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Stitch in time; A business lull, prompted by changes in the relationship with a major client, has stoked the fires of adaptability and innovation at DKM, a Halifax sewing and design business

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PAGE: A10

BYLINE: Mark Bolton Special

Seamstress Larysa Tsurkan finishes up a project at DKMSewing and Design in Halifax.

ILLUSTRATION: In the past, the 11-person firm has dealt mainly with businesses in the Maritimes, but it is now looking beyond toward Ontario and the United States. (Ted Pritchard / Staff)

WORD COUNT: 798

WITH THE EVER-CHANGING commercial landscape, small businesses constantly have to evolve and adapt. For local business DKM Sewing & Design, a reduction of work from a major client has been the catalyst for innovation in product design and marketing.

"When business is good it's very easy to rely on word of mouth to attract new customers. . . . Certainly a lull in the business makes you realize that actively seeking the new markets and customers is a necessity," says Bonnie Horne, owner and founder of DKM.

Ms. Horne's business was hurt by the withdrawal of work from Ultra Electronics in Dartmouth.

"A lot of what we used to do for the Dartmouth company has moved to the States," she said.

Ultra Electronics manufactured sonar buoys and subcontracted all the sewing involved to DKM, which included cords, parachutes and drogues.

"We were doing 80,000 (parachutes) per year," said Ms. Horne.

"Now, at approximately 1,000 units per month, the drop in production definitely creates problems, layoffs, cash flow etc.," Ms. Horne said.

It might only be a temporary setback as DKM has been asked by the U.S. company to bid for the work. Unfortunately, the timing with the high Canadian dollar has not helped the situation. "When the Canadian dollar was low the exchange on U.S. sales was to our advantage and it had been that way for years. Now, a U.S. bid based on a 12- to 18-month period is actually scary," she said.

The current challenges faced by DKM reflect the ever-evolving Canadian business world. Ultra Electronics is also in a state of adjustment.

"Our business is changing . . . (and) we're going more towards the service side and less towards the manufacturing. I think a lot of businesses are doing that, particularly these days the way the (Canadian) dollar is," said Sandy Mackay, the purchasing manager for Ultra Electronics.

Stitch in time; A business lull, prompted by changes in the relationship with a major client, has stoked the fire

Ultra Electronics was manufacturing the buoys for a sister company in the U.S. It was an arrangement that Mr. Mackay knew would eventually finish.

"We were doing it for them until they got up on their feet and were doing it properly. We would have lost the work no matter what the dollar was, what the (economic) conditions were," he said.

Over the past 10 years Ultra Electronics developed a good relationship with DKM and Mr. Mackay was helping Ms. Horne with her bid to recover the work.

"She's got a pretty good business over there. Being in Halifax, she probably has a special niche. You might find a lot more people like her in big cities but not necessarily in the smaller cities," said Mr. Mackay.

While still determined to win back the sonar buoy work, Ms. Horne is taking the opportunity to create new work, both from her existing client base and outside. It's a new challenge for her.

"I guess it's been an easy street as far as sales goes over these 10 years, but now you have to get out and promote. And that's something I didn't really have to do; clients just came to me," she said.

"I'm going to be more active and get out there. . . . There are so many local businesses that don't even know we exist."

DKM mainly deals with businesses in the Maritimes, but has also done work for firms in Ontario and the U.S. And Ms. Horne is working with existing clients to develop new products.

"We not only work with customer requests, but also try and introduce creative designs to supplement their existing products. . . . It could be bags, aprons, tablecloths, chair covers, napkins, lobster bibs, golf shirts, mittens, hats, pants, shirts, jackets, basically anything that's customised," said Ms. Horne.

One of the interesting items the team is working on at the moment is a new line of doggy jackets, suitable for the most sophisticated of pooches.

"It's fun to help customers transform their ideas into finished products."

Developing new products is no problem for Ms. Horne who has close to 30 years' experience in the industry.

"I have been sewing for other people since I was 12. I started sewing, my mother tells me, when I was three."

Before starting DKM, Ms. Horne was a professional seamstress for over 18 years, the last 14 with Nova Sewing Contractors.

"I headed it (Nova Sewing Contractors) up, made patterns, taught sewers, hired sewers, that type of thing. I was basically running the place, other than sales," she said.

When Nova Sewing Contractors closed in 1997, Ms. Horne started her own business.

"I used my Visa to buy as much of the equipment they were selling off as I could. . . . Within six months I had got back some of the major contracts that were lost due to the closure. . . . A bad thing turned into a good thing actually.

"My transition was smooth because it had been built upon for years and I was the person that most customers knew."

Stitch in time; A business lull, prompted by changes in the relationship with a major client, has stoked the fire

Ms. Horne has thrived on the challenges she has faced over the past decade.

"It's certainly been fun and enjoyable. You go home with a smile on your face usually. Some days can be stressful . . . but I have no regrets."

Many of Ms. Horne's employees are immigrants.

"(I've had) employees from Vietnam, Bosnia, Croatia, Ukraine, Romania, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, where ever the world has trouble and people are heading to Canada and looking for work."

It has made for an interesting workplace dynamic and Ms. Horne spends her day helping out with English and "partying with the women as they become Canadian."

"They think that I just give to them, but that's not the case. You get back much more in return. They're fabulous people.

"Also the satisfaction in what you're making and pleasing your customers. And it's always exciting coming up with a new design.

"But the people factor has probably been the highlight." A lull in business makes you realize that actively seeking the new markets and customers is a necessity.'

Suicide bomber kills four Afghan soldiers

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SECTION: World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Jason Straziuso

WORD COUNT: 190

KABUL, Afghanistan – A suicide bomber wearing an Afghan security forces uniform detonated his explosives at the entrance to a combined U.S.–Afghan base Saturday, killing four Afghan soldiers and a civilian, officials said.

The bomber walked up to a security gate for Afghan soldiers outside Forward Operating Base Bermel in the eastern province of Paktika, near the border with Pakistan, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said.

Four Afghan soldiers and a civilian were killed and six Afghans were wounded, ISAF said. No Americans were hurt.

It was not clear if the bomber had been trying to gain entry to the base.

Taliban insurgents have set off more than 100 suicide blasts this year, a record pace, and violence in 2007 has been the deadliest since the 2001 U.S.–led invasion.

Elsewhere, Taliban rebels killed three Afghan police who had been trying to prevent them from carrying out a kidnapping, said Mohammad Hussein Andiwai, the police chief in Helmand province. The insurgents managed to get away with one hostage during the gunbattle, he said.

Separately, U.S.–led coalition forces and Afghan soldiers killed "several" Taliban fighters near the Musa Qala region in Helmand province, the coalition said.

Fighting has intensified in recent weeks around Musa Qala – a Taliban–controlled town in the heart of Afghanistan's poppy growing region.

Bhutto visits father's tomb; Thousands flock to see former PM despite last week's deadly bombing

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PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Stephen Graham

ILLUSTRATION: Pakistan's former prime minister Benazir Bhutto appears out of the sunroof of her bullet proof vehicle as she arrives at Garhi Khuda Bux, the Bhutto family burial tomb, in the Pakistani town of Larkana on Saturday. (DAVID GUTTENFELDER / AP)

WORD COUNT: 556

GARHI KHUDA BAKSH, Pakistan – Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto visited her ancestral village Saturday amid tight security and sprinkled flower petals on her father's tomb on her first trip to provincial Pakistan since the bloody assassination attempt against her nine days ago.

Bhutto vowed to fight Islamic extremism – a call that came as pro-Taliban militants in another corner of the country executed 13 captives in response to a military assault against their leader.

Bhutto returned Oct. 18 from an eight-year exile to a massive welcome rally in Karachi, shattered by a suicide bombing that killed 143 people.

She has since been largely confined to her residence in that city, but eager to start her campaign for parliamentary elections slated for January.

"There is an attempt by the extremists and the terrorists to dictate who should be allowed to hold public meetings and who should not," Bhutto told journalists Saturday evening at her vast family compound.

". . . The agenda of the terrorists is to stop democratic parties from flourishing so they can continue to grow."

Pakistan has a choice between "creeping Talibanization" or standing up to save Pakistan, she said. "I believe the message of Islam is peace, and I hope that together as a nation we can work for peace." Security was tight Saturday, but throngs of people still swarmed around Bhutto at her family's white-domed marble mausoleum in the village of Garhi Khuda Baksh.

Wearing her trademark white headscarf, Bhutto smiled and waved to supporters from her SUV's sunroof with black metal sheets shielding her on the left and right, and a female aide standing in front of her.

Her convoy was flanked by paramilitary troops in white pickup trucks with machine-guns mounted on top. Other guards clung to the sides of the SUV.

Hundreds of armed private security guards surrounded the mausoleum and formed a tight circle around the opposition leader as she got out of her vehicle, pushing their way through a chaotic crowd of supporters and journalists.

In the mausoleum she paid respects to her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's first popularly elected leader who was overthrown by the military and hanged in 1979.

Bhutto visits father's tomb; Thousands flock to see former PM despite last week's deadly bombing 5

During her 45-minute visit, she said prayers and spread pink flower petals on his tomb and those of other relatives.

She later went to a balcony and waved to about 2,000 supporters. Banners depicting Bhutto and her late father covered walls and hung from lamp posts.

"I just wanted a glimpse of Bhutto from afar," said Ali Hassan, 52. "It seems very beautiful that she has come here after being away so long."

Bhutto, whose two governments between 1988 and 1996 toppled amid allegations of mismanagement and massive corruption, returned to Pakistan after talks with President Gen. Pervez Musharraf yielded an amnesty on pending graft cases against her. After elections, they could team up to fight Islamic extremism.

Militant violence has become increasingly common, not just in the volatile frontier region bordering Afghanistan, but in major cities such Karachi and the capital, Islamabad.

Bhutto says she is not intimidated by the Karachi attack. She has said she would visit Lahore and Islamabad, and also wants to go to Pakistan-controlled parts of Kashmir and remote areas along the Afghan border, where the Taliban and al-Qaida are tightening their grip.

She has accused elements in the government and security services of trying to kill her, and demanded that international experts join the investigation – a call the government rejected.

"Our investigators have solved all the cases of the past including those of Karachi, and I believe those involved in the Oct. 18 attack will also be arrested," Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told reporters Saturday in Karachi.

[EDMONTON (CP)– Family and friends of soldiers in Afghanistan can mail them parcels and letters for free until Jan. 11, 2008, the federal government...]

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EDMONTON (CP) – Family and friends of soldiers in Afghanistan can mail them parcels and letters for free until Jan. 11, 2008, the federal government said Friday.

Families can also use the service to reach out to soldiers serving in any war zone, including Bosnia–Herzegovina, the Sinai Peninsula, Jerusalem and on Canadian ships at sea.

To send a parcel or letter to a soldier, address it with their name, rank and mission information.

Items must be taken to Canada Post outlets in order to be shipped for free and cannot be dropped in street letter boxes without postage.

Free parcel delivery expires Jan. 11, but Canada Post will continue to mail letters to soldiers free of charge throughout 2008.

OTTAWA (CP) – An investigation shows the identity of a man kidnapped by rebels in a Sudanese oil field is not Canadian.

Two workers were abducted Tuesday after rebels from Darfur attacked an oil field in a neighbouring region of Sudan.

Local media had identified one of the two as a Canadian. However, Mohamed Bahr Hamdeen, the head of JEM for the region told The Canadian Press Thursday that the two hostages were one Iraqi and one Egyptian.

In Ottawa, a spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs said Saturday consular officials were able to confirm that a Canadian was not kidnapped. VANCOUVER (CP) – The B.C. government is going after one of the men acquitted in the Air India bombing trial for what it claims are hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid legal bills.

Court documents filed this week allege that Ripudaman Singh Malik still owes the government more than \$1.6 million dollars in legal fees for the trial that saw him and Ajaib Singh Bagri acquitted.

The government says in the documents that it wants properties and assets owned by Malik and his family sold to pay the bills. Malik has not yet responded to the government's legal action.

The 1985 bombing killed 329 people aboard Air India Flight 182.

CALGARY (CP) – Bumbo International, manufacturer of the popular Bumbo Baby Sitter, has announced it is temporarily removing the popular Bumbo Baby Sitter from store shelves to update the instructions.

[EDMONTON (CP)– Family and friends of soldiers in Afghanistan can mail them parcels and letters for free

The Bumbo Baby Seat can safely be used on a flat ground–level surface.

The company says it is not defective and does not need to be returned. Therefore no refunds are being offered.

The action is being taken in co–operation with Health Canada.

The company is strengthening the wording of the instructions to emphasize that the Bumbo Baby Seat should never be used on any elevated surface such as a table, countertop or chair because children can get out of the seat and fall. MONTREAL – Quebec City will follow Ottawa's lead by requiring all electors to show their faces before casting a ballot in elections.

Premier Jean Charest's government is expected to introduce legislation on Thursday to compel all voters – including veiled Muslim women – to uncover their faces to a polling station official. The change will be enforced for provincial, municipal and school board elections.

On Friday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government tabled legislation requiring all voters to reveal their faces before being allowed to vote in federal elections.

[EDMONTON (CP)– Family and friends of soldiers in Afghanistan can mail them parcels and letters for free

Manley to open website to public

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BYLINE: John Ward
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OTTAWA – John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said Saturday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input. Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian aid groups met Manley and his panel on Saturday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments and recommendations.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public," Barr said.

Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister and one-time leadership contender, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier this month to look at the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:– Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.– Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.– Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.– Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices.

"The options . . . that were given to them at the front end all had to do with . . . the Canadian military in Afghanistan," Barr said. "We were there to say to them that you need to put in your option category actively the search for a political consensus in Afghanistan, a national peace process and how Canada could support that kind of process."

Barr also said it's important to break perceived linkages between the military and development, which can become intertwined in people's minds.

"If there is a sort of military signature on aid . . . then the projects themselves can become targets in an insurgency war. As projects become targets, citizens and civilians are targeted themselves . . . and we do the opposite of what we intend with aid. "We have to stop any confusion between the aid and the military effort."

He agreed, though, that security can't be ignored:

"Plainly, security and development do relate to one another. It's important to have security in order to have development, but that does not mean they are Siamese twins."

Manley and his fellow panel members – former broadcaster Pamela Wallin, Derek Burney, former ambassador to Washington and one-time chief of staff to Brian Mulroney, Paul Tellier, former clerk of the

privy council and Jake Epp, a former Mulroney cabinet minister – are expected to report by January.

The bubble-wrap school of child rearing

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PAGE: A2

BYLINE: Peter Duffy

WORD COUNT: 661

SORRY KIDS, no more free sweets for you.

That's the decree by organizers of the Holiday Parade of Lights, the annual festival that draws tens of thousands to downtown Halifax for one magical Saturday evening in November.

Despite what cynics say – that this is all just a legal-liability issue – the ban on treat-tossing from floats is being justified as a safety issue, especially after an incident last year in which a child was cut by a piece of flying candy. Organizers say there was always lingering concern that a child might be hurt, although the fear seemed to be more of someone falling under a vehicle.

Anyway kids, that's it; for the first time in a dozen years, no sweets at the parade, just to be on the safe side.

But just how safe is safe when it comes to our children? Are we keeping them a bit too safe for their own good?

I think we are, and so does family therapist Michael Ungar of Halifax.

Michael's an expert on this kind of bubble-wrap approach to child rearing. He teaches at the school of social work at Dalhousie University and is author of the book *Too Safe for Their Own Good*.

He's concerned that, as a society, we're going overboard in trying to protect kids from those one-in-a-million chances of something untoward happening. And in the process, there's the danger we may be setting them up for other problems later.

Take away risks, says Michael, and you take away potential learning experiences.

Prime example? Look no further than this ban on candy-tossing at the parade.

Says Michael, "Now you have children who don't know how to duck."

Taken to its extreme, this kind of overreaction can lead to a generation of youngsters growing up not having a clear idea of where their bodies are in time or space.

Take away all potential danger, and what kind of children are we raising?

"Anxious and irresponsible and blaming others for any consequences," Michael observes.

So what's next for fans of the bubble-wrap school of child-rearing, now that the candy's verboten?

Some schools are banning roughhousing, games of tag and tree-climbing at playtime. Some forbid snowball fights.

Will kids sitting on their front steps be next, in case they hurt themselves on an exposed nail?

It's all most discouraging, especially from the point of view of a child.

Instead of waving a finger, let's wave a wand.

Here's an idea: let's train Holiday Parade of Lights participants to have better aims.

And while we're at it, let's provide them with softer candy.

Let's start finding alternatives.

How much longer before Afghanistan is able to defend itself against the bad guys? Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier is predicting it'll take three years to train a single Afghan battalion of about 600 men and a full 10 years for the country's entire military to be up to snuff. Boy! Things sure must be more complicated these days. Just ask any Canadian veteran from 1939–1945 about the scant months of training he received before going off for king and country. Of course, to be fair, there was a war going on at the time. Although, hmm, wait a minute. . .

And finally, a few idle thoughts on Halifax regional council's decision to include cats in its revamped animal bylaw.

It all begins next April, when cats and dogs will be created equal in the eyes of the law. (Pause here to allow cats to crack up.) Not only will those allowed by cats to share their homes be required to licence them (don't hold your breath), they'll also be expected to regulate their behaviour. (Pause for more laughter from cats and humans alike.)

Now, for those who aren't cat fans, (hissing noise), if you want to report a roaming feline for doing what comes naturally, you can try animal control (last year, the staff of seven logged 5,500–plus nuisance calls) and hope something happens.

Or you can get yourself one of those humane traps (more hissing noise) and try enticing the furry desperado into its clutches.

If you succeed, (yet more hissing noise), your work is far from over. Then you're supposed to take your prey to the nearest animal shelter, and good luck finding one (there are only two) with room for any more of God's critters.

Of course, things will be much easier when the municipality invests three or four million bucks in an animal shelter of its very own, (sounds of taxpayers fainting), along with truckloads of money to run the place (more fainting noises).

So there you have it. Thanks to the irresponsibility of a minority, and the twitchiness of our elected representatives in response to a few complaints, feline fans are now contemplating April's arrival with concern. As are hard-pressed taxpayers.

Unlike all the cats out there. For them, life goes on as ever, pleasantly and without worry.

I say we don't panic until they do.()

Peter Duffy appears Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Financial allegations levelled against Liberal MP; Critics claim Blair Wilson broke campaign funding rules

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Ottawa Citizen, CanWest News Service / TAKING TO THE STREETS: Ottawa protesters take part in the Pan-Canadian Day of Action Against War in Afghanistan. Similar peace rallies took place in at least 22 cities and towns in Canada. ;
KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS
DATELINE: VANCOUVER
BYLINE: Elaine O'Connor
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 584

VANCOUVER – A trail of debt and controversy has followed Blair Wilson, Liberal MP for West Vancouver, through his careers as a businessman, restaurateur and politician, a Vancouver Province investigation has found.

"I think the public has a right to know about their representative," 79-year-old West Vancouver real estate mogul Bill Lougheed says of Wilson, his son-in-law. "He was doing so much damage to people."

Lougheed is not alone in his opinion that Wilson, a businessman turned MP who was just appointed the Liberal Party's national revenue critic, is not fit for public office.

In addition to his father-in-law, former Wilson campaign workers and business associates have come forward claiming the MP committed grave breaches of the Canada Elections Act in failing to report campaign expenses.

Liberal insiders who worked for the candidate in the 2005–2006 election allege Wilson ran a campaign using cash payments and did not report all his spending.

They claim many campaign expenses were never reported to Elections Canada after Wilson, 44, switched his staff in favour of another team.

Earlier this week, a citizen in the riding filed an Elections Canada challenge to Commissioner William Corbett to have Wilson's campaign expenditures investigated.

"The election result was very close and had Mr. Wilson actually only spent what he was allowed to, he may well have lost. In the interest of a fair and accountable democratic election process, Mr. Wilson's campaign must be investigated," the submission alleges.

When asked about the status of the investigation, Elections Canada's Diane Benson said: "The Commissioner of Canada Elections never confirms or denies complaints or investigations."

B.C. Liberal organizer Mark Marrissen told the Province he recently was passed documents he submitted to the party's green-light committee, which vets candidates. If proven, the allegations would represent a serious breach of the Elections Act, and could bring penalties of fines, prison time, or a restriction on being "entitled to be elected or to sit in the House of Commons."

Among the allegations against Wilson, the Province has learned:

- Wilson did not report campaign expenses to Elections Canada, and paid for supplies off the books, in cash — a breach of the act.
- Wilson and his wife, Kelly, borrowed roughly \$1.9 million from his in-laws to purchase six properties, and much remains unpaid despite the fact they have sold some homes.
- Wilson and his wife were subject to Social Services Tax Act liens on three properties and owe \$2.1 million in bank mortgages.
- Wilson misled the media about the true extent of his business success, exaggerating the number of restaurants he founded and claiming to have sold an accountancy business his in-laws claim closed, among other discrepancies.
- Wilson lost hundreds of thousands of family investors' money in the stock market and yet billed them for management fees.
- Wilson's two restaurants, Mahoneys and Wilson's Steakhouse, closed. He was taken twice to the B.C. Employment Standards Tribunal for refusing to pay employees, was sued twice for failing to pay contractors, was twice compelled by the courts to pay GST owing, and also was taken to court by a supplier over \$33,839 that was owed (this amount was later paid).

When asked to comment on the allegations about campaign expense discrepancies, Wilson, the Liberals' B.C. caucus chair, former associate critic for finance and now the national revenue critic, said, "These are just unfounded allegations."

"The only thing I can say is I had a very good fiscal agent that filed all the necessary documents. I have not heard anything with respect to these allegations from Elections Canada to date and if and when I do hear from Elections Canada, I'll have more to comment on."

Wilson's official agent, Gordon Holley, said he wasn't aware of cash payments or unsubmitted receipts. "I continue to not be aware of any improprieties with respect to the campaign finances," he said.

Harper makes first trip to Van Doos' base

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PUBLICATION:	Edmonton Journal
DATE:	2007.10.28
EDITION:	Final
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	A5
KEYWORDS:	PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT;CANADA
DATELINE:	VALCARTIER, Que.
BYLINE:	Marianne White
SOURCE:	CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT:	232

VALCARTIER, Que. – For the first time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Saturday visited Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, home to the Royal 22nd Regiment, leading the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The famed Quebec regiment, often referred to as the Van Doos, has about 2,300 troops serving in the province of Kandahar for a six-month tour.

Harper paid tribute to the families of the soldiers, who he said are doing "a difficult job" in Afghanistan.

"We are here for you tonight," he told the crowd of 600. "We don't say it often enough, but the families of the soldiers are heroes as much as the soldiers themselves."

Harper was speaking at a fundraiser for the Valcartier family centre, which offers help and counselling to the families of soldiers before, during and after their mission.

"Our troops get the strength they need for the hard, dangerous work we ask them to do from the support they get back home. So my job, and our government's job, is to support the families just as much as we support the troops," Harper said in his brief remarks.

The prime minister also hailed the work of the soldiers, stressing they are giving the hope of a better future for the Afghan people and helping them rebuild their country.

"Quebecers should be proud of the accomplishments of the soldiers of the Royal 22nd Regiment," Harper said.

Brig.-Gen. Christian Barabe, commander of land forces for Quebec, said Harper's visit is sending a strong message to the troops.

"His presence is a great comfort to the soldiers and their families," he said. "They need to know and to hear that we are thinking about them."

Panel to consider broad options in Afghanistan; Study to look at aid and development work as well as role of military, representative says

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: John Manley;
KEYWORDS: FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Jack Aubry
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 533

OTTAWA – A blue-ribbon study panel headed by former deputy prime minister John Manley on Canada's future role in Afghanistan is open to broadening its scope to include non-military options in its report.

After a two-hour closed meeting Saturday with the five-member panel, representatives of Canada's voluntary sector organizations involved in Afghanistan reported as they left that Manley and the rest of the advisory panel seemed favourable to the idea of expanding its study beyond simply Canada's military role in the war-torn country.

One representative, who asked not to be identified, said he was certain after the meeting that the panel would broaden its mandate to include Canadian development and aid work in its study. Manley and the panel, which includes former Canadian ambassador to Washington Derek Burney, former cabinet minister Jake Epp, former broadcaster Pamela Wallin and former Privy Council clerk Paul Tellier, were not available for comment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed the non-partisan panel earlier this month, asking them to advise Parliament on how to proceed after the current deployment expires in February 2009. He called for a "full, open and informed" debate on options.

Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the panel readily acknowledged during the meeting that the government gave them the option to add to their mandate to study Canada's non-military role in Afghanistan.

"I don't think there is any question that the panel is open — they listened with great care and openness to the input they were receiving, which was the diverse views of non-governmental organizations," said Barr.

Kevin McCort, senior vice-president of operations at CARE Canada, said the panel heard his organization's concerns about remaining independent and impartial, separate from Canada's military role in Afghanistan. He also felt the panel was open to the idea of broadening the scope of their study.

"The panel was engaged during our presentations. They are curious and they want to know everything. And for us, it was an opportunity to provide information and make sure they understand what we are doing," said McCort.

Barr said the groups would like to meet again with the panel after it returns from its upcoming tour of Afghanistan since "it will stir up questions" that they might help them answer.

"We want them to take a very close look at the current challenge of the confusion between the military effort and the humanitarian effort, which is sort of a toxic brew. There needs to be clarity in terms of who does what and there needs to be independence for humanitarian actors and aid workers," said Barr.

"This is absolutely important. It is no good for projects to become targets."

Manley has already said that the panel would canvass a cross-section of specialists on foreign relations, defence and foreign aid and visit Afghanistan to meet with Canada's partners in the Afghan mission. For instance, the panel also met journalist Arthur Kent, who has reported regularly from Afghanistan since 1980, on Saturday morning during another closed session.

The panel has been instructed to consider a number of factors, including the "sacrifices Canadians have made to date in Afghanistan, the potential for deterioration in security and development, Canada's obligations to NATO and the United Nations, and the implications for Canada's international reputation."

Panel to consider broad options in Afghanistan; Study to look at aid and development work as well as role of

Don't like the weather? Try a different almanac; Forecaster uses technology, experience in new approach to predictions

IDNUMBER 200710280016
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canwest News Service / Meteorologist Larry Romaniuk has made long-range predictions in the new all-Canadian Almanac put out by Harrowsmith. ;
KEYWORDS: WEATHER; PREDICTIONS
BYLINE: Kathryn Young
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 537

Weather forecasting is a tricky business at best, but it's even more challenging with climate change thrown into the mix, according to Larry Romaniuk, a retired meteorologist whose predictions for 2008 are featured in the new Harrowsmith Truly Canadian Almanac.

"It's not easy, I'll tell you that, especially in the longer range," said Romaniuk, whose 37 years with Environment Canada took him across the country. "In the last 20 or 30 years, we've seen a drastic increase in severe weather being reported. To catch these extremes is difficult, I don't deny it."

His predictions for the coming year differ from the Canadian edition of the American Farmers' Almanac, based in Maine. While Romaniuk predicts close to normal snowfall on the Prairies and normal precipitation in B.C. this winter, for example, the Farmers' Almanac predicts a quarter to half the normal precipitation for those areas.

Farmers' Almanac editor Peter Geiger said there will always be differences in predictions.

"We're not going to be the same — we do it differently," said Geiger. The first Farmers' Almanac editor in 1818 devised a proprietary formula, still in use, based on sunspots, moon phases, planet positions and other astronomical and atmospheric factors to predict weather two years in advance.

The Old Farmers' Almanac also has a Canadian edition that takes into account solar flares and a secret formula devised in 1792 that is kept in a strong box in New Hampshire, said editor Jack Burnett. Although accuracy is usually about 80 per cent, he said it has slipped in recent years to 75 per cent, but is getting back on track. "The weather's been kind of wacky," said Burnett.

Romaniuk doesn't include sunspots, sunflares or any secret formulas, preferring to base his Canadian forecasts on historical weather data, his own experience, and especially the sophisticated computer models developed by scientists.

"We'll just have to wait and see (who is right)," he said with a laugh.

Readers of Country Guide magazine, where he's been making long-range forecasts for the past 12 years, assessed his accuracy at 75 per cent, although he gives himself a more generous 80 per cent, give or take a day.

"If I do hit a severe event, I give myself a bonus of five per cent," he said. "And if I don't hit it, then I subtract five per cent."

Bridget Wayland, editor of the Canadian almanac, said she has every confidence in Romaniuk's predictions over the Americans'.

"Time will tell," she said, adding that it was high time Canadians had a thoroughly Canadian almanac. "We weren't satisfied with having a nominally Canadian version of the Farmers' Almanac. We thought we could do it better."

Dubbed the "first homegrown almanac for country dwellers" rather than farmers, the Canadian version includes articles on microbreweries (urging you to drink locally), eco-nomics (how to live green), a Canadian soldier's memories of Afghanistan, encouraging pollinators in your garden, tales of Canadian monsters, book reviews, the differences between coffee customers at the local diner, Tim Hortons and Starbucks, weather sayings from different provinces, and rural hometown tours by 10 celebrities, including Rita MacNeil, Randy Bachman and Gordie Howe. One particularly helpful article on "Ductigami" (not to be confused with origami) shows how to make pet raingear out of duct tape. And, only in Canada, curling humour.

Athena system grants wisdom in war; High-tech battle rooms offer troops real-time maps

IDNUMBER 200710280003
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.28
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SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 845

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canada's military has leaped into the 21st century, trading radios and maps with pins stuck in them for ultra-high-tech war rooms where commanders have access to constant data streams, real-time digitized maps and live video feeds from drones, satellites and web cameras that travel with combat vehicles hunting the Taliban.

"We may still be in the mud, and the buildings we use may be made of plywood, but what we have now is comparable to a combat battle centre on a frigate — or the bridge of the Starship Enterprise," said Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the army's top general.

"This is a huge step forward. In distance, it is light-years. In time, we have moved decades with one step."

To nearly universal rave reviews, several state-of-the-art operations rooms have been set up by the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment battle group in southern Afghanistan.

The biggest is a digitized battle suite at the Kandahar Airfield, where soldiers have been working around the clock in shifts. Their eyes are fixed on dozens of small computer screens in a cool, hushed room.

The Athena Tactical System — named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and war — runs up to 100 times faster than the best Internet connection that Canadians have in their homes, Letourneau explained.

Made entirely in Canada, it combines telephone communication, e-mail and chat rooms, as well as video, data and a website loaded with background information. It cannot be hacked into because it is an entirely enclosed system.

The vehicles, in turn, are fitted with transponders that communicate constantly over global positioning satellites. As friendly fire incidents are known in the military as "blue-on-blue" attacks, that is also the colour used to signify friendly forces.

Other colours and symbols are used to designate the location of enemy forces, improvised explosive devices, unexploded ordnance and other threats. All this information can be placed on digitized maps or laid over satellite images. It can also be made instantly available to commanders in their vehicles in the field.

The live video capability is particularly dazzling when it carries images from sophisticated airborne cameras, which can reveal in amazing detail how battles with the Taliban are unfolding. There is also a

video–conferencing capability lacking in similar new American and British systems. With this capability, commanders in the field do not need to make hazardous road journeys to discuss operations with their superiors.

BEGIN OPTIONAL TRIM

The video can also be rewound and replayed so that senior officers can see how a battle developed, in order to learn what was done right and wrong.

END OPTIONAL TRIM

"Before we had to call everyone by radio to know where everyone was," said Lt.–Col. Alain Gauthier, who commands the Van Doo battle group. "This could take an hour and by then everybody had moved so the picture I got was obsolete. This gives me an instant visual that is much more effective and precise. It gives me the capacity to trace the threat and warn all our vehicles instantly."

Gauthier, however, conceded that the digital revolution will "not solve all the problems of Afghanistan."

"It is a tool in decision making. The threat of this insurgency remains real. We still have to dismount."

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Larose, who was involved in the first experiments with Athena two years ago, returned recently from a week in Alberta, where he briefed the next Canadian battle group about the new system it will inherit in February.

It is "ironic," Larose acknowledged, "that we are still getting killed by low–tech (attacks) while putting a high–tech system in place. But what are the number of IED explosions this high–tech capability is preventing? We will never really know, but hopefully this has stopped more explosions from hitting us than have hit us."

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The Athena system, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and war, is certainly impressive. But it has also suffered some teething problems.

"There have been a lot of little glitches," Larose acknowledged. "Training during a three–week exercise and sustaining a system for nine months are not the same."

Indeed, he noted, one of the breakdowns the system suffered once it was up and running "was caused by sand."

BEGIN OPTIONAL TRIM

If there is a power failure, the new electricity–hungry system has several backup generators. There are also backups for the system, and backups to the backups. Before deploying, troops are also trained the old way, with maps and stickers.

"To be honest, everybody was a bit afraid when we started with this," Larose said, "but it has been one of our success stories."

Even so, information overload is another potential issue that "can make a problem seem more complex." But he added, "if there is discipline, the solution will be based on better information."

END OPTIONAL TRIM

The revolutionary Athena system heralds a new era in soldiering. One suggestion has been to install printers in vehicles so troops can be given the latest situational data or images of wanted Taliban insurgents, information they can take with them when they leave their vehicles to fight on the ground.

Another possibility is that the situation in Afghanistan could be streamed live back to commanders in Canada.

"They have videos from soldiers' helmets in the movies, and we have not done that yet," Letourneau said, adding it is now technically feasible.

"If a commander in the field needs to watch CNN, we will plug it in. Why not?" Larose noted. "We could always go back to the old way, but why have a '56 Mustang when you can have the latest model?"

Athena grants Afghan troops wisdom; Tactical system puts live intelligence in Canadians' war rooms

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
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Anti-war protest hits T.O.

SOURCETAG 0710280370

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 23

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Veronica Henri, Sun Media About 1,500 people marched from the U.S. Consulate on University Ave. to Moss Park at Sherbourne and Queen Sts. yesterday in opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

BYLINE: BRETT CLARKSON, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 256

They chanted "George Bush we know you, your daddy's a killer too!" while marching down Yonge St.

On Queen St. E. heading towards the Moss Park Armouries, they shouted, "From Iraq to Palestine, occupation is a crime!"

An estimated 1,500 anti-war protesters marched yesterday from the U.S. Consulate to Moss Park in opposition to the Canadian military presence in Afghanistan and the U.S. war in Iraq.

The rally was part of the Pan-Canadian Day of Action against the war in Afghanistan, said James Clark, an organizer with the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War. Rallies also took place in about 30 towns and cities across Canada yesterday, Clark said.

Clark said the anti-war movement supports the Canadian soldiers because the troops are being "exploited for a broader political agenda" by the Canadian government.

'BRING THEM HOME'

"We do raise the slogan, 'support our troops, bring them home now,' " Clark said. "We don't think they should be sent off as cannon fodder."

Clark said he wanted the demonstration to send a message to the Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan -- that supporting the troops means bringing them home.

"It's about sending a message to the troops that we're not against you," Clark said. "We know that you don't make the decision to go to war, it's the federal government."

"We know a lot of troops signed up with the best intentions and want to see a better life for Afghan and they want to harness our resources to do that, and we're sympathetic to that. But we don't think this mission is doing that."

One such soldier is U.S. Sgt. Patrick Hart, 33, a deserter of the 101st Airborne Division, stationed in Fort Campbell, Ky. Hart, who is facing deportation from Canada, went AWOL in August 2005 because he opposed being sent with his fellow soldiers to Iraq.

"It just felt like the right thing to do," he said. KEYWORDS=TORONTO AND GTA

Canuck Papa Bear missed by 'little cubs'

SOURCETAG 0710280353
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 8
ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Bill Graveland, The Canadian Press Teddy bears atop a LAV honour soldier Mario Mercier. 2. photo of MARIO MERCIER Killed in action
BYLINE: BILL GRAVELAND, THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 312

There is something completely incongruous about a cute, cuddly children's toy strapped to the front of a vehicle capable of dispensing death.

At the Canadian base west of Kandahar, a row of Light Armoured Vehicles (LAV) stand at the ready, sporting both a machine-gun and a 25-mm cannon. They are identical in every way -- right down to the teddy bears strapped to the front of each vehicle.

The bears are an ongoing tribute to Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier, 43, of the Royal 22nd Regiment -- the sergeant major affectionately known to his charges as "Papa Bear." A big, burly bear of a man, Mercier used to refer to his men as his "little bear cubs" and his cubs miss him terribly.

Mercier and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, 34, of the 5th Field Ambulance, died Aug. 22 when their LAV drove over a roadside bomb on a dusty hill in Zhari district, about 50 km west of Kandahar. Zhari and the Panjwahi districts, just to the south, have been Taliban hotbeds and the site of many battles involving Canadian troops.

"We have them on our LAVs as a commemoration of our sergeant major," said Sgt. Martin Painchault. "The sergeant major, for me, was my father in my job," he said. "He was my God, my model."

Soldiers are generally not overly prone to sentimentality. So the emotion the men feel for their fallen friend and mentor is rare.

"He was taking good care of us. He was like the father of the company," said Pte. Francis Archambault. "He was the one working really hard to fix the company. He chose every guy in the company. He knew us. We knew him."

Mercier would have been proud of coalition soldiers yesterday as they reportedly killed about 80 Taliban fighters during a six-hour battle in southern Afghanistan.

The battle took place near Musa Qala in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy growing region. The battle was the latest in a series in the area since Sept. 1. that have killed more than 250 Taliban fighters.

In the eastern province of Paktika, a suicide bomber killed four Afghan soldiers. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Pub Quiz

SOURCETAG 0710280068

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Entertainment

PAGE: E15

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Errol McGihon Bruce Springsteen, saxophonist Clarence Clemons and drummer Max Weinberg perform at Scotiabank Place Oct. 14. Which city's streets did Springsteen sing about in 1994?

WORD COUNT: 232

CREEPY STUFF

1. In the horrific stabbing scenes from this 1960 movie, you never see the knife make contact with the victim. What famous movie?
2. Who had a big hit in the 1950s with Monster Mash?
3. What was responsible for the death of 98% of the population in Stephen King's The Stand?
4. Which show, which originated in '63, began with: "There is nothing wrong with your TV set, do not attempt to adjust the picture."
5. The movie Halloween was created in '78 by John Carpenter and spawned many games, sequels and books etc. What was the villain's name?

CANADIAN IN THE PUBLIC EYE

1. This established actor now stars in the new TV series Dirty, Sexy Money.
2. This French-Canadian model is about to become the father of Halle Barry's child.
3. Canada's sweetheart Rachel MacAdam and her beau Ryan Gosling met while filming which movie?
4. Two stars of Corner Gas met, then married shortly after the first series. Who are they?
5. This jazz singer and musician and mother of twins is married to Elvis Costello.

FOOD

1. A member of the walnut family, its Indian name means "hard to crack," although a hybridized version has a paper-thin shell and can be opened with the fingers.
2. Among the most ancient of fruits indigenous to Iran and Afghanistan, its seeds are used to make Grenadine Syrup.
3. What is the more popular name for the alligator pear?

4. Briefly, describe what rollmops are.

5. Describe what panettone is.

MISCELLANY

1. What was the name of Jacques Cousteau's exploration ship, immortalized in a song by John Denver?

2. What was the name of the cartoon cat who pursued the southern mice Pixie and Dixie?

3. What is the medical term for "pinkeye"?

4. In 1994, Bruce Springsteen sang about the streets of this city.

5. What name is given to the belt of low air pressure that is located at the equator?

ANSWERS

Creepy Stuff: 1. Psycho. 2. Bobby Boris Pickett. 3. Deadly virus/flu 4. The Outer Limits. 5. Michael Myers. (TPQL scored 65% average)

Canadians in the Public Eye: 1. Donald Sutherland. 2. Gabriel Aubry. 3. The Notebook. 4. Brent Butt and Nancy Robertson. 5. Diana Krall. (TPQL scored 75% average)

Food: 1. Pecan. 2. Pomegranate. 3. Avocado. 4. Pickled/marinated herring wrapped around onions or gherkins. 5. Italian sweetened bread with candied fruits, eaten around the Christmas season. (TPQL scored 70% average)

Miscellany: 1. Calypso. 2. Mr. Jinks. 3. Conjunctivitis. 4. Philadelphia. 5. Doldrums. (TPQL scored 70% average) KEYWORDS=OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

Afghan panel surfs the web

SOURCETAG: 0710280021
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 16
ILLUSTRATION: photo of JOHN MANLEY Four options
BYLINE: CP
WORD COUNT: 233

John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said yesterday.

The panel has said it won't hold public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input.

Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian aid groups met Manley and his panel yesterday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments and recommendations.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public," Barr said.

Barr said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four fellow committee members.

Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier this month to examine the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:

- Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.
- Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.
- Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.
- Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices.

"The options . . . that were given to them at the front end all had to do with . . . the Canadian military in Afghanistan," Barr said.

He also said it's important to break perceived linkages between the military and development. "We have to stop any confusion between the aid and the military effort," Barr said.

He agreed, though, that security can't be ignored. "Plainly, security and development do relate to one another."

Manley and his panel — former broadcaster Pamela Wallin, Derek Burney, former ambassador to Washington, Paul Tellier, former privy council clerk and Jake Epp, a former Tory cabinet minister — are expected to report by January. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Keeping the peace Anti-war protesters brave rainy weather to make their political point

SOURCETAG: 0710280005

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 4

ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo by Sean Kilpatrick, the Canadian Press Police keep a close eye on a small group of protesters as they make their way west along Rideau St. yesterday. The protesters were participating in the "Canada Out of Afghanistan — Bring The Troops Home Now" peace rally, one of more than 20 protests staged across the country yesterday. 2. photo by A.D. Wilson A protester dressed as a clown tries to make an impression on a city police officer. 3. photo by A.D. Wilson Robyn Batsch expresses her opinion during yesterday's peace rally, which started at the National Gallery of Canada.

BYLINE: NELLY ELAYOUBI, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 376

As 100 anti-war protesters descended on downtown yesterday calling on Canada to bring its troops home, a lonesome trio stood to the side delivering their own counter message.

Standing in front of the National Gallery of Canada, Andrew Hayes, 31, said the situation in Afghanistan is too complicated to simply pull the troops out. On the wall beside him a placed banner read, 'Canada Stay in Afghanistan.'

"It's a multi-lateral UN-mandated mission," he said. "You're not going to have development spring up without having some sort of security to back it."

But the larger gathering of anti-war protesters want the troops withdrawn immediately and called on the Canadian government to do just that during their rally yesterday.

"We would settle for Monday, but certainly not for 2009 or 2011 and some people from NATO have been talking about us staying there for generations," said Dylan Penner, of Together Against War.

"If we really wanted to help the Afghan people we would be supporting Afghan civil society and supporting what they want to see, not what the West is imposing," he said.

Chanting anti-war slogans to the beat of drums, the protesters made their way through the downtown core, ending up at the office of the prime minister.

The peace rally was part of a pan-Canadian and international day of action taking place in 24 other Canadian cities as well as Denmark, the U.K., U.S. and South Korea.

'LIES AND UNTRUTHS'

"Across the world and in Canada, people are outraged by the lies and untruths being told about why we're actually in Afghanistan," Penner said. "It's very clear we're not there for democracy or human rights or we wouldn't be supporting a government that is 60% made up of warlords, drug lords and former Talibans."

In the protesters' view, the war's about oil, Penner said, and controlling resources in the area.

Penner promised more anti-war events for the future, "until we bring the troops home."

Sophie Harkat, wife of Mohamed Harkat, the Algerian-born Ottawa resident accused of having ties to al-Qaida, was among the protesters, speaking out against the war on terror.

"It's affected every aspect of our lives and changed our lives," she said. "It's totally ruined our lives."

Not too far away in Montreal, close to 300 protesters waving signs scrawled with messages such as "Canada out! Stop killing civilians!" and "War isn't a solution" marched through that city's downtown core.

"We have been dragged into a war by the Americans and we've lost our role as peacekeepers, which was a very distinguished role for Canadians," said protester Joseph Baker in Montreal.

"We have a role to play in Afghanistan and it should be a constructive role."

Montreal's protest, which was staged as a relentless downpour of rain fell, was another of the nationwide demonstrations held to coincide with 11 anti-war marches planned in the U.S. KEYWORDS=OTTAWA AND REGION

Dare to dream The protesters downtown don't understand oppression

SOURCETAG 0710280002

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 2

ILLUSTRATION: photo by A.D. Wilson Jose Santoyo Nunez immigrated from Cuba and plays guitar in his barber shop on Preston St.

BYLINE: EARL MCRAE, OTTAWA SUN

COLUMN: McRae's World

WORD COUNT: 601

"A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

— The Cuban fisherman Santiago in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man And The Sea*

In his small, quiet barber shop on the other side of the city from where the spoiled and comfortable are noisily protesting against Canadian soldiers being in Afghanistan to help those being destroyed but not defeated, Jose Santoyo Nunez, who knows the crushing oppression of human beings, tells me he once met Santiago.

"I was at university in Cuba and I went with friends to the beach in Cojimar. It's a fishing village. A girl with us said, 'Jose. Look. There's Santiago from Hemingway's novel.' He was sitting in front of his house. He was very old then. We went over and he talked to us. He told us he did tell Hemingway a man can be destroyed, but not defeated. He was a very simple man, but very wise."

MELANCHOLY DAY

On a rain-falling melancholy day, Jose Santoyo Nunez, 47, is sitting in his barber shop at 4320 Preston St., and playing classical music on his guitar, the sheet music spread before him on a stand. He plays for himself, and for his customers ("They'll say 'No, no it's okay, keep playing, we like it, we can wait'") and since it is only recently he took over the business, his shop — Regular cut — \$12, Seniors 65 and over — \$10, Children under 12 — \$10 — he doesn't have a name for it yet, but Preston Barber Shop will soon be on the window.

Santoyo Nunez has a degree in education from the University of Havana, a degree from a conservatory of music, and it was in Cuba he learned barbering while employed full-time as a government interpreter, including for the communist dictator Fidel Castro himself.

"He was very imposing, very tall. His eyes in his olive skin went right through you, scanning your brain."

Santoyo Nunez was sent to Ottawa as an interpreter for the Cuban government and then one day 17 years ago, after he was here a year, he left work and never went back. Jose Santoyo Nunez defected.

"I loved the Canadian way of life, the abundance, the freedom. Growing up in Cuba, I had no reference points. Poverty. Food shortages. I knew when I defected, I could never go back. I would never see my mother and

father again, my wife, my children, my brother and sisters.

"For eight years it was like that. It has changed since then, I've been back to visit because the Cuban government feels I spent time in jail. To them, jail was the years I was not allowed back. I became a Canadian citizen in 1997. When the judge told us we were now part of the great Canadian family, it was the most emotional moment of my life."

Santoyo Nunez has been trying to get his 22-year old son, a university student in nuclear physics, to Canada from Cuba for a visit.

"The problem is more at this end. Canadian Immigration says he might defect."

God forbid Canada offend its friend Cuba, the countries doing \$1 billion in trade a year. Cuba grudgingly permits minimal emigration, the policy harshly restrictive and dissuasive.

WISHED HIM WELL

Santoyo Nunez drove taxi for several years after his defection before cutting hair again at Heads Up Barber Shop on Greenbank Rd. where the owner, Frank — "The best employer I've ever had" — wished him well when he left to run his own shop on Preston St.

The rain still falling outside, Jose Santoyo Nunez turns the page of his sheet music.

"Canadians live a soft, peaceful life. They don't know oppression, oppression so terrible that if escape meant leaving your family forever, you would. In life, you have to help people. You can't live in isolation."

He begins to play. I recognize the melancholy tune. Forbidden Dreams it's called, and across town they who live the good, soft, spoiled life are protesting Canada's soldiers helping a people — who asked for our help — achieve their forbidden dreams. KEYWORDS=OTTAWA AND REGION

Afghanistan panel to set up website It will take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group says.

SOURCETAG: 0710280123
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
ILLUSTRATION: photo of JOHN MANLEY Heads Afghanistan panel.
BYLINE: JOHN WARD, CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 225

John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take public submissions, the head of a Canadian development group said yesterday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for written public input.

Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian aid groups met Manley and his panel yesterday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public."

Barr said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four fellow committee members.

Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister and one-time leadership contender, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper this month to look at the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:

- Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.
- Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.
- Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region.
- Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices. "The options . . . that were given to them at the front end all had to do with . . . the Canadian military in Afghanistan," Barr said. "We were there to say to them that you need to put in your option category actively the search for a political consensus in Afghanistan, a national peace process and how Canada could support that kind of process."

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Afghanistan panel to set up website It will take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian

Protests denounce role in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0710280108

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

BYLINE: AYSHA PABANI, SPECIAL TO SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 257

Sixty-four year old Donna Crowell wiped a tear from her cheek yesterday as she got ready to protest against Canada's role in the war in Afghanistan.

"In spite of just having surgery, I'm here," she said. "When you come out, you don't feel alone. You see a sample of the people who care."

More than 100 people gathered in London's Victoria Park for the Pan-Canadian Day of Action, led locally by the Anti-War Organization of London and other activist groups.

Crowell's husband, George, 76, said, "Even if we're fighting a losing battle, it's our responsibility to keep fighting anyway."

But Donna Crowell said she believes politicians will respond to demonstrations. "And they know that for every person here, there are many people at home who feel the same way."

Crowell said she hoped to see more seniors out.

"Seniors are the ones who know the Canadian heritage of being peacemakers. They're the ones who can call it forth and make a difference, but I'm delighted to see so many young people here."

Eighteen-year-old UWO student Allie Fonarev said it's the United Nations' role, not Canada's, to be the peacekeeper.

"We have to get our troops out. They're doing more bad than good."

James Stepp, 20, an American soldier from Ohio who refused orders to deploy in Iraq, has been in London for two months applying for refugee status.

"It's not okay to invade a sovereign nation for money," said Stepp, one of the afternoon's speakers. "I don't think the protest necessarily speaks to the government because there aren't Conservatives out here. But it speaks to the people and it raises awareness."

Other demonstrators included a man draped in an American flag and wearing a mask portraying the president. He toyed with strings tied to another man intended to represent Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Similar rallies were held in Montreal and Ottawa yesterday.

London protest organizer Anthony Verberckmoes said he believes the gatherings make a difference.

"We're not going to end the war today in London by doing this. But it always starts with a few people."
KEYWORDS=LOCAL

Monument a fitting tribute

SOURCETAG 0710280106

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Sue Reeve, Sun Media
LED THE CHARGE: Joe Bowman stands in front of a war memorial that pays tribute to all Canadian soldiers from both world wars and Korea. Bowman led the charge to raise money and build the monument after an original one on the site was badly damaged by vandals.

BYLINE: PATRICK MALONEY, SUN MEDIA

WORD COUNT: 286

Sixty years after he first placed a wreath at a neighbourhood war memorial in honour of his brother, Joe Bowman was back again yesterday.

But unlike so many times before, the 87-year-old wasn't alone.

A retired grocer and Second World War veteran, Bowman, who served for more than seven years and returned from battle "without a scratch," moved to London in 1947. That year he put a wreath at a London memorial for his younger brother, Roy, who wasn't so lucky.

"He was killed July 25, 1943," in Sicily, an emotional Bowman recalled yesterday. "It's still hard."

Easier than it was, though, when that monument — the Manor and Highland Park War Memorial, built in 1927 on a quiet stretch of Briscoe Street West — sat unattended and was vandalized. First, they ripped off the statue soldier's gun, then a leg.

Finally, in 1984, the head was ripped off and Bowman had had enough.

He helped lead the charge to raise money so veterans could build and pay tribute at a new monument at the same site.

For the last 23 years, an annual memorial service, like the one that yesterday drew scores of veterans and dozens of nearby residents, has taken place on the last Saturday of October.

"It made you feel sad when you looked at it," Bowman said of the old, damaged memorial. "(Now), it's beautiful."

Originally built in 1927 by locals to honour neighbourhood soldiers lost in the First World War, the monument now pays tribute to all Canadian soldiers from both world wars and Korea.

A group of veterans, the Manor and Highland Park War Memorial Remembrance Committee, and officials with the adjacent Church of the Epiphany maintain the site.

With the rain holding off and sun peeking the clouds yesterday morning, more than a dozen wreaths were placed at its base by veterans' associations.

Carolyn Wilson, whose son Mark was killed serving in Afghanistan one year ago, placed one on behalf of all Canadian mothers who have lost children to war.

Those in attendance were asked, while remembering soldiers from the past, also to think of Canadians fighting today.

"Remember the Canadians in uniform who personify our values," said Korean War veteran J. W. Martin.
"And I would ask you to walk with them on patrol." KEYWORDS=LOCAL

Know Your News?

SOURCETAG 0710280635
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 40
WORD COUNT: 241

1. Who this week was voted the most masculine man in the world?
 - a) George Clooney
 - b) Justin Timberlake
 - c) David Beckham
 - d) Ed Stelmach
2. The Dalai Lama is scheduled to visit Canada next week. In what year did China exile him from Tibet?
 - a) 1952
 - b) 1960
 - c) 1966
 - d) 1969
3. Cab drivers in New York went on strike this week over what?
 - a) A new law making it mandatory to speak English
 - b) A plan to install GPS devices so customers can see where they are
 - c) A ban on drivers wearing turbans
 - d) What they say are the lowest fares in North America
4. The estranged wife of Beatle Paul McCartney, Heather Mills, would like who to play her in any bio-film?
 - a) Rosie O'Donnell
 - b) Scarlett Johansson
 - c) Jodie Foster
 - d) Reese Witherspoon

5. The U.S. Congress this week said the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would be what over the next decade?

- a) \$550 billion
- b) \$950 billion
- c) \$1.8 trillion
- d) \$2.4 trillion

6. The world's largest airliner, the Airbus A380, made its first commercial flight this week for which airline?

- a) Qantas
- b) Singapore Airlines
- c) Virgin Airlines
- d) WestJet

7. A company in Japan has invented what for motorists who get stuck in traffic jams?

- a) A portable toilet for cars
- b) A portable karaoke machine that plugs into the cigarette lighter
- c) A computer chip for car dashboards that will enable drivers to have conversations with the computer
- d) A car periscope so drivers can get a bird's-eye view of what is causing the jam

8. Calgarians lined up this week for vaccinations against hepatitis A after a worker at a local McDonald's was diagnosed with the disease. What organ does hepatitis A affect?

- a) Kidneys
- b) Liver
- c) Heart
- d) Pancreas

9. Scientists said this week some of the Neanderthals may have actually had red hair. What continents did the extinct hominids inhabit during their time on Earth?

- a) North and South America
- b) Africa and Asia
- c) North America and Europe
- d) Europe and Asia

10. What's believed to be the world's oldest copy of the Koran fetched more than \$2.2 million at an auction in Britain. In what year was the book written?

- a) 1032
- b) 1203
- c) 1855
- d) 837

ANSWERS

- 1. Beckham
- 2. 1952
- 3. They are upset about GPS devices
- 4. Reese Witherspoon
- 5. \$2.4 trillion
- 6. Singapore Airlines
- 7. A portable toilet for cars
- 8. Liver
- 9. Europe and Asia
- 10. 1203

Add your own spin Website to accept views on Afghanistan war

SOURCETAG 0710280625
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 33
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 156

John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said yesterday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input. Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian air groups met Manley and his panel yesterday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public," Barr said.

He said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four fellow-committee members.

Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier this month to look at the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:

- Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.
- Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.
- Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.
- Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009. KEYWORDS=CANADA

NATO boss wants more troops

SOURCETAG 0710280624
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 33
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 161

NATO is taking a risk by not sending enough troops to Afghanistan and restrictions on deployment of some countries' soldiers hampers operations, NATO's commander in Afghanistan said yesterday.

Afghanistan has seen an increase in violence this year, with more clashes with Taliban insurgents and more suicide bombings, killing as many as 5,000 people since January.

While the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force claims significant battlefield successes against the Taliban, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates has led calls for NATO nations to send more soldiers and allow them to do more.

ISAF commander Gen. Dan McNeill said NATO countries had not even sent troops already promised. "NATO agreed last year to a force level here ... it prescribed a minimum force ... that force has not been filled yet. On that basis alone, I think, no, I don't have enough force here," he said. "We are taking a certain amount of risk by having an unfilled force," he said. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Security process like 'a medieval court' Antiwar rallies held locally and across Canada

SOURCETAG 0710280615
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 21
BYLINE: NICKI THOMAS, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 222

Canada's security certificate process violates fundamental human rights, said demonstrators at an antiwar protest yesterday.

"All the principles which we as Canadians think of as the rule of law are violated by (security certificates)," said organizer Peggy Morton, a member of the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism.

CAN BE HELD INDEFINITELY

Under the current certificate process, non-citizens suspected of being a threat to national security can be held indefinitely and are not allowed to see details of the case against them.

"It's like a medieval court," said Morton.

Last February, the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the system, saying it violated the Charter of Rights and Freedom but suspended the ruling for one year so Parliament could have a chance to overhaul the law.

Last week, the Conservative government introduced legislation intended to bring the process in line with the charter.

"Security certificates are still an open issue," said Marilyn Gaa, a member of the Raging Grannies, who performed at yesterday's demonstration.

"It's not closed just because Stephen Harper came out with some cobbled together, newer version of security certificates."

Gaa said that under the current system, suspected terrorists are arrested and imprisoned with no recourse or due process.

"They can actually lock the door and throw away the key," she said.

The dozens of demonstrators who marched down Whyte Avenue from the University of Alberta to the Arts Barns also called for Canadian troops to be pulled out of Afghanistan immediately.

MORE PROTESTS

The event coincided with similar events in major cities across the country.

Morton said civilian deaths at the hands of NATO forces in Afghanistan are increasing and have reached an all-time high this year.

"Is this what people are supporting? I don't think so," she said. "I think most Canadians would support what they think is peacekeeping. Our point is that this is not peacekeeping." KEYWORDS=CANADA

Know Your News?

SOURCETAG 0710280792
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 51
TYPE : Questionnaire
WORD COUNT: 241

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NATO called on to boost troops in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0710280749
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 11
BYLINE: REUTERS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 220

NATO is taking a risk by not sending enough troops to Afghanistan and restrictions on deployment of some countries' soldiers hampers operations, NATO's commander in Afghanistan said yesterday.

Afghanistan has seen an increase in violence this year, with more clashes with Taliban insurgents and more suicide bombings, killing as many as 5,000 people since January.

While the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force claims significant battlefield successes against the Taliban, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates has led calls for NATO nations to send more soldiers and allow them to do more.

ISAF commander Gen. Dan McNeill said NATO countries had not even sent troops already promised.

"NATO agreed last year to a force level here ... it prescribed a minimum force ... that force has not been filled yet. On that basis alone, I think, no, I don't have enough force here," he said.

"We are taking a certain amount of risk by having an unfilled force," he said.

Many of the 37 nations contributing troops impose tight restrictions, known as caveats, barring them from offensive operations or from deployment in the more dangerous south.

German troops in the relatively safe north, for example, are not allowed to patrol at night, officials say.

"The caveats impinge on my ability to use all those principles of war in both planning and prosecuting operations," McNeill said.

"When countries say their forces can only operate in certain ways and in a certain geographic space that certainly impinges on my ability to mass forces."

More than 200 people have been killed during 130 suicide attacks this year as Taliban insurgents switch to what the military calls asymmetrical warfare after suffering heavy defeats in pitched battles.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Public to get say on troops Manley's Afghanistan panel to set up internet site for input

SOURCETAG: 0710280741
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 7
ILLUSTRATION: photo of JOHN MANLEY To set up website
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 235

John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said yesterday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input.

Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian air groups met Manley and his panel yesterday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments and recommendations.

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He said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four fellow-committee members.

Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier this month to look at the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:

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- Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.
- Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.
- Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices. Manley and his fellow-panel members — ex-broadcaster Pamela Wallin, Derek Burney, former ambassador to Washington and one-time chief of staff to Brian Mulroney, Paul Tellier, ex-clerk of the privy council and Jake Epp, an ex-Mulroney minister — are expected to report by January.

Harper appointed the panel amid a political debate over what Canada should do when the mandate of its

current Afghan commitment runs out in February 2009.

The Conservatives are leaning to a continuation, but other parties are demanding that the troops come home.
KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Anti-war activists take to streets

SOURCETAG 0710280740

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Jack Cusano, Sun Media About 50 Calgary anti-war protesters gathered today at Harry Hays Building to voice their displeasure with Canada's military role in Afghanistan through speeches and chanting.

BYLINE: TARINA WHITE

WORD COUNT: 131

One day after former British prime minister Tony Blair delivered a heavy pro-war speech to Calgary's business elite, peace activists who want Canadian troops brought home from Afghanistan took to the streets to rally their cause.

Collette Lemieux, co-chair of the Canadian Peace Alliance, organized yesterday's Calgary event to mark the sixth anniversary of Canada's involvement in the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan.

In that time, she argued the coalition forces have done little to bring stability to the troubled region.

"We don't believe the Canadian military is actually doing anything to support the people of Afghanistan," said Lemieux.

"We just don't think war is the solution to this."

Lemieux was careful to add that peace activists are supportive of Canadian troops.

"I do support the troops, but I do not support the mission," she said.

The local rally was among 23 anti-war events held across Canada and around the globe yesterday.

About 50 protesters marched through downtown waving placards, chanting "Support the troops, bring them home," and singing John Lennon's iconic anti-war anthem Give Peace A Chance. KEYWORDS=ALBERTA

--Twentieth NewsWatch--

DATE: 2007.10.27
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 353

Court documents have revealed some of the details of the morning that R-C-M-P Corporal Christopher Worden was shot to death.

Among them, at least five people claim to have heard the gunshots, but it was more than two hours later that Worden's body was found.

The information is contained in an application for a search warrant in Edmonton and has not been heard in open court.

Emrah Bulatci has been charged with first-degree murder in Worden's death. (20)

(Afghan-Cda-Hillier)

While deputy Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff asked Friday when the government would get the mission in Afghanistan under control, Canada's top soldier was doing some quick repair work.

Chief of Defence Staff General Rick Hillier hit the airwaves to dismiss the idea that he and the prime minister are not on the same page.

Hillier says he thinks it will take years to produce a top-notch, professional army in Afghanistan, but when the Canadian mission there will end is up to the government, not the military. (20)

(Harper-Forestry) (audio: 184)

The prime minister made a stop in Dryden, Ontario on Friday but failed to meet with the hard-pressed workers of the city's forestry industry.

Although Stephen Harper met behind closed doors with community leaders, a spokesman for the union at the Domtar mill called on the federal government to host a public forum on the crisis in the forest industry.

Domtar is a major employer in the city, but over the past four years, the mill's workforce has been chopped in half. (20)

(US-Iraq-Embassy)

The U-S State Department says it will begin ordering diplomats to serve in Iraq because of a lack of volunteers.

Starting Monday, 200 to 300 diplomats will be notified they're ``prime candidates" to fill 40 to 50 vacancies in Baghdad.

They'll have 10 days to accept or reject the position.

If not enough say yes, some will be ordered to go to Iraq and face dismissal if they refuse. (20)

(Puerto Rico–Pet Massacre)

Dogs from Puerto Rico are now being flown to a shelter in Florida as part of a rescue effort.

Twelve dogs were flown to the Central Florida S–P–C–A In Orlando, Friday.

The agency had offered to take as many as 50 dogs following an incident in one of San Juan's poorest slums earlier this month.

Dozens of pets were seized by a private animal control company and hurled from a 15–metre–high bridge.
(20)

(Lincoln–Ford's Theatre)

The theater where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865 is undergoing some 21st–century renovations. Ford's Theatre will be made part of a six–building complex that will include multimedia education displays on the legacy of the 16th president of the United States.

The renovated performance space is scheduled to open in time for the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth on February 12th, 2009. (20)

(NewsWatch by Leanne Davis)

Manley's panel plans Web link for public comment; Internet site to receive input on Canada's role expected to be up and running soon

IDNUMBER 200710280024
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A08
BYLINE: John Ward
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 415

Afghanistan John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said yesterday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input.

Barr said he and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian aid agencies met Manley and his panel yesterday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments and recommendations.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public," Barr said.

Barr said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four committee members.

The former Liberal cabinet minister and one-time leadership contender, was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier this month to assess Canada's future commitment in Afghanistan and to consider four options:

Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.

Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.

Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.

Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices.

"The options ... that were given to them at the front end all had to do with ... the Canadian military in Afghanistan," Barr said.

Manley's panel plans Web link for public comment; Internet site to receive input on Canada's role expected to be up and running soon

"We were there to say to them that you need to put in your option category: actively search for a political consensus in Afghanistan, a national peace process and how Canada could support that kind of process."

Barr said it's important to break perceived linkages between the military and development, which can become intertwined in people's minds.

"If there is a sort of military signature on aid ... then the projects themselves can become targets in an insurgency war. As projects become targets, citizens and civilians are targeted themselves ... and we do the opposite of what we intend with aid.

"We have to stop any confusion between the aid and the military effort. Plainly, security and development do relate to one another," Barr said. "It's important to have security in order to have development, but that does not mean they are Siamese twins."

Manley and his fellow panel members – Pamela Wallin, former broadcaster and ex–envoy in New York, Derek Burney, former ambassador to Washington and one– time chief of staff to Brian Mulroney, Paul Tellier, former clerk of the Privy Council and Jake Epp, a former Mulroney cabinet minister – are expected to report by January.

Harper appointed the panel amid political debate over what Canada should do when the NATO mandate for its Afghan military commitment runs out in February 2009. Conservatives are leaning to a continuation. Other parties are demanding troop withdrawals; 71 Canadian soldiers and a diplomat have been slain there since 2002.

World Digest

IDNUMBER 200710280015
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 362

Afghanistan

80 Taliban fighters killed in U.S.-led battle

Military officials say U.S.-led coalition forces killed about 80 Taliban fighters yesterday during a six-hour battle outside a Taliban-controlled town in southern Afghanistan.

The battle took place near Musa Qala in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy growing region. The battle was the latest of several in the area since Sept. 1 that have killed more than 250 Taliban fighters.

Libya

Gadhafi says Darfur talks doomed to failure

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi yesterday said peace talks to end violence in Darfur were doomed to failure because of the absence of key rebel groups in the conflict.

Despite the declaration of a ceasefire by the Sudanese government, the region's key rebel groups have boycotted the United Nations and African Union-sponsored talks in the Libyan resort of Sirte. "Without them we cannot make peace," Gadhafi said at the talks, aimed to bring an end to Darfur's bloodshed, which has claimed more than 200,000 lives since 2003.

Jordan

168 people in hospital

due to poisoning scare

At least 168 people suffering from poisoning were in hospital yesterday in northern Jordan.

Health officials attributed the poisoning to either bad food or contaminated water. The victims, all from the town of Sakeb, suffered diarrhea, vomiting and high fever. The exact cause of the outbreak is unknown.

Denmark

Bombardier turboprop in crash landing

A Scandinavian Airlines turboprop carrying 44 people made a crash-landing at Copenhagen airport yesterday, sliding down the runway on its belly after part of the landing gear on the Canadian-made plane collapsed.

No one was seriously hurt in the accident, the third crash landing involving the airline's Bombardier-built Q400 turboprops in less than two months. A spokesperson for Montreal-based Bombardier said safety and technical teams have been sent to assist in an investigation by Scandinavian inspectors.

Britain

Two arrested in Royal

sex tape blackmail bid

Police have arrested two men over an attempt to blackmail a member of the Royal Family with an alleged sex tape, a newspaper reported.

The Sunday Times said the pair had approached the unnamed family member and demanded about \$100,000 not to publicize a video allegedly showing the royal engaged in a sex act. The blackmailers also claimed to have evidence suggesting the royal had supplied an aide with an envelope containing cocaine, the newspaper said. The paper said it could not identify the royal for legal reasons.

From the Star's wire services

Security tight as Bhutto travels to father's tomb; 'I am not scared of these people,' former Pakistani PM says on visit to ancestral home

IDNUMBER 200710280014
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
BYLINE: Kamran Haider
SOURCE: ; REUTERS NEWS AGENCY
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 382

Thousands of party faithful feted former prime minister Benazir Bhutto yesterday as she visited her stronghold in southern Pakistan, days after an assassination bid killed 139 people.

Chanting "Long Live Bhutto," around 4,000 jubilant supporters of her Pakistan People's Party cheered and clapped as Bhutto arrived in a bulletproof vehicle at her father's vast mausoleum in their ancestral village of Garhi Khuda Baksh, near the town of Larkana in Sindh province.

Standing through the sunroof behind her secretary, Bhutto – who returned to Pakistan last week after eight years of self-exile – waved to crowds that were prevented from approaching the vehicle by security staff wielding AK-47s.

A huge Bhutto portrait hung from a pylon, and green, red and black PPP flags fluttered as her convoy whipped up a dust storm.

Bhutto draped a shawl inscribed with Islamic verses and sprinkled rose petals on her father's grave.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's first popularly elected prime minister, was toppled by the military in 1977 and later hanged.

Bhutto then sat by the tomb, reciting Qur'anic verses.

"I feel very emotional. I wanted to visit the tomb of my father, the leader of the people, and offer prayers," Bhutto told reporters afterward, before being driven to her family home flanked by paramilitaries.

"There is still danger of attack, but Allah can protect everyone and I am not scared of these people," she added, saying she now felt better about her security.

Oxford-educated Bhutto has huge feudal support in Sindh and is the country's most popular politician.

Ardent supporters in the rural area clamoured outside the tomb.

PPP flags and portraits of Bhutto and her father lined the roads in the countryside around Garhi Khuda Baksh, where farmers were busy harvesting their rice crops.

Security tight as Bhutto travels to father's tomb; 'I am not scared of these people,' former Pakistani PM says

Hundreds of police and paramilitary troops were deployed at Sukkur airport for Bhutto's first foray outside Karachi since the Oct. 18 attack marred her return to Pakistan after eight years of self-imposed exile abroad to avoid corruption charges.

At least one suicide bomber, possibly two, attacked her convoy in Karachi as it travelled slowly through hundreds of thousands of supporters.

The government blames the Karachi attack on Islamist militants based in tribal lands bordering neighbouring Afghanistan, where Al Qaeda and the Taliban are entrenched.

Bhutto suspects political allies of President Pervez Musharraf were also plotting against her, though she says she has no reason to believe he was personally involved.

Musharraf granted an amnesty that allowed Bhutto to return to Pakistan without fear of prosecution in graft cases hanging over her from the 1990s.

There is speculation the pair could end up sharing power after national elections due by early January.

Violence has escalated across Pakistan since July, when militants scrapped a peace deal and the army stormed a radical mosque in the capital, Islamabad.

Canada out!; Anti-war protesters march against Canada's mission in Afghanistan in demonstrations across the country

IDNUMBER 200710280008

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: News

PAGE: A08

ILLUSTRATION: Aaron Lynett Toronto star A woman is seen through a banner which reads, "Stop the war abroad ; stop the war at home," as protesters march up University Ave. yesterday chanting anti-war slogans after a large gathering at the United States consulate. The protest was one of 23 scheduled in Canadian cities and 11 planned in the U.S. ;

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 67

Aaron Lynett Toronto star A woman is seen through a banner which reads, "Stop the war abroad; stop the war at home," as protesters march up University Ave. yesterday chanting anti-war slogans after a large gathering at the United States consulate. The protest was one of 23 scheduled in Canadian cities and 11 planned in the U.S.

Week in review

IDNUMBER 200710280066
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City & Observer
PAGE: B8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Ed Stelmach; Colour Photo: Tony Blair ; Colour Photo: Jack Beauchamp ;
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 289

Alberta

Stelmach comes under fire

Premier Ed Stelmach found himself under siege Thursday after introducing a new oil and gas royalty plan — a strategy to significantly boost rates that left oilpatch leaders fuming, but falls nearly \$500 million short of what the government's own expert panel has recommended.

Calgary

Hep A scare hits McDonald's

A southeast McDonald's reopened Wednesday, hours after health officials confirmed an employee at the restaurant was diagnosed with hepatitis A.

It was feared thousands of patrons could have been affected if they'd eaten recently at the restaurant, from kids who play at the nearby soccer centre to workers in the busy Foothills Industrial Park.

The restaurant, at 5326 72nd Ave. S.E., was closed Tuesday before noon and staff said it had reopened Wednesday at about 2 p.m.

World

Keep fighting, Blair urges

Ex-British prime minister Tony Blair told 1,500 people Friday at Calgary's Telus Convention Centre that Canada needs to "stay the course" in Afghanistan. Calling the mission "a battle of ideas, not just a battle of arms," Blair said the West shouldn't back down in the fight against extremism.

Alberta

Multiple killers feared

A court heard Thursday police are investigating the possibility more than one killer may be responsible in the deaths of Alberta sex workers.

"We have an ongoing investigation that involves another serial offender or offenders," RCMP Staff Sgt. Kevin Simmill testified at a hearing related to the trial of accused killer Thomas Svekla.

According to a 2006 affidavit, police have investigated at least seven "significant suspects" in the killings of more than a dozen Edmonton prostitutes.

Crime

Pair guilty in office murder

Two men were found guilty last Sunday of first-degree murder in the Jan. 16, 2006 highrise shooting death of Calgary businessman Jack Beauchamp, 49. A jury of eight women and four men unanimously convicted Robert Elliot Deer and Mohamed Ali Karim, Deer's friend and former employee.

Calgarians demand Afghanistan pullout; 'Too many people think they can't change anything'

IDNUMBER 200710280057
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City & Observer
PAGE: B5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald / Protesters march down 7th Avenue S.E. toward the U.S. Consulate on Saturday calling for Canadian troops to be brought home from Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: Jamie Komarnicki
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 171

Calgary protesters joined a nationwide day of action Saturday, demanding the pullout of Canadian troops from Afghanistan.

"When I think about the lives lost, the devastation and the millions of dollars wasted, I get really angry," said Collette Lemieux, co-chairwoman of the Canadian Peace Alliance, to more than 50 people gathered outside the Harry Hays building in downtown Calgary.

"How are we winning a war on terror when we're creating more enemies?" said Lemieux.

Carrying signs and chanting, the protesters marched to the U.S. Consulate, dogged by a handful of hecklers.

There are approximately 2,500 Canadian troops in Afghanistan, most in the volatile south region.

Last month, Calgary's Cpl. Nathan Hornburg became the 71st Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

In the throne speech last week, the Canadian government signalled it planned to continue training the Afghan army and police to defend their own people, a task it expects to achieve by 2011.

Six years have passed since Canada's first military involvement in Afghanistan, and Tracy Hache said it's frustrating that those who don't believe in the mission aren't speaking out.

"Having that voice is one of the freedoms we have," said Hache at Saturday's event.

"Too many people think they can't change anything because they're just one person," she said.

"Sometimes you just need to come out and show solidarity."

jkomarnicki@theherald.canwest.com

Caption Only

IDNUMBER 200710280055

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.10.28

EDITION: Final

SECTION: City & Observer

PAGE: B3

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Michele Geistlinger photo / The Village of Longview is surrounded by lush rolling foothills, boasting some of the best winter grazing in Canada, and is graced by the towering, craggy presence of the Rocky Mountains. ; Colour Photo: Kurtis Kristianson photo, Spindrift Productions / Crossfield retains its family-friendly feel, despite its residential and business growth. ; Colour Photo: Kurtis Kristianson photo, Spindrift Productions / A fireworks display lights up the skies of Crossfield, celebrating its centennial in 2007. ; Photo: Courtesy, Town of Redwater / Redwater is proud to be home to an Afghanistan memorial dedicated to Canadians who've lost their lives. ;

KEYWORDS: 0

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 4

NO TEXT

Climate change tough on almanac forecasters

IDNUMBER 200710280026
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
COLUMN: Next: Trends • Discoveries What's New
Colour Photo: John Woods, CanWest News Service / Larry Romaniuk drew on his 37
ILLUSTRATION: years of experience with Environment Canada to make weather predictions for the Truly Canadian Almanac. ;
KEYWORDS: WEATHER; PREDICTIONS
BYLINE: Kathryn Young
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 479

Weather forecasting is a tricky business at best, but it's even more challenging with climate change thrown into the mix, according to Larry Romaniuk, a retired meteorologist whose predictions for 2008 are featured in the new Harrowsmith Truly Canadian Almanac.

"It's not easy, I'll tell you that, especially in the longer range," said Romaniuk, whose 37 years with Environment Canada took him across the country.

"In the last 20 or 30 years, we've seen a drastic increase in severe weather being reported. To catch these extremes is difficult, I don't deny it."

His predictions for the coming year differ from those in the Canadian edition of the American Farmers' Almanac, based in Maine. While Romaniuk predicts close to normal snowfall on the Prairies and normal precipitation in B.C. this winter, for example, the Farmers' Almanac predicts a quarter to half the normal precipitation for those areas.

Farmers' Almanac editor Peter Geiger said there will always be differences in predictions. "We do it differently," said Geiger.

The first Farmers' Almanac editor in 1818 devised a proprietary formula, still in use, based on sunspots, moon phases, planet positions and other astronomical and atmospheric factors to predict weather two years in advance.

The Old Farmers' Almanac has a Canadian edition that takes into account solar flares and a secret formula devised in 1792 and kept in a strongbox in New Hampshire, said editor Jack Burnett. Although accuracy is usually about 80 per cent, he said it has slipped in recent years to 75 per cent, but is getting back on track.

"The weather's been kind of wacky," said Burnett.

Romaniuk doesn't include sunspots, solar flares or secret formulas in his calculations, preferring to base his Canadian forecasts on historical data, his experience and sophisticated computer models developed by scientists.

"We'll just have to wait and see (who is right)," he said with a laugh.

Readers of Country Guide magazine, where Romaniuk has been making long-range forecasts for the past 12 years, assessed his accuracy at 75 per cent, although he gives himself 80 per cent, give or take a day.

"If I do hit a severe event, I give myself a bonus of five per cent," he said. "And if I don't hit it, then I subtract five per cent."

Bridget Wayland, editor of the Canadian almanac, said she has every confidence in Romaniuk's predictions.

"Time will tell," she said, adding it was high time Canadians had a thoroughly Canadian almanac.

Dubbed the "first homegrown almanac for country dwellers" rather than farmers, the Canadian version includes articles on micro-breweries (urging you to drink locally) and economics (how to live green); a Canadian soldier's memories of Afghanistan; tips on encouraging pollinators in your garden; tales of Canadian monsters; book reviews; a discussion of the differences between coffee customers at the local diner, Tim Hortons and Starbucks; weather sayings from different provinces; and rural hometown tours by 10 celebrities, including Rita MacNeil, Randy Bachman and Gordie Howe.

One particularly helpful article on "Ductigami" (not to be confused with origami) shows how to make rain gear for your pet out of duct tape.

And — only in Canada — there is a helping of curling humour.

Published by Harrowsmith Country Life magazine, 100,000 copies of the almanac have been printed.

Harper visits home of Van Doos

IDNUMBER	200710280025
PUBLICATION:	Calgary Herald
DATE:	2007.10.28
EDITION:	Final
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	A8
KEYWORDS:	PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT;CANADA
DATELINE:	VALCARTIER, Que.
SOURCE:	CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT:	181

VALCARTIER, Que. – For the first time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Saturday visited Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, home to the famed Royal 22nd regiment, who lead Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The Quebec regiment, known as the Van Doos, has some 2,300 troops serving in Kandahar for a six-month tour.

Harper paid tribute to the soldiers' families. "We are here for you tonight," he told the crowd of 600 people that included mostly businessmen but few families.

"We don't say it often enough, but the families of the soldiers are heroes as much as the soldiers themselves."

Harper was speaking at a fundraiser for the Valcartier family centre. The centre offers help and counselling to families of soldiers before and during their mission.

Valcartier was shaken in August when two of its soldiers, Master Warrant Officer Mercier and Master Cpl. Duchesne, died when their light-armoured vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device.

The deaths, with that of Pte. Simon Longtin just days before, brought the cost of the Afghan conflict home to Quebec, where support for the mission is the lowest in the country.

The Canadian government is under pressure to bring the troops home when the current mandate of the Afghan mission expires in February 2009.

Seventy-one soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Attacks turning Afghans against Taliban forces

IDNUMBER 200710280014
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
COLUMN: Kelly Cryderman
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Kelly Cryderman
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 530

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – Capt. Philippe Sauve points to the rocky patch of ground that was covered with wounded Afghans — sitting up on chairs, lying in stretchers and bleeding with bomb-blast injuries both serious and superficial.

Two weeks ago, a suicide bomber set off a massive explosion at a market in the border town of Spin Boldak, killing 11 and injuring 36 — a significant casualty number for a single blast. A fleet of pickup trucks transferred the wounded to Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak for first aid before sending them to Kandahar Airfield or a local hospital.

"At first when they called us, they said there was 12 injured people, then there was 24 and finally there was 36," said Suave, second in command of the Quebec-based reconnaissance squadron at the base.

Two-hundred metres from the triage site and Sauve's office, the Canadian captain's Afghan peer believes these types of attacks are turning the population against the Taliban.

Capt. Hezrat Wali, a former mujahedeen fighter who now commands an Afghan National Army reconnaissance company on the border, said he's confident the tide is turning against the Taliban in the border province.

During his recent patrols through local villages, his men have learned that villagers have sometimes offered their homes to the Taliban passing across the porous border with Pakistan. With the suicide attacks wounding and killing civilians, that is changing, Wali said.

"It's clear for all the people that the Taliban are not good people," Wali said through an interpreter as his soldiers played volleyball outside his office.

"Now the villagers are not willing to hide them."

A flourishing border crossing, Spin Boldak is often considered calm and safe by southern Afghanistan standards — relative to the more volatile parts of the province patrolled by Canadians and other International Security Assistance Force soldiers.

"Their heart, their start is Kandahar," Sauve said of the Taliban's preference for attacking further west of Spin Boldak.

However, the ferocity and impact of this bomb blast, combined with other attacks in recent months, has been seen as an indication that violence in this border region is increasing.

Part of the escalation is a Taliban push against Spin Boldak heavyweight Col. Abdul Razik, who heads the border police in the area and is an implacable foe of the Taliban, according to Canadian commanders.

This is also the time of year when many Taliban cross back into Pakistan after spending months in the insurgency in Afghanistan — to go home, rest or retrain.

Concerns are increasing about Taliban activity in the area and the Canadians recently stepped up their presence in the border region spanning about 100 kilometres.

While Canadians zero in on the security in Spin Boldak, Americans at the base — who make up about 30 per cent of the population — focus on training Afghans. There is increasing emphasis on ensuring that Wali's forces and others can take on the Taliban by themselves.

U.S. Capt. Darren Towers of the Embedded Transition Team, who works with Afghans and Canadians on the base, is mentoring Wali alongside the Afghan commander's two dozen active troops.

Many are experienced fighters, Towers said, but their organization could use some work.

"We spend a lot of time planning stuff. In their culture and experience, they just do things," Towers said. "It's just giving them the tools and the resources and the confidence."

While Afghan forces now back up the Canadian soldiers who go out to villages and watch security checkpoints, Towers hopes it will be the Canadians who back up the Afghans within the next year.

"In the past, it took a lot more effort on the coalition's side."

kcryderman@theherald.canwest.com

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DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 86

SPECIAL SECTIONS

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Harper honours families at Van Doos' home base

IDNUMBER 200710280015
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Mathieu Belanger, Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper shakes hands with Mia Caron yesterday during a fundraiser for a family centre at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier in Quebec. ;
DATELINE: VALCARTIER, Que.
BYLINE: Marianne White
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 316

VALCARTIER, Que. — For the first time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday visited Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, home to the Royal 22nd regiment, leading the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The famed Quebec regiment, often referred to as the Van Doos, has about 2,300 troops serving in the province of Kandahar for a six-month tour.

Harper paid tribute to the soldiers' families. "We are here for you tonight," he told the crowd of 600 people that included mostly businesspeople, but few families.

"We don't say it often enough, but the families of the soldiers are heroes as much as the soldiers themselves."

Harper was speaking at a fundraiser for the Valcartier family centre. The centre offers help and counselling to the families of soldiers before and during their mission.

Valcartier was shaken in August when two of its soldiers, Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, died when their light-armoured vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device.

The two deaths, along with that of Pte. Simon Longtin a few days earlier, brought the true cost of the Afghan conflict home to Quebec, where support for the mission is the lowest in the country.

The Canadian government is under public and opposition pressure to bring the troops home when the current mandate of the Afghan mission expires in February 2009.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister's Office dismissed the assessment from Canada's top soldier that the training of Afghanistan's army would take five years longer than the 2011 objective. In the recent throne speech, the Conservatives pledged a two-year extension of Canada's military role in the NATO-led mission. Harper also has appointed a panel to make recommendations on the mission's future.

Gen. Rick Hillier, the chief of defence staff, said at the end of a three-day visit in Kandahar Thursday: "It's going to take 10 years or so" to build a national army ready to safeguard national security on its own. Hillier said Afghanistan is only about halfway to the 70,000 soldiers it needs to maintain peace in the country.

Seventy-one soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

Afghanistan panel open to non-military options; Advisory group considering Canada's future role in war-torn country

IDNUMBER 200710280007
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Jack Aubry
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 536

OTTAWA -- A blue-ribbon study panel headed by former deputy prime minister John Manley on Canada's future role in Afghanistan is open to broadening its scope to include non-military options in its report.

After a two-hour closed meeting yesterday with the five-member panel, representatives of Canada's voluntary sector organizations involved in Afghanistan reported as they left that Manley and the rest of the advisory panel seemed favourable to the idea of expanding its study beyond simply Canada's military role in the war-torn country.

One representative, who asked not to be identified, said he was certain after the meeting that the panel would broaden its mandate to include Canadian development and aid work in its study. Manley and the panel, which includes former Canadian ambassador to Washington Derek Burney, former cabinet minister Jake Epp, former broadcaster Pamela Wallin and former Privy Council clerk Paul Tellier, were not available for comment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed the non-partisan panel earlier this month, asking them to advise Parliament on how to proceed after the current deployment expires in February 2009. He called for a "full, open and informed" debate on the country's options.

Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the panel members readily acknowledged during the meeting that the government gave them the option to add to their mandate to study Canada's non-military role in Afghanistan.

"I don't think there is any question that the panel is open -- they listened with great care and openness to the input they were receiving, which was the diverse views of non-governmental organizations," said Barr.

Kevin McCort, senior vice-president of operations for CARE Canada, said the panel heard his organization's concerns about remaining independent and impartial, separate from Canada's military role in Afghanistan. He also felt the panel was open to the idea of broadening the scope of their study.

"The panel was engaged during our presentations. They are curious and they want to know everything. And for us, it was an opportunity to provide information and make sure they understand what we are doing," said McCort.

Barr said the groups would like to meet again with the panel after it returns from its upcoming tour of Afghanistan since "it will stir up questions" that they might help them answer.

"We want them to take a very close look at the current challenge of the confusion between the military effort and the humanitarian effort, which is sort of a toxic brew. There needs to be clarity in terms of who does what, and there needs to be independence for humanitarian actors and aid workers," said Barr.

"This is absolutely important. It is no good for projects to become targets."

Manley has already said that the panel would canvass a cross-section of specialists on foreign relations, defence and foreign aid and visit Afghanistan to meet with Canada's partners in the Afghan mission. For instance, the panel also met journalist Arthur Kent, who has reported regularly from Afghanistan since 1980, yesterday during another closed session.

The panel has been instructed to consider a number of factors, including the "sacrifices Canadians have made to date in Afghanistan, the potential for deterioration in security and development, Canada's obligations to NATO and the United Nations and the implications for Canada's international reputation."

Multiple protests target Canada's Afghan mission

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PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
NOTE: Harper honours military families, A8. Americans protest Iraqwar, C12
WORD COUNT: 178

OTTAWA — Antiwar protesters didn't exactly fill the streets, but they did file through many downtown arteries across the country yesterday to protest Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan.

In Ottawa, about 100 determined protesters met at the National Gallery of Canada in the early afternoon, part of a collective group of protests that Canadian Peace Alliance organizers were calling the Pan-Canadian Day of Action Against War in Afghanistan.

Those who attended the protest in Ottawa — and who put up with the on-and-off rain — represented various ages.

Robert Batsch, 49, brought his daughters Jamie, 18, and Robyn, 12, to show their collective displeasure with the situation in Afghanistan.

Batsch said he did not like the role Canada was taking in the war, and that Canada's military should stick to peacekeeping and stay away from military actions.

His daughter Jamie said the war had gone on far too long and the federal government was not paying attention to the voice of its people.

"They shouldn't be making decisions that not everyone agrees with," she said.

The rally lasted about an hour and wound its way to the front of the Office of the Prime Minister.

About 200 protesters waved antiwar placards and chanted their way through the rain-drenched streets of downtown Montreal, while in Calgary, marchers also demanded the pullout of Canadian troops.

U.S., Afghan forces kill 80 Taliban fighters

IDNUMBER 200710280005
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 118

KABUL (Reuters) — U.S.-led coalition and Afghan troops killed some 80 Taliban fighters in a six-hour battle following an ambush in southern Afghanistan, the U.S. military said today.

Taliban fighters opened fire yesterday with machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades on the joint coalition and Afghan army patrol from a trench near Musa Qala in Helmand province, the most important town held by insurgents.

"The combined patrol immediately returned fire, manoeuvred, and employed close air support resulting in almost seven dozen Taliban fighters killed during a six-hour engagement," the U.S. military statement said.

Such large pitched battles are relatively rare in Afghanistan where the Taliban prefer to "shoot and scoot" before air strikes can be called in.

Predictions aren't what they used to be; 'Wacky weather' throws a curve at forecasters

IDNUMBER 200710280003
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: John Woods, CanWest News Service / Meteorologist Larry Romaniuk says it's not easy making long-range predictions. "In the last 20 or 30 years, we've seen a drastic increase in severe weather being reported. To catch these extremes is difficult, I don't deny it." ;
BYLINE: Kathryn Young
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 522

Weather forecasting is a tricky business at best, but it's even more challenging with climate change thrown into the mix, according to Larry Romaniuk, a retired meteorologist whose predictions for 2008 are featured in the new Harrowsmith Truly Canadian Almanac.

"It's not easy, I'll tell you that, especially in the longer range," said Romaniuk, whose 37 years with Environment Canada took him across the country.

"In the last 20 or 30 years, we've seen a drastic increase in severe weather being reported. To catch these extremes is difficult, I don't deny it."

His predictions for the coming year differ from the Canadian edition of the American Farmers' Almanac, based in Maine. While Romaniuk predicts close to normal snowfall on the Prairies and normal precipitation in B.C. this winter, for example, the Farmers' Almanac predicts a quarter to half the normal precipitation for those areas.

Farmers' Almanac editor Peter Geiger said there will always be differences in predictions. "We're not going to be the same -- we do it differently," said Geiger.

The first Farmers' Almanac editor in 1818 devised a proprietary formula, still in use, based on sunspots, moon phases, planet positions and other astronomical and atmospheric factors to predict weather two years in advance.

The Old Farmers' Almanac also has a Canadian edition that takes into account solar flares and a secret formula devised in 1792 and kept in a strong box in New Hampshire, said editor Jack Burnett. Although accuracy is usually about 80 per cent, he said it has slipped in recent years to 75 per cent, but is getting back on track.

"The weather's been kind of wacky," said Burnett.

Romaniuk doesn't include sunspots, sunflares or any secret formulas, preferring to base his Canadian forecasts on historical weather data, his own experience, and especially the sophisticated computer models developed

by scientists.

"We'll just have to wait and see [who is right]," he said with a laugh.

Readers of Country Guide magazine, where he's been making long-range forecasts for the past 12 years, assessed his accuracy at 75 per cent, although he gives himself a more generous 80 per cent, give or take a day.

"If I do hit a severe event, I give myself a bonus of five per cent," he said. "And if I don't hit it, then I subtract five per cent."

Dubbed the "first homegrown almanac for country dwellers" rather than farmers, the Canadian version includes articles on microbreweries (urging you to drink locally), eco-nomics (how to live green), a Canadian soldier's memories of Afghanistan, encouraging pollinators in your garden, tales of Canadian monsters, book reviews, the differences between coffee customers at the local diner, Tim Horton's and Starbucks, weather sayings from different provinces, and rural hometown tours by 10 celebrities, including Rita MacNeil, Randy Bachman and Gordie Howe.

One particularly helpful article on "Ductigami" (not to be confused with origami) shows how to make pet raingear out of duct tape. And, only in Canada, curling humour.

Geiger said he'd heard of the Canadian almanac but hasn't seen one yet and doesn't know if it will cut into his circulation of 250,000 north of the border.

Published by Harrowsmith Country Life magazine, 100,000 copies of the almanac have been printed. No sales reports are available yet, although 4,500 copies were preordered before it went on sale in September.

Deeper and deeper into Afghanistan; How Canada's 'exit strategy' brought our troops to the killing fields of Kandaha

IDNUMBER 200710280053
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: The Citizen's Weekly: Books
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: (The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar By Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang) ; Colour Photo: John D Mchugh, Agence France–Presse, Getty Images / Canadian Soldiers on Patrol in Northern Kandahar ;
BYLINE: Peter McKenna
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 1166

The Book

The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar

By Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang

Viking Canada, \$35

If you were to listen to former prime minister Jean Chrétien tell it, the reason Canadian soldiers are dying in bloody Kandahar province is because of Paul Martin's dithering. Had Martin moved more swiftly, instead of waiting until all the other Afghan sectors had been claimed by Canada's casualty-averse NATO allies, members of our armed forces would be peacekeeping in the north today instead of warring in the dangerous south.

But in their new book, *The Unexpected War*, University of Toronto professor Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, a former chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, have a different take on the Kandahar deployment. They argue that it wasn't so much Martin's indecision that was to blame as it was the year-long bureaucratic infighting between the Department of National Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs over the precise location and mandate of Canada's Afghan commitment.

Additionally, no one in either government department expected that southern Afghanistan would turn into a deadly war zone. This critical point about an unexpected war, and what that says about our foreign and defence policy establishment, is hammered home over and over again by Stein and Lang. As they put it, "Canada slipped into war in Afghanistan, step by step, incrementally, without fully understanding that it was going to war, until it woke up to mounting casualties and grim battles."

The authors also make clear that if this was anyone's war, it was Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier's Afghan adventure—and not Paul Martin's. The former PM disagreed with much of Hillier's selling job and didn't think that Afghanistan was something the Canadian military should be involved in, especially when humanitarian calamities in Darfur and Haiti were more pressing.

From the beginning of the book, it becomes very clear that senior Canadian military officials pushed very hard for the federal government to make a military contribution to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March of 2003 and to avoid joining the Kabul-based International Security Assistance Force like the plague. The military brass felt Canada would find it difficult to get its forces out of the ill-defined, semi-peacekeeping Kabul mission once they committed to ISAF. Instead, they pushed very hard to join the American forces in Kandahar province.

We also learn that these same officials knew precious little about Afghanistan's troubled history of tribal warfare, resistance to outside invaders or foreigners, or Afghan expertise in guerrilla insurgency. Shockingly, no one at DND or Foreign Affairs had anticipated what former defence minister Bill Graham would later describe as the eventual "Iraqization of Afghanistan," with its suicide bombings and heavy fighting — preferring instead to label it "a more robust peace support role" for Canada's armed forces.

More controversially, Stein and Lang inform us that former U.S. secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon had no objections to Canada sitting out the Iraq invasion — as long as it took up the leadership of ISAF in the Kabul region for one year and thus freed up U.S. forces for the Iraq campaign. The Canadian government agreed to the Kabul commitment its military leaders had strenuously opposed. As the authors rightly point out: "This was a real opportunity for Canada to show international leadership, and it would help get Canada off the hook on Iraq." Thus was spawned the so-called "Afghanistan solution" to Canada's sticky political problem of avoiding a military commitment in Iraq.

In terms of Afghanistan, they write that both the U.S. and Canadian militaries embraced the Pentagon-inspired Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model for the Afghan provinces. The U.S. saw it as a way to get the allies in and the Americans out and the Canadian military viewed it as an exit strategy from its ISAF leadership role in Kabul. From DND's standpoint, it would permit Canada to reduce its military deployment to 200 from its ISAF commitment of 2,000 and to find a more manageable spot for its mission.

"What no one realized at the time was that, far from being an exit strategy to a smaller, safer mission, the PRT would lead the Canadian Forces deeper and deeper into the most dangerous part of Afghanistan," write the authors.

Eventually, the military recommended Kandahar for the PRT in late 2004 — at the time, it was not the violence-prone province that it would soon turn out to be. According to Stein and Lang, though, it would be the newly-appointed chief of defence staff, Gen. Hillier, who would persuade Paul Martin "to send Canada's military deeper and deeper into the conflict in Afghanistan." They also argue that Hillier convinced Stephen Harper to continue the combat mission in Kandahar beyond the initial 2007 withdrawal date.

There is an uncomfortable and prickly thread that the authors weave throughout the book — namely, that Canada must undertake certain actions internationally, often with the forceful prodding or manipulation of Canada's military leadership, so as to please the White House and the Pentagon.

In the words of the authors: "Canada's military missions were largely, if not exclusively, determined on the basis of Ottawa's relationship with the United States ... Afghanistan could have been anywhere. It was no more than a spot on the map."

They go on to make the disturbing point that DND is now largely driving foreign policy in Ottawa, that Foreign Affairs has badly lost its way and influence, and that greater civilian oversight of the military is desperately needed today.

The Unexpected War is a fine piece of work — well-written, engaging, informative and thorough (supported by inside information and insightful personal interview material). For anyone interested in a first-hand account of Canada's road to Kandahar — and the political and bureaucratic machinations that accompanied it

Deeper and deeper into Afghanistan; How Canada's 'exit strategy' brought our troops to the killing fields of K

— this book is a must read.

As such, my criticisms of the narrative are mostly piddling: It could have made a better effort to utilize Paul Cellucci's book, *Unquiet Diplomacy*, on his tenure as U.S. ambassador to Canada; formulated a more revealing analysis of why Harper wanted to extend the mission to 2009; discussed DND's \$25-million PR budget for selling the war to Canadians; and provided a stronger concluding chapter to tie all the key points together.

Before the Harper government and members of Parliament vote on any extension of Canada's Afghan mission to 2011, they should first read *The Unexpected War*. More to the point, they should take careful heed of what the authors warn: "The life cycles of insurgencies are not a year or two or three, but a decade or a generation, and the Canadian Forces are now on the frontlines of that insurgency."

Peter McKenna is an associate professor in the department of political studies at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown.

Caption Only

IDNUMBER 200710280014

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.10.28

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen / PROTESTING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: About 100 demonstrators met at the National Gallery of Canada yesterday afternoon for a peace rally in protest of the war in Afghanistan. The march, which began at the gallery and made its way through the Byward Market, was part of the Pan-Canadian Day Of Action Against War In Afghanistan. Anti-war demonstrations organized by the Canadian Peace Alliance took place in more than 20 cities and towns across the country, all united under the call for the withdrawal of Canadian troops. ;

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

Press Gallery undeterred by PM's snub; Five Tory MPs attend annual dinner

IDNUMBER 200710280008
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.28
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
BYLINE: William Lin and Tony Atherton
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 597

With Prime Minister Stephen Harper snubbing the annual Press Gallery dinner last night, two Conservative ministers received a standing ovation just for showing up.

The annual event, held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, was hosted by Radio Canada reporter Daniel Lessard, who joked that other Tory ministers had dietary reasons for not coming. "They weren't serving chicken," he said.

The brave attendees were Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon and Minister of Labour Jean-Pierre Blackburn, who were joined by three other Tory MPs, Michael Chong, John Williams and Lee Richardson.

Of the three party leaders who attended — NDP leader Jack Layton, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, and Green party chief Elizabeth May — only Mr. Layton and Mr. Dion dared give speeches.

This comes as no surprise. With the demise of the off-the-record nature of the affair, many politicians now see their involvement as a potential liability. The Press Gallery admitted attendance this year was down, but said it had sold 450 tickets, more than enough to break even.

"When the prime minister cancelled, I think everyone in his caucus saw that as a signal not to attend, which was unfortunate because the press gallery dinner is a long-standing event," said Citizen reporter Glen McGregor, who attended last night.

"It's a good opportunity for people to be self-deprecating, and that only endears them with everybody." CTV's Mike Duffy agrees. He has attended the event yearly since 1971, and said the event has changed.

"It used to be that it was off the record and that politicians would come and say outrageous things aimed at reporters and they would kind of let their hair down," he said.

The dinner was once an almost weekend-long drunk in which the men in power and the men who wrote about them (female journalists weren't invited) donned tuxedos to engage in locker-room banter — all under a veil of absolute secrecy.

After dinner, the press gallery would mount an outrageous variety show. In 1962, with the U.S. civil rights movement well under way, the whole cast got itself up in black face to put on a minstrel show. In 1925, the unscheduled entertainment was Mackenzie King dancing on the table.

Over the years, the boozy old-boys club of off-the-record sniggering and intemperate carousing was worn away by the incursions of sobriety, journalistic ethics, political correctness and public exposure.

By the early '90s, the dinner was seen as an anachronism. Media outlets protested the off-the-record nature (even if their reporters did not). For two years running, prime minister Brian Mulroney declined to attend, raising questions of the affair's survival.

Ironically, when the dinner abandoned its secrecy in 1994, it enjoyed a revival. It became a place where politicians might score some points with an audience broader than a bunch of jaded journalists.

"I think the dinner has changed," Mr. Duffy said last night, "but it hasn't declined. I think that was the original fear. It's a gala with people very elegantly dressed. And it's moved out of the locker room and moved into the boardroom, or cabinet room." Among the elegant in attendance last night was Belinda Stronach. Recovering from breast cancer surgery, Ms. Stronach looked stunning in a black gown with a plunging neckline. Other attendees included U.S. ambassador David Wilkins, Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams, Chief of Defence Gen. Rick Hillier, and Afghanistan's ambassador, Omar Samad.

"It's really sad the prime minister isn't here tonight," said Mr. Duffy. "The fact is the prime minister is a very funny guy." And he is probably right. The last time Mr Harper did attend, he had the last laugh, describing the dinner as an affair where "people who aren't funny tell jokes to people with no sense of humour."

Around the World

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A9

SECTION: City

WORD COUNT: 268

CP Wire Chrysler workers settle DETROIT -- Despite significant dissent among some of its workers, United Auto Workers members narrowly passed a four-year contract agreement with Chrysler LLC on Saturday, leaving Ford Motor Co.

as the last automaker to negotiate with in this year's round of contract talks.

The union and Chrysler reached agreement Oct. 10 following a six-hour countrywide strike. Like the agreement ratified earlier by General Motors Corp. workers, the Chrysler contract establishes a union-run trust to cover retirees' health care and allows the company to pay lower wages to about 11,000 non-core, non-assembly workers.

Sudan declares ceasefire SIRTE, Libya -- The Sudanese government committed to an immediate ceasefire in Darfur at the opening of peace talks on Saturday, but the expected announcement was not met by similar pledges from rebels, who largely boycotted the UN-brokered negotiations.

The talks are aimed at ending over four years of fighting that have killed more than 200,000 people in the western Sudanese region of Darfur.

80 Taliban killed in battle KABUL, Afghanistan -- Officials say U.S.-led coalition forces have killed about 80 Taliban fighters during a six-hour battle near Musa Qala, a Taliban-controlled town in southern Afghanistan. It is the world's largest poppy growing region.

Home holds coin treasure WINDBER, Pa. -- Talk about throwing away money. Piles of old coins worth as much as US\$200,000 were found in a long-abandoned home, including scores that the owner had apparently thrown down a hole in the wall.

-- From the news services {Detroit MI}

Around Canada

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A6

SECTION: City

WORD COUNT: 251

CP Wire PM visits Van Doos VALCARTIER, Que. — For the first time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Saturday visited Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, home to the Royal 22nd regiment, leading the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

The famed Quebec regiment, often referred to as the Van Doos, has about 2,300 troops serving in the province of Kandahar for a six-month tour.

Harper paid tribute to the families of the soldiers who he said are doing "a difficult job" in Afghanistan.

Child-seat removal CALGARY — Bumbo International, manufacturer of the popular Bumbo Baby Sitter, has announced it is temporarily removing the popular sitter from store shelves to update the instructions.

The company says it is not defective and does not need to be returned.

Therefore, no refunds are being offered.

The company is strengthening the wording of the instructions to emphasize that the Bumbo Baby Seat should never be used on any elevated surface such as a table, countertop or chair because children can get out of the seat and fall.

Plane crash kills three INVERMERE, B.C. — A small plane has crashed in B.C.'s interior, killing all three people on board.

Family members identified two of the victims as 63-year-old William Wood and his 37-year-old son David, both of Calgary.

Free mail to soldiers EDMONTON — Family and friends of soldiers in Afghanistan can mail them parcels and letters for free until Jan. 11, 2008, Ottawa said Friday.

Families can also use the service to reach out to soldiers serving in any war zone, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Sinai Peninsula, Jerusalem and on Canadian ships at sea.

— From the wire services

At last, our own almanac Winnipegger offers homegrown long-term weather forecast

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A3

SECTION: Life

WORD COUNT: 635

Staff Reporter Kathryn Young Weather forecasting is a tricky business at best, but it's even more challenging with climate change thrown into the mix, according to Winnipegger Larry Romaniuk, a retired meteorologist whose predictions for 2008 are featured in the new Harrowsmith Truly Canadian Almanac.

"It's not easy, I'll tell you that, especially in the longer range," said Romaniuk, whose 37 years with Environment Canada took him across the country. "In the last 20 or 30 years, we've seen a drastic increase in severe weather being reported. To catch these extremes is difficult, I don't deny it." His predictions for the coming year differ from the Canadian edition of the American Farmers' Almanac, based in Maine. While Romaniuk predicts close-to-normal snowfall on the Prairies and normal precipitation in B.C. this winter, for example, the Farmers' Almanac predicts a quarter to half the normal precipitation for those areas.

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"We're not going to be the same — we do it differently," said Geiger. The first Farmers' Almanac editor in 1818 devised a proprietary formula, still in use, based on sunspots, moon phases, planet positions and other astronomical and atmospheric factors to predict weather two years in advance.

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Although accuracy is usually about 80 per cent, he said it has slipped in recent years to 75 per cent, but is getting back on track.

"The weather's been kind of wacky," said Burnett.

Romaniuk doesn't include sunspots, sun flares or any secret formulas, preferring to base his Canadian forecasts on historical weather data, his own experience, and especially the sophisticated computer models developed by scientists.

"We'll just have to wait and see (who is right)," he said with a laugh.

Readers of Country Guide magazine, where he's been making long-range forecasts for the past 12 years, assessed his accuracy at 75 per cent, although he gives himself a more generous 80 per cent, give or take a day.

"If I do hit a severe event, I give myself a bonus of five per cent," he said. "And if I don't hit it, then I subtract five per cent." Bridget Wayland, editor of the Canadian almanac, said she has every confidence in Romaniuk's predictions over the Americans.

"Time will tell," she said, adding that it was high time Canadians had a thoroughly Canadian almanac.

"We weren't satisfied with having a nominally Canadian version of the Farmers' Almanac. We thought we could do it better." Dubbed the "first homegrown almanac for country-dwellers" rather than farmers, the Canadian version includes articles on microbreweries (urging you to drink locally), "eco-nomics" (how to live green), a Canadian soldier's memories of Afghanistan, encouraging pollinators in your garden, tales of Canadian monsters, book reviews, the differences between coffee customers at the local diner, Tim Hortons and Starbucks, weather sayings from different provinces, and rural hometown tours by 10 celebrities, including Rita MacNeil, Randy Bachman and Gordie Howe. One particularly helpful article on "Ductigami" (not to be confused with origami) shows how to make pet rain gear out of duct tape. And, only in Canada, curling humour.

Geiger said he'd heard of the Canadian almanac but hasn't seen one yet and doesn't know if it will cut into his circulation of 250,000 north of the border.

"Public relations-wise, it would be nice to say everything is all-Canadian, but I try to think of the almanac as being North American in its taste," he said. "We have a lot in common." Published by Harrowsmith Country Life magazine, 100,000 copies of the almanac have been printed. No sales reports are available yet, although 4,500 copies were preordered before it went on sale in September.

— CanWest News Service

Winnipegger lends a hand to the guys in khaki

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A1

SECTION: Sunday

WORD COUNT: 386

Lindsey Wiebe Lindsey Wiebe KANDAHAR — Daniel Lindsay had his reasons for setting aside his medical work in Winnipeg and picking up some extra shifts in Kandahar — and the money isn't one of them.

"I wanted to help these guys out," said the Health Sciences Centre radiologist, gesturing to the soldiers around him. "That's the bottom line." Lindsay is one of five civilians working as specialists at the Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit, the hospital at Kandahar Airfield where most of Canada's roughly 2,500 soldiers in Afghanistan are based.

The slim 51-year-old with a ponytail doesn't quite blend in with the camouflage-clad troops, despite his khakis and flak jacket.

But the father of three is on his third trip to Afghanistan, the second of which was just a few months ago.

Lindsay, who grew up with a military father, said he feels a deep affinity for the soldiers who will be his co-workers and patients.

"The military people over here are almost uniformly conscientious and caring," he said. "And it's really a very motivated group of individuals who are trying to actually make the world better.

"I mean it's quite interesting... you know, the cynicism that so much of the rest of the population has is not expressed with the guys on the ground here, I find." Back in Winnipeg, Lindsay balances his work at HSC with duties as director of the Selkirk and District General Hospital. He's half of a well-travelled medical couple — his partner Kim has served overseas a number of times with Doctors Without Borders.

At the Role 3 MMU, Lindsay's work involves doing X-rays and CT scans for the predominantly Afghan patients who come through the doors, as well as international troops from the base.

Working at a military hospital has its challenges, said Lindsay, one of which is staying emotionally detached while witnessing "what man can do to man." "If you start to let that empathy sink in, it's difficult to see the situation that the Afghans find themselves in," he said.

There's no additional pay for the radiologist for serving in Afghanistan, and the workload is substantial: he will be on call at the hospital 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But for Lindsay, his work is the ultimate payoff.

"I originally came because I thought that the guys here should get the same kind of care that the rest of us are getting in Canada," he said. "They're putting themselves on the line for us." lindsey.wiebe@freepress.mb.ca

No east or west on Kandahar wards Even suspected Taliban soldiers get Canadian care

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A1

SECTION: Sunday

WORD COUNT: 841

Lindsey Wiebe Lindsey Wiebe KANDAHAR — After a few nerve-racking nights of rocket attacks, the sky is mercifully dark above the Kandahar Airfield hospital, but the deep drone of a helicopter signals that new patients are on the way.

A cluster of Canadian medics waits at the hospital entrance, chatting casually at first, but quieting as an ambulance pulls up.

Then the group moves into action, quickly unloading a motionless man with a bruised, bloodied face, then an unconscious 12-year-old boy, who lies shirtless on a stretcher, looking thin and fragile.

The victims, both Afghans, are rushed off to a trauma bay. They were hurt in a motorcycle accident. Maybe it was a run-of-the-mill traffic collision, or perhaps the result of a roadside bomb, a common occurrence in Kandahar province.

Treating locals is a daily occurrence at the Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit, where 85 per cent of patients are not Canadian or even international soldiers, but Afghans.

"Canadian casualties don't add much to our workload," said Maj.

Sandra West, an Ottawa physician working at the hospital.

In fact, most of the medics' time is spent treating Afghan soldiers and police wounded in battle.

"The Afghans bear the brunt of the fighting, and you have to realize we've only seen the tip of the iceberg of their injuries," West said.

Of the 139 people working at the Role 3 MMU — Role 3 indicates specialized, hospital-level care — well over half are from Canada, with the rest from locales like the United States, Denmark and the Netherlands.

As facilities go, this one is undeniably bare-bones, with floors of poured concrete and walls built with raw, knotted lumber, covered with posters and charts.

It's nearly impossible to rid the place of the desert dust that coats every surface in Kandahar, along with the occasional invasions of nature. In one corner, a confused flying cricket hops against a supply shelf.

"Nothing is sterile in this environment, but we try to keep it as clean as possible," West said.

When the dust is cleared away, the equipment contained within the hospital's rough exterior is on par with any you'd find in Canada, like a new CT scanner, a diagnostic tool shipped in from Halifax.

"The walls are just the shell," said Lt.-Col. Errol Villeneuve, the officer in charge of in-patient services.

Most Afghans who come to the hospital were involved in accidents alongside NATO forces, though some are sent over from the overburdened Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar City, a facility that has gained attention for its poor condition and lack of medical equipment.

In Role 3's well-equipped intensive care unit, a young woman lies with her head swaddled in bandages, a man standing attentively at her side. It's an area used to treat amputations, broken limbs, facial, head and abdominal injuries — all typically caused by explosions or bullet wounds.

It's not quite what the Canadians, most military but some civilian, see back home.

"They get the MVAs (motor vehicle accidents), we get the IEDs (improvised explosive devices)," West said. "And we get a few more gunshot wounds than you see in the average Canadian emergency. Quite a few more." While Role 3 is up to North American standards, most Canadian and international troops don't stay there for long. Those with serious injuries are typically airlifted to Germany after a few days for better treatment.

But for Kandahar residents, the military hospital is as good as it gets, a troubling reality for the doctors who treat them.

Despite substantial improvements in health care since the fall of the Taliban, the average life expectancy in Afghanistan is still just 43 years.

The country has the world's second highest rate of women dying in childbirth, and while infant mortality has dropped an impressive 19 per cent in recent years, 135 out of every 1,000 Afghan children still die before their first birthday.

Even for patients who leave the hospital healed, "life could be very harsh after that," said Lt.-Col. Charles Gendron, a deputy commanding officer, also from Ottawa.

At a military hospital, both staff and facilities tend to work double-duty, with medics driving ambulances when needed.

The hospital's isolation room, typically used to hold patients with communicable diseases, also serves as a private chamber to keep Afghan women patients apart from men on the ward.

There's also a third unusual function for the tiny room — as a holding cell for injured Taliban detainees, with guard standing outside the sole entrance to ensure no one escapes.

Treating wounded Taliban soldiers is part of the job at the Role 3 MMU, and it's a role that can take an emotional toll on staff.

"Whatever enemy that is wounded has to then be treated the same as our own," Gendron said.

Cpl. Karine Gignac, a medical technician, said she sometimes finds it tough to reconcile the military's work in Afghanistan with the treatment she offers to injured Taliban fighters.

"We have to take care of them as we would any other patient," said the 27-year-old.

"To me, it's the hardest part of my job. Not treating them, but to understand why." However, there are moments of satisfaction and even joy at the hospital. Last month, an Afghan woman went into labour while being treated at Role 3 MMU. It was the first baby born inside the hospital, and the delivery went off without a hitch, never mind that assisting childbirth is outside the medics' usual duties.

"When a baby's coming, it doesn't take much set-up," laughed West.

Despite the challenges of offering impartial treatment while a war rages outside the hospital walls, there's a high level of job satisfaction at Role 3 MMU.

"That's the reason why we do it," said Capt. Brandy McKenna, a medical liaison officer from Saskatoon. "It's kind of like the height of your military experience." "People are so motivated to be here," Gignac said.

"I think it's something Canadians should be proud of, that hospital." lindsey.wiebe@freepress.mb.ca
{ Kandahar AFGHANISTAN }

Afghan panel seeks public input Can offer submissions on website; no open sessions for Manley group

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.28

PAGE: A7

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 370

CP Wire John Ward OTTAWA — John Manley's Afghanistan panel is setting up a website to take written submissions from the public, the head of a Canadian development group said Saturday.

The panel has said it had no plans for public hearings, but Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the website will allow for public input.

Barr and representatives of about a dozen other Canadian aid groups met Manley and his panel on Saturday. They were told an Internet site will be running soon and will accept comments and recommendations.

"Plainly, if they put their address on the website and ask for submissions, they're going to get them from the general public," Barr said.

Barr said the aid groups had a lively two hours behind closed doors with Manley and his four fellow committee members.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister and one-time leadership contender, earlier this month to look at the future of Canada's commitment in Afghanistan.

At the time, Harper said he wanted the panel to consider four options:

- z Keep training Afghan troops and police to be self-sustaining when Canadian troops withdraw.

- z Focus on reconstruction in Kandahar with another NATO country taking over security.

- z Shift Canadian security and reconstruction to another region of Afghanistan.

- z Withdraw the main body of Canada's troops in February 2009.

Barr said he urged Manley and the panel to look beyond those choices.

"The options... that were given to them at the front end all had to do with... the Canadian military in Afghanistan," Barr said.

"We were there to say to them that you need to put in your option category actively the search for a political consensus in Afghanistan, a national peace process and how Canada could support that kind of process." Barr also said it's important to break perceived linkages between the military and development, which can become intertwined in people's minds.

"If there is a sort of military signature on aid... then the projects themselves can become targets in an insurgency war. As projects become targets, citizens and civilians are targeted themselves..."

Afghan panel seeks public input Can offer submissions on website; no open sessions for Manley group

and we do the opposite of what we intend with aid." Meanwhile, umbrellas outnumbered placards as hundreds of rain-soaked demonstrators hit the streets of Montreal on Saturday to denounce Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

Close to 300 protesters waving signs scrawled with messages such as "Canada out! Stop killing civilians!" and "War isn't a solution" marched through the downtown core as well as in cities across Canada.

"We have been dragged into a war by the Americans and we've lost our role as peacekeepers, which was a very distinguished role for Canadians," said demonstrator Joseph Baker.

— The Canadian Press

Bhutto defies extremist threat Visits village of ancestors despite danger

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PAGE: A9

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 471

CP Wire Stephen Graham GARHI KHUDA BAKSH, Pakistan — Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto visited her ancestral village Saturday amid tight security and sprinkled flower petals on her father's tomb on her first trip to provincial Pakistan since the bloody assassination attempt against her nine days ago.

Bhutto vowed to fight Islamic extremism — a call that came as pro-Taliban militants in another corner of the country executed 13 captives in response to a military assault against their leader.

Bhutto returned Oct. 18 from an eight-year exile to a massive welcome rally in Karachi, shattered by a suicide bombing that killed 143 people.

She has since been largely confined to her residence in that city, but eager to start her campaign for parliamentary elections slated for January.

"There is an attempt by the extremists and the terrorists to dictate who should be allowed to hold public meetings and who should not," Bhutto told journalists Saturday evening at her vast family compound.

"... The agenda of the terrorists is to stop democratic parties from flourishing so they can continue to grow." Pakistan has a choice between "creeping Taliban-ization" or standing up to save Pakistan, she said. "I believe the message of Islam is peace, and I hope that together as a nation we can work for peace." Security was tight Saturday, but throngs of people still swarmed around Bhutto at her family's white-domed marble mausoleum in the village of Garhi Khuda Baksh.

Wearing her trademark white headscarf, Bhutto smiled and waved to supporters from her SUV's sunroof with black metal sheets shielding her on the left and right, and a female aide standing in front of her.

Her convoy was flanked by paramilitary troops in white pickup trucks with machine-guns mounted on top. Other guards clung to the sides of the SUV.

Hundreds of armed private security guards surrounded the mausoleum and formed a tight circle around the opposition leader as she got out of her vehicle, pushing their way through a chaotic crowd of supporters and journalists.

In the mausoleum she paid respects to her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's first popularly elected leader who was overthrown by the military and hanged in 1979.

During her 45-minute visit, she said prayers and spread pink flower petals on his tomb and those of other relatives.

She later went to a balcony and waved to about 2,000 supporters.

Banners depicting Bhutto and her late father covered walls and hung from lampposts.

Bhutto defies extremist threat Visits village of ancestors despite danger

"I just wanted a glimpse of Bhutto from afar," said Ali Hassan, 52. "It seems very beautiful that she has come here after being away so long." Bhutto, whose two governments between 1988 and 1996 toppled amid allegations of mismanagement and massive corruption, returned to Pakistan after talks with President Gen. Pervez Musharraf yielded an amnesty on pending graft cases against her. After elections, they could team up to fight Islamic extremism.

Militant violence has become increasingly common, not just in the volatile frontier region bordering Afghanistan, but in major cities such Karachi and the capital, Islamabad.

— The Associated Press

It's time NATO members started acting like allies

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BYLINE: ROGER COHEN
SOURCE: New York Times
WORD COUNT: 669

Remember the Wehrmacht? It was a formidable fighting force. The modern German army, the Bundeswehr, is also very effective. Thing is, it is reluctant to fight or even place itself in danger.

Given history, that might seem just fine. But in Afghanistan, where 3,200 Germans serve in a hard-pressed NATO force, a touch of "Bundesmacht" would be welcome.

Afghanistan is a divided country. The south and east are dangerous because Taliban forces are resurgent there; NATO casualties have been significant. The north and west are quieter; peacekeeping prevails. Tensions have grown between front-line alliance states fighting a war and those that are not.

The former group includes the United States, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands. The latter is dominated by Germany, Spain and Italy. The split gives a rough guide to parts of the world that still see military force as inextricable from international security and others that are now functionally pacifist.

"In Afghanistan, NATO solidarity collapses at the point of danger," said Julian Lindley-French, a military expert at the Netherlands Defence Academy. "There's no point planning robust operations worldwide if the burden is not shared. A lot of the German troops are little more than heavily armed traffic cops."

Canada, with about 2,500 soldiers in Afghanistan, has seen more than 70 killed. That is about three times the German losses and seven times the Italian. Britain has more than 80 dead, and the U.S. almost 450. These are eloquent numbers.

The Afghan mission has evolved. The United Nations mandate for the 40,000 NATO troops there speaks of the "maintenance of security" in the interests of "reconstruction and humanitarian efforts." Nowhere does it mention counterinsurgency or counterterrorism.

But with the Taliban regrouping, and support for it still arriving from Pakistani border areas, security has become inseparable from eliminating insurgents.

Some of this counterinsurgency toll is the work of U.S. and other special forces in the separate American-run Operation Enduring Freedom – the more secret of the Afghan campaigns. Still, NATO is at war here.

That, however, is a fact Europeans are reluctant to accept, just as the link between slaughter in Madrid, London or Amsterdam and the Afghan-Pakistani terror nexus seems unconvincing to many Europeans floating on an Iraq-comforted wave of moral smugness.

This month, the German Bundestag approved the extension of the mission for another year. But Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has not visited Afghanistan, prefers talk of trendy eco-problems. Tenuous German support for deployment is tied to maintaining the caveats with which the mission began: The army is here to help with security, reconstruction and good governance from a northern base. Building schools should be more central than killing Taliban. Soft power trumps hard.

Most military leaders would not argue with that. Afghanistan, six years after the toppling of the Taliban, stands at a tipping point: Only improved governance, a less corrupt police force and material progress will marginalize the back-to-the-past brigade.

But this under-resourced mission, on which NATO's future hinges, needs switch-hitters. Rigid interpretation of mandates ill serves a changing situation.

William Wood, the U.S. ambassador in Kabul, said, "The commitment to Afghanistan should be a full commitment," and "some of the caveats should be removed." He continued, "It would certainly be better if we could all co-operate together on precisely the same missions."

NATO defence ministers, meeting in the Netherlands, were being pressed this week by the U.S. defence secretary, Robert Gates, to provide more troops and helicopters. Those are needed. But at a deeper level, NATO members must decide whether they are in this together with an equal readiness to face danger.

If, for example, Germany, Italy and Spain were more flexible, some of their troops could be detached to provide a strategic reserve for the stormy south.

One German retort I've heard is that it's no good having the United States demand that its allies fight and die in southern Afghanistan when Washington refuses debate over the role of its pampered friend, Pakistan, in the violence.

That's a fair point. Still, it's time to bring on the Bundesmacht and past time for continental Europe to see through its pacifist mirage and accept that these are dangerous times demanding serious defence budgets and sacrifice.

Are karachi cops outmatched?; Pakistani police investigators seem to be out of their league in tracking down bomb plotters

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: AAMIR QURESHI, AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES /Pakistanis search in a Karachi mortuary for relatives missing since a suicide bombing aimed at former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's vehicle during a homecoming procession on Oct. 18. The bombing claimed 139 lives. Analysts say it is highly unlikely that those who planned the attack will be captured and convicted. "To be very honest, I have my doubts," said an official close to the investigation. ;

KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; FOREIGN RELATIONS

DATELINE: KARACHI, Pakistan

BYLINE: LAURA KING

SOURCE: Los Angeles Times

WORD COUNT: 929

The government of President Pervez Musharraf insists that those responsible for trying to kill former leader Benazir Bhutto in a bombing Oct. 18 that left 139 people dead will be brought to justice. But history suggests otherwise.

Of dozens of suicide bombings and other attacks that have taken place in Pakistan over the past several years, including a number of high-profile assassination attempts, very few such cases have been definitively solved.

One notable exception: two attempts in 2003 to kill Musharraf with bombs near his headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. The alleged mastermind was hunted down and shot to death months later by Pakistani security forces.

Analysts, together with current and former investigators and government officials, said it is highly unlikely that those who planned the attack against Bhutto, as she returned home from eight years in self-imposed exile, would be captured, tried and convicted. They cited imprecise investigative methods, the shifting nature of the many Islamic militant groups with the desire and motivation to kill Bhutto, the vagaries of the Pakistani judicial system and a degree of sympathy in some official quarters for the militants' cause.

"Are we going to try? Yes," said one Pakistani official who is close to the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Are we going to succeed? To be very honest, I have my doubts."

Bhutto and the government have cast suspicion on radical Islamists who are angered by her pro-Western stance and repelled by the idea of a woman in a leadership role.

But assuming that theory is correct, narrowing the list of suspects will be difficult and painstaking. Modern forensic methods are little used in Pakistan.

From the moment of the attack early Friday, the crime scene was tainted and trampled by hundreds of people, victims and rescuers. Amid panic and chaos, police made little effort to cordon off the area around the blasts, which took place on the main boulevard leading from Karachi's international airport to the center of the city.

"It wasn't exactly CSI – not Miami, or Las Vegas, or even some small town," said a western diplomat in Karachi, referring to the popular U.S. television crime series in which latex-gloved forensics experts minutely examine the tiniest of clues.

Bhutto, unharmed in the attack, was hustled from her damaged vehicle, which then sat by the roadside virtually unguarded for hours. By early morning, boys were swarming over the scene, collecting bolts and ball bearings sprayed in all directions by the force of the twin blasts. Cars and trucks passed within inches of the spot where the explosions occurred.

Bhutto has demanded that foreign investigators be brought in to help with the case. The U.S. and other western nations offered to provide technical assistance; the government rejected any outside aid.

Some analysts said Bhutto might have made a tactical error by going public with her demand.

"The implication, of course, was that she does not have confidence in the ability of Pakistani investigators," said retired Brig.-Gen. Naeem Salik, a scholar at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

"A private request might have been more effective – otherwise the government is in the embarrassing position of saying, 'Yes, we accept our inability to investigate properly.' "

At least initially, Karachi and provincial police took a lead role in the investigation, although a case of this scope is considered by many observers to be well beyond their abilities.

"The best detectives we have are the military and intelligence agencies. When they marshal their resources, they can put up a pretty impressive show," said Ayaz Amir, a Karachi-based columnist for the national Dawn newspaper.

"But investigation definitely isn't the strong suit of the local police; they're badly overstretched, and they wouldn't be counted as the world's most efficient."

Some of those with the technical skills to carry out the investigation, however, are likely to be compromised by ideology, said author Ahmed Rashid, who has written widely on the Taliban and other militant groups.

"The intelligence agencies are working at cross-purposes to one another, and some have people who are sympathetic to the Islamists," he said. "I think the prospects of getting to the bottom of this are very poor."

Bhutto, while being careful to avoid any direct accusations against Musharraf, has said she believes elements in his government were complicit in the attack.

The bombing came as her convoy moved at little more than a walking pace through enormous crowds that had turned out to greet her.

The 54-year-old former prime minister has claimed that the failure of streetlights, as the convoy approached the outskirts of Karachi after midnight, pointed to sabotage on the part of authorities.

Despite denials from the government, analysts say the notion of an accomplice or accomplices in a position of authority is by no means farfetched.

Are karachi cops outmatched?; Pakistani police investigators seem to be out of their league in tracking down

Musharraf has acknowledged that junior army and air force officers were involved in the plot to kill him in 2003. More recently, suicide bombings in the past three months targeting heavily fortified Pakistani military installations were believed by investigators to have been carried out with the help of insiders.

Bhutto received threats from militant groups before returning to Pakistan, and her lawyer, Farooq Naik, appealed Tuesday for better government protection for her. He cited a new threat against her, this one involving the prospective use of a female suicide bomber.

Militant groups operating in the tribal areas along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan have links with urban radical groups – ties that are particularly difficult to track in a teeming city like Karachi, with a population of at least 15 million and a long history as a base of Islamist militancy.

Even if suspects are caught and charged, Pakistani human rights groups say confessions are often unreliable because they are obtained through torture. Not infrequently, that leads to cases being declared closed when the actual culprits are still at large.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said Tuesday he was certain that the case would end with convictions.

A protest for peace

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: JOHN MORSTAD, THE GAZETTE / CROWD BRAVES SOGGYWEATHER
Protesters marched through heavy rain yesterday to protest against Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan. The marchers, about 200 in all, waved anti-war placards and chanted their way down Ste. Catherine St. to the U.S. consulate on René Lévesque Blvd. The protest was organized by the Collectif Échec à la guerre. ;

KEYWORDS: 0

SOURCE: The Gazette

WORD COUNT: 4

NO TEXT

Harper attends Valcartier fundraiser; Praises families; PM's first visit to home of Van Doos

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DATELINE:	VALCARTIER
BYLINE:	MARIANNE WHITE
SOURCE:	CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT:	266

For the first time yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, home to the Royal 22e Régiment.

The famed regiment, commonly known as the Van Doos, has 2,300 troops serving in the province of Kandahar for a six-month tour.

Last night, Harper paid tribute to the soldiers' families.

"We are here for you tonight," he told the crowd of 600 people that included many businessmen but few families.

"We don't say it often enough, but the families of the soldiers are heroes as much as the soldiers themselves."

Harper was speaking at a fundraiser for the Valcartier family centre. The centre offers help and counselling to the families of soldiers before and during their mission.

Valcartier was shaken in August when two of its soldiers, Master Warrant Officer Mercier and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, died when their light-armoured vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device.

The two deaths, along with that of Pte. Simon Longtin a few days earlier, brought the cost of the Afghan conflict home to Quebec, where support for the mission is the lowest in the country.

The Canadian government is under public and opposition pressure to bring the troops home when the current mandate of the Afghan mission expires in February 2009.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister's Office dismissed the assessment from Canada's top soldier that the training of Afghanistan's army would take five years longer than the 2011 objective.

In the recent throne speech, the Conservatives pledged a

two-year extension of Canada's military role in the NATO-led mission. Harper also has appointed a panel to make recommendations on the mission's future.

General Rick Hillier, the chief of defence staff, said at the end of a three-day visit in Kandahar Thursday: "It's going to take 10 years or so" to build a national army ready to safeguard national security on its own.

Hillier said Afghanistan has only about half the 70,000 soldiers it needs to maintain peace in the country.

Seventy-one soldiers and a Canadian diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

Support for Taliban waning; Suicide bombings; Tide turning in wake of deadly attacks

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KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS
DATELINE: SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan
BYLINE: KELLY CRYDERMAN
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 494

Capt. Philippe Sauvé points to the rocky patch of ground that had been covered with wounded Afghans – sitting up on chairs, lying in stretchers and bleeding with bomb blast injuries both serious and superficial.

Two weeks ago, a suicide bomber set off a massive explosion at a market in the border town of Spin Boldak, killing 11 and injuring dozens – a significant casualty number for a single blast. A fleet of pickup trucks transferred the wounded to Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak for first-aid treatment before being sent to Kandahar Airfield or a local hospital.

"At first, when they called us, they said there was 12 injured people, then there was 24 and finally there was 36," said Sauvé, second in command of the

Quebec-based reconnaissance squadron at the base.

Two hundred metres from the triage site, the Canadian captain's Afghan peer says he believes these types of attacks are turning the population against the Taliban.

Capt. Hezrat Wali, a former mujahedeen fighter who now commands an Afghan National Army reconnaissance company on the border, said he's confident the tide is turning against the Taliban in the border province.

During his recent patrols through local villages, his men have learned that villagers have sometimes offered their homes to the Taliban passing across the porous border with Pakistan. With the suicide attacks wounding and killing civilians, that is changing, Wali said.

"It's clear for all the people that the Taliban are not good people," Wali said through an interpreter. "Now the villagers are not willing to hide them."

A flourishing border crossing, Spin Boldak is often considered calm and safe by southern Afghanistan standards.

However the ferocity and impact of the blast two weeks ago, combined with other attacks in recent months, has been seen as an indication that violence in this border region is increasing.

Concerns are increasing about Taliban activity in the area, and the Canadians recently stepped up their presence in the border region spanning about 100 kilometres.

Part of the escalation is a Taliban push against Spin Boldak heavyweight Col. Abdul Razik, who heads the border police in the area and is an implacable foe of the Taliban, according to Canadian commanders.

This is also the time of year where many Taliban cross back into Pakistan after spending months in Afghanistan – to go home, rest or retrain.

While Canadians zero in on the security in Spin Boldak, the Americans at the base – who make up about 30 per cent of the population – focus on training Afghans. There is increasing emphasis on ensuring that Wali's forces and others can take on the Taliban by themselves.

U.S. Capt. Darren Towers of the Embedded Transition Team, which works with Afghans and Canadians on the base, is mentoring Wali alongside the Afghan commander's two dozen active troops. Many are experienced fighters, Towers said, but their organization could use some work.

"We spend a lot of time planning stuff. In their culture and experience, they just do things," Towers said. "It's just giving them the tools and the resources and the confidence."

While Afghan forces now back up the Canadian soldiers who go out to villages and monitor security checkpoints, Towers hopes it will be the Canadians who back up the Afghans within the year.

"In the past, it took a lot more effort on the coalition's side."

Panel asked to weigh non-military options; Studying future in war-torn country; John Manley expected to expand group's scope to include development and aid work

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DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: JACK AUBRY
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 514

A blue-ribbon study panel, headed by former deputy prime minister John Manley, about Canada's future role in Afghanistan is open to broadening its scope to include non-military options in its report.

After a two-hour closed meeting yesterday with the five-member panel, representatives of Canada's voluntary sector organizations involved in Afghanistan reported as they left that Manley and the rest of the advisory panel seemed open to the idea of expanding its study beyond simply Canada's military role in the war-torn country.

One representative, who asked not to be identified, said he was certain after the meeting that the panel would broaden its mandate to include Canadian development and aid work in its study. Manley and the panel, which includes former Canadian ambassador to Washington Derek Burney, former cabinet minister Jake Epp, former broadcaster Pamela Wallin and former Privy Council clerk Paul Tellier, were not available for comment.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed the non-partisan panel earlier this month, asking them to advise Parliament on how to proceed after the current deployment expires in February 2009. He called for a "full, open and informed" debate on the country's options.

Gerry Barr, president of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, said the panel readily acknowledged during the meeting that the government gave them the option to add to their mandate to study Canada's non-military role in Afghanistan.

"I don't think there is any question that the panel is open – they listened with great care and openness to the input they were receiving, which was the diverse views of non-governmental organizations," Barr said.

Kevin McCort, senior vice-president of operations at CARE Canada, said the panel heard his organization's concerns about remaining independent and impartial, separate from Canada's military role in Afghanistan. He also felt the panel was open to the idea of broadening the scope of their study.

"The panel was engaged during our presentations. They are curious and they want to know everything. And for us, it was an opportunity to provide information and make sure they understand what we are doing," McCort said.

Barr said the groups would like to meet again with the panel after it returns from its upcoming tour of Afghanistan since "it will stir up questions" that they might help them answer.

"We want them to take a very close look at the current challenge of the confusion between the military effort and the humanitarian effort, which is sort of a toxic brew. There needs to be clarity in terms of who does what and there needs to be independence for humanitarian actors and aid workers," Barr said.

"This is absolutely important. It is no good for projects to become targets."

Manley has already said that the panel would canvass a cross-section of specialists on foreign relations, defence and foreign aid and visit Afghanistan to meet with Canada's partners in the Afghan mission.

For instance, the panel also met journalist Arthur Kent, who has reported regularly from Afghanistan since 1980, yesterday morning during another closed session.

The panel has been instructed to consider a number of factors, including the "sacrifices Canadians have made to date in Afghanistan, the potential for deterioration in security and development, Canada's obligations to NATO and the United Nations, and the implications for Canada's international reputation.

Battlefield marches into the digital age

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KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: MATTHEW FISHER
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 1000

Canada's military has leaped into the 21st century, trading radios and maps with pins stuck in them for ultra-high-tech war rooms set up by the Quebec-based Royal 22e Régiment battle group in southern Afghanistan.

Here, commanders have access to constant data streams, real-time digitized maps and live video feeds from drones, satellites and Web cameras that travel with combat vehicles hunting the Taliban.

"We may still be in the mud and the buildings we use may be made of plywood, but what we have now is comparable to a combat battle centre on a frigate – or the bridge of the Starship Enterprise," said Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, the army's top general. "This is a huge step forward. In distance, it is light years."

"In time, we have moved decades with one step," Leslie said. "In terms of information, we are right up there with the Americans and British."

Several state-of-the art operations rooms have been set up by the Royal 22e Régiment, nicknamed the Van Doos.

The biggest is a digitized battle suite at the Kandahar Airfield, where soldiers have been working around the clock in shifts. Their eyes are fixed on dozens of small computer screens in a cool, hushed room. The room is dominated by several huge computer screens hung on the walls and a red light on the ceiling that turns on whenever contact with the enemy is expected or has begun, or when there are Canadian wounded or dead.

"If that red light is on, it means go to your battle stations; there is serious business to be done," said Major Pascal Larose, an armoured officer who gave the first extensive tour of the top-secret Provincial Operations Centre to a journalist. "And that light is on almost every day."

Larose's job is to keep the electronic marvels running, along with Capt. Fred Letourneau, a signaller and computer engineer.

"It is a big, big change in how we do things. What we have now is better situational awareness for everybody so everybody can make better decisions."

The Athena Tactical System, which was made in Canada, runs up to 100 times faster than the best Internet connection that Canadians have in their homes, Letourneau explained. It combines telephone communication, email and chat rooms for an unlimited number of people online at the same time, as well as video, data and a

website loaded with background information. It cannot be hacked into because it is an entirely enclosed system.

A key feature of the new system is a "blue force tracker," which marks the position of every Canadian vehicle. The vehicles, in turn, are fitted with transponders that communicate constantly over global positioning satellites. As friendly fire incidents are known in the military as "blue-on-blue" attacks, that is also the colour used to signify friendly forces.

Other colours and symbols are used to designate the location of enemy forces, improvised explosive devices, unexploded ordnance and other threats. All this information can be placed on digitized maps or laid over satellite images. It can also be made instantly available to commanders in their vehicles in the field.

The live video capability is particularly dazzling when it carries images from sophisticated airborne cameras, which can reveal in detail how battles with the Taliban are unfolding. There is also a video-conferencing capability lacking in similar new U.S. and British systems.

"Before we had to call everyone by radio to know where everyone was," said Lt.-Col. Alain Gauthier, who commands the Van Doos battle group. "This could take an hour and by then everybody had moved so the picture I got was obsolete. This gives me an instant visual that is much more effective and precise. It gives me the capacity to trace the threat and warn all our vehicles instantly."

Gauthier, however, conceded that the digital revolution will "not solve all the problems of Afghanistan."

Larose, who was involved in the first experiments with Athena two years ago, returned recently from a week in Alberta, where he briefed the next Canadian battle group about the new system it will inherit in February.

It is "ironic," Larose acknowledged, "that we are still getting killed by low-tech (attacks) while putting a high-tech system in place. But what are the number of IED explosions this high-tech capability is preventing? We will never really know, but hopefully this has stopped more explosions from hitting us than have hit us."

The Athena system, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and war, is certainly impressive. But it has also suffered some teething problems.

"There have been a lot of little glitches," Larose acknowledged.

One of the breakdowns the system suffered once it was up and running "was caused by sand."

If there is a power failure, the new electricity-hungry system has several backup generators. Before deploying, troops are also trained the old way, with maps and stickers.

Information overload is a potential issue that "can make a problem seem more complex." But Larose said, "if there is discipline, the solution will be based on better information."

The revolutionary Athena system heralds a new era in soldiering. One suggestion has been to install printers in vehicles so troops can be given the latest situational data or images of wanted Taliban insurgents, information they can take with them when they leave their vehicles to fight on the ground. Another possibility is that the situation in Afghanistan could be streamed back to commanders in Canada.

"They have videos from soldiers' helmets in the movies, and we have not done that yet," Letourneau said, adding it is now technically feasible.

"If a commander in the field needs to watch CNN, we will plug it in. Why not?" Larose noted. "We could always go back to the old way, but why have a '56 Mustang when you can have the latest model?"

AFGHAN MISSION

Panel studying Canada's future role in Afghanistan is asked to weigh non-military options.

Deadly suicide bombings are alienating many of the Taliban's Afghan supporters.

Details, Page A4

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OFFICIALS CONCERNED ABOUT DEEPENING ETHNIC DIVIDE

KABUL – Many former militia commanders and residents in northern Afghanistan have been hoarding weapons in violation of the country's disarmament laws, giving the excuse that they face a spreading Taliban insurgency from the south that government forces alone are too frail to stop, Afghan and Western officials say.

The talk of rearming underscores a deepening north-south ethnic divide that some diplomats and Afghan officials privately worry could lead the way to a shift of power back to warlords – and toward a countrywide armed conflict – if left unchecked.

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