtain shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles, so-called MANPADS (man portable air defence system).

Taliban fire missile at plane; Surface-to-air heat-seeker. Weapon believed to have been smuggled across

The recent attack was probably with a Sam-7 shoulder-launched missile, an elderly model of Soviet or Chinese origin. Though relatively primitive, they are still a potent weapon, particularly against low-flying helicopters, such as the workhorse Chinook transporters used by British forces in the southern Helmand province.

The C-130 attacked in Nimroz was flying at 11,000 feet at the time of the attack, which is within the 2.5- to 5-kilometre range of a shoulder-launched missile system such as the Sam-7.

Though the West supplied hundreds of sophisticated Stinger heat-seeking missiles to the Afghan Mujaheddin in the 1980s, they are not thought to be still usable because of the deterioration of their sophisticated electronics and battery systems.

As a contingency in 2002, the U.S. government offered an amnesty on Stingers and successfully bought back many of the missiles still in the arsenals of Afghan warlords for \$40,000 a missile.

To date, the Taliban has shot down a number of Western helicopters, but only through the use of unguided rocket-propelled grenades, which have a range of only 500 metres.

In April, members of the Special Boat Service operating in Nimroz province intercepted several truckloads of weapons coming across the Iranian border, including a working Sam-7 missile.

It was one of a number of recent weapon caches Western officials claim have been seized on the border with Iran, fuelling allegations by Britain and the United States that Iran, or elements within the Iranian government, have begun supplying arms to the Taliban.

Hundreds of Sam-7 missiles disappeared into the black market in Iraq in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein, where they have since been used to shoot down dozens of helicopters and aircraft, reportedly including a British C-130 in 2005.

Meanwhile, a Taliban spokesperson said yesterday the group would allow more time for an envoy from Seoul to travel to join talks for the release of 22 South Korean hostages held for more than a week.

# Much at stake in looming by-elections; Tories aim to make inroads in Quebec. Liberals, Bloc desperate to hold onto ridings, while NDP seeks important breakthrough

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: ALLEN MCINNIS, THE GAZETTE / Liberals' (Jocelyn Coulon) will face off against NDP hopeful Thomas Mulcair in Outremont by-election. ; Map: THE GAZETTE / (See hard copy for map) ; Colour Photo: ALLEN MCINNIS, THE GAZETTE / Liberals' Jocelyn Coulon will face off against NDP hopeful (Thomas Mulcair) in Outremont by-election. ;

**KEYWORDS:** PREMIERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; QUEBEC

**BYLINE:** ANDY RIGA

**SOURCE:** The Gazette

**WORD COUNT:** 969

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While Canadians focus on cold beer, air conditioning and weekends at the cottage, political parties are quietly gearing up for a series of by-elections that will soon mark the end of the political off-season.

Quebec is the battleground.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper must announce one by-election in the province by today – in Outremont – and he may call as many as three. They would probably take place in September or early October.

With polls indicating voting intentions haven't shifted much since the minority Conservative government was elected in January 2006, all four major parties are hoping for a boost from the by-elections.

One will be in a Liberal stronghold (Outremont), the others in traditional Bloc Québécois ridings: Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot and Roberval-Lac St. Jean.

The Conservatives want to show momentum in Quebec, where Harper's party must win more seats to earn a majority in the next general election.

Standing in his way is the still-formidable Bloc.

The Liberals can't afford to lose Outremont, where party leader Stéphane Dion hopes a star candidate will help revive the party among Quebec francophones, a key goal before the next general election.

The Bloc must hold its seats to prove it's not a spent force after the Parti Québécois collapsed provincially. BQ leader Gilles Duceppe also wants to redeem himself after botching a short-lived bid to head the PQ.

The New Democratic Party is betting a prominent candidate in Outremont will give it a breakthrough in Quebec – its first win in the province since Phil Edmonston won a 1990 by-election.

Losing their respective ridings would be a big blow to the Liberals and the Bloc, said Darrell Bricker, president of the polling firm Ipsos-Reid.

"It would be a real setback for the Liberals if they can't win Outremont," he said. "If Dion can't win there, it's a huge statement about his ability."

The Bloc, for its part, "desperately needs to hold on to show it hasn't lost momentum as a result of the provincial election" loss by the PQ, he added.

The Liberals have won the ethnically diverse riding of Outremont in every election since the 1920s, save one in the 1988 when it went to the Progressive Conservatives.

In the last election, Liberal Jean Lapierre beat star Bloc candidate Jacques Léonard by 2,500 votes, with the NDP coming third and the Conservatives fourth.

The race is shaping up as a battle between the Liberals and the NDP.

The Liberal hopeful is Jocelyn Coulon, a journalist who went on to become a university professor and a TV and newspaper commentator on foreign affairs. The NDP candidate is Thomas Mulcair, who achieved star status in Quebec after quitting Liberal Premier Jean Charest's cabinet over environmental policies.

In an interview, Coulon said he'll focus on local and international issues. Locally, he wants to deal with concerns about the Université de Montréal's billion-dollar expansion plan and to improve services to the riding's many immigrants, he said.

On the foreign scene, he said, he'll target the Conservative government's "militarization" of Canada's Afghanistan mission, its decision to boost defence spending while cutting back on the diplomatic service, and on what he describes as an overly cozy relationship with the U.S.

He said Canada should shift its Afghan role to "development, rebuilding and stabilization of the country."

Coulon is also dealing with a controversy over Israel. B'nai Brith wants him dumped as a candidate, labelling him "anti-

Israel."

Last year, after Hamas won Palestinian elections, Coulon suggested negotiating with the organization, a terrorist group banned in Canada. He has since reversed his position.

Coulon said a close reading of his work shows he supports Israel, backing its decision, for example, to build a wall to stop suicide bombers.

The NDP's Mulcair, who is also focusing on the university expansion as a local issue, is brandishing his green credentials, accusing Harper and Dion of ignoring climate change.

In an interview, Mulcair targeted Coulon on Afghanistan, citing a column 14 months ago in which Coulon suggested the war would be "costly, long, bloody and there's a risk of failure. It's the price to pay to attempt to save this country."

The NDP wants Canada to withdraw from its counter-insurgency mission in Afghanistan and focus on development and reconstruction.

With the Bloc and sovereignty weakened, the NDP has a chance to persuade left-leaning Quebecers to give it a shot, Mulcair said.

The Conservatives hoped to recruit Montreal city councillor Marcel Tremblay – brother of Mayor Gérald Tremblay – in Outremont, but he balked, leaving the party with former diplomat and political neophyte Gilles Duguay.

The Bloc's candidate is also a little-known newcomer: psychoanalyst Jean-Paul Gilson.

As for the other Quebec ridings up for grabs, both have voted Bloc since 1993, the first year the party fielded candidates in a general election.

In Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot, a rural riding east of Montreal, the Bloc's Yvan Loubier won the last election by 15,500 votes, the Conservatives coming second.

In Roberval-Lac Saint Jean, a riding in the nationalist bastion north of Quebec City, Michel Gauthier of the Bloc won by 3,100 votes last time, ahead of a Tory.

The Conservatives might stand a chance in these two ridings, both of which have voted Conservative in the past.

In Roberval-Lac Saint Jean, the Conservatives are counting on a star candidate: Roberval Mayor Denis Lebel.

The Tories also made a splash in the region, announcing last week that a new air force unit will be established at Canadian Forces Base Bagotville, a \$300-million plan to add 550 troops to the base over seven years.

The Bloc's candidate in the riding is Céline Houde, a nurse and union activist who is new to politics. The Liberals have yet to announce a candidate.

In Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot, Harper is hoping the success in the region of his political kindred spirit – Mario Dumont, leader of the provincial Action démocratique du Québec – will translate into votes for the Conservatives.

The Tories and the Liberals have yet to name candidates in the riding. The Bloc's hopeful is first-timer Ève-Mary Thaï Thi Lac, an aide to former MP Gauthier, who has left politics.

In the Quebec by-elections, Harper is expected to test the message he plans to use in the next general election – that his party is the only one that can get things done for the province.

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By-elections on horizon

Seven House of Commons seats are or will soon be up for grabs. PM Stephen Harper has up to six months after a seat is vacated to call a by-election to fill the seat.

The ridings are:

Much at stake in looming by-elections; Tories aim to make inroads in Quebec. Liberals, Bloc desperate to h

Outremont, where Liberal MP Jean Lapierre quit Jan. 28. St. Hyacinthe–Bagot, where Bloc Québécois MP Yvan Loubier quit Feb. 21.

Roberval–Lac St. Jean, where Bloc MP Michel Gauthier has said he is quitting.

Toronto Centre, where Liberal MP Bill Graham quit July 2.

Willowdale, the Toronto riding where Liberal MP Jim Peterson quit July 12.

Vancouver Quadra, where Liberal MP Stephen Owen resigned, effective yesterday.

Desnethé–Missinippi–Churchill River (Saskatchewan), where Liberal MP Gary Merasty has said he will quit, effective Aug. 31.

Andy Riga

# South Koreans question the mission; Behind Today's News – An in–depth examination of stories making news today; Many say missionaries kidnapped by Taliban were warned by Korean government

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Reuters / A family member of one of the South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan weeps at a news conference asking for the safe return of the hostages. ; Photo: Jo Young–Hak, Reuters / A South Korean man at a vigil reads a paper with photos of the kidnap victims. ;

**DATELINE:** SEOUL

**BYLINE:** Robert Neff and Donald Kirk

**SOURCE:** The Christian Science Monitor

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 820

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In South Korea, grief is now tinged with anger toward Christian missionaries with news that the leader of a group of 23 kidnapped Korean aid workers in Afghanistan had been shot by their Taliban captors.

"The missionaries were warned by the Korean government that it was too dangerous to go to Afghanistan and preach about the Christian God," said Kim Hyoungh Jin, a university student in Seoul. "They knew they were taking a risk, even though they knew they were doing a wonderful job, and they knew that something was going to happen."

Jennifer Chang, an announcer at a Seoul radio station, said Koreans are questioning whether the group, including 18 young nurses, was there to dispense medical aid or to spread their religion in a deeply Islamic society.

"Some Korean Christians think it's a good thing to go to Afghanistan and die trying to proselytize on behalf of their religion," Chang, a regular churchgoer in a country that's one–third Christian, said. "But many are critical."

With nearly 17,000 missionaries in 173 nations, South Korea is second only to the U.S. in the number of Christians sent abroad. In 2004, eight South Korean missionaries were kidnapped and later released in Iraq. Later that year, a man who had gone to Iraq to do missionary work was beheaded. That killing prompted sympathy in Korea. But some South Koreans are reacting more critically this time.

The Presbyterian congregation that sent the group to Afghanistan says the group was there to spread aid, not religion. It has been doing medical and charity work for several years in Afghanistan, and each summer Bae Hyung–kyu, the pastor who was killed on Wednesday, had brought a group there.

"They go to help Afghan children," said Paul Kim, a member of the Saemmul church, whose 3,000 members pack several services each Sunday in the city of Bundang. "We received help from the U.S. in the Korean War. Now our members help people the way the U.S. helped the Korean people."

Still, some in Seoul say that if missionaries were not attempting to spread Christianity, they did not hesitate to flout the advice of their government not to go to Afghanistan. Koreans point to pictures that church members took of the group in front of an airport sign here warning of the dangers of going to Afghanistan. The women in the group all wore veils in accordance with Islamic custom, but the farewell photos are seen as proof of their pride.

"The church is used to sending missionaries to very dangerous countries," said Julia Kim, a member of another Presbyterian congregation, one of Korea's largest Protestant denominations.

"Afghanistan was a very good target for them. It's really sad because they went there (to provide) medicine and they were captured."

The congregation that sent the group to Afghanistan now is recalling another 42 members on missions there and says it will not attempt to send more. Seoul, meanwhile, is sending a special envoy to Afghanistan to try to sort out differing demands for the hostages' release, including money, the release of Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government, and withdrawal of 210 South Korean troops (mostly engineer and medical teams) before the year's end.

Koreans are far from certain their government should yield to the kidnappers' demands. "Why should the government pay terrorists for the actions of a group of missionaries who knew they were doing wrong," Paul Kim asked. "The Korean government should not negotiate with terrorists. Why should the government pay for their mistakes?"

The kidnapping also raises the issue of why South Korea sent troops to Afghanistan in the first place.

The Taliban "should not punish Korean missionaries as prisoners of war, for a war that the United States and England began," said taxi driver Lee Young Nam, who questioned why Koreans should "suffer for the actions of the United States".

South Koreans have gathered in churches nationwide to pray for the hostages' release. Hundreds of members of the hostages' Saemmul church have held overnight vigils as they heard of the pastor's death and new deadlines set by the kidnappers for the murder of others if demands are not met.

Some South Koreans have called for the church to reimburse the government if any ransom money is paid.

In the Seoul newspaper Chungang Ilbo, commentator Lee Hoon Beom was critical of those who have expressed antipathy toward what they see as the work of "overzealous Christians" working abroad. "Although they (the church group) made bad decisions, it is not right to condemn people who have a youthful passion to help their neighbours in pain. The Taliban are the fanatics. They don't hesitate to kidnap and kill innocent civilians," he wrote.

Some see the pastor as a martyr. "He's a great man of faith and prayer," said Kristen Suh, wife of an evangelical church pastor. "He was a pastor over the young people in his church and he is known for his passion for missions."

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun released a statement saying, "Murder of an innocent civilian can never be justified."



# Afghanistan can't be rebuilt fast: RCMP; Behind Today's News – An in– depth examination of stories making news today; Population has to be trained to manage their country

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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 497

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Afghanistan is in the "middle of an insurgency" and countries like Canada that are rebuilding it shouldn't make a hasty exit, says an RCMP officer helping train Afghan police recruits.

The war–torn country risks going backward if international forces leave before it's self–sufficient, said RCMP Supt. David Fudge.

Fudge is a police officer with 30 years of experience and his job is to help train Afghan police recruits who are often illiterate and arrive in tattered clothes and flip–flops.

He has been on the job in Afghanistan for a year as part of Canada's provincial reconstruction team, a multi–level unit that includes soldiers, police officers and officials from Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency.

"Afghanistan is in the middle of an insurgency," Fudge said in an interview at the unit's headquarters, about 18 kilometres from the multinational base in Kandahar.

"The job is not done yet. And if we leave too early, we very much stand the risk of going back to ground zero or even worse, as we've seen in Haiti, where we had to go back and start rebuilding from zero again."

Fudge said the foundations of a civil society have been progressively established in Afghanistan since the international community began working on reconstruction in 2002.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is slated to end in February 2009. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he won't extend the mission beyond that date if he doesn't have a consensus from the four main political parties in Ottawa, a difficult goal in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition.

However, the newly appointed police chief of Kandahar province has stated Canada would be making a serious mistake by pulling its troops out by 2009.

Fudge refused to comment on the political decision involving Canada's participation in Afghanistan, but he did say the giant task of stabilization won't be completed before the deadline set by Ottawa.

"You don't crack that problem overnight," he said. "You don't rebuild overnight, you have 70 per cent of the people here who are illiterate.

"We have to plant the seed for long-term success, to teach Afghans to manage themselves ... give them a decent place to come to work."

In the last year, the police contingent headed by the RCMP has trained 600 recruits for the Afghan national police. It will take another 3,200 trained recruits to ensure adequate policing and surveillance in Kandahar, Fudge said.

Afghan police face chaos, bribes from drug traffickers and even the possibility of being shot at by the international forces that are supposed to be their allies. They also can face hostility from the local population.

"We're trying to improve the image of the Afghan national police in the public eye," Fudge said. "It's going to take long time, yes. I would say at least one generation, if we do it right."

Fudge said there were no police stations when he arrived but, "I'm proud to say we have five stations under construction right now. Actually, two are finished."

The long-term plan is for Canada to build a state-of-the-art police training facility.

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

In 2001, U.S.-led forces ousted the Taliban for hosting al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, who has yet to be found.

# An aunt copes with more tragedy; Hamilton woman mourns the death of her two nephews shot during an Afghan tribal conflict

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**PAGE:** A9

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Barry Gray, the Hamilton Spectator / Parigul Salman, 45, of Hamilton says the Kuchis — allied with the Taliban — 'shot my nephews.' ;

**BYLINE:** Mir Mahdavi

**SOURCE:** The Hamilton Spectator

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 297

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A Hamilton woman is grieving the death of two young nephews killed last Saturday in Afghanistan.

Parigul Salman, 45, wears mourning black as she welcomes fellow Afghans who have come to her home to pay their respects.

Nine-year-old Mahdi, and Mostafa, seven months, were killed July 21 by gunmen who attacked their village of Nahoor.

It's in Ghazni province, southwest of Kabul and about 600 kilometres northeast of Kandahar where Canadian troops are based.

The children were victims of a conflict that few Canadians know about. It's a war between the Sunni Muslim Taliban and members of the Shiite ethnic Hazara community. And Parigul says it was members of the Kuchi tribe — allied with the Taliban — who killed the boys.

"Kuchis shot my nephews" she said from her downtown Hamilton townhouse.

Parigul said survivors told her that Kuchi gunmen attacked Nahoor early Saturday morning. Residents, mostly women and children, tried to flee. They literally ran, Mostafa cradled in his mother's arms.

The gunmen followed and opened fire, she said. Mostafa's mother was badly wounded and the boy killed.

Mahdi was wounded during the escape attempt and died on the way to hospital.

The deaths are just the latest tragedy in Parigul's life. She came to Canada with her four children in 2003 after her husband and three of her brothers were killed by Taliban.

Other family members stayed behind.

Kuchis — a tribe that lives along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border — began attacking Hazara villages in the Behsood district, 100 kilometres from Kabul, about one month ago.

An aunt copes with more tragedy; Hamilton woman mourns the death of her two nephews shot during an Af

Reports say hundreds of villagers have been forced from their homes as Kuchis occupy their villages.

They are accused of killing dozens of civilians.

"They forced residents to leave the area with burning some houses and Shiite mosques," said Gholam Hussini, an Afghan journalist who was forced to flee the area.

Both the United Nations Assistance Mission and the Afghan government have called on the Kuchis to leave.

It appears that they have moved on to another province.

But the matter is complicated by the tangled alliances in the region. Observers say that the national government also has ties to the group.

Kuchis are part of the Taliban and unfortunately the Afghan government also supports them, said Dr. Sana Nikpay, an Afghan–Canadian writer and lawyer who lives in Toronto.

mmahdavi@thespec.com

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An aunt copes with more tragedy; Hamilton woman mourns the death of her two nephews shot down by an Af

# No evidence of retreat from Afghanistan

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**COLUMN:** Don Martin  
**BYLINE:** Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Servic  
**WORD COUNT:** 826

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If Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor is correct and the Canadian mission here is slowing, shrinking or changing its focus as the countdown lurches toward a possible February 2009 pullout, it'll be news in Kandahar, where all signs are pointing to a military and redevelopment buildup.

New air-conditioned Leopard tanks are expected next month, 16 military vehicles to better detect landmines are scheduled for arrival this fall, and the ground floor of a frantic expansion at Canada's reconstruction base in Kandahar City is filling up with new staff even before work on the top level is complete.

The lone Foreign Affairs bureaucrat here will soon be replaced by five officials as a signal that Afghanistan has become a hefty diplomatic priority. The number of Canadian teams deployed to mentor and train Afghans to govern themselves more effectively has quadrupled.

The Canadian International Development Agency is finally moving beyond its most visible project — putting a Maple Leaf stamp on garbage cans lining the deadliest suicide bombing stretch of highway in the country — to quietly backing a myriad self-help initiatives for Afghans.

It doesn't exactly sound like a retreat being sounded. Besides, as Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant makes clear, Canada's most important work here won't be done for another three years at best.

The key to winning conditions for Canada's departure are the cops, an ill-prepared force of underpaid, underemployed youngsters being trained by Canadians to bring law and order to the daily chaos and confusion of Afghan life.

## VAN DOOS TAKING CHARGE

"In my mind, our mission now has everything to do with the Afghan national police," the base commander said in an exit interview with CanWest News Service as he prepares to hand over control to the Van Doos deployment from Quebec.

"It will take three years, maybe longer, to give them the professionalism and confidence needed to be that front line of defence and base of governance."

Grant, who bears an eerie physical resemblance to B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell, insists the job can't be declared done until Afghanistan has a clean police force to call its own. Right now, all they have is a corrupt, unreliable and often AWOL force, particularly during poppy harvesting season — which creates the bizarre optics of police working the fields to get illegal opium to market.

"Our aim is not to be the lead of combat operations. That is a role for the Afghan army," Grant told me after a mad dash down Kandahar's main highway to a medal ceremony.

"Can they do that by themselves right now? No. Are they getting closer day by day? They sure are. So what we'll see over time is a change in the weight of our effort, allowing us take our expertise and abilities and focus them on areas where we can make a difference."

Grant's partial to an initiative called the Provincial Reconstruction Team, which sends soldiers into villages armed with well-paying contracts for digging ditches or installing wells. The idea is that Afghans learn to improve their own lives, instead of increasing their reliance on foreign aid.

Yet, Grant has a hard spin to turn his rotation's list of accomplishments into a parade of positives.

He insists dramatic improvements in the Panjwahi district, the former Taliban stronghold west of Kandahar, will be its signature accomplishment.

Yet, the district has helped make this troop rotation the deadliest of the three since Canada redeployed to Kandahar.

The six-month toll has been 22 soldiers — and not one death came from actual combat against the Taliban. It's been all roadside and suicide bombs, each blast bigger than the last, closer to military checkpoints, and inflicting ever more catastrophic damage to armoured vehicles.

## DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT

Politically, problems are on the rise, too. In some districts, tribal councils have fallen apart as locals find themselves unable to agree on new leadership. Scratch a local and you'll find an almost visceral distrust of the national government in Kabul festering under his skin.

And everywhere, all the time, security concerns dominate people's lives. The general himself had a near brush with disaster Monday when a rocket flew over his convoy and hit a mountainside at the operating base visited by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in the spring.

It was hardly a reassuring sign of peace in a district considered a showcase of enhanced security.

Still, Grant is quick to insist that progress is not a six-month process. "People were concerned the Taliban were going to take Kandahar City last summer, that it would fall and rest of the country would go with it," he says. "This year, in spite of suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices, people have confidence in their safety, traffic is way up and they are building everywhere you look."

He's got a point. There are signs of economic vibrancy and renewal in Kandahar City. But, then again, signs can be misleading.

The indicators that Canada is here for the long term would appear to be sending off false readings of its future intent.

What Canada is building up today seems doomed to be taken down in 18 months, leaving Afghanistan's international force with a huge hole at the centre of its southern headquarters — and a legacy of unfinished business to show for its soldier sacrifice.

Don Martin filed this column for CanWest News Service from Kandahar, Afghanistan. E-mail: [dmartin@canwest.com](mailto:dmartin@canwest.com).

# Wholehearted support for Canadian troops

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**BYLINE:** Randy Stroesser  
**SOURCE:** Windsor Star  
**WORD COUNT:** 315

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Re: If We Supported Troops We'd Bring Them Home, July 23. Letter writer R.K. Hill asks, What does support our troops mean? I understand from the tone of his/her letter that he/she has issues with the political correctness of our country's mission in Afghanistan. However, I think Mr./Ms. Hill is missing the whole point of the support our troops movement. I have had the great fortune of spending some time with many of the fine young men and women who have served in this conflict and I can say with utmost certainty that our country is in very good hands and these soldiers are indeed worthy of not only our support, but also our admiration, respect and deepest gratitude.

Whether or not you or I agree with the appropriateness of our participation in this war is something that will be debated for years, if not decades.

But I can assure you that each and every one of our troops who are or have been deployed in Afghanistan believes that they are there for all the right reasons, they are there to help protect and preserve the rights and freedoms that we as Canadians take for granted every day.

The fact that they have been there, and experienced first-hand what we are trying to accomplish is good enough for me. If my taxes must be raised a few dollars to ensure that these brave men and women have the finest supplies and technology available, then so be it. Meanwhile, I will continue to proudly fly our flag, I will wear red on Friday, I will display my pins, my wristbands and my yellow ribbons, and I will continue to pray for our fallen soldiers and their families. Support our troops? You bet, with all my heart.

RANDY STROESSER

Windsor

# Taliban delays hostage killings

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**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** D1 / FRONT  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Shah Marai  
**SOURCE:** Agence-France Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 389

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – The Taliban said Friday it had given Afghanistan more time to allow an envoy from Seoul to join talks for the release of 22 South Korean hostages but again threatened to kill them all.

The South Korean envoy was due to arrive in Kabul to seek an urgent hearing with Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai and U.S.-led forces following a desperate appeal by one of the captive Christian aid workers for help.

Taliban militants had set a midday Friday deadline to arrange the release of the remaining 22 Christian aid workers now in their ninth day of captivity. The leader of the group has already been killed.

The Islamic guerrillas are insisting on the release of eight Taliban prisoners held in Afghanistan in return for the aid workers' freedom, although Seoul has said the rebels' demands are "considerably fluid and not unified."

"We call on the government to give more value to the negotiations and speed up the process of releasing our suggested prisoners," Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi said from an unknown location after the limit expired.

"They requested more time. They say they have a new Korean envoy involved in the negotiation process. But if we feel they are not honest in releasing our prisoners we will kill all of the hostages," he said.

There was no official confirmation that the envoy had arrived.

Deputy interior minister Munir Mohammad Mangal confirmed that the Afghan government had requested an unlimited deadline from the kidnappers, adding that the militants' demands were shifting and they needed more time to study them.

MPs and council members from southern Ghazi province where the Koreans were seized had met with the kidnappers, as requested by the Taliban, Mangal added.

"We are trying to win the safe and sound release of the Koreans. Our negotiations still continue," he told reporters.

Officials say they do not want to break President Hamid Karzai's pledge not to release more rebel prisoners after his government in March released five Taliban in exchange for an Italian reporter.



One of the hostages earlier made an emotional plea for help in a reported telephone interview with U.S. television network CBS, apparently conducted in the presence of her captors.

"We are in a very difficult time. Please help us," said the woman, who CBS said gave her name as Yo Cyun-ju, after the interview shown Thursday organized by a Taliban commander.

"We are all pleading for you to help us get out of here as soon as possible. Really, we beg you."

"All of us are sick and in very bad condition," she said, begging Seoul and the international community to make a deal with the Taliban to win their freedom.

She went on to describe her captivity as a "very difficult life every day," and "a very exhausting situation," CBS reported.

# Musharraf's juggling act; The Pakistani ruler alternates between ignoring extremists and cracking down hard, alienating virtually every important domestic constituency

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**SECTION:** News

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Mian Khursheed, Reuters / The Pakistan government's attack on its own Red Mosque in Islamabad this month shows the inconsistency and lack of effectiveness of the country's ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The bullet-ridden Jamia Hafsa, above, is the mosque's religious school for women. ;

**BYLINE:** Husain Haqqani

**SOURCE:** Citizen Special

**WORD COUNT:** 852

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The conclusion of the latest U.S. National Intelligence Estimate that al-Qaeda enjoys a safe haven in Pakistan effectively contradicts the image of Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, as a crucial western ally in the global war against terrorism.

Since 9/11, when he abandoned support for Afghanistan's Taliban regime, Gen. Musharraf has been showered with praise by U.S. leaders. His regime has received more than \$10 billion in American aid alone, and almost every western government has ignored concerns about human-rights violations and the absence of democracy in Pakistan. Conventional wisdom in the Bush administration is that Gen. Musharraf holds the line in a troubled country, armed with nuclear weapons and infested with Islamist extremists.

The CIA's new assessment about al-Qaeda regrouping in Pakistan should also lead to a re-evaluation of Gen. Musharraf's role in combating terrorism. He alternates between promising much, delivering little and finally, trying to make up for lost time with highly visible shows of force. His sporadic actions against terrorists are timed to win support in the United States and other western countries but, over the years, he has managed to alienate virtually every important domestic constituency in Pakistan.

The shoot out this month at Islamabad's Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in the heart of Pakistan's generally quiet capital is emblematic of Gen. Musharraf's deadly inconsistencies.

Since January, the clerics of the government-run mosque, located not far from the headquarters of Pakistan's dreaded Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), used it as the centre of their Taliban-like movement to eliminate vice and promote their brand of virtue.

They occupied a government library, sponsored raids on alleged brothels, ran vigilante squads that forcibly shut down video shops, and dispensed instant justice in unofficial Shariah courts. Their exhortations to jihad became the focus of the world's attention. By doing nothing to clear the Red Mosque of its radical clerics for almost seven months, Gen. Musharraf gave them time to amass weapons and ammunition and gather supporters from all over Pakistan.

After a final round of negotiations, which Gen. Musharraf claims had failed, army commandos from Gen. Musharraf's old unit, the Special Services Group (SSG), stormed the Red Mosque in an operation code named "Operation Silence." The ensuing gun battle caused more than 100 deaths (including 11 government soldiers), according to official figures. More than 200 people, including women and children, are missing since then.

Islamist extremists have responded to the military's Red Mosque operation with multiple suicide attacks, including some on military establishments, resulting in dozens of fatalities.

Extremist Islamists are not the only ones attacking Gen. Musharraf's regime. Last week, Pakistan's Supreme Court overturned Gen. Musharraf's decision to remove the Supreme Court's liberal chief justice. This was a major victory for civil–society organizations and opposition political parties that organized massive demonstrations nationwide against Gen. Musharraf's attempt to curtail the judiciary's independence.

For more than five decades Pakistan's military rulers have depended on the country's judiciary to provide a fig leaf of legitimacy for their arbitrary decisions. The Supreme Court judgment against Gen. Musharraf brought that arrangement between the courts and the military to an end.

Gen. Musharraf's problems lie in his fundamental attitudes, which were shaped when he was trained as an army commando. Pakistan's military ruler thinks tactically rather than strategically, with survival as the main objective. He tries to fit several contradictory policies into his agenda.

For example, he wants to be seen as the man determined to save Pakistan from Islamist extremism, but does not want to end the close ties between Pakistan's military and militant Islamists dating back to the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the Pakistani–backed insurgency in Indian–controlled Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, he claims that he ultimately wants Pakistan to become a democracy, but refuses to let the exiled former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif back into the country.

Gen. Musharraf's only strategy seems to be to stay in power, and to that end he has made governing Pakistan a massive juggling act.

The result of Gen. Musharraf's juggling act has been chaos, polarization and violence in a large country of more than 160 million people, with large ungoverned spaces such as the tribal regions bordering Afghanistan and the troubled province of Baluchistan, where sentiment against the central government runs deep. This is just the environment where al–Qaeda and others of its ilk can recruit, train, organize and operate.

The international community cannot ignore Gen. Musharraf's domestic policies any longer in return for his co–operation in the American–led war against terrorism. If al–Qaeda is to be denied a base in Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf must be coerced into overcoming Pakistan's many divisions to focus exclusively on fighting terrorists and homegrown Islamist militants.

Husain Haqqani is director of Boston University's Center for International Relations, and co–chair of the Islam and Democracy Project at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. He served as adviser to Pakistani prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto.

# The death of a king

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**COLUMN:** David Warren  
**BYLINE:** David Warren  
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There were good reasons for not putting Mohammad Zahir Shah — who died this week, at the age of 92 — back on the throne of Afghanistan.

For one thing, he was a peace-loving man. Unusual in a Pashtun — especially one who was highly ethnocentric, impatient with the country's "diversity," and frankly prejudiced against those whose native language was Persian. But though he could sound rebarbative, he had a long record of giving the store away rather than fighting with anybody.

The worst was when his unspeakable socialist cousin, Mohammad Daoud Khan, pulled a coup d'état in 1973, declaring a republic while opening windows through which the Soviet Communists promptly crawled. Rather than object, Zahir Shah agreed to go quietly. (He was in Italy with eye problems at the time, and decided he liked it there.)

He had ascended the throne in 1933, naturally after the death of his father, although his father's death was quite unnatural. That father, Nadir Shah, from an old Peshawar family, had not ascended the throne on the other side of the Khyber in a strictly constitutional way.

It is a myth that the Afghan habit of assassinating her leaders goes back only to the 1970s (when political questions were too frequently settled by cabinet shoot-out). Nor, for that matter, did Islamic zealotry first appear at that time. It is as natural to the mountains of Afghanistan as to the highlands of the Scots. (Indeed, the comparison can be a fruitful one, for remoter Scotland, by the 16th century, had descended to about the point Afghanistan was rising to in the 20th.)

Nevertheless, murderous ideological "Islamism" of the Wahabi strain, fuelled by the vast unearned oil revenues of the sheiks of Arabia, did arrive in recent times.

Rather than fight, Zahir Shah liked to bicker. He bickered with Pakistan, at a time when good relations with Pakistan were crucial to Afghanistan's future. He was a "modernizer," or so he thought, constantly bickering with tribal chiefs who refused to wear shirts and ties. Reputed to be under the thumb of his women, he bravely chattered about women's rights. (Some schools for girls were perhaps his principal legacy.)

When set up, after his deposition, as "the king over the water" — a symbol of resistance to Soviet occupation — he kept letting everyone down. He ought to have struck a colourful figure. Instead, he proved an old hypochondriac, like so many who live past 90 years, the last three score on their "last legs." He was an adorable old man who ended his days under multiple layers of anachronism.

I recall him as a benign presence, in greasy photographs, crudely-framed in tea shops, when I was wandering pointlessly around Afghanistan as a young man. I am glad to have caught a glimpse of the country before it went utterly to hell: poor, proud, magnificent Afghanistan, prospering in rifles, opium, and chaos — about seven countries for the price of less than one, and each of those a tribal tapestry.

If the world could only have left Afghanistan alone! But there is no going back through the turnstiles of history.

Still, the customs of all nations are deeply seated. For the foreseeable future, Afghanistan requires a king, and its Loya Jirga (assembly of tribal lords). Hamid Karzai is called "president," but is by birth and gesture really a monarch.

His job is to be the cosmopolitan influence in a tribal field of give and take. And to stay alive, somehow, nominally leading the fight against the jihadis — themselves a foreign influence.

A monarchy suited Afghanistan, would still suit it, as it still suits the most humane and open of other Islamic nations, and has been through time the power to moderate eruptions of fanaticism in the mosques. It is because an Islamic king has religious prestige, in a cultural order that does not finally distinguish between civil and religious authority, that he is in a position to protect minorities, and resist craziness.

Democracy, dropped out of the sky without generations of cultural preparation, can only assist the fanatics.

We misconceive our role in Afghanistan if we think it is to bring democracy. Instead, our job is the modest one of helping the Afghans re-establish their own way of life, by killing as many of their jihadis as possible.

In this case, we are truly the allies of the peoples of Afghanistan. In any other, we are foreign imperialists, playing into the hands of the enemy who flew airplanes into Washington and New York.

David Warren's column appears on Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

# Misplaced Christian zeal

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Blame for the kidnapping and murder of South Korean missionaries in Afghanistan belongs finally with the Taliban, of course. But there's lots of responsibility to go around.

The Taliban are the men with the guns, who grabbed a busload of South Koreans on the road in Ghazni province in the country's southeast and are holding them for a ransom they haven't yet made clear. Perhaps Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government, perhaps money, perhaps the withdrawal of the 200 troops South Korea has in the country on peacekeeping duty. There were 23 hostages; at last report the Taliban had murdered one, the pastor leading the group. He was sick and had difficulty moving himself, it seems, so they shot him repeatedly and left his body by the road, on the day he turned 42.

Such people cannot be talked out of the evil they do.

The hostages' South Korean Presbyterian church says the people the Taliban grabbed on July 19 were in Afghanistan to support health-care and education projects. The church swears its members weren't in Afghanistan to evangelize Christianity, which is considered a capital crime by the Taliban and is frowned on by the administration of President Hamid Karzai.

Regardless, their itinerary resembles that of a tour group. They arrived on July 13, spent some time in Mazar-e-Sharif in the north before heading to Kabul, and were on the road south to Kandahar when they and their bus were seized by the Islamist radicals, driven into the desert, and marched away. The kidnappers later released the locally hired driver, who related the story.

The obvious comparison is to the Christian Peacemaker Teams, several of whose members, including Canadians James Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden, were taken prisoner by Iraqi insurgents in 2005. Their group seemed to have a martyrdom complex somehow equivalent, in a funhouse-mirror way, to that of the Islamists — the more danger they were in, the more valid their work was.

Afghanistan isn't Iraq, but it's not a safe place, either. The country needs aid workers, but it needs smart, experienced, tough aid workers who are in to stay, not dilettantes jumping in and out on bungee cords. By being there, the South Koreans clearly put themselves at great risk, and now imperil others working to get them released.

South Korea, which has 200 troops on duty in Afghanistan, clearly recognizes the danger. Its government has added Afghanistan to a list of countries where its citizens may not go except on official business; the other two are Iraq and Somalia.

Mr. Karzai's government is partly responsible, too. It negotiated an end to a previous hostage-taking in March, giving up five Taliban prisoners, including a brother of Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah Akhund, to secure the release of a kidnapped Italian journalist. Now Dadullah is dead, killed by an

Afghan–NATO raid, and his brother (a different one) is in charge. He's learned the lesson well. In Afghanistan, taking hostages works.

For the sake of the South Koreans and their families, Mr. Karzai and others might be tempted to make an exchange, but they must know that in so doing, this will happen again and again and again, only worse each time.

# Canadian values

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**BYLINE:** Fred Maroun  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
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Re: Taliban order kidnapping offensive, July 26.

It is hard to think of an organization more despicable than one that murders aid workers and teaches children to hate and kill. This is the Taliban.

Despite the knowledge that a departure of NATO troops from Afghanistan would most likely hand over the country to this group of murderers, Canada's opposition parties are eager to pull Canada's troops out of Afghanistan.

The Liberals want them out as soon as Canada's current commitment is over, regardless of the consequences, and the NDP and Bloc Québécois want them out right away.

There is no rational reason for Canada's opposition to make this demand other than to fish for the votes of Canadians who do not understand the Afghanistan war and who have an irrational fear of more deaths among soldiers. My heart aches for every death among our brave soldiers, and yet I know that the soldiers understand better than anyone the value of their work in Afghanistan — they say so at every opportunity.

Surely, Canadian values include supporting civilians who are helping war victims and supporting children held hostage in a war. Canada's Liberals and NDP are eager to talk about Canadian values but only the Conservatives are willing to fight to maintain them. For this reason alone, Canada must elect a majority Conservative government at earliest opportunity — this opportunity cannot come soon enough.

Fred Maroun, Ottawa



# Conservative senator pushes air role for Canada; Hugh Segal says he fears 'mission creep'

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**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry  
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An influential Conservative senator is suggesting that Canada alter its military role in Afghanistan after February 2009 by reducing its ground forces while increasing its naval and air force support — which would include patrols over the troubled country in manned and unmanned Canadian aircraft.

Hugh Segal, a former chief of staff for Brian Mulroney, said yesterday that he will present the new options for the country's military commitment at the Conservative caucus retreat in Prince Edward Island in August.

"The bottom line is that at some point, Afghanistan has to be run by the Afghans and we have to ask ourselves as a NATO partner: 'How do we calibrate our presence going forward so that it is sustainable and how do we not desert our core national security obligation?'" said Mr. Segal.

"One of the choices obviously is to use more air surveillance and to use more naval in some of the adjacent areas to make sure there aren't any large concentrations of Taliban or al-Qaeda forming ... and that does not necessarily require endless convoys on the ground and endless boots on the ground in an endless sort of process that seems to have no apparent end."

Canada's CF-18 fighter jets were a successful part of the spring 1999

NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia, taking part in the 78-day aerial bombardment of the war-torn country in order to stop the systematic violence directed at ethnic Albanian Muslims in the province of Kosovo.

Mr. Segal said there has been some upgrading of the CF-18 in terms of its avionics and smart munitions.

"It would be the enhanced use of technology to increase our tactical options and perhaps reduce the size of our deployment without necessarily reducing our strategic capacity," said Mr. Segal.

Appointed to the Senate by former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, the affable Mr. Segal is one of the more non-partisan politicians on Parliament Hill. He also wants to discuss his proposal, and other options, with the Liberals.

"I am trying to open up the debate by suggesting that it is not just 'stay with what we have or go.' There are other options for all of NATO, including Canada, for sustaining the course of the strategic mission.

"The thing that bothers me the most is the extent (that) 'mission creep' becomes a given and then becomes non-debatable," said Mr. Segal in an interview with CanWest News.

He described "mission creep" as the notion of Canada having a perpetual support role in Afghanistan — that three to five more years of the same military engagement after 2009 would be the only way to uphold our NATO commitment.

# Heat-seeking missile was Taliban's first

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**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Thomas Coghlan, With Files From Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** The Daily Telegraph, Reuters  
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KABUL – Taliban militants have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack a western aircraft over Afghanistan for the first time.

The attack with a weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran represents a worrying increase in the capability of the militants, which western commanders had long feared.

The Daily Telegraph has learned that the Taliban attempted to bring down an American C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over the southwestern province of Nimroz last Sunday. The crew reported that a missile system locked on to their aircraft and that a missile was fired.

It closed in on the large C-130 aircraft, pursuing it as the pilots launched a series of violent evasive manoeuvres and jettisoned flares to confuse the heat sensors in the nose of the missile.

Crew members said that they saw what they believe was a missile passing very close to the aircraft. The C-130 was not damaged in the attack.

Nato officials yesterday refused to confirm or deny that such an attack had taken place.

nato blamed for civilian deaths Dozens of civilians, including women and children, have been killed in two foreign air strikes in southern Afghanistan, residents and a local member of parliament said yesterday.

One of the raids by NATO hit houses in the Girishk district of Helmand province Thursday night, killing up to 50 civilians, a group of some 20 residents reported to journalists in Kandahar, the main city in the south.

Wali Jan Sabri, a parliamentarian from Helmand, said he had credible information that between 50 to 60 civilians had been killed in a battle between the Taliban and NATO forces in Girishk. About 50 Taliban were also reported killed.

Meanwhile, Canada's new Kandahar base commander said the danger to Canadian soldiers fighting here will remain high until the fledgling Afghan army shoulders more responsibility for the security of its country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who arrived around midnight yesterday to start a nine-month posting, said there's no easy solution to the plague of roadside bombs and suicide bombers.

# Face of war has given the Tories a fright; 'I sense cutting and running,' historian says, despite PM's earlier declaration

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / Canadian MasterCpl. Mike McCauley marches on a joint patrol with Afghan National Army troops near Panjwaii village. ;

**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 971

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On March 13, 2006, against a backdrop of armoured vehicles at Kandahar Air Field, Stephen Harper told an assembly of hundreds of Canadian and international soldiers — and a country that had just elected him listening back home — that Canada would not "cut and run" from Afghanistan as long as he was prime minister.

On June 22, Mr. Harper told a press conference on Parliament Hill that, unless the House of Commons reaches a "consensus" on the future of the mission, it will end as scheduled in February 2009.

So, what happened in those intervening 15 months to soften the prime minister's resolve? Only Mr. Harper himself knows for sure, but one fact is clear: 50 Canadian soldiers lost their lives on Afghan soil in that interval.

The signals Mr. Harper is sending about Canada's future military involvement in Afghanistan are as clear as a Kandahar sandstorm. Still, this much is apparent: Canada's "new government" now envisions a less robust military commitment to Afghanistan, less fighting, more training of Afghan security forces, and greater emphasis on the diplomatic front. In other words: less dying.

"I sense cutting and running," says Canadian military historian and author Jack Granatstein. "We are clearly preparing to end or greatly minimize our combat role. It's obviously too politically damaging.

"I don't think Canadian public opinion can withstand massive coverage of every death." Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said last weekend that Canadian troops are all but done as warriors when he remarked that he expects newly trained Afghan troops may be able to take over leading security duties from Canada as early as next year. The suggestion was immediately shot down by military analysts at home, and called into question by Canadian Forces commanders in Kandahar.

The suggestion that Canadian soldiers now seem to face less fighting — and, by extension, less death — comes as support for the mission wanes in public opinion polls. Moreover, the Conservative's political opposition, especially the Liberals and NDP, have made it clear they aren't interested in reaching any "consensus" on extending the mission beyond February 2009.

That has left Mr. Harper with only one path: try to sell a softer version of the mission to Parliament, so he can keep some sort of Canadian military footprint on Afghan soil, while priming the public and Canada's NATO allies for the inevitable end of combat operations.

"I don't have any doubt that he's been damaged by the casualty returns. I think a change in role before an election will probably help," says Mr. Granatstein.

When Mr. Harper touched down in Afghanistan in March 2006, just five weeks after being sworn in as Canada's 22nd prime minister, he had already dealt with the deaths of two Canadian military personnel on his watch less than two weeks earlier. By then, the Canadian death toll stood at 10 soldiers and one diplomat.

Though history offers a sense of proportion (more than 40,000 Canadians were killed in the Second World War), that is cold comfort, politically, for the Conservatives.

"It doesn't appear to matter. The coverage wasn't the same in the Second World War or Korea or the First World War. The immediacy of coverage on the national news every night is impossible to overcome," Mr. Granatstein says.

If the media focus on combat deaths is bad for the government's political fortunes, the scarcity of information the government is offering to the Canadian public about the mission is also eroding support. This criticism comes not only from the political opposition, but also from military pundits who have traditionally been supportive of Canada's intervention in Afghanistan.

"What is needed is regular briefings like we had during Kosovo," says Alain Pellerin, head of the Conference of Defence Associations.

Mr. Pellerin says the government tends to restrict communications to news releases issued at the time of a Canadian casualty, typically reaffirming the importance of the mission and the soldier's part in it.

"Between these dates when people get killed there's no flow of information," he says. "Because there is a vacuum, there is a lot of speculation." That's what happened after the Tory defence minister predicted in a television interview last week that, by years' end, Canada would have trained an extra 3,000 Afghan soldiers in the south and could take a step back and become more of a reserve force. Military analysts and the Liberal opposition criticized that as a rosy assessment that bore little resemblance to the realities on the ground.

Mr. O'Connor's prediction seemed to fly in the face of the official numbers that NATO and the Afghan government have set for the desirable size of an indigenous security force — 70,000 soldiers and 62,000 policemen. The alliance is roughly half way toward meeting those predictions.

Canada's Commons defence committee commented in its latest Afghanistan report last month that a lack of information about the mission can fuel public intolerance.

"In the end, the committee came to think that uninformed impatience at home might have some adverse impact on our national will and, therefore, have a negative influence on our determination to what is required to achieve strategic objectives set by government," the committee noted.

Chris Alexander, the former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan who is now a senior United Nations representative in Kabul, told the committee it could take upwards of a decade to rebuild Afghanistan.

But it appears that a majority of Canadian parliamentarians would not buy an argument from Mr. Harper that Canada must stay the course, and not cut and run.

Face of war has given the Tories a fright; 'I sense cutting and running,' historian says, despite PM's earlier d

"He will try to get a new mandate but it will be a different mandate. Our combat role will end as of February '09. It sounds like we're staying there, but we're staying in a different way," predicts Mr. Granatstein.

But, the historian noted, such a response would not be good for Canada.

"It reinforces the 'all we do is peacekeeping' mythology. To have a government forced out of a combat role by a sort of know-nothing, 'anything the Americans do must be bad' attitude is really damaging to our sense of self."

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Afghan army seen as key to limiting Canadian risks General wants ANA to take on larger role, but acknowledges Canadian soldiers will always face danger

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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

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PAUL KORING KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Putting Afghan soldiers out front is the best way to reduce Canadian casualties, Brigadier-General Guy Laroche, Canada's next commander in Afghanistan, said yesterday as he arrived at Kandahar air base.

"The way to essentially reduce the risk is to have again more Afghans doing the work," Gen. Laroche said minutes after stepping from a Canadian Hercules transport plane.

The general will command a battle group based on the famed Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Vandoos, drawn primarily from Quebec, where public support for the Canadian mission in Afghanistan is at its lowest.

"It's always difficult to reduce casualties," Gen. Laroche conceded.

Shifting more of the combat load to the Afghan National Army has been an objective of NATO and U.S. forces for years, but the ill-equipped, poorly paid and inadequately led Afghan forces have only slowly achieved a limited ability to carry the fight to the Taliban.

Fewer than 500 Afghan soldiers are currently fighting alongside Canada's heavily equipped battle group in Kandahar, although that number is expected to more than triple in the next year.

Even the best Afghan units have no armoured vehicles.

Their soldiers fight with worn-out Kalashnikovs, no body armour and some are without helmets. Although Canadians suffer few casualties in gun battles with the Taliban, the same is not true of Afghan National Army soldiers.

As additional Afghan soldiers are better trained and equipped and capable of "doing most of the work . . . we will be there to support them as we have in the past," Gen. Laroche said.

However, even if Afghan soldiers replaced Canadians in combat roles, the gravest threats are still posed by roadside bombs and suicide attacks.

Of the 22 Canadians killed in the past six-month rotation, currently ending, all but four were killed by improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers.

Gen. Laroche acknowledged that preventing those types of casualties was impossible.

"Very few casualties are based on face-to-face engagements," he said, after being greeted on the Kandahar tarmac by the current Canadian contingent commander Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, who will formally hand over command next week.

"What we've been dealing with since the beginning essentially are IEDs," Gen. Laroche said.

"And you know it's difficult in that sense that IEDs are something that, even though you are well prepared, the risk is always there." Only a day earlier, a suicide bomber attacked a Canadian armoured convoy on the main highway running between Kandahar air field and the city.

Although Gen. Grant's armoured vehicle wasn't hit and only the suicide bomber was killed in the attack, it underscored the omnipresence of the threat.

Even if the arriving Vandoos devote more of their effort to training and support of the Afghan army and less to carrying the fight to the Taliban, they will still be exposed to roadside bombs and suicide attacks.

"We'll always have Canadians on the road and the risk will always be there," Gen. Laroche acknowledged.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; war; deaths; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Guy Laroche

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban



# THE AFGHAN MISSION: Commander's nine-month tour comes to a close Top general vows to tell it like it is Taliban tactics that sap international support and corrupt Kandahar police force pose biggest threat, he says

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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

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PAUL KORING KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Brigadier-General Tim Grant says he's ready to tell Canadians tough truths about what it's going to take to win in Afghanistan.

"I'm not interested in just being a cheerleader or parroting government policy," said Gen. Grant, the Canadian contingent commander, who heads home next week after nine months in Afghanistan.

The general has some pretty well-formed ideas of what's been achieved, what hasn't and, most important, what lies ahead in the tough counterinsurgency war being fought by Canadians in the Taliban's heartland of Kandahar.

While Canadian firepower has smashed the Taliban's capacity to seize and hold territory, the toll from their fallback tactic – suicide bombs and IEDs – threatens to erode international support for the mission, the general said. And while he's heartened by the still-evolving transformation of the Afghan army into a vital fighting force, the woefully corrupt police force in Kandahar poses the biggest impediment to bringing stability, he said.

Insurgencies don't march to the incessant drumming of impatient foreign populations but, in Canada, February, 2009, has become an onrushing deadline. It's the date by which troops will return home to be replaced by other combat units or, perhaps, Canada will extend its military commitment.

Here, amid the dust and the heat and the uncertainty – where waging a counterinsurgency is a never-ending grind and every drive down every road is a version of Russian roulette played with roadside bombs and suicide attackers – the notion of a specific withdrawal date seems absurd.

Lean, soft-spoken and thoughtful, the general knows that only half the battle involves the hearts-and-minds campaign to woo Afghans to modernity, where opportunity, security, education and democracy are a viable alternative to warlord-ism, violence and a narco-state.

There's also a war for the hearts and minds of citizens in faraway places. In Holland and Germany, in Spain

THE AFGHAN MISSION: Commander's nine-month tour comes to a close Top general vows to tell it like it is

and Canada, doubts are mounting and a rising chorus of voices want their soldiers brought home.

Mounting casualties, as roadside bombs and suicide attacks reap a grim toll, underscore the political utility of the Taliban's shift in tactics.

"They are hoping to break the will of the international community," Gen. Grant said. If the stubborn Afghan fighters seeking to drive foreign occupiers from their land succeed, just as they ousted the British in the 19th century and the Russians in the 20th, then Canadian blood and bullion will have been wasted.

Given the enormity of the task of establishing a civil society in a war-ravaged and impoverished land, progress in Kandahar has been swift and impressive since the long convoys of Canadian troops rolled south 1 1/2 years ago. Then, there was a grave threat that the Taliban would seize the city of Kandahar, creating a Islamic statelet that would undermine Afghanistan and re-emerge as a new haven for al-Qaeda.

That threat has gone. The Taliban, as a stand-and-fight force, stood and was defeated last fall in the Panjwai district west of Kandahar.

Canadian troops, on aggressive search-and-destroy missions, regularly rout and kill small groups of Taliban fighters. Equally important, the fledgling Afghan National Army, mentored by embedded Canadian teams and with Canadian artillery and tank support, is increasingly capable of conducting small-scale combat operations.

"That's why I am so optimistic after 10 months," Gen. Grant said.

Kandahar city is bustling. The fertile Panjwai has been mostly repopulated. It's no small measure of progress that small children shyly wave to passing Canadian armoured vehicles. "There are plenty of places where people still don't wave," one soldier said.

Almost by definition, waging a successful counterinsurgency, especially for a foreign army, consists of barely perceptible progress that rarely warrants headlines back home interrupted with headline-making failures, defeats and mistakes.

"The Taliban is losing credibility in the eyes of the population," Gen. Grant said in a wide-ranging interview days before his departure.

Efforts to enhance governance (does the mayor have a filing system or does the village know how to reach the police) and aid reconstruction (new irrigation ditches and a stunningly successful polio-eradication program) are the two other legs that, along with security, complete the Canadian effort in Afghanistan.

"They are not well told and not well understood," Gen. Grant admits of the governance and aid components of the mission.

But slapping a Maple Leaf flag on every irrigation ditch dug with Canadian money may have little impact in Canada and could be counterproductive in Kandahar. There's a fine line between effective aid and making a local population look like lackeys to a foreign army.

"Hurry up and wait" is the unofficial motto of all armies. So the general, on an impossibly tight timetable in the last week of his tour, sits and patiently waits in Masum Ghar, a Canadian forward operating base, because the medals he is supposed to bestow are in a vehicle that has broken down somewhere. It's a rare moment to reflect.

"This can't be done in two or three years," he says. "Do we have a long way to go? Absolutely." But Gen.

THE AFGHAN MISSION: Commander's nine-month tour comes to a close Top general vows to ~~15712~~ like it

Grant's political antennae aren't just tuned to shifting sentiments among Afghans. "The mission focus can change," he said, well aware that the high-profile of the military effort, and its heavy cost in casualties, may need reshaping.

If beating the Taliban in a conventional campaign to control territory was the first big objective and transforming the Afghan National Army into a force that will eventually be able to replace Canadians in the front line of counterinsurgency operations was the second, the third is fixing the police.

Manifestly corrupt, widely distrusted by ordinary Afghans, often left to man remote checkpoints where they are little more than cannon fodder for roaming Taliban, the Afghan National Police are the weakest link in the still-evolving chain that is supposed to anchor civil society in Afghanistan.

"It took me about four months too long to figure out where the ANP system was broke," Gen. Grant admitted. NATO has no mandate to reform and rebuild the police, and creating an honest force is a huge project.

"The next big thing is the police in Kandahar province," he said.

Like most soldiers in Canada's small army, Gen. Grant can expect to be back in Afghanistan if the mission continues. He will be back sooner than most because his next job will be deputy commander of all Canadian expeditionary forces abroad.

"The first thing I will look at is the police," he said, when asked how he will measure future progress.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Tim Grant

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Some South Korean hostages 'not in good condition'

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AMIR SHAH Associated Press KABUL A purported Taliban spokesman warned yesterday that some of the 22 South Korean hostages were in bad health, saying hours after the kidnappers' latest deadline passed that the captives were crying and worried about their future.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, who claims to speak for the kidnappers, said by phone that the group still insisted on exchanging Taliban prisoners for the captives, who could be killed if the demand was not met.

Mr. Ahmadi spoke several hours after the passage of the most recent Taliban deadline but said the militia had not set a new one.

Some of the South Koreans were "not in good condition," Mr. Ahmadi said. "I don't know if the weather is not good for them, or our food. The women hostages are crying. The men and women are worried about their future." One hostage, 42-year-old pastor Bae Hyung-kyu, was found dead of multiple gunshots on Wednesday in Qarabagh, the district where the hostages were being held.

Meanwhile, a South Korean presidential envoy arrived for talks with President Hamid Karzai and other top officials, and Afghan officials said they remained upbeat about the chances of freeing the hostages without further bloodshed.

In Seoul, a Foreign Ministry official said the captives were still believed to be safe and that officials were trying to get medicine and other items delivered to them.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

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

PERSONAL NAME: Qari Yousef Ahmadi

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# MILITARY: FAMILIES OF THE SOLDIERS WHO DIED

## 'The questions will be forever, they will never end'

### Women widowed by Afghanistan mission say they want to tell their children what happened – and learn how to carry on

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**BYLINE:** ALISON AULD

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ALISON AULD Canadian Press It's the smallest tasks that Charmaine Tedford sometimes finds the most difficult.

Shovelling snow, making dinner or helping the children with homework were all things her husband, Sergeant 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 Corporal Jeffrey Walsh, who suffered a fatal gunshot wound almost a year ago in Afghanistan.

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

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

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

She said it is also tough to try to explain to her children why their father isn't coming home any more.

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

"We told her exactly what happened," Ms. Mason said. "We haven't spoken about it since, but when we told her what happened, she said, 'Okay, I'm going back to play with my friends.' " But managing information can

be a tricky balance, said Ms. 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.

The difficulty is getting a handle on whether they understand the situation and how they might express that, something Ms. 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.

Ms. Arnold, whose 32-year-old husband Corporal Glen Arnold was killed in Afghanistan by a suicide bomber last September, listened as her son called out for her father 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," Ms. 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.

Ms. 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.

Ms. Tedford, whose two daughters are 5 and 7, said she and many of the women on the base in Petawawa where her husband was stationed are used to having their spouses away on tours for a fixed, finite amount of time.

They can be "single moms for six months" and put off things around the house until their husbands return, but when that six-month rotation turns into a year after a death, Ms. Tedford said the reality sinks in and the responsibilities can be overwhelming.

"It's the simplest daily tasks that you shared with your spouse, that you don't realize how much they did for you," she said. "I cut the grass when he was alive, but he might have been cooking supper or bathing the kids. It was a division of labour and now it's me doing it all." Ms. Tedford remembers buying a barbecue and getting the store clerks to load it into her car. She drove home, pulled in to her driveway and realized she had no idea how she would get it out of the vehicle, let alone put it together.

"I had to go and ask one of his friends, 'Can you come help me take a stupid barbecue out of the car? Can you help me put it together because I can't do that and watch the kids and a dog all at the same time?' " she said. "It's very frustrating." Ms. Arnold, who started a support group on the base, also knows the frustration of having to rely on others for help, since her husband did everything from hanging out the laundry and doing the dishes to repairing things around the house.

"When he was alive, I shovelled the driveway once and he gave me trouble for it," she said, laughing. "I never cut the grass until he went on tour. Thank God I've got good neighbours." In addition to the practical concerns of maintaining a house, the women said they are also focused on keeping the memory of their loved one alive for very young children who may have little sense of who their fathers were.

For Ms. Mason, the fear is that her youngest will eventually lose any recollections he had of his father, who deployed when Ben was just six months old. She found herself playing videos of her husband every day and talking about him constantly, as if to keep him alive through the threads of her memories.

"I can't even put into words what it does to your heart to think that your children will forget who their father is," she said. "That was the biggest fear for me, that they were going to forget. I just realized there comes a point that the picture will just be a picture to them and there will be no memories that go with that picture.

"That was one of the hardest steps for me." Still, the three women have filled their homes with photos of their lost husbands and created rituals in remembrance of the men, whether it's blowing them a kiss in heaven at bedtime or making crafts to place on their graves on Father's Day.

"Every night before he goes to bed, he gives his picture a kiss, and then he turns it to me to kiss it, and he gives him a kiss when he gets up in the morning," Ms. Arnold said of her son.

"I have pictures of him everywhere – on my key chain, in the house – and our wedding picture is on his headstone. I always want them to know who he was."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: war deaths; strife; biography; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Charmaine Tedford; Darcy Tedford; Julie Mason; Jeffrey Walsh; Kerry Arnold; Glen Arnold

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

# Face of war has given the Tories a fright; 'I sense cutting and running,' historian says, despite PM's earlier declaration

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / Canadian MasterCpl. Mike McCauley marches on a joint patrol with Afghan National Army troops near Panjwaii village. ;

**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 971

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On March 13, 2006, against a backdrop of armoured vehicles at Kandahar Air Field, Stephen Harper told an assembly of hundreds of Canadian and international soldiers — and a country that had just elected him listening back home — that Canada would not "cut and run" from Afghanistan as long as he was prime minister.

On June 22, Mr. Harper told a press conference on Parliament Hill that, unless the House of Commons reaches a "consensus" on the future of the mission, it will end as scheduled in February 2009.

So, what happened in those intervening 15 months to soften the prime minister's resolve? Only Mr. Harper himself knows for sure, but one fact is clear: 50 Canadian soldiers lost their lives on Afghan soil in that interval.

The signals Mr. Harper is sending about Canada's future military involvement in Afghanistan are as clear as a Kandahar sandstorm. Still, this much is apparent: Canada's "new government" now envisions a less robust military commitment to Afghanistan, less fighting, more training of Afghan security forces, and greater emphasis on the diplomatic front. In other words: less dying.

"I sense cutting and running," says Canadian military historian and author Jack Granatstein. "We are clearly preparing to end or greatly minimize our combat role. It's obviously too politically damaging.

"I don't think Canadian public opinion can withstand massive coverage of every death." Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said last weekend that Canadian troops are all but done as warriors when he remarked that he expects newly trained Afghan troops may be able to take over leading security duties from Canada as early as next year. The suggestion was immediately shot down by military analysts at home, and called into question by Canadian Forces commanders in Kandahar.

The suggestion that Canadian soldiers now seem to face less fighting — and, by extension, less death — comes as support for the mission wanes in public opinion polls. Moreover, the Conservative's political opposition, especially the Liberals and NDP, have made it clear they aren't interested in reaching any "consensus" on extending the mission beyond February 2009.



That has left Mr. Harper with only one path: try to sell a softer version of the mission to Parliament, so he can keep some sort of Canadian military footprint on Afghan soil, while priming the public and Canada's NATO allies for the inevitable end of combat operations.

"I don't have any doubt that he's been damaged by the casualty returns. I think a change in role before an election will probably help," says Mr. Granatstein.

When Mr. Harper touched down in Afghanistan in March 2006, just five weeks after being sworn in as Canada's 22nd prime minister, he had already dealt with the deaths of two Canadian military personnel on his watch less than two weeks earlier. By then, the Canadian death toll stood at 10 soldiers and one diplomat.

Though history offers a sense of proportion (more than 40,000 Canadians were killed in the Second World War), that is cold comfort, politically, for the Conservatives.

"It doesn't appear to matter. The coverage wasn't the same in the Second World War or Korea or the First World War. The immediacy of coverage on the national news every night is impossible to overcome," Mr. Granatstein says.

If the media focus on combat deaths is bad for the government's political fortunes, the scarcity of information the government is offering to the Canadian public about the mission is also eroding support. This criticism comes not only from the political opposition, but also from military pundits who have traditionally been supportive of Canada's intervention in Afghanistan.

"What is needed is regular briefings like we had during Kosovo," says Alain Pellerin, head of the Conference of Defence Associations.

Mr. Pellerin says the government tends to restrict communications to news releases issued at the time of a Canadian casualty, typically reaffirming the importance of the mission and the soldier's part in it.

"Between these dates when people get killed there's no flow of information," he says. "Because there is a vacuum, there is a lot of speculation." That's what happened after the Tory defence minister predicted in a television interview last week that, by year's end, Canada would have trained an extra 3,000 Afghan soldiers in the south and could take a step back and become more of a reserve force. Military analysts and the Liberal opposition criticized that as a rosy assessment that bore little resemblance to the realities on the ground.

Mr. O'Connor's prediction seemed to fly in the face of the official numbers that NATO and the Afghan government have set for the desirable size of an indigenous security force — 70,000 soldiers and 62,000 policemen. The alliance is roughly half way toward meeting those predictions.

Canada's Commons defence committee commented in its latest Afghanistan report last month that a lack of information about the mission can fuel public intolerance.

"In the end, the committee came to think that uninformed impatience at home might have some adverse impact on our national will and, therefore, have a negative influence on our determination to what is required to achieve strategic objectives set by government," the committee noted.

Chris Alexander, the former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan who is now a senior United Nations representative in Kabul, told the committee it could take upwards of a decade to rebuild Afghanistan.

But it appears that a majority of Canadian parliamentarians would not buy an argument from Mr. Harper that Canada must stay the course, and not cut and run.

Face of war has given the Tories a fright; 'I sense cutting and running,' historian says, despite PM's earlier d

"He will try to get a new mandate but it will be a different mandate. Our combat role will end as of February '09. It sounds like we're staying there, but we're staying in a different way," predicts Mr. Granatstein.

But, the historian noted, such a response would not be good for Canada.

"It reinforces the 'all we do is peacekeeping' mythology. To have a government forced out of a combat role by a sort of know-nothing, 'anything the Americans do must be bad' attitude is really damaging to our sense of self."

# Conservative senator pushes air role for Canada; Hugh Segal says he fears 'mission creep'

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**BYLINE:** Jack Aubry  
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An influential Conservative senator is suggesting that Canada alter its military role in Afghanistan after February 2009 by reducing its ground forces while increasing its naval and air force support — which would include patrols over the troubled country in manned and unmanned Canadian aircraft.

Hugh Segal, a former chief of staff for Brian Mulroney, said yesterday that he will present the new options for the country's military commitment at the Conservative caucus retreat in Prince Edward Island in August.

"The bottom line is that at some point, Afghanistan has to be run by the Afghans and we have to ask ourselves as a NATO partner: 'How do we calibrate our presence going forward so that it is sustainable and how do we not desert our core national security obligation?'" said Mr. Segal.

"One of the choices obviously is to use more air surveillance and to use more naval in some of the adjacent areas to make sure there aren't any large concentrations of Taliban or al-Qaeda forming ... and that does not necessarily require endless convoys on the ground and endless boots on the ground in an endless sort of process that seems to have no apparent end."

Canada's CF-18 fighter jets were a successful part of the spring 1999

NATO mission in the former Yugoslavia, taking part in the 78-day aerial bombardment of the war-torn country in order to stop the systematic violence directed at ethnic Albanian Muslims in the province of Kosovo.

Mr. Segal said there has been some upgrading of the CF-18 in terms of its avionics and smart munitions.

"It would be the enhanced use of technology to increase our tactical options and perhaps reduce the size of our deployment without necessarily reducing our strategic capacity," said Mr. Segal.

Appointed to the Senate by former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, the affable Mr. Segal is one of the more non-partisan politicians on Parliament Hill. He also wants to discuss his proposal, and other options, with the Liberals.

"I am trying to open up the debate by suggesting that it is not just 'stay with what we have or go.' There are other options for all of NATO, including Canada, for sustaining the course of the strategic mission.

"The thing that bothers me the most is the extent (that) 'mission creep' becomes a given and then becomes non-debatable," said Mr. Segal in an interview with CanWest News.

He described "mission creep" as the notion of Canada having a perpetual support role in Afghanistan — that three to five more years of the same military engagement after 2009 would be the only way to uphold our NATO commitment.

# Heat-seeking missile was Taliban's first

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**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Thomas Coghlan, With Files From Don Martin  
**SOURCE:** The Daily Telegraph, Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 305

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KABUL – Taliban militants have used a heat-seeking surface-to-air missile to attack a western aircraft over Afghanistan for the first time.

The attack with a weapon believed to have been smuggled across the border with Iran represents a worrying increase in the capability of the militants, which western commanders had long feared.

The Daily Telegraph has learned that the Taliban attempted to bring down an American C-130 Hercules aircraft flying over the southwestern province of Nimroz last Sunday. The crew reported that a missile system locked on to their aircraft and that a missile was fired.

It closed in on the large C-130 aircraft, pursuing it as the pilots launched a series of violent evasive manoeuvres and jettisoned flares to confuse the heat sensors in the nose of the missile.

Crew members said that they saw what they believe was a missile passing very close to the aircraft. The C-130 was not damaged in the attack.

Nato officials yesterday refused to confirm or deny that such an attack had taken place.

nato blamed for civilian deaths Dozens of civilians, including women and children, have been killed in two foreign air strikes in southern Afghanistan, residents and a local member of parliament said yesterday.

One of the raids by NATO hit houses in the Girishk district of Helmand province Thursday night, killing up to 50 civilians, a group of some 20 residents reported to journalists in Kandahar, the main city in the south.

Wali Jan Sabri, a parliamentarian from Helmand, said he had credible information that between 50 to 60 civilians had been killed in a battle between the Taliban and NATO forces in Girishk. About 50 Taliban were also reported killed.

Meanwhile, Canada's new Kandahar base commander said the danger to Canadian soldiers fighting here will remain high until the fledgling Afghan army shoulders more responsibility for the security of its country.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who arrived around midnight yesterday to start a nine-month posting, said there's no easy solution to the plague of roadside bombs and suicide bombers.

# Canadian values

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**BYLINE:** Fred Maroun  
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Re: Taliban order kidnapping offensive, July 26.

It is hard to think of an organization more despicable than one that murders aid workers and teaches children to hate and kill. This is the Taliban.

Despite the knowledge that a departure of NATO troops from Afghanistan would most likely hand over the country to this group of murderers, Canada's opposition parties are eager to pull Canada's troops out of Afghanistan.

The Liberals want them out as soon as Canada's current commitment is over, regardless of the consequences, and the NDP and Bloc QuEbEcois want them out right away.

There is no rational reason for Canada's opposition to make this demand other than to fish for the votes of Canadians who do not understand the Afghanistan war and who have an irrational fear of more deaths among soldiers. My heart aches for every death among our brave soldiers, and yet I know that the soldiers understand better than anyone the value of their work in Afghanistan — they say so at every opportunity.

Surely, Canadian values include supporting civilians who are helping war victims and supporting children held hostage in a war. Canada's Liberals and NDP are eager to talk about Canadian values but only the Conservatives are willing to fight to maintain them. For this reason alone, Canada must elect a majority Conservative government at earliest opportunity — this opportunity cannot come soon enough.

Fred Maroun, Ottawa

# Misplaced Christian zeal

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Blame for the kidnapping and murder of South Korean missionaries in Afghanistan belongs finally with the Taliban, of course. But there's lots of responsibility to go around.

The Taliban are the men with the guns, who grabbed a busload of South Koreans on the road in Ghazni province in the country's southeast and are holding them for a ransom they haven't yet made clear. Perhaps Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government, perhaps money, perhaps the withdrawal of the 200 troops South Korea has in the country on peacekeeping duty. There were 23 hostages; at last report the Taliban had murdered one, the pastor leading the group. He was sick and had difficulty moving himself, it seems, so they shot him repeatedly and left his body by the road, on the day he turned 42.

Such people cannot be talked out of the evil they do.

The hostages' South Korean Presbyterian church says the people the Taliban grabbed on July 19 were in Afghanistan to support health-care and education projects. The church swears its members weren't in Afghanistan to evangelize Christianity, which is considered a capital crime by the Taliban and is frowned on by the administration of President Hamid Karzai.

Regardless, their itinerary resembles that of a tour group. They arrived on July 13, spent some time in Mazar-e-Sharif in the north before heading to Kabul, and were on the road south to Kandahar when they and their bus were seized by the Islamist radicals, driven into the desert, and marched away. The kidnappers later released the locally hired driver, who related the story.

The obvious comparison is to the Christian Peacemaker Teams, several of whose members, including Canadians James Loney and Harmeet Singh Sooden, were taken prisoner by Iraqi insurgents in 2005. Their group seemed to have a martyrdom complex somehow equivalent, in a funhouse-mirror way, to that of the Islamists — the more danger they were in, the more valid their work was.

Afghanistan isn't Iraq, but it's not a safe place, either. The country needs aid workers, but it needs smart, experienced, tough aid workers who are in to stay, not dilettantes jumping in and out on bungee cords. By being there, the South Koreans clearly put themselves at great risk, and now imperil others working to get them released.

South Korea, which has 200 troops on duty in Afghanistan, clearly recognizes the danger. Its government has added Afghanistan to a list of countries where its citizens may not go except on official business; the other two are Iraq and Somalia.

Mr. Karzai's government is partly responsible, too. It negotiated an end to a previous hostage-taking in March, giving up five Taliban prisoners, including a brother of Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah Akhund, to secure the release of a kidnapped Italian journalist. Now Dadullah is dead, killed by an

Afghan–NATO raid, and his brother (a different one) is in charge. He's learned the lesson well. In Afghanistan, taking hostages works.

For the sake of the South Koreans and their families, Mr. Karzai and others might be tempted to make an exchange, but they must know that in so doing, this will happen again and again and again, only worse each time.



# The death of a king

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**COLUMN:** David Warren  
**BYLINE:** David Warren  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
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There were good reasons for not putting Mohammad Zahir Shah — who died this week, at the age of 92 — back on the throne of Afghanistan.

For one thing, he was a peace-loving man. Unusual in a Pashtun — especially one who was highly ethnocentric, impatient with the country's "diversity," and frankly prejudiced against those whose native language was Persian. But though he could sound rebarbative, he had a long record of giving the store away rather than fighting with anybody.

The worst was when his unspeakable socialist cousin, Mohammad Daoud Khan, pulled a coup d'Etat in 1973, declaring a republic while opening windows through which the Soviet Communists promptly crawled. Rather than object, Zahir Shah agreed to go quietly. (He was in Italy with eye problems at the time, and decided he liked it there.)

He had ascended the throne in 1933, naturally after the death of his father, although his father's death was quite unnatural. That father, Nadir Shah, from an old Peshawar family, had not ascended the throne on the other side of the Khyber in a strictly constitutional way.

It is a myth that the Afghan habit of assassinating her leaders goes back only to the 1970s (when political questions were too frequently settled by cabinet shoot-out). Nor, for that matter, did Islamic zealotry first appear at that time. It is as natural to the mountains of Afghanistan as to the highlands of the Scots. (Indeed, the comparison can be a fruitful one, for remoter Scotland, by the 16th century, had descended to about the point Afghanistan was rising to in the 20th.)

Nevertheless, murderous ideological "Islamism" of the Wahabi strain, fuelled by the vast unearned oil revenues of the sheiks of Arabia, did arrive in recent times.

Rather than fight, Zahir Shah liked to bicker. He bickered with Pakistan, at a time when good relations with Pakistan were crucial to Afghanistan's future. He was a "modernizer," or so he thought, constantly bickering with tribal chiefs who refused to wear shirts and ties. Reputed to be under the thumb of his women, he bravely chattered about women's rights. (Some schools for girls were perhaps his principal legacy.)

When set up, after his deposition, as "the king over the water" — a symbol of resistance to Soviet occupation — he kept letting everyone down. He ought to have struck a colourful figure. Instead, he proved an old hypochondriac, like so many who live past 90 years, the last three score on their "last legs." He was an adorable old man who ended his days under multiple layers of anachronism.

I recall him as a benign presence, in greasy photographs, crudely-framed in tea shops, when I was wandering pointlessly around Afghanistan as a young man. I am glad to have caught a glimpse of the country before it went utterly to hell: poor, proud, magnificent Afghanistan, prospering in rifles, opium, and chaos — about seven countries for the price of less than one, and each of those a tribal tapestry.

If the world could only have left Afghanistan alone! But there is no going back through the turnstiles of history.

Still, the customs of all nations are deeply seated. For the foreseeable future, Afghanistan requires a king, and its Loya Jirga (assembly of tribal lords). Hamid Karzai is called "president," but is by birth and gesture really a monarch.

His job is to be the cosmopolitan influence in a tribal field of give and take. And to stay alive, somehow, nominally leading the fight against the jihadis — themselves a foreign influence.

A monarchy suited Afghanistan, would still suit it, as it still suits the most humane and open of other Islamic nations, and has been through time the power to moderate eruptions of fanaticism in the mosques. It is because an Islamic king has religious prestige, in a cultural order that does not finally distinguish between civil and religious authority, that he is in a position to protect minorities, and resist craziness.

Democracy, dropped out of the sky without generations of cultural preparation, can only assist the fanatics.

We misconceive our role in Afghanistan if we think it is to bring democracy. Instead, our job is the modest one of helping the Afghans re-establish their own way of life, by killing as many of their jihadis as possible.

In this case, we are truly the allies of the peoples of Afghanistan. In any other, we are foreign imperialists, playing into the hands of the enemy who flew airplanes into Washington and New York.

David Warren's column appears on Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.