

# Table of Contents

<u>Taliban to free S. Korean hostages.....</u>	1
<u>More than 100 Taliban killed, coalition says.....</u>	2
<u>Taliban agree to release hostages; South Korean church volunteers have been held captive since July 19.....</u>	4
<u>Yarmouth County students plan to honour slain soldiers.....</u>	6
<u>[Relatives of a group of 19 church volunteers kidnapped in Afghanistan cheer Tuesday in Sungram, South Korea, as they hear news of a deal to...]......</u>	7
<u>New vehicles will help Canadians disarm IEDs.....</u>	8
<u>Taliban: Group will be freed; Hostage deal hinges on South Korea pulling troops from Afghanistan by year's end.....</u>	10
<u>Taliban to release 19 kidnapped South Korean church workers.....</u>	12
<u>U.S.-led coalition claims over 100 Taliban killed.....</u>	13
<u>Canada buys vehicles to help cut down on roadside bombs.....</u>	14
<u>Snap end to war will bring chaos, death.....</u>	15
<u>Fallen Van Doos become fuel for political fray.....</u>	16
<u>Troops to get new defensive vehicles; Will help guard against Afghan roadside bombs.....</u>	18
<u>Deal reported reached for Taliban to release 19 kidnapped South Koreans.....</u>	19
<u>U.S.-led coalition says more than 100 Taliban killed in southern Afghanistan.....</u>	20
<u>Recent kidnappings of foreigners in Afghanistan.....</u>	22
<u>Canada buys special vehicles to help cut down on Afghan roadside bombs.....</u>	23
<u>Update:Adds condition of release.....</u>	25
<u>BC-Afghan-Battle.....</u>	26
<u>Duceppe a threat to Harper government.....</u>	27
<u>We need to stand our ground in Afghanistan.....</u>	29
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans; Seoul confirms it will withdraw troops, agrees to stop missionary work as part of hostage deal.....</u>	30

# Table of Contents

<u>Canadians get new bomb protection; U.S. vehicles to help troops in war zone.....</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>Portrait of soldier stolen.....</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors.....</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans in deal.....</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties.....</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties.....</u>	<u>39</u>
<u>Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors.....</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans in deal.....</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>Afghan war futile: Poll 49% of Canadians think it's a failure -- but opposition much higher in Europe.....</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties.....</u>	<u>45</u>
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans in deal.....</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors.....</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>Hockey night in CFB Oilers launch Tickets for Troops program.....</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors.....</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans in deal.....</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Inspiration for the troops.....</u>	<u>53</u>
<u>Wild Art.....</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties.....</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>WILD ART.....</u>	<u>57</u>
<u>Troops kill 100 militants in attack.....</u>	<u>58</u>
<u>Vehicles to help soldiers detect bombs.....</u>	<u>59</u>
<u>Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties.....</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>Taliban to free South Koreans in deal.....</u>	<u>62</u>

# Table of Contents

<u>Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors.....</u>	63
<u>Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan.....</u>	64
<u>Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan.....</u>	65
<u>Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan.....</u>	66
<u>Deal struck for the release of 19 South Korean hostages; Church members expected to be freed within the next few days.....</u>	67
<u>Words of support, gratitude go out to soldiers; Book has travelled the country collecting the well wishes of civilians and military personnel.....</u>	69
<u>Portrait of fallen soldier stolen.....</u>	71
<u>Surveillance drones not doing the job; Limitations heighten risk, soldiers say.....</u>	72
<u>Deal could free hostages today.....</u>	74
<u>Bomb-clearing vehicles expected in fall.....</u>	75
<u>Taliban say they'll release hostages.....</u>	76
<u>A death with larger meaning.....</u>	77
<u>S. Korea agrees to withdraw troops; Deal reached with Taliban to get 19 hostages released.....</u>	79
<u>Military to get anti-explosives vehicles; New system will benefit troops in Afghanistan.....</u>	81
<u>54 Edmonton soldiers off to Afghanistan.....</u>	83
<u>Soldiers say drone flaws put troops at risk; Supplier awaits Ottawa's approval for upgrade.....</u>	84
<u>Newfoundland premier leaves Liberal leader out on a limb; Planned joint blast at PM fizzles as meeting is closed.....</u>	86
<u>Surveillance drones fall short, soldiers say; Limits to capabilities put troops at risk during firefights with Taliban.....</u>	88
<u>Public invited to send messages to troops.....</u>	90
<u>Poppy yield indicates Afghanistan reality.....</u>	91
<u>War effort hurt by drug strategy; Record poppy crops show eradication effort has failed while increasing Taliban support.....</u>	92

# Table of Contents

<u>More than 100 Afghan insurgents killed: U.S.</u> .....	94
<u>Final Van Doos ship out to Afghanistan</u> .....	95
<u>Canadian military to get anti-explosive vehicles</u> .....	96
<u>New vehicles can detect, neutralize roadside bombs</u> .....	97
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: STAFF: WILL CANADA LEAVE THEM BEHIND? Interpreters give their lives for little pay and no glory</u> .....	98
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION Afghan developments</u> .....	101
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: CELEBRATION IN SEOUL, CONCERN IN KANDAHAR Hostage deal fuels Taliban legitimacy Seeing militants treated as negotiating partners worries observers and Afghans alike</u> .....	102
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION Captives far from home</u> .....	104
<u>Sizing up Harper</u> .....	106
<u>No Afghan exploitation</u> .....	107
<u>TELECOM Cellphones transforming Afghan life</u> .....	108
<u>Vehicles to shield Canadian troops</u> .....	110
<u>Taliban to free Korean hostages Seoul to withdraw its 200 troops</u> .....	111
<u>Korea reaches deal on Taliban captives; Afghan leaders unhappy at official 'capitulation'</u> .....	113
<u>Taliban, South Koreans strike deal to release hostages</u> .....	115
<u>Troop support not city work</u> .....	117
<u>Now. Where was I?</u> .....	119
<u>Three NATO soldiers killed</u> .....	121
<u>Canadians to get booby-trap hunting vehicles this fall</u> .....	122
<u>S. Korea criticized for deal with Taliban; Afghan minister calls hostage agreement 'capitulation'</u> .....	124
<u>Dead soldier's portrait stolen before pickup</u> .....	126
<u>Faulty drones risk lives: troops; Afghan spy plane can't always provide best information; builder says it has offered fix</u> .....	128

# Table of Contents

<u>New drones could save troops' lives: Senator; Afghan Mission.....</u>	130
<u>SOUTH KOREAN MISSIONARIES TO BE RELEASED; Taliban Hostages; Deal Tied To Removal Of South Korean Troops From Afghanistan; The New York Times, With Files From News Services.....</u>	132
<u>Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry.....</u>	134
<u>Spare us the pseudogrief.....</u>	135
<u>Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry.....</u>	136
<u>Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry.....</u>	137
<u>Pollsters asked wrong question.....</u>	138
<u>Anti-IED vehicles delayed until fall; Husky, Buffalo and Cougar designed to detect and disarm roadside bombs.....</u>	139
<u>Outmoded drones put us at risk, soldiers say; Unmanned aircraft have flaws, but supplier says inexpensive fixes are available.....</u>	141
<u>Portrait of fallen soldier stolen; Painting taken from Ottawa gallery.....</u>	143
<u>Taliban to free 19 hostages; Mostly women in their 20s and 30s. Agreement with South Korea includes withdrawal of troops, Christian groups.....</u>	144
<u>More Quebecers ship out solemn sendoff; Latest rotation to Afghanistan. Double funeral to be held tomorrow near Valcartier.....</u>	146

# Taliban to free S. Korean hostages

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**PUBLICATION:** The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Front  
**PAGE:** A6  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS / Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan cheer yesterday as they watch a news report on TV in Sunnam, South Korea. Taliban militants in Afghanistan agreed to release 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive since July 19. ;  
**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN  
**SOURCE:** Washington Post  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 270

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South Korean negotiators and Taliban leaders have reached an agreement that will allow for the release of 19 hostages from a South Korean church who have been held captive by Afghan insurgents for nearly six weeks, officials in Afghanistan said yesterday.

While the hostages had not been released as of yesterday, officials said they would be freed within the next few days and that both sides were satisfied with the terms of the deal yesterday.

"In the very near future, all of the hostages will be released. It is a comprehensive agreement," said Reto Stocker, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Afghanistan. The Red Cross had helped to facilitate the negotiations.

The Taliban initially took 23 South Koreans hostage, but two were killed by their captors and two were released. The church members were abducted July 19 in the Ghazni province as they travelled by bus along a highway linking the capital, Kabul, with the city of Kandahar.

In Seoul last night, families of the hostages reacted to news of the deal with whoops of joy, hugging and tears.

But that outpouring changed suddenly when during a televised news conference the South Korean government said the release of the hostages would not happen immediately, noting that further negotiations would be necessary.

"The two sides reached agreement on the release of all 19 Korean hostages on condition that the Korean government withdraws its troops in Afghanistan by the end of this year and bans missionary work by Korean Christians in Afghanistan," South Korean presidential spokesperson Cheon Ho Su said.

South Korea, though, seemed to give up little in its negotiations. Seoul had already planned to withdraw its 200 noncombat troops by the end of the year.

# More than 100 Taliban killed, coalition says

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**PUBLICATION:** The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** A6  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, AFGHANISTAN  
**SOURCE:** Associated Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 397

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U.S.-led and Afghan troops battled suspected Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan yesterday in ground clashes and air strikes that left more than 100 militants dead, the coalition said.

In eastern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attacked NATO troops helping to build a bridge, killing three U.S. soldiers, a U.S. official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because not all families had been notified.

The battle in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district started after the joint force was ambushed by a large group of insurgents who tried to overrun their position several times, before being strafed by air strikes, the statement from the coalition said.

More than 100 suspected insurgents and an Afghan soldier were killed, the coalition said. The casualty figures could not be independently verified due to the remoteness of the area. Canadian soldiers were not involved in the battle.

The clashes also left three coalition and three Afghan soldiers wounded, the statement said. The nationality of the coalition soldiers was not disclosed, but the vast majority of soldiers in the area are American.

Violence is soaring in Afghanistan. This year more than 3,900 people — most of them militants — have died, according to a tally of casualty figures provided by western and Afghan officials.

Also yesterday, U.S.-led and Afghan troops raided a house near Kandahar city, killing two suspected militants and detaining five others, a coalition statement said. Those targeted in the raid were accused of facilitating bomb attacks against coalition and Afghan forces in Kandahar, the statement said.

In the Taliban-held Musa Qala district of Helmand province, militants ambushed the joint U.S.-Afghan force Monday, another coalition statement said. The joint force fought back, and about a dozen militants were killed in the clash, the statement said..

Militants have been running Musa Qala since last year's controversial peace deal between local elders and Afghan officials, supported by British troops in the province. The deal effectively turned over Musa Qala town and surrounding areas to Taliban control.

Also on Monday, coalition and Afghan troops spotted a group of 20 insurgents preparing an ambush in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district, the coalition said. The troops attacked the insurgents and killed seven, while the rest fled. There were no reports of coalition or Afghan troops killed or wounded in either

clash.

In the eastern province of Nangarhar, a roadside blast hit a vehicle carrying Afghan soldiers on Monday, killing four, a statement from the Defence Ministry said.

# Taliban agree to release hostages; South Korean church volunteers have been held captive since July 19

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

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** B2

**SOURCE:** AP

**BYLINE:** Amir Shah

**PHOTO:** AP

**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Relatives of South Koreans kidnapped in Afghanistan react to the news that Taliban militants in Afghanistan have agreed to release 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive for more than a month.

**WORD COUNT:** 341

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Taliban militants agreed yesterday to free 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The agreement, reached in direct talks between Taliban negotiators and South Korean officials meeting in central Afghanistan, ends a hostage crisis that had exposed the growing security problems facing Afghanistan.

Relatives of the hostages in South Korea welcomed news of the impending release.

"I would like to dance," said Cho Myung–ho, mother of 28–year–old hostage Lee Joo–yeon.

South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho–sun said from Seoul, the South Korean capital, that the deal had been reached "on the condition that South Korea withdraws troops by the end of year and South Korea suspends missionary work in Afghanistan."

There was no word on when the captives would be released.

In reaching the deal, South Korea did not appear to commit to anything it did not already plan to do.

Seoul has already said it would withdraw its 200 non–combat troops by the end of the year and has also sought to prevent missionaries from going to countries where they were not wanted.

The government in Seoul and relatives of the hostages had insisted that the 19 kidnapped South Koreans were not missionaries, but were instead doing aid work.

The Taliban had also been demanding the release of militant prisoners in exchange for the captives' freedom. Afghan officials had ruled out any exchange, saying such a move would only encourage further kidnappings.

Taliban spokesmen have previously said they had no interest in a ransom payment.

Cheon, the South Korean presidential spokesman, told The Associated Press that he was informed by South Korean officials in Afghanistan that money was not discussed during negotiations with the Taliban.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans as they travelled by bus from Kabul to the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar on July 19.

In late July, the militants executed two male hostages. They released two women earlier this month as a goodwill gesture.

Yesterday's agreement came after face-to-face talks between the two sides in the central town of Ghazni.

It was the fourth time direct negotiations had been held. All the talks had been mediated by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Abductions have become a key insurgent tactic in recent months in trying to destabilize the country, targeting both Afghan officials and foreigners helping with reconstruction.

# Yarmouth County students plan to honour slain soldiers

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**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** NovaScotia

**PAGE:** B7

**BYLINE:** Brian Medel Yarmouth Bureau

**WORD COUNT:** 218

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YARMOUTH – Students at a Yarmouth County junior high school plan to have the names of Canadians killed in Afghanistan engraved on a cenotaph erected on the school grounds about 20 years ago.

"The back of the monument was clear and free and we've always wanted to put something there," said teacher Joe Bishara, who runs the Memorial Club at Maple Grove Education Centre. The club honours current and former Canadian military personnel and also has a branch at Yarmouth's senior high school.

"Last February the students were talking about our war dead in Afghanistan," said Mr. Bishara.

"There was a motion made by one of our students to have the names of our fallen put on the back of the monument and it was unanimous by the whole memorial club.

"If the back of the monument becomes full, we will have a major fundraiser to expand the monument."

The side of the monument can hold more than 100 names, he said.

It will cost more than \$2,000 to have the names of the 69 soldiers and a Canadian diplomat who have died so far engraved, said Mr. Bishara.

"This is going to be a fantastic place for young people to learn about sacrifice.

"Names will make this more of a reality and other schools can come here to visit.

"It's just such a great honour to have this here."

The \$8,000 memorial was erected in 1986 with money raised by students.

Club members have fundraised ever since. They also prepare and distribute care packages to wounded soldiers and provide services for elderly veterans, locally and in other parts of the province.

The engraving may be done this fall but an official unveiling might not be practical until next spring, said Mr. Bishara.

Students want to honour families of fallen soldiers at the same time.

"We want to invite all the families that we can," he said.( )

# [Relatives of a group of 19 church volunteers kidnapped in Afghanistan cheer Tuesday in Sungram, South Korea, as they hear news of a deal to...]

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle-Herald

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A4

**ILLUSTRATION:** Relatives of a group of 19 church volunteers kidnapped in Afghanistan cheer Tuesday in Sungram, South Korea, as they hear news of a deal to release the group.(AP)

# New vehicles will help Canadians disarm IEDs

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**PUBLICATION:** The  
Chronicle–Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A4  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet  
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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as insurgents adapt their tactics.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries starting in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig–Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in the war–ravaged country since 2002, more than half – 38 – have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

The vehicles are expected to make the situation a bit safer in Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system)," Laroche said.

"The Americans have been using the system for a while, they have been using it in Iraq a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

But Laroche cautioned that the trio of vehicles won't totally eliminate the problem of roadside bombs.

Canada currently has some equipment to detect roadside bombs but nothing like the specialized vehicles that will start arriving in two months, he added.

The Buffaloes and the Cougars are made in the United States while the Husky vehicles are made in South Africa.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

Pte. Simon Longtin was the first Van Doo to die in Afghanistan when he was killed by a roadside bomb on Aug. 19.

Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier, 43, of the Royal 22nd Regiment and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, 34, of the 5th Field Ambulance were killed several days later.

# Taliban: Group will be freed; Hostage deal hinges on South Korea pulling troops from Afghanistan by year's end

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle-Herald

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A4

**BYLINE:** Amir Shah

**ILLUSTRATION:** Relatives of a group of 19 church volunteers kidnapped in Afghanistan cheer Tuesday in Sungram, South Korea, as they hear news of a deal to release the group.(AP)

**WORD COUNT:** 358

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Taliban militants agreed Tuesday to free 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The agreement, reached in direct talks between Taliban negotiators and South Korean officials meeting in central Afghanistan, ends a hostage crisis that had exposed the growing security problems facing Afghanistan.

Relatives of the hostages in South Korea welcomed news of the impending release.

"I would like to dance," said Cho Myung-ho, mother of 28-year-old hostage Lee Joo-yeon.

South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho-sun said from Seoul, the South Korean capital, that the deal had been reached "on the condition that South Korea withdraws troops by the end of the year and South Korea suspends missionary work in Afghanistan."

There was no word on when the captives would be released.

In reaching the deal, South Korea did not appear to commit to anything it did not already plan to do.

Seoul has already said it would withdraw its 200 non-combat troops by the end of the year and has also sought to prevent missionaries from going to countries where they were not wanted.

The government in Seoul and relatives of the hostages had insisted that the 19 kidnapped South Koreans were not missionaries, but were instead doing aid work.

The Taliban had also been demanding the release of militant prisoners in exchange for the captives' freedom. Afghan officials had ruled out any exchange, saying such a move would only encourage further kidnappings.

Taliban spokesmen have previously said they had no interest in a ransom payment.

Cheon, the South Korean presidential spokesman, told The Associated Press that he was informed by South Korean officials in Afghanistan that money was not discussed during negotiations with the Taliban.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans as they travelled by bus from Kabul to the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar on July 19.

Taliban: Group will be freed; Hostage deal hinges on South Korea pulling troops from Afghanistan by year's end

In late July, the militants executed two male hostages. They released two women earlier this month as a goodwill gesture.

Tuesday's agreement came after face-to-face talks between the two sides in the central town of Ghazni.

It was the fourth time direct negotiations had been held. All the talks had been mediated by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Abductions have become a key insurgent tactic in recent months in trying to destabilize the country, targeting both Afghan officials and foreigners helping with reconstruction.

A German engineer and four Afghan colleagues kidnapped a day before the South Koreans are still being held.

# Taliban to release 19 kidnapped South Korean church workers

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B7

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 258

---

Taliban militants agreed Tuesday to free 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

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Cheon, the South Korean presidential spokesman, told The Associated Press he was informed by South Korean officials in Afghanistan money was not discussed during talks with the Taliban.

# U.S.-led coalition claims over 100 Taliban killed

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**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B7

**COLUMN:** Synopsis

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 152

---

U.S.-led and Afghan troops battled suspected Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday in ground clashes and air strikes that left more than 100 militants dead, the coalition said.

In eastern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attacked NATO troops helping to build a bridge, killing three American soldiers, a U.S. official said.

The battle in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district started after the joint force was ambushed by a large group of insurgents who tried to overrun their position several times, before being strafed by air strikes, the statement from the coalition said.

"Coalition aircraft destroyed the reinforced enemy emplacements and sniper positions as well as two trucks used to reinforce and re-supply the insurgent force," the statement said.

Violence is soaring in Afghanistan. This year more than 3,900 people – most of them militants – have died, according to an Associated Press tally of casualty figures provided by western and Afghan officials.

# Canada buys vehicles to help cut down on roadside bombs

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B7

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 53

---

Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have been the biggest threat facing Canadian troops, as insurgents adapt their tactics.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces for \$29.6 million, with deliveries starting in October.

# Snap end to war will bring chaos, death

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** Editorial

**PAGE:** A6

**COLUMN:** Letters to the editor

**WORD COUNT:** 234

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Editor:

I would like to respond to Mr. Stevenson's letter ("Politics impede will to end Afghan war," Aug. 28, 2007) Sir, please be careful for what you wish for.

Do I want any more Canadian lives to be taken over this conflict? I will say no as it has affected me directly.

My sense of things is that those who are echoing the "Bring them home" chant have yet to think their decision through.

When the troops are repatriated and Afghanistan does not possess the skills and infrastructure to take care of its own affairs, the government-elect will topple to the former regime. And the group that ran that country will resume its reign of drug sales, human rights violation and violence.

It is inconceivable to me that once we pull the troops out that this conflict will be over.

My sense is that the government overthrow will cause an influx of refugees wanting, willing and applying to come to Canada.

Who will Canada rely on to tell us in this flood of people who the bad actors are? It won't be the military at the airports. It won't be the military standing guard around Bay Street in Toronto.

We, at that point, will be truly vulnerable to terrorist attack.

Even if your opinion is that this should be the U.S.'s problem, and not ours, we are involved in it.

You cannot get involved in a domestic dispute then just walk out, ask any police officer.

While you are lobbying your politicians to get the military to start packing you might also want to ask them to look at Canada's immigration laws in order to slam the gates closed at the border, even though this rings of what was done to the Jews in the Second World War.

Please bring your ear muffs in order to not hear the screams of "Help Me!" from the innocent.

Eric Payne, Warren Grove

# Fallen Van Doos become fuel for political fray

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** Editorial

**PAGE:** A6

**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 510

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By all accounts Pte. Simon Longtin was the kind of young man any parent would have been proud of.

Fun-loving, sensitive, intelligent and courageous; his loss in combat in Afghanistan should be felt keenly – as keenly as this country feels any loss in combat.

But the death of Pte. Longtin, the first suffered by the famous Van Doos, the Royal 22nd Regiment, based in Valcartier near Quebec City, and the subsequent deaths of Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne and Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier have become political matters almost immediately.

The numbers are only getting worse for the government of Stephen Harper. An emboldened opposition is pressing home what it sees as an advantage.

One survey showed that almost 70 per cent (and climbing) of Quebecers disapprove of the Afghan mission, up from about 57 per cent in previous polls. An Ipsos Reid survey released Friday shows a slight increase in support. These contradictory tallies are the kinds of results that seem to have forced Prime Minister Stephen Harper to be more categorical that Canada's military role in Kandahar province will end in February, 2009 unless there's a consensus in support. And given the positions of the Bloc Québécois, the Liberals and the NDP, the consensus will not be there.

Quebec has always marched to a different drum when Canada has gone to war. In the First and Second World Wars, federal governments faced serious national-unity crises over the conscription of troops. Quebec society has also traditionally favoured Canada's image as a peacekeeper – surveys have also shown that Canada's gentle image abroad is a source of great pride in the province. But that has meant that federal leaders, particularly Liberal prime ministers, have over-emphasized this part of our defence and foreign policy. It also resulted in the serious erosion of our military readiness.

Canada is not a neutral nation. This country belongs to military alliances that must be respected. And it is expected to play a role at the sharp end of the stick from time to time. In this very unstable world, there isn't a lot of peacekeeping to do these days. Soldiers in trouble spots are peacemaking, as they are in Afghanistan.

The Van Doos know this. While they mourn the loss of their comrades, judging by their comments they remain genuinely committed to the mission. They are professional soldiers. This is the work they have trained for.

They know also that if the field is abandoned in Kandahar, the threat posed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda to western interests will only grow again.

It is a sad fact that there will be more members of the Van Doos killed in Afghanistan. These tragedies could further inflame Quebec's opposition. There is little the government can do to prevent this. But what it must not do, and will not do judging by the record so far, is diminish the importance of the mission or our respect for the Canadian soldiers that are active there.

That would be a disservice to the memory of Pte. Longtin and all the other Canadians who have made the ultimate sacrifice in a faraway land.

# Troops to get new defensive vehicles; Will help guard against Afghan roadside bombs

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

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** A9

**SOURCE:** CP

**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet

**DATELINE:** Kandahar

**WORD COUNT:** 175

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Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as insurgents adapt their tactics.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries starting in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in the war-ravaged country since 2002, more than half – 38 – have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

The vehicles are expected to make the situation a bit safer in Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system)," Laroche said.

# Deal reported reached for Taliban to release 19 kidnapped South Koreans

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 255

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan (AP) \_ Taliban militants in Afghanistan and the South Korean government have reached a deal for the release of 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive since July 19.

The South Korean government says the hostage release comes on condition that South Korean troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of the year, as previously planned.

The South Koreans must also stop missionary work in Afghanistan under the agreement.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, says South Korean and Taliban delegates at face-to-face talks today in the central Afghan town of Ghazni had ``reached an agreement" to release the captives.

In Seoul, South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho-sun confirmed a deal was reached.

``We welcome the agreement to release 19 South Koreans," said Cheon Ho-sun.

The apparently breakthrough came after the resumption of face-to-face talks between Taliban militants and South Korean officials on the fate of the 19 South Koreans.

Earlier Tuesday, an Associated Press reporter in the central town of Ghazni saw members of a South Korean delegation being driven into the venue of the meeting by Afghan intelligence officers.

Later, a two-man Taliban delegation was brought to the compound in a vehicle belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The talks were taking place in the offices of the Afghan Red Crescent, the local partner of the ICRC. The Red Cross facilitated the previous talks.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans as they travelled by bus from Kabul to the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. Two men were killed and two women released earlier.

The insurgents have demanded the withdrawal of around 200 South Korean troops currently in the country and the release of militant prisoners in exchange for the captives' freedom.

Afghan officials have ruled out any exchange, saying such a move will only encourage further kidnappings

# U.S.-led coalition says more than 100 Taliban killed in southern Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 452

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KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) \_ U.S.-led and Afghan troops battled suspected Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday in ground clashes and air strikes that left more than 100 militants dead, the coalition said.

In eastern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attacked NATO troops helping to build a bridge, killing three American soldiers, a U.S. official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because not all families had been notified.

The battle in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district started after the joint force was ambushed by a large group of insurgents who tried to overrun their position several times, before being strafed by air strikes, the statement from the coalition said.

``Coalition aircraft destroyed the reinforced enemy emplacements and sniper positions as well as two trucks used to reinforce and re-supply the insurgent force," the statement said.

More than 100 suspected insurgents and an Afghan soldier were killed, the coalition said. The casualty figures could not be independently verified due to the remoteness of the area. Canadian soldiers were not involved in the battle.

The clashes also left three coalition and three Afghan soldiers wounded, the statement said. The nationality of the coalition soldiers was not disclosed, but vast majority of soldiers in the area are American.

Violence is soaring in Afghanistan. This year more than 3,900 people \_ most of them militants \_ have died, according to an Associated Press tally of casualty figures provided by western and Afghan officials.

Also Tuesday, U.S.-led and Afghan troops raided a house near Kandahar city, killing two suspected militants and detaining five others, a coalition statement said.

Those targeted in the raid were accused of facilitating bomb attacks against coalition and Afghan forces in Kandahar, the statement said. The people detained in the raid will be questioned at a military facility before being turned over to Afghan authorities, it said.

In the Taliban-held Musa Qala district of Helmand province, militants ambushed the joint U.S.-Afghan force Monday, another coalition statement said.

The joint force fought back, targeting militants who were using several compounds and trenches for cover, the statement said. It said about a dozen militants were killed in the clash.

Militants have been running Musa Qala since last year's controversial peace deal between local elders and Afghan government officials, supported by British troops in the province. The deal effectively turned over Musa Qala town and surrounding areas to Taliban control.

Also on Monday, coalition and Afghan troops spotted a group of 20 insurgents preparing an ambush in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district, the coalition said.

The troops attacked the insurgents and killed seven, while the rest fled, the statement said. There were no reports of coalition or Afghan troops killed or wounded in either clash.

In the eastern province of Nangarhar, a roadside blast hit a vehicle carrying Afghan soldiers on Monday, killing four, a statement from the Defence Ministry said.

# Recent kidnappings of foreigners in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 299

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**SOUTH KOREAN CHRISTIANS:** 23 South Korean Christian aid workers are taken hostage while travelling by bus from Kabul to Kandahar on July 19. Two of the hostages were killed and two women were freed. The Taliban agree to free the remaining 19 in exchange for a promise from South Korea to end missionary work in Afghanistan and withdraw its troops from the country by the end of the year, as previously planned.

**GERMAN ENGINEERS:** German engineers Rudolf Blechschmidt and Ruediger Diedrich and five Afghan colleagues are kidnapped in southern Wardak province on July 18. Diedrich is found shot dead July 21. Blechschmidt and four Afghans remain in custody. One of the Afghans escaped, according to Taliban captors.

**FRENCH AID WORKERS:** French aid workers Celine Cordelier and Eric Damfreville from the group Terre d'Enfance and their three Afghan colleagues \_ Mohammad Hashim and brothers Ghulam Rasul and Ghulam Azrat \_ are abducted along with two French colleagues on April 3 in the southwestern province of Nimroz. All were released over the next two months.

**ITALIAN JOURNALIST:** Daniele Mastrogiacomo is abducted in southern Helmand province with two Afghan colleagues on March 5. Mastrogiacomo is released March 19 in exchange for five Taliban prisoners. Both Afghans were beheaded.

**ITALIAN PHOTOGRAPHER:** Italian photographer Gabriele Torsello and his Afghan translator are abducted while driving from Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern Helmand province, toward neighbouring Kandahar on Oct. 12. Torsello was left by the side of a road on Nov. 3.

**COLOMBIAN AID WORKER:** Gunmen kidnap a Colombian aid worker and two Afghan employees of a French-funded nongovernment organization in southern Wardak province on Sept. 12. The three were released three weeks later.

# Canada buys special vehicles to help cut down on Afghan roadside bombs

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 326

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) \_ Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as insurgents adapt their tactics.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries starting in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

“They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army,” said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in the war-ravaged country since 2002, more than half \_ 38 \_ have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

“As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great,” Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

The vehicles are expected to make the situation a bit safer in Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

“In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system),” Laroche said.

“The Americans have been using the system for a while, they have been using it in Iraq a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that.”

But Laroche cautioned that the trio of vehicles won't totally eliminate the problem of roadside bombs.

Canada currently has some equipment to detect roadside bombs but nothing like the specialized vehicles that will start arriving in two months, he added.

The Buffaloes and the Cougars are made in the United States while the Husky vehicles are made in South Africa.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government, of which about 1,100 are from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, known as the Van Doos.

Pte. Simon Longtin was the first Van Doo to die in Afghanistan when he was killed by a roadside bomb on Aug. 19. Longtin's funeral was held on Monday in the Montreal area.

Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier, 43, of the Royal 22nd Regiment and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne, 34, of the 5th Field Ambulance were killed several days later.

Their funerals are pending.

# Update:Adds condition of release

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 111

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Taliban militants in Afghanistan and the South Korean government have reached a deal for the release of 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive since July 19.

The South Korean government says the hostage release comes on condition that South Korean troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of the year, as previously planned.

The South Koreans must also stop missionary work in Afghanistan under the agreement.

Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, says South Korean and Taliban delegates at face-to-face talks today in the central Afghan town of Ghazni had 'reached an agreement' to release the captives.

In Seoul, South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho-sun confirmed a deal was reached.

'We welcome the agreement to release 19 South Koreans,' said Cheon Ho-sun.

(AP)

# BC–Afghan–Battle

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**DATE:** 2007.08.28  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 138

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KABUL — The U.S.–led coalition in Afghanistan says a battle in southern Afghanistan has left more than 100 insurgents dead.

The coalition says three of its soldiers were wounded. Their nationality was not disclosed but the vast majority of the coalition troops are believed to be Americans.

The coalition says in a statement that the battle in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district started after the joint force of coalition troops and Afghan government soldiers was ambushed by a large group of insurgents.

The insurgents reportedly tried to overrun their position several times before air strikes were called in.

The statement says ``coalition aircraft destroyed the reinforced enemy emplacements and sniper positions as well as two trucks used to reinforce and re–supply the insurgent force."

The coalition claim that more than 100 insurgents have been killed could not be independently confirmed because of the remote location of the battle.

(AP)

ap/ppl

# Duceppe a threat to Harper government

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290121  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A23  
**BYLINE:** Chantal Hebert  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 546

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Montreal Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe are on a collision course that could yet see Canada return to the polls before the end of the year.

Since the last election, the sovereigntist party has been key to the survival of the minority government. But now Harper and Duceppe are headed into the fall session of Parliament with what may amount to irreconcilable political needs.

The Prime Minister has exhausted his initial agenda. This month's cabinet shuffle was the first step of a relaunch that should, in all logic, include the presentation of a throne speech.

Except that such a speech would trigger an automatic confidence vote at a time when Duceppe can ill afford to extend more support to the government.

At the end of a pre-session caucus retreat last week, the Bloc leader warned the Prime Minister against seeking the confidence of the House in the fall. He also said he would not support a throne speech that did not specifically exclude an extension of the current Afghan mission beyond its 2009 deadline.

There is more to these warnings than the routine noises of an opposition leader seeking to demonstrate that he cannot be taken for granted, and more also than just a cynical attempt to exploit the rising profile of the deployment in Quebec.

The Bloc is undergoing a crisis of relevance and the Afghan issue is only one part of a larger picture.

With the Parti Quebecois in third place in the National Assembly, the Bloc can no longer rally support around the imminent goal of another referendum. Given past Conservative overtures to Quebec, nor can it capitalize on dissatisfaction with the government in the way that it used to in the recent Liberal past.

These days, the Quebecers who are satisfied with the general directions of the government increasingly question why they should stick with the Bloc while those who oppose Conservative policies are increasingly uncomfortable with Duceppe's support of the Harper regime. Some of those dynamics are on exhibit in the three Quebec ridings at play in next month's federal by-elections.

In Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean and, to a lesser degree, in Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, the Bloc has to fend off the appeal of supporting a governing party. Meanwhile, in the Montreal riding of Outremont, it has to worry about a slippage of its votes to the NDP. That party's call for an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan

is more in sync with anti-war voters than the Bloc's position of staying the course until 2009.

Over the coming months, sticking to that particular position will be a challenge for the Bloc. At this point, going the extra mile of extending the life of the Harper government against the backdrop of mounting Quebec casualties on the Afghan front looks like a bridge too far for Duceppe.

If the Bloc withdraws its support for the Conservatives, the government could in theory turn to one of the other opposition parties. But in practice it is unlikely that either the Liberals or the NDP would step into the breach and vote for a Harper throne speech.

Given their rhetoric, neither could do so without losing face. Yet the Liberals, who don't sound keen for an election at this stage, could be even less eager for one after the Sept. 17 by-elections. But more on that in another column.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

# We need to stand our ground in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** Letter  
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**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 92

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Let's not tear down Afghan gains

Column, Aug. 27

Rosie DiManno is correct in describing the role of our troops in Afghanistan. We need to stand by these people and the gains that have been made, particularly for women.

I heard a German newscast where it described the Taliban as very media savvy in seeing the weaknesses of democratic societies. Kidnap or kill someone and there are immediate cries for withdrawal from a vocal group or politicians with a private agenda.

It seems to me that the individuals who take a stand for withdrawal are increasing the odds of more injuries and deaths for our troops.

Anne Robinson, Toronto

# Taliban to free South Koreans; Seoul confirms it will withdraw troops, agrees to stop missionary work as part of hostage deal

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290082  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** World And Comment  
**PAGE:** AA01  
**ILLUSTRATION:** jeon doo-hyun reuters Family members of the South Koreans kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan react emotionally in Seoul yesterday to news of their impending release. ;  
**BYLINE:** Jan Agha  
**SOURCE:** REUTERS NEWS AGENCY  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 571

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Taliban insurgents said yesterday they would release 19 South Korean Christian volunteers they have held for nearly six weeks provided Seoul pulls out its troops and stops Korean missionary work in Afghanistan by year-end.

South Korea's presidential office issued a statement setting out the terms of the agreement, and Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal had been struck.

The Taliban's conditions did not include their main previous demand – the release of a group of militants held prisoner by the Afghan government.

"By the end of 2007, they will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan," Bashir told reporters, standing side by side with Korean negotiators in Ghazni province.

"They will not send to Afghanistan those they sent for promulgation of ... Christianity and will ban others from coming again for promulgation of Christianity," he said.

"All Korean nationals in any field working in Afghanistan will leave Afghanistan by the end of August," he said, adding that the Taliban would start freeing the hostages today.

The announcement followed the resumption of negotiations, which had been on hold for two weeks after the Korean side said it was unable to meet the kidnappers' demand for the release of Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government in exchange for the hostages, most of them women.

"The government will take every possible measure to make sure the hostages are safely back in their families' arms as soon as possible," a South Korean presidential spokesperson said, adding that their release could take time.

The South Korean government had decided before the hostage crisis to pull out its small contingent of engineers and medical staff from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

Since the hostages were taken, it has banned its nationals from travelling there.

Taliban to free South Koreans; Seoul confirms it will withdraw troops, agrees to stop missionary work as part

The insurgents seized 23 Korean Christian volunteers on July 19 from a bus in Ghazni province. They killed two male hostages early on in the crisis, but released two women as a gesture of goodwill during the first round of talks.

Afghan Trade and Industry Minister Amin Farhang criticized South Korea's government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope that other countries would not follow Seoul's example.

"If every government were to do this it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," Farhang told Germany's Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger newspaper.

"It's like a demand of the Taliban."

The result of capitulation will likely be more abductions, the paper reported Farhang as saying.

The hostages' relatives in South Korea, however, reacted differently. They cheered, hugged and chatted on their mobile phones after news broke that the hostages would be released.

"We knew the negotiation process was turning favourable, but we never thought it would happen so soon," a spokesperson for the hostage families, Cha Sung-min, told reporters.

"When the announcement came out, there was a commotion in the room as everyone hugged each other."

Family members flocked to the Saemmul Church outside Seoul where relatives have been holding a vigil.

"It was all possible due to the government's help, and we thank everybody for being there for us," said Seo Jeung-bae, who had a son and a daughter among the hostages.

"The Number 1 hero are the South Korean citizens. Thank you very much."

The church has been criticized in South Korea for sending inexperienced Christian volunteers to the volatile Muslim country.

South Korea is the world's second-biggest source of Christian missionaries, many of them working in hot spots.

"We are very sorry to have caused any problems to the country over the kidnappings," Cha said in nationally broadcast comments after the government announcement.

"We can't show enough how sorry we are that we can't share this happy news with the other victims' families," he added, referring to the two male hostages who were killed.

The kidnapping of the Koreans was the largest case of abductions in the resurgent Taliban campaign since U.S.-led troops ousted the Islamists from power in 2001.

One day earlier, Taliban fighters had seized two German aid workers and five of their Afghan colleagues in Wardak province which, like Ghazni, is southwest of Kabul.

The Taliban have killed one German, but are still holding the other along with four Afghans. One Afghan escaped.

Taliban to free South Koreans; Seoul confirms it will withdraw troops, agrees to stop missionary work as par

# Canadians get new bomb protection; U.S. vehicles to help troops in war zone

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290075  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** World And Comment  
**PAGE:** AA02  
**BYLINE:** Martin Ouellet  
**SOURCE:** CANADIAN PRESS  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 252

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Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from roadside bombs thanks to three kinds of specialized vehicles designed to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries to start in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as insurgents adapt their tactics.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in the war-ravaged country since 2002, more than half – 38 – have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig mines up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles capable of neutralizing bombs.

The vehicles are expected to make the situation a bit safer in Kandahar and southern Afghanistan.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system)," Laroche said.

"The Americans have been using the system for a while, they have been using it in Iraq a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

But Laroche cautioned that the trio of vehicles won't totally eliminate the problem of roadside bombs.

Canada currently has some equipment to detect roadside bombs, but nothing like the specialized vehicles that

will start arriving in two months, he added.

Buffaloes and Cougars are made in the United States; the Husky vehicles are made in South Africa.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in the war-torn country as part of the NATO force supporting the Afghan government.

# Portrait of soldier stolen

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290024  
**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A7  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 176

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OTTAWA — A portrait painted of a Canadian soldier killed in June in Afghanistan has been stolen just before a family friend, who purchased the artwork, could pick it up from an Ottawa gallery and give it to the dead man's girlfriend.

The portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis was painted by Ottawa artist Heidi Conrod and stolen from Dale Smith Gallery in early August.

The police are investigating.

Conrod said in an interview Tuesday the purchaser had wanted to give the portrait to Karigiannis's girlfriend, who lives in Kingston, Ont.

Neither Conrod nor Dale Smith released the names of the purchaser or the girlfriend. "I feel terrible for them," Conrod said.

The artist has offered to create another painting of Karigiannis if the original is not located.

The girlfriend did come to the Ottawa gallery to view the painting before it was stolen. She and her friend, the purchaser, were allowed to spend some time alone with the artwork.

"It was quite emotional," said Smith.

The portrait was one of three paintings of Canadian soldiers killed on June 20 when their unarmoured vehicle was struck by roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

The three soldiers were all from the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The other two soldiers were Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe.

Ottawa Citizen

# Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290317  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 12  
**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 181

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Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as Afghan insurgents adapt their tactics.

Now Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the U.S. Army, with deliveries starting in October, for \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed since 2002, more than half — 38 — have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Taliban to free South Koreans in deal

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290315  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 12  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 109

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Taliban militants agreed yesterday to free 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The agreement, reached in direct talks between Taliban negotiators and South Korean officials meeting in central Afghanistan, ends a hostage crisis that had exposed the growing security problems facing Afghanistan.

There was no word on when the captives would be released.

In reaching the deal, South Korea did not appear to commit to anything it did not already plan to do.

Seoul has already said it would withdraw its 200 non-combat troops by the end of the year.

It had also sought to prevent missionaries from going to countries where they were not wanted.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290312  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
**WORD COUNT:** 462

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I have a theory that has solidified over the last two elections.

If you want to know where an election will go, you're better off looking at how the leaders' numbers compare as opposed to how the parties compare.

In 2004, when voters were still reeling from Adscam, Prime Minister Paul Martin's leadership numbers were consistently ahead of Harper's, while party popularity numbers fluctuated more.

In 2006, when voters got a taste of Mr. Dithers' leadership (for lack of a better word) party popularity remained neck-and-neck, but Harper's leadership numbers grew steadily throughout the campaign eventually eclipsing Martin's and Harper ended up leading the Tories to form a minority government.

If my theory is correct, a Strategic Counsel/CTV poll released yesterday bodes well for Harper and ill for the Liberals and Stephane Dion.

The poll found that when asked about Harper's leadership, Canadians were fairly positive.

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**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 18  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
**WORD COUNT:** 462

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290477  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 181

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Taliban to free South Koreans in deal

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**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 109

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Afghan war futile: Poll 49% of Canadians think it's a failure -- but opposition much higher in Europe

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**SOURCETAG:** 0708280504  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.28  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 6  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 306

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Canadians and Europeans think the Afghanistan mission is a failure, a new poll reveals, as a United Nations report shows opium crops reaching a record high in the key battleground for the "war on terror."

An Angus-Reid online survey of 5,075 people in five countries found 49% of Canadians see the military operation as futile, compared with 63% in Britain and France, 66% in Italy and 69% in Germany. Only 22% of Canadians deem the NATO mission as a success, while another 29% aren't sure.

## 'DIFFICULT TIME'

Mario Canseco, director of global studies for Angus Reid Strategies, said the numbers reflect a lack of understanding about the mission.

"It shows the federal government has not done a good job in making Canadians aware of the role of the armed forces in Afghanistan," he said. "Stephen Harper has had a very difficult time communicating with the public, and this is an issue where not speaking with the media is hurting public views."

The poll comes on the heels of a report from the UN that shows opium cultivation has expanded by 17% in 2007 in Afghanistan. Growth is primarily in the southern area, where Taliban insurgents control large swaths of land and use profits from the illicit opium trade for weapons and militia payments.

Canseco said opium growth, corruption and a weak Afghan government are shaping views of Canada's impact on the country.

"There really hasn't been much to celebrate lately, so it is natural for people to start second-guessing what is happening," he said.

Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre said the UN opium report underscores the need to rebalance the mission to put more focus on development and diplomacy.

## OPIUM STRATEGY

To choke the supply flow to the Taliban, UN allies must develop an opium strategy that wins farmers' hearts by awarding fair compensation for crops, he said. "You can't just eradicate it and say that's it, that's all," he said.

But Coderre rejected the view that the Afghan mission is a bust.

"The Conservative approach regarding Afghanistan is a failure, but the mission itself is not a failure. It is noble," he said.

The survey is based on online interviews with adults from July 26 to Aug. 11. KEYWORDS=SURVEY; WAR; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
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**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** 15  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 9  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, AFGHANISTAN  
**WORD COUNT:** 109

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290243  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 9  
**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 181

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# Hockey night in CFB Oilers launch Tickets for Troops program

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**SOURCETAG:** 0708290444

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Sports

**PAGE:** S3

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Brendon Dlouhy, Sun Media CFB Edmonton base commander Lt.-Col. Gary Blenkinsop and Edmonton Oilers president/CEO Patrick LaForge launch the 'Tickets for Troops' campaign yesterday. They are asking season-ticket holders to donate their tickets to the Nov. 24 game against Chicago to military families.

**BYLINE:** DEREK VAN DIEST, SUN MEDIA

**WORD COUNT:** 395

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Patrick LaForge got emotional when talking about the Edmonton Oilers' Tickets for the Troops program.

The president and CEO of the National Hockey League club has a special place in his heart for the Canadian military. His father served in the Second World War.

"The families of the military get an ingrained set of values of what it means to be military," LaForge said.

"Those old stories talked about days on the European continent. For me they seemed far away at the time. Today they come home to roost it seems like too often. Every second day it seems that someone from the Garrison is losing their life over in the Middle East."

LaForge's father served in the Canadian infantry from 1939-45 and made it home from the war.

Yesterday LaForge and the Oilers launched the program in a media conference at CFB Edmonton, asking season-ticket holders to donate their ducats for the Nov. 24th contest against the Chicago Blackhawks to members of the Canadian Forces stationed at the base.

"These guys wear that uniform very proudly and they're prepared to make that ultimate sacrifice," LaForge said. "(It's) a great opportunity to say, 'Thank you.' "

The goal is to have Rexall Place full of military personnel for a game that will be broadcast nation-wide on CBC's Hockey Night in Canada.

"In Canada, recognizing and celebrating the contribution our military makes to our world is fairly narrow," LaForge said.

"It's not been a broadly accepted practice as it is in other countries. The Garrison is home-based. We're lucky to have them here in Edmonton. They are great citizens from all over Canada. And on top of that, they're pretty good Oiler fans too.

"We're happy to have them here and we appreciate the struggle that they're going through. The idea, to me, was just a natural."

The packages sent out to the season–ticket holders will include a postage–paid envelope where the Nov. 24 tickets can be sent back to the Oilers to be distributed throughout the base.

The Oilers have sold all 14,000 season tickets for the upcoming season.

For now the request has only been made to season–ticket holders. Once the mini–packs are sold and the rest of the tickets for that night are distributed, the request will be extended.

Depending on the response from ticket holders, the biggest issue facing the local military base could be finding enough troops and their families to accept the tickets.

The number of troops at the base varies throughout the year depending on whether some are out on exercises or deployed overseas.

"My initial concern was how we were going to distribute the tickets," said base commander Lt.–Col. Gary Blenkinsop. "We want to make sure as a base commander who has not been to Afghanistan that I'm not first in line for the tickets for this game.

"If I had to put a priority on it, I told the Oilers that I would try and find soldiers with recent operation experience. We also want to make sure that soldiers can bring a family member." KEYWORDS=HOCKEY

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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 18  
**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 18  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 109

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# Inspiration for the troops

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290394  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 17  
**BYLINE:** FRANK LANDRY, CITY HALL BUREAU  
**WORD COUNT:** 206

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Master Cpl. Renay Groves is on a mission to bring some notes from home to Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

Last fall, the Ottawa-based soldier fashioned a book of blank pages on her bedroom floor, with the intention of getting Canadians to jot down some messages on the pieces of paper to send overseas.

She's been travelling the country collecting signatures and words of inspiration in the volume she calls Notes From Home.

The book is now over 1,000 pages thick.

"It gives people a chance to say how grateful they are to the soldiers," Groves said yesterday, after bringing the book to Edmonton city hall. "Some of the stuff written in there is unbelievable and people don't hold back.

"It's not just signatures. There's everything from pictures they've drawn, to poems to full letters ... and that's pretty cool."

Groves said she got the idea after routinely being approached by civilians, thanking her for her service.

Having never been to Afghanistan, Groves said she couldn't take credit for the sacrifices her colleagues made. So she decided to ask well-wishers to write down their sentiments.

Her superiors liked the idea and asked her to travel the country with her book in tow.

Groves said she's been to about a dozen communities, collecting close to 17,000 notes.

"It's building quite a story," said Groves.

She broke down in tears recalling a photo of the infant son of Capt. Jeff Francis sitting on the book. It's been included in the collection.

Francis – who was based out of Shilo, Man. – was one of six Canadian soldiers killed in July when their armoured vehicle was hit by a powerful roadside bomb southwest of Kandahar,

Groves said she will hand-deliver the volume to soldiers in Afghanistan in September.

**KEYWORDS=EDMONTON**

# Wild Art

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290392

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

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**PAGE:** 17

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Brendon Dlouhy, Sun Media GOODBYE TO DAD Master Cpl. Ben Holmes plays with his daughter, Rory Holmes, 1 1/2, as he waits to leave for Afghanistan from the lecture training facility at Edmonton Garrison yesterday.

**WORD COUNT:** 0

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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
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# WILD ART

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290381

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**SECTION:** News

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**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Brendon Dlouhy LAST BIG HUG Master Cpl. William Haber's youngest daughter, Breanna, 10, wraps her arms around her dad as he waits to depart for service in Afghanistan from the lecture training facility at the Edmonton Garrison yesterday morning.

**WORD COUNT:** 0

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# Troops kill 100 militants in attack

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290705  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 22  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**WORD COUNT:** 164

---

U.S.-led and Afghan troops battled suspected Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan yesterday in ground clashes and air strikes that left more than 100 militants dead, the coalition said.

In eastern Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attacked NATO troops helping to build a bridge, killing three American soldiers, a U.S. official said.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because not all families had been notified.

The battle in Kandahar province's Shawali Kot district started after the joint force was ambushed by a large group of insurgents who tried to overrun their position several times, before being strafed by air strikes, the statement from the coalition said.

"Coalition aircraft destroyed the reinforced enemy emplacements and sniper positions as well as two trucks used to reinforce and re-supply the insurgent force," the statement said.

More than 100 suspected insurgents and an Afghan soldier were killed, the coalition said. The casualty figures could not be independently verified due to the remoteness of the area.

Canadian soldiers were not involved in the battle.

The clashes also left three coalition and three Afghan soldiers wounded, the statement said. The nationality of the coalition soldiers was not disclosed. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Vehicles to help soldiers detect bombs

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290704  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 22  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 111

---

Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as insurgents adapt tactics.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries starting in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, 38 have died as a result of bombs.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Follow the leader Polling numbers for Harper, Dion tell what's ahead for their parties

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290691  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 15  
**BYLINE:** LICIA CORBELLA  
**WORD COUNT:** 462

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I have a theory that has solidified over the last two elections.

If you want to know where an election will go, you're better off looking at how the leaders' numbers compare as opposed to how the parties compare.

In 2004, when voters were still reeling from Adscam, Prime Minister Paul Martin's leadership numbers were consistently ahead of Harper's, while party popularity numbers fluctuated more.

In 2006, when voters got a taste of Mr. Dithers' leadership (for lack of a better word) party popularity remained neck-and-neck, but Harper's leadership numbers grew steadily throughout the campaign eventually eclipsing Martin's and Harper ended up leading the Tories to form a minority government.

If my theory is correct, a Strategic Counsel/CTV poll released yesterday bodes well for Harper and ill for the Liberals and Stephane Dion.

The poll found that when asked about Harper's leadership, Canadians were fairly positive.

Some 67% find Harper to be decisive — certainly not an adjective anyone would use to describe Dithering Dion. Of those polled, 53% said "Harper keeps his promises and can be trusted to do what's right for Canada" and 49% of those polled described him as a "team player" and a "visionary" while 46% said he was "somebody I like."

Those were the positives for Harper, who was also described as "controlling" by 70% of respondents while 59% said he is "partisan," 58% said he is too "right wing" and 53% believe he will do whatever George Bush wants of him.

## PM IN THE LEAD

A recent Sun Media/SES Research poll released Aug. 14, however, shows that when it comes to leadership, Harper is way ahead.

The SES poll found Tory support at 36% and the Liberals at 33% — a virtual tie.

But when it comes to leadership Harper scores 31% while Dion is at 23%, rising from a dire 15% three months ago.

What's really significant about Dion's numbers is his went up when he was being likened to the character in the children's books, Where's Waldo. In other words, he's more popular when he's missing in action than when he is front and centre.

During election campaigns, it's impossible for party leaders to fly under the radar, what with leaders' debates and national media following their every move.

This is significant because both the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois are threatening to bring down Harper's minority government if he doesn't promise to do their bidding in the upcoming Throne Speech.

Dion vows unless the PM embraces the opposition parties' amendments to the Clean Air and Climate Change Act, he won't support the Throne Speech.

Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe is demanding the Conservatives announce a clear plan to withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan when the mission ends in February 2009, or he too will vote against the Throne Speech and try to topple the government.

But if my theory is correct, and Nik Nanos, president and CEO of SES (the most accurate polling firm in Canada) says it is, then the Conservatives shouldn't fear a fall election.

"Watching the leadership numbers is the best indicator of what's going to happen," says Nanos.

"One other interesting indicator is Dion, in the one province where they know him best, does the poorest in terms of who would be the best prime minister," points out Nanos, referring to Dion's home province of Quebec.

The opposite is true of Harper, who is best known and liked in Alberta.

To paraphrase some familiar sayings, with Dion, familiarity really does breed contempt while with Harper, to know him is to love him.

So, the Tories should write the Throne Speech they want and let the others topple the government at their peril.

# Taliban to free South Koreans in deal

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290684  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 109

---

Taliban militants agreed yesterday to free 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The agreement, reached in direct talks between Taliban negotiators and South Korean officials meeting in central Afghanistan, ends a hostage crisis that had exposed the growing security problems facing Afghanistan.

There was no word on when the captives would be released.

In reaching the deal, South Korea did not appear to commit to anything it did not already plan to do.

Seoul has already said it would withdraw its 200 non-combat troops by the end of the year.

It had also sought to prevent missionaries from going to countries where they were not wanted.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Canada spending \$29M on IED detectors

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**SOURCETAG** 0708290683  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** MARTIN OUELLET, CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**WORD COUNT:** 181

---

Now almost powerless against roadside bombs, Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize them.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months, as Afghan insurgents adapt their tactics.

Now Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the U.S. Army, with deliveries starting in October, for \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," said Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's commander in Afghanistan.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed since 2002, more than half — 38 — have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"As we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs, so having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras.

Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

The vehicles are expected to make the situation a bit safer.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system)," Laroche said. "The Americans have been using the system for a while, they have been using it in Iraq a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290033  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A14  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**BYLINE:** Peter Jorgensen  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 254

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Re: B.C. doctor faces probe for writing about dying soldier, Aug. 25

I have just finished wiping the tears from my eyes. Moments ago I read the excerpt from the diary of Dr. Kevin Patterson about Cpl. Kevin Megeney's death. I am not faint of heart, but it took me three passes to get through the description of the measures taken to save Megeney's life. I wept when I read how Megeney, "yelled for someone to call his mother," as he was dying.

There is something clean, clinical and numb about the way the deaths of our soldiers have been handled. It keeps the reality of what is happening in Afghanistan at a safe distance and allows us to go about our daily lives with whatever misconceptions we come up with on how and why our soldiers die. Words like noble, honourable and freedom have become commonplace and somehow lose their impact with each flag-draped coffin that comes home.

Now Patterson has given light to one young man's story and all the truth that goes with it. This is the true place from which a serious dialogue about our country's efforts in Afghanistan should start: The small picture of one young man and how horrendously his life ended.

For me, today, my numbness has given way to sorrow and grief. I am forced to ask hard questions of myself and my country. In honour of the life that Megeney gave for Canada, I hope that our leaders are compelled to do the same.

Peter Jorgensen

Burnaby

# Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290030  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A14  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**BYLINE:** Camilla Amundsen  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 241

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I applaud Dr. Kevin Patterson for his clear and compassionate recounting of his experience of this reality of war. I empathize with the terrible grief suffered by Cpl. Kevin Megeney's family over their loss of such a beautiful young man and I believe they deserve to know the truth. Why is it that we as a society seem to expect that the medical profession and the military will bear the burden of truth we might be "too disturbed" to hear?

Do the rewards of money or national pride or the "fight for democracy" make it any easier for us to "try to sound hardened" like the surgical residents in this operating room? Can readers of Patterson's clean prose fail to despair as "everyone in the facility sags as the story comes out"? Can a responsible adult honestly deny the gift that Megeney's mother Karen has graciously shared with all of us by agreeing to the publication of Patterson's article in Mother Jones?

Ethical confusion on the part of the Canadian Medical Association about patient confidentiality and warnings about "sensitive information" from the Department of National Defence notwithstanding, it seems to me that efforts to squelch opportunities for similar accounts reaching the public are motivated by power. Is it power over publication of all the facts of war?

Camilla Amundsen

North Vancouver

# Doctor's diary about dying soldier reveals the reality about the anguish in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290028  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A14  
**KEYWORDS:** 0  
**BYLINE:** Bill Forst  
**SOURCE:** Vancouver Sun  
**WORD COUNT:** 99

---

Re: Rifleman remembered as the joker of platoon, Aug. 21

Derrick Farnham, a lieutenant with Quebec's Black Watch regiment, reacted to the tragic death of yet another Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, Pte. Simon Longtin, by saying, " We want to be here and we want to finish the job we have come to do."

I have been searching in vain for months to find a definitive statement of what exactly that job is, and how we will know when it is finished. Perhaps Prime Minister Stephen Harper's spanking new minister of defence, Peter MacKay, can answer that question.

Bill Forst

Gibsons

# Deal struck for the release of 19 South Korean hostages; Church members expected to be freed within the next few days

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290019  
**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / Relatives of South Korean hostages in Afghanistan show relief at the Saem–Mul Presbyterian church in Seongnam, South Korea after news Tuesday that Afghanistan's Taliban agreed to release 19 Christian aid workers. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** HOSTAGES; ASYLUM; ARMAMENTS; TERRORISM; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, Pakistan  
**BYLINE:** Griff Witte and Blaine Harden  
**SOURCE:** Washington Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 466

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — South Korean negotiators and Taliban leaders have reached an agreement that will allow for the release of 19 hostages from a South Korean church who have been held captive by Afghan insurgents for nearly six weeks, officials in Afghanistan said Tuesday.

While the hostages had not been released as of late Tuesday, officials said they would be freed within the next few days and that both sides were satisfied with the terms of a deal completed earlier in the day.

"In the very near future, all of the hostages will be released. It is a comprehensive agreement," said Reto Stocker, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Afghanistan. The Red Cross had helped to facilitate the negotiations.

The Taliban initially took 23 South Koreans hostage, but two were killed by their captors and two were released. The church members were abducted July 19 in the central Afghan province of Ghazni as they travelled by bus along the treacherous highway linking the capital, Kabul, with the southern city of Kandahar.

In Seoul on Tuesday night, families of the hostages reacted to news of the agreement with whoops of joy, hugging and tears.

"I would like to dance," Cho Myung Ho, mother of 28-year-old hostage Lee Joo Yeon, told reporters after hearing of the deal.

But that outpouring of emotion and relief changed rather suddenly when many family members appeared later in a nationally televised press conference. They stood stoically in what seemed to be a show of collective remorse, as their spokesman apologized for a 41-day-long hostage drama that upset and inconvenienced the people and government of South Korea.

"We are very sorry to cause the nation so much concern and worry," said Cha Sung Min, whose 32-year-old sister Cha Hye Jin was one of the hostages.

South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho Sun explained terms of the deal his government's negotiators had struck with the Taliban. "The two sides reached agreement on the release of all 19 Korean hostages on condition that the Korean government withdraws its troops in Afghanistan by the end of this year and bans missionary work by Korean Christians in Afghanistan," he said.

South Korea, though, seemed to give up little of substance in its negotiations. Seoul had already planned to withdraw its 200 noncombat troops by the end of the year, and the government has been trying to stop missionaries from causing trouble in countries where they are not wanted.

The South Korean government said Tuesday night that release of the hostages would not happen immediately, noting that further negotiations would be necessary.

A Korean news agency, Yonhap, reported that hostages were being held in different locations and that they may be released in groups of about three at a time over a period of up to five days.

"When the hostages are released, we will send them to the Afghan capital of Kabul for medical checkups and take them to Korea as soon as possible," Cheon said.

# Words of support, gratitude go out to soldiers; Book has travelled the country collecting the well wishes of civilians and military personnel

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290061  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Cityplus  
**PAGE:** B1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Candace Elliott, The Journal / Master Cpl. BenHolmes holds his daughter Rory, 18 months, while she plays with a Canadian flag Tuesday as soldiers bound for Afghanistan said farewell to family members and friends. ; Colour Photo: Walter Tychnowicz, The Journal / From left, city councillors Terry Cavanaugh and Ron Hayter listen Tuesday to Master Cpl. Renay Groves as she explains about signing a book of support for military personnel going to Afghanistan. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** !@DATELINE=EDMONTON  
**BYLINE:** Meghan Hurley  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 284

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EDMONTON – Master Cpl. Renay Groves has taken a memory book across the country to gather more than 17,000 notes of support that will be sent to Canadian soldiers posted in Afghanistan.

And she isn't finished yet.

The memory book, called Notes from Home, started out on the east coast in June and made its way to Edmonton's City Hall Tuesday. Hundreds of pages are already covered and more will be filled when the book is taken to Vancouver.

Civilians and military personnel can sign the book and offer well wishes and thanks to the troops posted in Afghanistan, Groves said.

"When I go out into the community in uniform people say, 'Thank you,' " she said. "I don't want to take credit for something I haven't done yet."

She expects to complete her tour in Afghanistan in 2008.

Coun. Kim Krushell was one of many councillors, city staff and civilians who signed the book. She recently spoke with Cpl. Jordan Anderson's widow, Amanda, about the Edmonton-based soldier who was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan on July 4.

"It's tough because she's so young and has her whole life ahead of her," Krushell said. "You should show support by signing regardless if you agree with the mission or not."

Groves hopes the book will get the message out that soldiers have a choice whether they will serve in Afghanistan, she said.

Words of support, gratitude go out to soldiers; Book has travelled the country collecting the well wishes of ci

"If you're wearing a uniform and aren't prepared to go, maybe you shouldn't be wearing it," Groves said.

"We have a very good, strong force that will possibly die for their country."

Several pages of the book were covered with children's hands traced in different colours. One hand had the name William, 22 months old, written inside. His father is serving in Afghanistan.

OTHERS WISHED THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WELL:

– "Hey, Calder and Smith, Holmberg here. Hold on buds."

— one friend wrote.

– "Can't wait to see you guys and have a beer."

— Holmberg

– "Always proud of you sunshine. We are behind you a hundred per cent. Be safe."

— Dad

– "Good luck and keep your head down."

— Chimo

– "I'm proud to be chief of defence."

— General Rick Hillier

– "Onward and upward."

— Ryan Anderson

After the book is presented to troops in mid-September, it will go to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

[mhurley@thejournal.canwest.com](mailto:mhurley@thejournal.canwest.com)

SEE MORE

For more photos of the soldiers' farewell, visit Photo Galleries at [www.edmontonjournal.com](http://www.edmontonjournal.com)

Words of support, gratitude go out to soldiers; Book has travelled the country collecting the well wishes of ci

# Portrait of fallen soldier stolen

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290041  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A14  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Supplied / Stolen portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis by artist Heidi Conrod ;  
**KEYWORDS:** ART GALLERIES; ART; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 178

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OTTAWA – A portrait painted of a Canadian soldier killed in June in Afghanistan has been stolen just before a family friend, who purchased the artwork, could pick it up from an Ottawa gallery and give it to the dead man's girlfriend.

The portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis was painted by Ottawa artist Heidi Conrod and stolen from the Dale Smith Gallery in early August.

Conrod said in an interview Tuesday the purchaser had wanted to give the portrait to Karigiannis's girlfriend.

Neither Conrod nor Dale Smith released the names of the purchaser or the girlfriend. "I feel terrible for them," Conrod said. The artist has offered to create another painting of Karigiannis if the original is not located.

The girlfriend did come to the Ottawa gallery to view the painting before it was stolen. She and her friend, the purchaser, were allowed to spend some time alone with the artwork.

"It was quite emotional," said Smith.

The portrait was one of three paintings of Canadian soldiers killed on June 20 when their unarmoured vehicle was struck by roadside bomb in Afghanistan. The three soldiers were all from the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

# Surveillance drones not doing the job; Limitations heighten risk, soldiers say

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290019  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**KEYWORDS:** ESPIONAGE; WAR  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 347

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OTTAWA – Canadian troops in Afghanistan are being put at risk because of the limited capabilities of the aerial drones which provide them with surveillance, say soldiers on the ground.

The use of Sperwer unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in Kandahar is being hindered by extremely hot temperatures, the aircraft's limited endurance as well as serviceability issues, military officers said privately. Those limitations have also resulted in gaps in surveillance during recent firefights in the Kandahar area, putting soldiers at risk, they add.

Defence Department officials in Ottawa declined, for reasons of operational security, to discuss specifics related to the Sperwer's performance.

But the firm handling the Sperwer contract, Rheinmetall Canada, says it's been standing by for months with low-cost improvements that will significantly increase the aircraft's endurance and which could be put in place in a matter of days in some cases.

But the Quebec-based company says it has yet to hear back from the Defence Department.

The unmanned aerial vehicles have become a valuable fixture on the Afghan battlefield. During firefights, the drones transmit information back to commanders on the ground giving them details about enemy movements.

Sylvain Lefrancois, a senior Rheinmetall Canada manager, said all UAVs can be limited by the extreme operating conditions and temperatures in Afghanistan. But he said the company has produced a new launcher for the Sperwer that will increase its endurance by 50 per cent.

"This is available and it's ready to go," he said. "We have informed the customer it can be delivered in the next 15 days."

Lefrancois said the company also informed the Defence Department months ago that it has a more powerful engine which will also significantly increase its endurance.

Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate's defence committee, said he has also heard about the UAV concerns from Kandahar, a situation that should prompt the government to immediately deal with the problem. Kenny said if the solution is to purchase a new UAV then, "someone should be out there with a

cheque right now."

Kenny also pointed out a fleet of high-endurance UAVs could save Canadian lives by helping detect the improvised explosive devices that have caused so many casualties among the troops in Kandahar.

# Deal could free hostages today

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290017  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** HOSTAGES; FOREIGN AID; FAMILY REUNIONS; FOREIGN RELATIONS;NUCLEAR WEAPONS; SUMMIT CONFERENCES; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Mohammad Yaqob  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 241

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Afghanistan's Taliban could free some South Korean hostages within hours, the Korean embassy and the insurgents said today, after a deal to end nearly six weeks of wrenching drama.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi said one group of the 19 aid workers would be released, but that he did not know how many and at what time.

"We think we will have part of them today," an official at the South Korean embassy in Kabul told AFP.

A tribal elder involved in the negotiations to free the group told AFP on condition of anonymity it was "likely" that five to 10 people would be freed Wednesday afternoon.

News of the deal broke late Tuesday, triggering tears of relief from their relatives who have been watching and praying for their loved ones since they were seized in southern Afghanistan.

"I am extremely happy. I want to see them and hug them hard now," said Seo Jeung–Bae, 57, whose son and daughter are among those being held.

"I had not doubted for one moment that the Taliban would return my children some day as the Taliban are also human beings and have their own families," he told AFP at the suburban Seoul church where the Christian group was based.

In return, the South Korean government promised to pull out its 200 troops in medical and engineering units from Afghanistan by the end of the year — something it was already planning to do.

A South Korean foreign ministry official told the Yonhap news agency that negotiators "will contact the Taliban after the sun rises today in Afghanistan to set up a detailed plan for the release of the hostages."

# Bomb-clearing vehicles expected in fall

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290014  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**COLUMN:** World Digest  
**KEYWORDS:** AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY; AUTOMOBILES  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 119

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The Canadian military should see the arrival this fall of a new system of vehicles for detecting and clearing improvised explosive devices, Canada's top military commander here said Tuesday.

The military quietly announced in May that it would purchase 16 specialized anti-IED vehicles from the U.S. military for \$29.6 million. The vehicles were originally expected to arrive in August.

Brigadier General Guy Laroche told Canwest News Service on Tuesday that the vehicles are now expected to arrive in the fall. "When you conduct operations and so on and you have additional vehicles like that that can clear the mines and make sure the area is safe, it's always a good thing," he said.

# Taliban say they'll release hostages

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290011  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** HOSTAGES; WAR; TERRORISM; KIDNAPPING  
**DATELINE:** ISLAMABAD, Pakistan  
**SOURCE:** Washington Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 247

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – South Korean negotiators and Taliban leaders have reached an agreement for the release of 19 hostages from a South Korean church who have been held captive by Afghan insurgents for nearly six weeks, officials in Afghanistan said Tuesday.

While the hostages had not been freed as of late Tuesday, officials said they would be released within the next few days and both sides were satisfied with the terms of a deal completed earlier in the day.

"In the very near future, all of the hostages will be released," said Reto Stocker, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Afghanistan. The Red Cross facilitated the negotiations.

The Taliban initially took 23 South Koreans hostage, but two were killed by the captors and two were released. The church members were abducted July 19 in the central Afghan province of Ghazni as they travelled by bus along the treacherous highway linking the capital, Kabul, with the southern city of Kandahar.

In Seoul Tuesday night, families of the hostages reacted to news of the agreement with whoops of joy, hugging and tears.

"I would like to dance," Cho Myung Ho, mother of 28-year-old hostage Lee Joo Yeon, told reporters after hearing of the deal.

But that outpouring of emotion and relief changed when many family members appeared later in a nationally televised press conference. They stood stoically in what seemed to be a show of collective remorse, as their spokesman apologized for a 41-day-long hostage drama that upset and inconvenienced the people and government of South Korea.

# A death with larger meaning

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290045  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** The Editorial Page  
**PAGE:** A18  
**COLUMN:** Barry Cooper  
**BYLINE:** Barry Cooper  
**SOURCE:** For The Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 785

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The grief on the face of Pte. Benoit Longtin when the coffin of his brother, Simon, was unloaded at CFB Trenton reminds us all how terrible war is. We think: no one should suffer such a loss. Those with religious sensibilities may connect human sinfulness to war. Even a spiritual dullard can sense human imperfection in tears of mourning.

There is also tragedy in the funeral of a young soldier. By tragedy is meant not sentimental schlock or even a literary form, but the old original Greek sense of public education about the fragile reality of human life. Tragedy conveys information about right and wrong and about our limitedness. The ceremonial reception of Pte. Longtin tells us of the existential burden of sacrifice that is not lightened by its nobility.

Longtin's sacrifice was felt most sharply by his family and by his fellow soldiers. To the extent it was shared by Canadians, it reminded them of the importance of choice. Canadian troops do not have to be in Afghanistan. Our government chose to send them. Likewise, they are soldiers because they chose a demanding and dangerous path, which is also why we honour them for having done so.

The element of public education in tragedy means it would be wrong to say or to fear that Longtin (or any other soldier) may have "died in vain." Soldiers and armies may be used to implement public policies, but their deaths are never simply in vain or useful, depending on the outcome of military action. Death, especially sacrificial death, carries a meaning that is greater than the occasion of its appearance. Sacrifice bears its own significance and never can be in vain.

And yet the cliché "dying in vain" has enormous currency in discussions of war and of death that necessarily accompanies war. The simple-minded utilitarians who speak this way show thereby that their consciousness is immune to the experience of tragedy. They mean only that they disapprove of, in this instance, the presence of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

When pressed for an explanation, the results tend typically to consist in a tumult of additional clichés, the perfect linguistic tool to articulate thoughtlessness. And so we hear: Canadians don't do war; Canadians do peacekeeping; Afghanistan is just sucking up to the Americans; war is wrong.

We have all heard this stuff, these empty words that hide the bad conscience that invariably accompanies evasiveness and the deliberate refusal to apprehend reality. Such excuses express but do not dispel the baseness of those whose lives are devoted to nothing but comfortable self-preservation and for whom sacrifice is entirely alien.

Even though clichés say nothing admirable, they are not entirely meaningless. Many years ago, the great philosopher of war, Carl von Clausewitz, wrote of the wondrous or amazing trinity — the state, the army, the people — by means of which countries such as ours typically fight wars. All three elements of this trinity must be balanced for wars to be won. What is particularly significant in Canada today is the popular element, the civilians.

There is no doubt that the government and the military understand the justice of the Afghanistan mission. They know that Canada is there for justifiable and clear strategic reasons: the Taliban offered that country as a base from which al-Qaeda launched the attack on the United States on 9/11. That has not changed because of anything that has happened since.

So what of the Canadian people? Public opinion polls reflect as much the questions asked as they do the ebb and flow of support. What is less easy to grasp is whether the statements of ambitious opposition party leaders who contemplate leaving an alliance in the middle of a war are just attempts at pandering to the soft self-righteousness that threatens all democracies or are genuine expressions of the lack of fortitude among Canadians.

Let there be no misunderstanding: if Canada and NATO do not prevail in Afghanistan, they will be defeated. There are no silver medals in war. A Canadian military surrender in Afghanistan brought about because Canadian civilians are prisoners of their own fears and anxieties would be a great boon not just to the lethal enemies of the Canadian Forces far away but to the close-by enemies of Canadian democracy as well.

Democracies are not exempt from defending themselves. That too is a tragic truth for which Longtin died. Sharing in his family's grief was the beginning of our public education.

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

# S. Korea agrees to withdraw troops; Deal reached with Taliban to get 19 hostages released

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<b>IDNUMBER</b>	200708290034
<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	Calgary Herald
<b>DATE:</b>	2007.08.29
<b>EDITION:</b>	Final
<b>SECTION:</b>	News
<b>PAGE:</b>	A13
<b>KEYWORDS:</b>	FOREIGN RELATIONS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS; KOREAN WAR; FAMILYREUNIONS; SUMMIT CONFERENCES
<b>DATELINE:</b>	GHAZNI, Afghanistan
<b>BYLINE:</b>	Jan Agha
<b>SOURCE:</b>	Reuters
<b>WORD COUNT:</b>	367

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Taliban insurgents said Tuesday they would release 19 South Korean Christian volunteers they have held for nearly six weeks provided Seoul pulls out its troops and stops Korean missionary work in Afghanistan by year-end.

South Korea's presidential office issued a statement setting out the terms of the agreement, and Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal had been struck.

The Taliban's conditions did not include their main previous demand -- the release of a group of terrorists held prisoner by the government of Afghanistan.

"By the end of 2007, they will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan," Bashir told reporters, standing side by side with Korean negotiators in Ghazni province.

"They will not send to Afghanistan those they sent for promulgation of . . . Christianity and will ban others from coming again for promulgation of Christianity," he said.

"All Korean nationals in any field working in Afghanistan will leave Afghanistan by the end of August," he said, adding that the Taliban would start freeing the hostages today.

The announcement followed the resumption of negotiations, which had been on hold for two weeks after the Korean side said it was unable to meet the kidnappers' demand for the release of Taliban prisoners held by the government in exchange for the hostages, most of them women.

"The government will take every possible measure to make sure the hostages are safely back in their families' arms as soon as possible," a South Korean presidential spokesman said, adding that their release could take time.

The South Korean government had decided before the hostage crisis to pull out its small contingent of engineers and medical staff from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

Since the hostages were taken it has banned its nationals from travelling there.

The insurgents seized 23 Korean Christian volunteers on July 19 from a bus in Ghazni province. They killed two male hostages early on in the crisis, but released two women as a gesture of goodwill during the first round of talks.

Afghan Trade and Industry Minister Amin Farhang criticized South Korea's government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope that other countries would not follow Seoul's example.

"If every government were to do this it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," Farhang told Germany's Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger newspaper. "It's like a demand of the Taliban."

The result of capitulation will likely be more abductions, the paper reported Farhang as saying.

# Military to get anti-explosives vehicles; New system will benefit troops in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290033

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A13

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Herald Archive, CanWest News Service / Roadside bombs have taken a heavy toll on Canadian troops in Afghanistan, but the arrival this fall of vehicles for detecting and clearing improvised explosive devices is expected to save many lives. ;

**KEYWORDS:** !@DATELINE=KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 343

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The Canadian military should see the arrival this fall of a new system of vehicles for detecting and clearing improvised explosive devices, Canada's top military commander here said Tuesday.

The military quietly announced in May that it would purchase 16 specialized anti-IED vehicles from the U.S. military for \$29.6 million. The vehicles were originally expected to arrive in August.

But Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche told CanWest News Service Tuesday that the vehicles are now expected to arrive in the fall.

"When you conduct operations and so on and you have additional vehicles like that that can clear the mines and make sure the area is safe, it's always a good thing . . . Because as we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs," he said.

The challenge of dealing with IEDs, normally planted at the side of roads or bridges, has become one of the biggest thorns in the side of the Canadian military.

Of the 25 Canadian soldiers killed so far this year in Afghanistan, all but three have been killed by IEDs.

The threat has exposed the vulnerability of the convoys that regularly ply the roads west of Kandahar City to supply Canada's various forward operating bases.

The new system is called the Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC). It includes three vehicles that specialize in unearthing and neutralizing buried IEDs: The Husky, the Buffalo and the Cougar.

The Husky is a tractor-like vehicle equipped with a metal detector that scans the side of the road and the road bed for explosives.

The Buffalo has an extendable arm and remote-control camera that can physically expose the bomb so it can be identified at a safe distance.

The Cougar is essentially an armoured personnel carrier that would transport Canada's explosive ordnance teams and their array of tools, including anti-IED robots.

The Husky will be acquired through the U.S. army, while the Buffalo and Cougar will be bought from the U.S. Marine Corps.

"In the world, it's one of the best if not the best (system)," said Laroche. "The Americans are using the system for a while. They have been using it in Iraq quite a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

Canada has a fleet of RG-31 Nyalas, a jeep-like armoured vehicle with a V-shaped hull designed to protect against roadside bombs and mines.

## 54 Edmonton soldiers off to Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290028  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**KEYWORDS:** ARMED FORCES; HOCKEY; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** EDMONTON  
**SOURCE:** Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 96

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Fifty-four Edmonton-based soldiers left for Afghanistan on Tuesday.

They gathered at the Edmonton Garrison Tuesday morning to say goodbye to their families.

Most are members of the Leopard tank squadron of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians). They will join the battle group in Kandahar that is made up primarily of troops based in Valcartier, Que.

About 100 Edmonton-based soldiers returned Sunday night from Afghanistan. They belong to Charlie Company of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, which lost nine soldiers during its six-month tour of duty. The rest of the Patricias are expected home in September.

# Soldiers say drone flaws put troops at risk; Supplier awaits Ottawa's approval for upgrade

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290027  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**KEYWORDS:** ESPIONAGE; WAR  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 327

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Canadian troops in Afghanistan are being put at risk because of the limited capabilities of the aerial drones which provide them with surveillance, say soldiers on the ground.

The use of Sperwer unmanned aerial vehicles in Kandahar is being hindered by extremely hot temperatures, the aircraft's limited endurance as well as serviceability issues, military officers said privately. Those limitations have also resulted in gaps in surveillance during recent firefights in the Kandahar area, putting soldiers at risk, they add.

Defence Department officials in Ottawa declined, for reasons of operational security, to discuss specifics related to the Sperwer's performance.

But the firm handling the Sperwer contract, Rheinmetall Canada, says it's been standing by for months with low-cost improvements that will significantly increase the aircraft's endurance and which could be put in place in a matter of days in some cases.

But the Quebec-based company says it has yet to hear back from the Defence Department.

The unmanned aerial vehicles have become a valuable fixture on the Afghanistan battlefield.

During firefights, the drones transmit information back to commanders on the ground giving them details about enemy movements.

Sylvain Lefrancois, a senior Rheinmetall Canada manager, said all drones can be limited by the extreme operating conditions and temperatures in Afghanistan.

But, he said, the company has produced a new launcher for the Sperwer that will increase its endurance by 50 per cent.

"This is available and it's ready to go," he said. "We have informed the customer it can be delivered in the next 15 days."

Lefrancois said the company also informed the Defence Department months ago that it has a more powerful engine which will also significantly increase its endurance.

Those engines can be installed by next spring. Both improvements to the launcher and engine cost little, Lefrancois said, although he declined to get into specifics.

For security reasons, Lefrancois declined to discuss specifics about the Sperwer's endurance.

Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate's defence committee, said he has also heard about the drone concerns from Kandahar, a situation that should prompt the government to immediately deal with the problem.

Kenny said if the solution is to purchase a new drone then "someone should be out there with a cheque right now."

Kenny also pointed out a fleet of high-endurance drones could save Canadian lives by helping detect the improvised explosive devices.

# Newfoundland premier leaves Liberal leader out on a limb; Planned joint blast at PM fizzles as meeting is closed

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290072  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B11  
**DATELINE:** ST. JOHN'S, N.L.  
**BYLINE:** Juliet O'Neill  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 569

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ST. JOHN'S, N.L. — Federal Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion's plan to deliver a joint blast at the Harper government with feisty Conservative Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams fizzled yesterday.

Williams, who has been waging political war on Prime Minister Stephen Harper who he accuses of breaking a 2006 election promise on offshore oil revenues, declared his meeting with Dion private, forcing the Liberals to cancel a scheduled photo opportunity with the two leaders.

Dion had billed the event as a way of showcasing what both men say is Harper's untrustworthiness because the Tory prime minister reneged on a campaign pledge to exclude offshore oil revenue from federal-provincial revenue-sharing calculations.

Dion was left on his own to accuse Harper of a "breach of trust" at a news conference, even as a local radio talk show discussed his meeting with Williams in the context of the ancient proverb: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Liberal officials said Williams declined the opportunity to make a joint appearance with Dion on the grounds of a pending Newfoundland election campaign. Williams' office did not elaborate. The premier is about to call an Oct. 9 provincial election, in which he is regarded as a shoo-in.

Asked how badly the federal Liberals need Williams to help defeat Conservatives in the region in the next federal election, Dion replied: "He's a big boy. He will decide what he has to do. And I will decide what I have to do. His slogan, though, 'Anybody but Conservative' — ABC — I think is a very good one. But I will add 'Liberals for Canada' — LFC."

Williams's office issued a statement saying the meeting went well and the two discussed several regional issues, including the Atlantic Accord on offshore revenue. "There were no outcomes per se," the statement said.

Dion also used the news conference to call on Harper to "open the books" on a Tory election spending issue that has triggered an examination by William Corbett, the commissioner of Canada Elections.

"We need to know where the expenses have been made — in the riding or by the national machine of the Conservative party," Dion charged, adding that "there is a possibility that this party broke the law and had \$1

Newfoundland premier leaves Liberal leader out on a limb; Planned joint blast at PM fizzles as meeting is closed

million in extra spending that were outside the limits."

Corbett, who has the power to pass on cases to prosecutors, is currently examining whether the Conservative party broke the law in the 2006 election campaign when it gave money to some candidates, then immediately took it back again to buy regional advertisements.

At issue is whether the funds were spent appropriately on local TV and radio ads -- expenses that could be eligible for partial refunds through Elections Canada. If not, and the money principally benefited the national campaign, the party may have exceeded its allowable campaign spending limit.

"This is a very, very serious issue, Dion said. "The prime minister should open the books right away. We need to know where the invoices [are] where [they went], what happened, because \$1 million may make a big difference in a national campaign."

Dion also reiterated that if Harper plans to prorogue Parliament and start afresh with a throne speech, he needs to understand the opposition's demands. Notably, the Liberals seek a better environmental package than the government has offered; notification to NATO that Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan will end as scheduled in February 2009; a competitiveness policy that helps the manufacturing sector, and a social policy that addresses homelessness and other poverty issues.

# Surveillance drones fall short, soldiers say; Limits to capabilities put troops at risk during firefights with Taliban

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290068  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B11  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 373

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OTTAWA — Canadian troops in Afghanistan are being put at risk because of the limited capabilities of the aerial drones which provide them with surveillance, say soldiers on the ground.

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The firm handling the Sperwer contract, Rheinmetall Canada, says it's been standing by for months with low-cost improvements that will significantly increase the aircraft's endurance and which could be put in place in a matter of days in some cases.

But the Quebec-based company says it has yet to hear back from the Defence Department.

The unmanned aerial vehicles have become a valuable fixture on the Afghan battlefield. During firefights, the drones transmit information back to commanders on the ground, giving them details about enemy movements.

Sylvain Lefrançois, a senior Rheinmetall Canada manager, said all UAVs can be limited by the extreme operating conditions and temperatures in Afghanistan. But he said the company has produced a new launcher for the Sperwer that will increase its endurance by 50 per cent.

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Kenny also pointed out a fleet of high-endurance UAVs could save Canadian lives by helping detect the improvised explosive devices that have caused so many casualties among the troops in Kandahar.

# Public invited to send messages to troops

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290064  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Capital & Van. Isl.  
**PAGE:** B2  
**COLUMN:** Island Briefing  
**SOURCE:** Times Colonist  
**WORD COUNT:** 102

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A book containing goodwill messages for soldiers and civilians serving in Afghanistan arrives in Victoria tomorrow.

The Notes from Home book is available for anyone to sign, from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Colwood Pacific Activity Centre (2610 Rosebank Ave.) and 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Mayfair Shopping Centre, near the Island Savings Credit Union entrance.

Tens of thousands of signatures have already been collected in the book, including those of Prime Minister Steven Harper and Gen. Rick Hillier, chief of defence staff.

The final product will be delivered to Forces personnel and civilians in Afghanistan. The book will eventually be stored in the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

# Poppy yield indicates Afghanistan reality

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290046  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Letters  
**PAGE:** A13  
**BYLINE:** Norm Ryder  
**SOURCE:** Times Colonist  
**WORD COUNT:** 93

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Re: "Afghan poppy yield at record high," Aug. 26.

I find it difficult to rationalize the public statements from the federal government that we are also making progress in Afghanistan with the United Nations report that the production of opium is up 45 per cent. Is progress in Afghanistan measured in terms of how much and how cheap the heroin is in the West? If we were making progress there I would expect a reduction of 45 per cent would be a better indicator.

Norm Ryder,

Saanichton.

# War effort hurt by drug strategy; Record poppy crops show eradication effort has failed while increasing Taliban support

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290039  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Comment  
**PAGE:** A12  
**SOURCE:** Times Colonist  
**WORD COUNT:** 398

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Canadian support for the Afghanistan mission relies in part on confidence that it is being managed competently. A United Nations report showing a 34-per-cent jump in poppy production raises renewed doubts about the strategies being pursued by NATO.

Afghanistan growers and labs supply 93 per cent of illegal opium in the world. The profits help fund the Taliban, while opium-related corruption in the police, military and governments undermines efforts to stabilize the country. It is a problem that must be addressed.

But NATO's response — driven largely by the U.S. commitment to a drug war based on attacking supplies — has been a destructive failure. Western attempts to eradicate crops have been totally unsuccessful, as this year's record output demonstrates.

In the process, the NATO forces have fuelled corruption and driven thousands of Afghans to support the Taliban.

These results are not surprising. Afghanistan is desperately, almost incomprehensibly poor. The average income is under \$30 per month.

And the opium industry is central to the economy. About one in 10 Afghans earns income producing or processing the crops; it represents more than 10 per cent of all economic activity. There is no alternate crop or source of income for many rural communities.

Expecting Afghans to voluntarily stop growing opium, when they have no other way of surviving, is foolish.

And the eradication efforts — even when they are not subverted by corrupt local officials and police — simply create new recruits for the Taliban, which promises protection to farmers, and alienate ordinary Afghans.

Destroying families' crops in the days before harvest means a winter of suffering.

There are alternate approaches. The Senlis Council, an international research agency with a focus on Afghanistan, has proposed a Poppy for Medicine program. Afghan villages would be supported in growing poppies and producing morphine. The pain-management drug is in desperately short supply for medical use in much of the developing world.

Western nations could also subsidize farmers to grow other crops or simply buy and destroy the poppy harvest.

Expensive, certainly. But the U.S. spent \$600 million last year on its failed effort to reduce poppy cultivation. Canada spent \$55 million, while production increased 32 per cent in Kandahar. Simply redirecting existing funding would allow a start on a new approach.

The eradication efforts have not only failed: Destroying farmers' crops has driven Afghans into the arms of the Taliban. In a battle that relies on winning the hearts and minds of ordinary people, a program that brings them hunger and greater poverty is a disaster.

Our troops deserve a real chance to succeed. That means an entirely new approach to poppy production in Afghanistan.

# More than 100 Afghan insurgents killed: U.S.

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290027  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**COLUMN:** World Briefing  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 78

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KABUL – More than 100 suspected insurgents were killed in a battle with U.S.–led troops in southern Afghanistan, the U.S. military said today.

The battle erupted after a convoy of Afghan and U.S. coalition forces came under attack in Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar province, it said in a statement.

There were no civilian casualties but one Afghan security force member was killed and three foreign troops and three Afghan soldiers were wounded, the statement from the U.S. military said.

# Final Van Doos ship out to Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290025  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**DATELINE:** CFB VALCARTIER, Que.  
**BYLINE:** Kevin Dougherty  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 198

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CFB VALCARTIER, Que. -- "It's hard."

Chantale Descarie was eloquently simple in expressing her feelings as her husband, Cpl. Marcel Descarie, prepared to board a plane to Afghanistan yesterday, part of the final 118 soldiers of the latest Quebec-led rotation of Canadian troops on their way to a mission few Quebecers support.

Descarie said while public support in Canada and other NATO countries for the mission may be mixed, his family supports it.

"They understand we are going there to help," Descarie said.

Flags at the Valcartier military base flew at half mast to honour three Quebec-based soldiers who were killed last week by improvised explosive devices, the favourite weapon of the Taliban insurgents, as Canada's fourth rotation, including 44 soldiers based in Valcartier, 57 from Edmonton and 17 based in Petawawa, Ont., readied for departure.

Funerals for Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne and Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier will be held Friday, near Valcartier.

Their families, who have requested a limited media presence at the funerals, issued a statement thanking Canadians for "the incredible show of support during the repatriation in Trenton on Aug. 26. Veterans, ambulance workers, firefighters, police officers and citizens alike were present to pay their last respects to the fallen soldiers," said the statement released by the Canadian Forces.

# Canadian military to get anti-explosive vehicles

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290024  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Guy Laroche: Expects arrival this fall.;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 246

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The Canadian military should see the arrival this fall of a new system of vehicles for detecting and clearing improvised explosive devices, Canada's top military commander here said yesterday.

The military quietly announced in May that it would purchase 16 specialized anti-IED vehicles from the U.S. military for \$29.6 million. The vehicles were originally expected to arrive in August.

But Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said yesterday that the vehicles are now expected to arrive in the fall.

"When you conduct operations and so on and you have additional vehicles like that, which can clear the mines and make sure the area is safe, it's always a good thing," he said.

The challenge of dealing with IEDs, planted at the side of roads or bridges, has become one of the biggest thorns in the side of the Canadian military.

Of the 25 Canadian soldiers killed so far this year in Afghanistan, all but three have been killed by IEDs.

The threat has exposed the vulnerability of the convoys that regularly ply the roads west of Kandahar City to supply Canada's various forward operating bases.

The new system is called the Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC). It includes three vehicles that specialize in unearthing and neutralizing buried IEDs: The Husky, the Buffalo, and the Cougar.

The Husky is a tractor-like vehicle equipped with a metal detector that scans the side of the road and the road bed for explosives. The Buffalo has an extendable arm and remote-control camera that can physically expose the bomb so it can be identified at a safe distance.

The Cougar is essentially an armoured personnel carrier that would transport Canada's explosive ordnance teams and their array of tools.

# New vehicles can detect, neutralize roadside bombs

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290011  
**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Canada/World  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Jacob Silberberg, the Associated Press / New vehicles can detect, neutralize roadside bombs ;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 169

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Canadian soldiers will soon get specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize deadly roadside bombs.

Canada is spending \$29.6 million to acquire 16 vehicles from the U.S. armed forces with deliveries starting in October.

Six Husky vehicles can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads; five Buffalo vehicles — like the one pictured — can dig them up using extended arms and cameras; and five Cougar vehicles can neutralize the bombs.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops. Of the 69 soldiers killed in the war-ravaged country since 2002, more than half — 38 — have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

Canada has some equipment to detect roadside bombs, but nothing like these specialized vehicles, said Brigadier-General Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan.

He cautioned that the vehicles won't totally eliminate the problem of roadside bombs but said the Americans have had success with the equipment in Iraq. The Buffaloes and the Cougars are made in the United States while the Husky vehicles are made in South Africa.

# THE AFGHAN MISSION: STAFF: WILL CANADA LEAVE THEM BEHIND? Interpreters give their lives for little pay and no glory

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072410206

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A14

**BYLINE:** CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD

**SECTION:** Column

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 1151

**WORD COUNT:** 1123

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CHRISTIE BLATCHFORD KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN The interpreter shacks sit just beyond the famous "wire" here at Kandahar Air Field, past the gates, the observation posts and the entrance to the sprawling coalition base.

As a metaphor it couldn't be more perfect or poignant, for the young Afghan men who wait inside these dusty compounds to be called on by the soldiers of the NATO-led International Assistance Force to Afghanistan remain just a bit on the outside, too.

In the field, especially but not exclusively on combat missions, the interpreters and the individual soldiers with whom they work often become close as brothers.

The 26-year-old supervisor of the 700 interpreters who work in what's called Regional Command South – volatile and dangerous southern Afghanistan – for International Management Services, Inc., or IMS, says that he recently offered one of his "terps," as everyone calls them, a safe job inside the office, and that the young man replied, "I can't. My [Canadian] captain needs me." Yet although the interpreters are dying at a faster rate than either Canadian or British troops – 64 terps have been killed in RC South this year alone, compared with 25 Canadian soldiers and 29 British ones – they remain faceless and nameless, even in death.

Last week, for instance, when a light armoured vehicle, or LAV III, hit a mine, two soldiers from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment were killed, and another, as well a Radio-Canada cameraman Charles Dubois, seriously injured.

The dead soldiers, Master Corporal Christian Duchesne and Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier, were honoured at the traditional brief but moving ramp ceremony two days later, Mr. Dubois and the unidentified Vandoo were flown to Landstuhl, Germany, for further treatment.

But the 26-year-old interpreter who was killed with them in the blast was mentioned only in passing in news reports and was quietly buried in the same shroud of anonymity in which he toiled.

He died three days from his 27th birthday.

Even had the pace of operations allowed it, his new Canadian friends couldn't have attended his funeral, held the next day as is Muslim custom, for fear that their presence would alert the Taliban that he had been

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STAFF: WILL CANADA LEAVE THEM BEHIND? Interpreters give their lives for li

working for the coalition and thus cause his family to be targeted.

For the same reason, even now, the young man's name can't be made public.

Single, he was nonetheless the chief, if not the only, breadwinner in his large extended family – his parents, six brothers, an unknown number of sisters, and an uncle.

His supervisor, who says the young man had been working with Canadians for the past three or four months, has told no one in his family, including his wife, what he does for a living. His wife believes, he says, that he is still attending school in Kabul, and although he quit field work a few months ago to become part of IMS management, he has been living and sleeping at the rudimentary shacks 24/7 ever since.

Interpreters, as well as district politicians, Afghan police and anyone seen as helping coalition forces – such as three local men working as de-miners, who were kidnapped then murdered earlier this month – are traditional targets for the Taliban.

Canadian army officials say that all interpreters are covered by Defense Base Insurance, the U.S. company that insures most private contractors working in either Iraq or Afghanistan. In addition, sources say a little-known payment is made by the Canadian government, likely a lump sum of about \$10,000, to the families of interpreters who are killed on the job while working with Canadian troops.

None of the interpreters interviewed by The Globe and Mail voiced the mildest complaint about how they are treated by Canadian soldiers (or those from any other nation, for that matter) or even about their pay, which is less than they earn working for Americans.

General-level terps employed by Canadians earn about \$600 (U.S.) a month, while specialists, such as those working with legal mentors or who have acquired a particular expertise, can earn as much as \$1,200 (U.S.). But most of those working for the United States earn at least \$1,000 (U.S.) a month. About 200 of the 700 IMS terps in the south regularly work with Canadians, and if anything, they tend to be grateful.

"Canadians have made a lot of sacrifices here," the supervisor says. "A lot of lives. They're shedding blood for someone else's prosperity and peace; it's amazing." The Kandahar office of IMS is headed by a team of Afghan-American brothers who were born in Afghanistan but raised and schooled in southern California; the younger speaks English with a noticeable American accent. Just 23, he has been with the company only a short time and is still reeling a little from the shock of this place.

"In America," he says, "we don't see dead people. I got to see the first dead person in my life here; it's like bodies are everywhere – an explosion here, an explosion there." He says the care given terps who are injured while fighting with Canadian troops is first-rate, both by medics at the scene and at coalition hospitals, such as the one at the main base in Kandahar.

"They really take care of them," he says, "like their own soldiers while they're out on the job." But unlike him, most interpreters – they usually learn English first at small private schools in Kabul or Kandahar and hone their skills on the job – can only dream of living in either the U.S.

or Canada.

For those who work with Americans, that dream became more feasible this June, when U.S. President George Bush amended the National Defense Authorization Act to expand the number of special visas available for interpreters who have worked with U.S. forces either in Iraq or Afghanistan. This year and next, 500 of the special immigration visas will be available for those who have worked with U.S. forces for at least a year, have a letter of recommendation from the U.S.

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STAFF: WILL CANADA LEAVE THEM BEHIND? Interpreters give their 90s for lit

chain of command, and pass the usual security checks.

Denmark also recently made special arrangements to take its 60-member Iraqi staff with them when its soldiers pull out of Iraq. But Canada has no comparable program, a spokesman for Citizenship and Immigration Canada said.

The IMS tarp shacks at Kandahar Air Field sit in between the main coalition base and Camp Hero, home base for the 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army – like the men sitting inside them, not quite belonging to either place. At the entrance to the shacks, a sad but spirited little monkey on a short chain is the first sight the visitor sees – himself not a bad symbol of the men in the compound, waiting, behind him.

cblatchford@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; strife; interpreters; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban; Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION: STAFF: WILL CANADA LEAVE THEM BEHIND? Interpreters give their lives for li

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Afghan developments

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072410205

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A14

**BYLINE:**

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** AP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** Kabul AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 241

**WORD COUNT:** 235

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Associated Press KABUL \* U.S. and Afghan troops battled suspected Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan in ground clashes and air strikes that left more than 100 militants dead, the coalition said.

The battle in Kandahar province's Shah Wali Kot district started after the joint force was ambushed by a large group of insurgents who tried to overrun their position several times before being strafed by air strikes.

"Coalition aircraft destroyed the reinforced enemy emplacements and sniper positions as well as two trucks used to reinforce and re-supply the insurgent force," a coalition statement said.

The clashes also left three coalition and three Afghan soldiers wounded, and one Afghan soldier dead, the statement said. The casualty figures could not be independently verified due to the remoteness of the area. Canadian soldiers were not involved in the battle.

The nationality of the coalition soldiers was not disclosed, but the vast majority of soldiers in the area are American.

\* In a separate action, U.S. and Afghan troops raided a house near Kandahar city, killing two suspected militants and detaining five others.

Those targeted in the raid were accused of facilitating bomb attacks against coalition and Afghan forces in Kandahar. The people detained will be questioned at a military facility before being turned over to Afghan authorities, a coalition statement said.

\* A suicide bomber in eastern Afghanistan attacked NATO troops helping to build a bridge, killing three U.S. soldiers, a U.S. official said.

**ADDED SEARCH TERMS:**

**GEOGRAPHIC NAME:** United States; Afghanistan

**SUBJECT TERM:** strife

**ORGANIZATION NAME:** Taliban; Armed Forces

# THE AFGHAN MISSION: CELEBRATION IN SEOUL, CONCERN IN KANDAHAR Hostage deal fuels Taliban legitimacy Seeing militants treated as negotiating partners worries observers and Afghans alike

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072410204

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A1 (ILLUS)

**BYLINE:** GRAEME SMITH

**SECTION:** International News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** Islamabad PAKISTAN

**WORDS:** 704

**WORD COUNT:** 708

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GRAEME SMITH ISLAMABAD Scenes of joy from South Korea filled television screens yesterday as the Taliban announced a deal to release 19 kidnapped church volunteers.

Far away from the celebrations, however, observers worried that the end of the hostage crisis marks the beginning of a new stage in Afghanistan's insurgency.

Not only did the Taliban succeed in taking the largest group of hostages captured since the start of the conflict, they conducted the raid on a highway paved with American funding – a vital link between Kabul and Kandahar and a zone considered only medium-risk by security experts.

The negotiations leading to the hostage release also included scenes that outraged among some Afghans, as Taliban fighters entered a major city under a white flag to meet Korean representatives face to face, and afterward held their first press conference since their regime collapsed in 2001.

Perhaps most worryingly, observers say, the apparent conclusion of the drama means the Taliban can now claim greater legitimacy as reliable negotiating partners. It could also inspire more kidnappings, an increasingly common tactic as the insurgents try to drive away the foreigners propping up a weak government.

"This takes the Taliban to a different level of recognition," said Barnett Rubin, a leading academic on Afghanistan. "They successfully negotiated a deal with a foreign government. They committed war crimes and executed hostages, so they didn't look that good, but it's still a victory for them." The Taliban originally captured the 23 Koreans on a bus from Kabul to Kandahar on July 19, subsequently killing two of them and releasing two others.

Yesterday's deal appears to give the insurgents little of substance for their effort, as the Korean government's only publicized concessions were a repetition of previous commitments for the withdrawal of 200 non-combat troops by the end of the year, and a ban on Korean missionaries visiting Afghanistan. The insurgents dropped an earlier demand for a prisoner exchange.

Spokesmen for the Taliban said that they would announce today when and how the Koreans would be freed. Both sides have said that money wasn't discussed in their talks, but media outlets in Afghanistan and South

Korea speculated that a ransom was paid. Neither side would be interested in publicly acknowledging that money was involved: Governments with citizens in dangerous countries don't want to set precedents, and the Taliban's propaganda depends on an image of moral purity, as the insurgents try to distinguish themselves from the brigands who plague the country.

Even before the latest deal, however, Afghans were already losing patience with the flurry of foreigners being kidnapped in record numbers. An Italian journalist, two French aid workers, and two German engineers were captured this year, each case inspiring heavy pressure on the Kabul government to make concessions.

Afghans expressed outrage as the Taliban negotiated cash and prisoners in exchange for their foreign captives, saying that Afghans themselves get little help when they're captured – and complaining about the benefits reaped by the insurgents because of what many Afghans view as the foreign governments' inability to stomach the idea of their own citizens dying.

Several days after the start of the Korean kidnapping ordeal, Kabul newspapers and broadcasters were asking why the Afghan government allows foreigners to travel outside the capital city. "The Afghan Ministry of Interior Affairs needs to make sure not to allow foreigners to travel around Afghanistan," said a major Kabul daily.

Another newspaper said the Taliban would be encouraged by the legitimacy they have gained from talks with the Korean government, suggesting that more kidnappings would follow.

"One can see the sign of further zeal on their faces," said the Musharekat-e Milli, an opposition newspaper in Kabul.

Despite the concerns, Mr. Rubin also suggested an optimistic view of the Taliban's new tactics. The insurgents have proven they can maintain a coherent bargaining position during a period of weeks, he said, which may give hope to those who wish to find a negotiated end to the war.

"It shows increasing political sophistication by the Taliban," he said.

"Maybe they're moving in the direction where they're capable of a political settlement." Graeme Smith covers Afghanistan for The Globe and Mail

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; South Korea

SUBJECT TERM: strife; hostages; south koreans; kidnapping

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Captives far from home

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 072410203

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A14

**BYLINE:**

**SECTION:** International News

**SOURCE:** AP

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 452

**WORD COUNT:** 505

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Associated Press Recent kidnappings of foreigners in Afghanistan: German engineers German engineers Rudolf Blechschmidt, above, and Ruediger Diedrich and five Afghan colleagues were kidnapped in southern Wardak province on July 18. Mr. Diedrich was found shot dead July 21. Mr. Blechschmidt and four Afghans remain in custody. One of the Afghans escaped, according to Taliban captors. Mr. Blechschmidt appeared on Afghan television on Aug. 23, coughing and holding his chest while appealing for help. "I am a prisoner of the Taliban," said the man, who identified himself as Rudolf Blechschmidt. "We live in the mountains, very high in a very bad condition, please help us." French aid workers French aid workers Celine Cordelier and Eric Damfreville from the group Terre d'Enfance and their three Afghan colleagues, Mohammad Hashim and brothers Ghulam Rasul and Ghulam Azrat, were abducted on April 3 in the southwestern province of Nimroz. Ms. Cordelier was released on April 28, and Mr. Damfreville was released on May 11. The three Afghans were released on May 27. Terre d'Enfance is a small NGO set up in 2001; it describes itself as an apolitical group that promotes the rights of children and socio-cultural tolerance.

Italian photographer Italian photographer Gabriele Torsello and his Afghan translator were abducted while driving from Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern Helmand province, toward neighbouring Kandahar on Oct.

12. Mr. Torsello was left by the side of a road on Nov. 3. An aid agency insisted that \$2-million (U.S.) was paid for the release of Mr. Torsello. The Italian government did not deny the charge.

Colombian aid worker Gunmen kidnapped a Colombian aid worker and two Afghan employees of a French-funded non-governmental organization in southern Wardak province on Sept. 12. The three were released three weeks later.

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe was attacked at home for approving the payment of a ransom for the release of Diego Rojas. Mr. Uribe denied having paid a ransom, although he implied that the aid agency likely did. Mr. Rojas worked for MADERA, which provided programs in rural development, rehabilitation and aid.

Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo, above, was abducted in southern Helmand province with two Afghan colleagues on March 5. Mr. Mastrogiacomo was released March 19 in exchange for five Taliban prisoners. Both of the Afghan colleagues were beheaded. The agreement for Mr. Mastrogiacomo's release caused an international furor, with both the United States and Britain saying the release of five guerrillas in exchange for an Italian reporter put NATO troops in danger and encouraged kidnappings.

A senior official with the U.S. administration said Washington had formally complained to Rome through diplomatic channels for putting pressure on Kabul to release Taliban members.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; kidnapping; deaths; list

# Sizing up Harper

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL  
**IDN:** 072410161  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**PAGE:** A12  
**BYLINE:** H. W. MACFADYEN  
**SECTION:** Letter to the Edit  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** Canmore, Alta.  
**WORDS:** 104  
**WORD COUNT:** 105

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H. W. MacFadyen Canmore, Alta.

\* So you are wondering how Stephen Harper can increase his chances of winning a majority? Apparently the answer is simple: Become a Liberal.

Just look at the polling results for what it would take to improve Canadians' impressions of Mr. Harper: 86 per cent would like Mr.

Harper better if he reduced wait times for major health treatments; 83 per cent, if Canada's Kyoto targets to reduce global warming were met; 78 per cent, if more money were put into urban public transit; and 63 per cent would prefer a prime minister who would withdraw our troops from a combat role in Afghanistan.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: political; public opinion polls

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

# No Afghan exploitation

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL  
**IDN:** 072410160  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**PAGE:** A12  
**BYLINE:** COSTA ZAFIROPOULOS  
**SECTION:** Letter to the Edit  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** Montreal PQ  
**WORDS:** 87  
**WORD COUNT:** 110

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Costa Zafirooulos Montreal Lysiane Gagnon (An Electoral Land Mine In Quebec – Aug. 27) feels Thomas Mulcair and the NDP are "shamelessly exploiting Canadian casualties." This is unfair to Mr. Mulcair, the NDP and the millions of Canadians who are opposed to this war.

The NDP has been vocally opposed to Canadian involvement since the very beginning of the mission. Ms. Gagnon may not like what they have to say, but to accuse those opposed to the Afghan mission of exploiting Canadian deaths is insulting and contributes nothing to the debate.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Quebec

SUBJECT TERM: political; foreign policy; defence

# TELECOM Cellphones transforming Afghan life

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL  
**IDN:** 072410129  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**PAGE:** B7 (ILLUS)  
**BYLINE:** CHRIS BRUMMITT  
**SECTION:** International News  
**SOURCE:** AP  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** Kabul AFGHANISTAN  
**WORDS:** 324  
**WORD COUNT:** 317

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CHRIS BRUMMITT Associated Press KABUL About 150,000 people subscribe to cellphone service each month in Afghanistan and there's "no end in sight" to the growth, the country's Communications Minister said yesterday.

Speaking after the launch of the nation's fourth cellphone service provider, Amirzai Sangin predicted the telecommunication and information technology sector would "be the engine of growth for Afghanistan." Afghanistan's economy is growing quickly, due mostly to the infusion of foreign aid since the downfall of the Taliban in 2001. But the country's living standards are among the lowest in the world and it faces mounting security problems.

Its economy is predominantly rural, and trade and industry are badly hampered by crumbling roads and chronic electricity shortages.

Not including the illicit trade in opium, the nation's few exports include dried fruit and carpets.

But like in other developing nations, cellphone service providers have been doing brisk business, bringing communication to poor villagers who until four years rarely, if ever, used a telephone.

"In Afghanistan, the majority of our people will be connected through mobile phones," Mr. Sangin said. ". . . We have gone straight into the age of personal communication." Calling rates are currently about 10 cents a minute, with the cheapest phone cards on sale for the equivalent of \$1. Coverage is generally available in all the country's 34 provinces.

Mr. Sangin said the country's telecommunications and IT sector employed about 50,000 people and was crucial to opening opportunities for trade between districts as well as other countries.

So far, 12 per cent of Afghanistan's 25 million people have cellphones.

Yesterday, Emirates Telecommunication Corp. , or Etisalat, became the fourth service provider to compete in the Afghan market. The United Arab Emirates company said it had invested \$300-million to set up service.

Salem Al Kendi, Etisalat's Afghan chief executive officer, predicted brisk growth in Afghanistan and said the company hoped to move into other countries in the region.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:telecommunications industry; cellular telephones; economy

# Vehicles to shield Canadian troops

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**PUBLICATION:** WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A10

**SECTION:** World Wire

**WORD COUNT:** 148

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CP Wire Martin Ouellet KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Canadian soldiers soon will have more protection from specialized vehicles to detect, unearth and neutralize roadside bombs.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the biggest threat facing Canadian troops in recent months.

Canada is buying 16 vehicles from the American armed forces, with deliveries starting in October. The price tag is \$29.6 million.

"They will be the first vehicles of their kind for the Canadian army," Brig-Gen. Guy Laroche said.

Of the 69 Canadian soldiers killed in the country since 2002, more than half — 38 — have died as a result of roadside bombs, mines or suicide attacks.

"... So having equipment like that will be great," Laroche said.

Canada is buying six Husky vehicles that can detect mines buried under or at the side of roads, while the five Buffalo vehicles on order will dig them up using extended arms and cameras. Rounding out the team will be five Cougar vehicles, capable of neutralizing bombs.

Laroche cautioned that the vehicles won't totally eliminate the problem.

— Canadian Press

# Taliban to free Korean hostages Seoul to withdraw its 200 troops

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**PUBLICATION:** WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**PAGE:** A10

**SECTION:** World Wire

**WORD COUNT:** 340

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CP Wire Amir Shah GHAZNI, Afghanistan — Taliban militants agreed Tuesday to release 19 South Korean church volunteers held hostage for more than a month after Seoul agreed to end all missionary work and keep a promise to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The agreement — reached in direct talks between Taliban negotiators and South Korean officials meeting in central Afghanistan — ends a hostage crisis that had exposed the growing security problems facing Afghanistan.

Relatives of the hostages in South Korea welcomed news of the impending release.

"I would like to dance," said Cho Myung-ho, mother of 28-year-old hostage Lee Joo-yeon.

South Korean presidential spokesman Cheon Ho-sun said from Seoul, that the deal had been reached "on the condition that South Korea withdraws troops by the end of year and South Korea suspends missionary work in Afghanistan." There was no word on when the captives would be released.

In reaching the deal, South Korea did not appear to commit to anything it did not already plan to do.

Seoul has already said it would withdraw its 200 non-combat troops by the end of the year.

It has also sought to prevent missionaries from going to countries where they were not wanted.

The government in Seoul and relatives of the hostages had insisted that the 19 kidnapped South Koreans were not missionaries, but were instead doing aid work.

The Taliban had also been demanding the release of militant prisoners in exchange for the captives' freedom.

Afghan officials, however, had ruled out any exchange, saying such a move would only encourage further kidnappings.

Taliban spokesmen have previously said they had no interest in a ransom payment.

Cheon, the South Korean presidential spokesman, told The Associated Press that he was informed by South Korean officials in Afghanistan that money was not discussed during negotiations with the Taliban.

The Taliban kidnapped 23 South Koreans as they travelled by bus from Kabul to the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar on July 19.

In late July, the militants executed two male hostages.

But the militants released two women hostages earlier this month as a goodwill gesture.

Taliban to free Korean hostages Seoul to withdraw its 200 troops

Tuesday's agreement came after face-to-face talks between the two sides in the central town of Ghazni.

It was the fourth time direct negotiations had been held. All the talks had been mediated by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Abductions have become a key insurgent tactic in recent months.

A German engineer and four Afghan colleagues kidnapped a day before the South Koreans are still being held.

— Associated Press

# Korea reaches deal on Taliban captives; Afghan leaders unhappy at official 'capitulation'

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290040

**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A8

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: STR; Agence France–Presse ; Getty Images / AT LAST: Relatives of South Korean hostages in Afghanistan get the good news of their imminent freedom Tuesday. The Taliban will release 19 aid workers after six weeks of captivity. ;

**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Jan Agha

**SOURCE:** Reuters

**WORD COUNT:** 329

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – South Korea and Taliban insurgents have reached an agreement over 19 South Korean Christian volunteers held hostage in Afghanistan for nearly six weeks.

South Korea's presidential office issued a statement setting out the terms of the agreement, and Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal had been struck.

In Seoul, the president's office said South Korea agreed to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and end missionary work.

The Taliban's conditions did not include their main previous demand — the release of a group of militants held prisoner by the Afghan government.

"By the end of 2007, they will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan," Bashir told reporters, standing side by side with Korean negotiators in Ghazni province.

"They will not send to Afghanistan those they sent for promulgation of ... Christianity and will ban others from coming again for promulgation of Christianity," he said.

"All Korean nationals in any field working in Afghanistan will leave Afghanistan by the end of August," he said, adding that the Taliban would start freeing the hostages today.

The announcement followed the resumption of negotiations, which had been on hold for two weeks after the Korean side said it was unable to meet the kidnappers' demand for the release of Taliban prisoners held by the government in exchange for the hostages, most of them women.

Afghan Trade and Industry Minister Amin Farhang criticized South Korea's government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope that other countries would not follow Seoul's example.

"If every government were to do this it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," Farhang told Germany's Koelner Stadt–Anzeiger newspaper. He suggested more kidnappings might result from the action.

The South Korean government had decided before the hostage crisis to pull out its small contingent of engineers and medical staff from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

Since the hostages were taken, it has banned its nationals from travelling there.

The insurgents seized 23 Korean Christian volunteers on July 19 from a bus in Ghazni province. They killed two male hostages early on in the crisis, but released two women as a gesture of goodwill during the first round of talks.

# Taliban, South Koreans strike deal to release hostages

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290080  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** D4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Reuters / South Korean and Taliban negotiators announce their plans Tuesday near Kabul ;  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 388

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan (Reuters) — Taliban insurgents said on Tuesday they would release 19 South Korean Christian volunteers they have held for nearly six weeks provided Seoul pulls out its troops and stops Korean missionary work in Afghanistan by year-end.

South Korea's presidential office issued a statement setting out the terms of the agreement, and Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal had been struck.

The Taliban's conditions did not include their main previous demand — the release of a group of militants held prisoner by the Afghan government.

"By the end of 2007, they will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan," Bashir told reporters, standing side by side with Korean negotiators in Ghazni province.

"They will not send to Afghanistan those they sent for promulgation of . . . Christianity and will ban others from coming again for promulgation of Christianity," he said.

"All Korean nationals in any field working in Afghanistan will leave Afghanistan by the end of August," he said, adding that the Taliban would start freeing the hostages on Wednesday.

The announcement followed the resumption of negotiations, which had been on hold for two weeks after the Korean side said it was unable to meet the kidnappers' demand for the release of Taliban prisoners held by the government in exchange for the hostages, most of them women.

"The government will take every possible measure to make sure the hostages are safely back in their families' arms as soon as possible," a South Korean presidential spokesperson said, adding that their release could take time.

The South Korean government had decided before the hostage crisis to pull out its small contingent of engineers and medical staff from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

Since the hostages were taken it has banned its nationals from travelling there.

The insurgents seized 23 Korean Christian volunteers on July 19 from a bus in Ghazni province. They killed

two male hostages early on in the crisis, but released two women as a gesture of goodwill during the first round of talks.

Afghan Trade and Industry Minister Amin Farhang criticised South Korea's government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope that other countries would not follow Seoul's example.

"If every government were to do this it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," Farhang told Germany's Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger newspaper. "It's like a demand of the Taliban."

The hostages' relatives in South Korea, however, reacted differently. They cheered, hugged and chatted on their mobile phones after news broke that the hostages would be released.

# Troop support not city work

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290159  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** City  
**PAGE:** F4  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 468

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City councillors can go to rallies and donate to the Military Families Fund and write postcards to Canadian Forces members as enthusiastically as anyone else. And that's a healthy way to back our troops.

In contrast, Rideau–Goulbourn Councillor Glenn Brooks is expected today to ask city council to consider a resolution expressing support for Canada's troops abroad, particularly in Afghanistan. It's a silly motion council shouldn't even debate, let alone vote on.

In 2003, Bay Councillor Alex Cullen tried to get city council to debate prospects for Canada's joining the invasion of Iraq, and council rightly declined. We have different levels of government for a reason; city council's rightful areas of competence include potholes and ambulance services. Foreign affairs and national defence are the federal government's job.

But, some might protest, supporting the troops is such a benign sentiment. Who wouldn't vote for such a resolution?

If what Mr. Brooks proposes really is that inoffensive then it goes without saying and council shouldn't waste its time discussing it. But of course "supporting the troops" isn't that simple.

The Citizen has firmly supported both the Canadian mission in Afghanistan from the beginning and the men and women sent to carry it out, but the mission and the people assigned to it are not one and the same.

Nevertheless, some people use the "Support the troops!" slogan to blend together soldiers and politicians, those who are in harm's way with those who decided to put them there.

"You cannot say you are for our military and then not stand behind the things they do," Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a "support the troops" rally on Parliament Hill last September. That's nonsense: the troops do the things they do on orders that originate with the government, and sometimes those orders are unwise, poorly informed, or meant to serve political purposes rather than military ones.

Truly supporting the troops means watching the politicians closely and criticizing them openly if ever they take undue risks with soldiers', sailors' or airmen's lives. It also means that if you genuinely believe the mission in Afghanistan is so irreparably misguided that everyone (including the Afghans) would be better off if the Canadian Forces came home, you must say so and explain why.

There are more than two positions that reasonable people of goodwill can hold.

Requiring politicians to vote for a resolution that frames the discussion in these simplistic terms, or else be branded unpatriotic, limits free speech and action. Did you vote for the motion? Did you wear red last Friday? Did you go to the last rally? Did anybody see you there? Exactly how loudly did you sing O Canada?

Councillors should have better things to do, such as de-crunching the city budget (see below). If this is what they choose to spend their time on, they're taking neither their work nor the Afghanistan mission seriously enough.

# Now. Where was I?

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290058  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A12  
**COLUMN:** Susan Riley  
**BYLINE:** Susan Riley  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 847

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Away for a refreshing two month break, far from the political white noise, but, unfortunately, not entirely out of range. I did pick up disturbing signals, even cycling through foggy Nova Scotia, as Prime Minister Stephen Harper spent his summer building his majority and re-fashioning what he once called "a second-rate socialist country" into something more muscular, righteous and useful.

To be fair, he warned us. Under his leadership, Canada would reassert its presence in the world, he said, fearlessly defending democracy and denouncing tyranny, making common cause with ideological allies like Israel, Australia, and the United States and scolding human rights scofflaws — some, at least. "Canada is back," he boasts, as if the entire country had dropped off the map during the long Liberal interregnum.

A few foreign policy wonks took issue with Harper's historic revisionism, pointing to Canada's role in establishing the 1997 Ottawa land mines convention, its refusal to embrace the war in Iraq despite pressure from a powerful neighbour, an honourable history of peace-keeping that started with Lester Pearson and Canadian leadership in strengthening the International Criminal Court. But none of these achievements, apparently, is as emphatic (and manly) as sending Canadian soldiers to a war zone.

That said, it is facile to portray Harper as a lapdog, or imitator, of tough-guy George W. Bush. As the prime minister himself said in Latin America this summer, "it is not in our past, or within our power, to conquer or dominate." That job — sheriff of the world, imperial bully, dangerous innocent — falls more naturally to the U.S. Canada's emerging role under Harper is different: we are becoming the world's unappointed Ethics Commissioner.

On the same visit to South America, Harper's first, he laid down the law in a speech in Chile. Calling upon his hitherto undisclosed expertise on southern hemisphere politics, Harper urged his listeners to reject the example of Venezuela and its leftish president, Hugo Chavez. The choice is not, he declared, "economic nationalism, political authoritarianism and class warfare," or economic and cultural domination by the U.S. Canada offers a third alternative, he said, as a country that promotes "fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law." Promotes, but does not impose.

To do this credibly, however, we have to be consistent. Last year, on his first trip to China, Harper declared, with what some saw as admirable moral clarity, that Canada would not sacrifice rights for trade. He sternly lectured Chinese leaders on human rights abuses. Yet, last month, when he visited Colombia's right-leaning president, Alvaro Uribe — whose government has been linked to murderous paramilitaries — he deliberately avoided finger-wagging. "We're not going to say fix all your social, political and human rights problems and only then will we trade with you," he said. "That's ridiculous."

The business of promoting democracy abroad is equally treacherous. Are U.S. forces "promoting" democracy in Iraq, for example, or imposing some face-saving version that won't survive an hour after the last American soldier leaves? As for Canada, we are repeatedly told that our soldiers are in Afghanistan to support Hamid Karzai's fledgling democracy. But Karzai's influence hardly extends beyond Kabul, and his government is widely known to be corrupted by drug profiteers and warlords.

On the other hand, when Palestinians elected a government dominated by Hamas last year, Canada was the first country to withdraw support on the grounds that Hamas is a terrorist organization that refuses to renounce violence and recognize Israel's right to exist. But if we are going to take on Islamic fundamentalists, why stop there? While Canadian soldiers are in Afghanistan fighting for women's rights, for example, we maintain normal relations with Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries, where women are chattel and Jews unwelcome.

This week, Sudan ejected Canada's ambassador, Nuala Lawlor, for urging the release of two imprisoned opposition leaders. Our government is defending her and refusing to apologize. Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier says she was "acting in the finest traditions of Canadian diplomacy." Indeed, her gesture was more noble than former ambassador to Syria Franco Pillarella's refusal to intervene vigorously on behalf of Maher Arar for fear of upsetting his powerful Syrian friends. But is taking the high moral road effective? How would Canadians react if Hugo Chavez, or the Sudanese, started telling us how to run our country?

In international affairs, there is always tension between doing the right thing and doing the smart thing -- and Canada has developed a reputation for skating carefully between cynicism and sanctimony. Harper could damage that reputation that if he doesn't learn to tone down the outrage and lead by example.

Susan Riley's column runs Monday, Wednesday and Friday. E-mail: [sriley@thecitizen.canwest.com](mailto:sriley@thecitizen.canwest.com)

# Three NATO soldiers killed

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 120

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A suicide bomber killed three NATO soldiers in Afghanistan yesterday, while more than 100 insurgents were killed in a separate battle that lasted deep into the night, the military said.

Afghan security officials reported, meanwhile, that six Afghan troops and more than 20 Taliban rebels had died across the country in attacks linked to an intensifying insurgency by the Taliban movement backed by al–Qaeda.

The suicide blast, similar to scores carried out by the Taliban militia, struck soldiers working at a project to build a bridge in the east of the country, the NATO–led alliance said. NATO did not give the nationality of the victims, but most of the forces in that area are American.

# Canadians to get booby-trap hunting vehicles this fall

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290043  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 478

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The Canadian military should see the arrival this fall of a new system of vehicles for detecting and clearing booby traps, known as improvised explosive devices, Canada's top military commander here said yesterday.

The military quietly announced in May that it would purchase 16 specialized anti-IED vehicles from the U.S. military for \$29.6 million. The vehicles were originally expected to arrive in August.

But Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said yesterday the vehicles are now expected to arrive in the fall.

"When you conduct operations and so on and you have additional vehicles like that that can clear the mines and make sure the area is safe, it's always a good thing," he said. "Because as we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs."

The challenge of dealing with IEDs, normally planted at the side of roads or bridges, has become one of the biggest thorns in the side of the Canadian military.

Of the 25 Canadian soldiers killed this year in Afghanistan, all but three have been killed by IEDs. The threat has exposed the vulnerability of the convoys that regularly ply the roads west of Kandahar City to supply Canada's various forward operating bases.

The new system is called the Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC). It includes three vehicles that specialize in unearthing and neutralizing buried IEDs: The Husky, the Buffalo, and the Cougar.

The Husky is a tractor-like vehicle equipped with a metal detector that scans the side of the road and the road bed for explosives.

The Buffalo has an extendable arm and remote-control camera that can physically expose the bomb so it can be identified at a safe distance.

The Cougar is essentially an armoured personnel carrier that would transport Canada's explosive ordnance teams and their array of tools, including anti-IED robots.

The Husky will be acquired through the U.S. army, while the Buffalo and Cougar will be bought from the U.S. Marine Corps.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best (system)," said Brig.-Gen. Laroche. "The Americans are using the system for a while. They have been using it in Iraq quite a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

Canada has a fleet of RG-31 Nyalas, a jeep-like armoured vehicle with a V-shaped hull designed to protect against roadside bombs and mines. U.S. and British forces in Kandahar province, by contrast, often use armoured Humvees and Land Rovers, which offer considerably less protection.

The Canadian military also has mine-clearance vehicles and quasi-tanks equipped with ploughs that can clear IEDs. But unlike other countries stationed here, Canada does not have helicopters that can transport troops to forward operating bases, forcing the military to rely heavily on the province's perilous roads. The military also does not have any vehicles designed to handle roadside bombs, which can be built using anything from a stack of mines to artillery shells.

"This equipment is essentially specialized on IEDs, so that's essentially the first equipment that we're going to get like that," said Brig.-Gen. Laroche.

# S. Korea criticized for deal with Taliban; Afghan minister calls hostage agreement 'capitulation'

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290023  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A6  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Getty Images / Relatives of South Korean hostagescelebrate after learning that a deal to free them has been reached. ;  
**DATELINE:** GHAZNI, Afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** Reuters  
**WORD COUNT:** 361

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GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Taliban insurgents yesterday said they would release 19 South Korean Christian volunteers they have held for nearly six weeks, provided Seoul pulls out its troops and stops Korean missionary work in Afghanistan by year–end.

South Korea's presidential office issued a statement setting out the terms of the agreement, and Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal had been struck.

Afghan Trade and Industry Minister Amin Farhang criticized South Korea's government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope that other countries would not follow Seoul's example.

"If every government were to do this, it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," Mr. Farhang told a German newspaper. "It's like a demand of the Taliban."

The result of capitulation will likely be more abductions, the paper reported Mr. Farhang as saying.

The hostages' relatives in South Korea, however, reacted differently. They cheered, hugged and chatted on their mobile phones after news broke that the hostages would be released.

"We knew the negotiation process was turning favourable, but we never thought it would happen so soon. When the announcement came out, there was a commotion in the room as everyone hugged each other," a spokesman for the hostage families, Cha Sung–min, told reporters.

The Taliban's conditions did not include their main previous demand — the release of a group of militants held prisoner by the Afghan government.

The announcement followed the resumption of negotiations, which had been on hold for two weeks, after the Korean side said it was unable to meet the kidnappers' demand for the release of Taliban prisoners held by the government in exchange for the hostages, most of them women.

The Taliban initially took 23 South Koreans hostage, but two were killed by their captors and two were released.

The South Korean government had decided before the hostage crisis to pull out its small contingent of

engineers and medical staff from Afghanistan by the end of the year.

The South Korean government said last night that release of the hostages would not happen immediately, noting that further negotiations would be necessary.

A Korean news agency, Yonhap, reported that hostages were being held in different locations, and that they may be released in groups of about three at a time over a period of up to five days.

To view a video report on the hostage crisis, go to Today's Videos at [ottawacitizen.com](http://ottawacitizen.com)

# Dead soldier's portrait stolen before pickup

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Ottawa artist Heidi Conrod's portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis had been purchased and was to be delivered to the girlfriend of the dead soldier. It was stolen from a gallery in early August. ; Colour Photo: DND / Sgt. Christos Karigiannis was one of three Canadian soldiers killed by a bomb June 20 in Afghanistan. ;

**BYLINE:** Paul Gessell

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 343

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A portrait painted of a Canadian soldier killed in June in Afghanistan has been stolen just before a family friend, who purchased the artwork, could pick it up from an Ottawa gallery and give it to the dead man's girlfriend.

The portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis was painted by Ottawa artist Heidi Conrod and stolen from Dale Smith Gallery in early August. The police are investigating.

Ms. Conrod said in an interview yesterday the purchaser had wanted to give the portrait to Sgt. Karigiannis's girlfriend, who lives in Kingston. Neither Ms. Conrod nor Dale Smith released the names of the purchaser or the girlfriend.

"I feel terrible for them," Ms. Conrod said.

The artist has offered to create another painting of Sgt. Karigiannis if the original is not located.

The girlfriend did come to the Ottawa gallery to view the painting before it was stolen. She and her friend, the purchaser, were allowed to spend some time alone with the artwork.

"It was quite emotional," said Ms. Smith.

The portrait was one of three portraits of Canadian soldiers killed June 20 when their unarmoured vehicle was blown up from a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

The three soldiers were all from the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Sgt. Karigiannis's family lives in Laval. The other two soldiers were Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe.

The three portraits by Ms. Conrod were part of a group show entitled Fever that ran this summer at Dale Smith Gallery.

The portraits were meant to be "tributes to the fallen soldiers and to represent the three young men as the heroes they are," Ms. Conrod said around the time of the unveiling of the paintings. The artist did not know any of the men personally, but used newspaper photographs of them as inspiration. All three portraits were

sold during the exhibition, which ended Aug. 10.

The paintings gave the three men a boyish look, as if to reveal the children inside them. Ms. Conrod is best known for her moody, haunting portraits of children. Her work is exhibited across Canada.

Yesterday, Ms. Conrod said she was astounded that someone would feel strongly enough about the portraits to steal one.

"Obviously, these portraits did touch people."

She also found the theft somewhat creepy.

Ms. Conrod has been following the news about the deaths of other Canadian soldiers and is considering creating more portraits of the fallen men.

"I feel compelled to do more."

# Faulty drones risk lives: troops; Afghan spy plane can't always provide best information; builder says it has offered fix

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Department of National Defence / A Canadian soldier guards a Sperwer drone after one of its first flights in the Kabul area in 2003. ;  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 782

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Canadian troops in Afghanistan are being put at risk because of the limited capabilities of the aerial drones that provide them with surveillance, say soldiers on the ground.

The use of the Sperwer unmanned aerial vehicles in Kandahar are being hindered by extremely hot temperatures, the aircraft's limited endurance, as well as serviceability problems, military officers said privately. Those limitations have also resulted in gaps in surveillance coverage during recent wildfires in the Kandahar area, putting soldiers at risk, they add.

Defence Department officials declined for reasons of operational security to discuss specifics related to the Sperwer's performance in Afghanistan.

But the firm handling the Sperwer contract, Rheinmetall Canada, says they've been standing by for months with low-cost improvements to the system that will significantly increase the aircraft's endurance and could be put in place in a matter of days in some cases. But the Quebec-based company says it has yet to hear back from the Defence Department.

The unmanned aerial vehicles have become a valuable fixture on the Afghan battlefield.

During wildfires between insurgents and Canadian troops, the drones have transmitted information back to commanders on the ground, giving them details about enemy movements.

Sylvain Lefrançois, a senior Rheinmetall Canada manager, said all UAVs can be limited by the extreme operating conditions and temperatures in Afghanistan. But he said the company has produced a new launcher for the Sperwer that will increase its endurance by 50 per cent. "This is available and it's ready to go," he said. "We have informed the customer it can be delivered in the next 15 days."

Mr. Lefrançois said the company also told the Defence Department months ago it has a more powerful engine for the Sperwer, which will also significantly increase its endurance.

Those engines can be installed by next spring. Both improvements to the launcher and engine cost little, Mr. Lefrançois said, although he declined to get into specifics. "At the moment, these improvements are being considered by the customer," he added.

Faulty drones risk lives: troops; Afghan spy plane can't always provide best information; builder says it has offered fix

For security reasons, Mr. Lefrançois declined to discuss specifics about the Sperwer's endurance.

Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate's defence committee, said he has also heard about the UAV concerns from Kandahar, a situation that should prompt the government to immediately deal with the problem. Mr. Kenny said if the solution is to purchase a new UAV, then "someone should be out there with a cheque right now."

He said government bureaucracy or red tape should not stand in the way of providing the best equipment available to troops involved in combat.

Mr. Kenny also pointed out that a fleet of high-endurance UAVs could save Canadian lives by helping detect the improvised explosive devices that have caused so many casualties among the troops in Kandahar.

The U.S. uses UAVs in Iraq and Afghanistan to help find such IEDs by using on-board cameras to track insurgents as they plant the devices on convoy routes, or more sophisticated heat sensors to highlight changes in the ground that might indicate the presence of the deadly booby-traps.

In April, the Citizen reported the Defence Department had asked the Harper government for approval to purchase the U.S.-built Predator for the Afghanistan mission, but that request was denied because of concerns in cabinet and the federal bureaucracy that the deal would be non-competitive.

The Conservatives have already committed to spending billions of dollars on sole-source contracts on helicopters and transport aircraft built by U.S. aerospace firms. That, in turn, has fuelled criticism in the Commons as well as worries among some Conservative MPs that domestic firms may be left on the sidelines. Opposition MPs have also questioned whether taxpayers are getting value for money on such sole-source deals.

Instead of purchasing the Predator, the Defence Department has launched a new project, still in its early stages. That program would purchase longer-endurance UAVs for the army and special forces, but such aircraft would not be delivered until 2009.

Military officials say the Predator is just one type of UAV that could do the job in Afghanistan.

But Rheinmetall Canada officials say their Sperwer UAVs are more than capable of conducting missions and that there are other issues at play, including the lack of trained military personnel. "The system is fully operational and the number of assets would allow it to fly more often, but the limitation is personnel," said Mr. Lefrançois.

The Sperwers were originally purchased for the Afghanistan mission in 2003 but more have been bought since then. The UAVs were plagued by a series of crashes that military and company officials blamed on Afghanistan's extreme environment and the lack of experience among operators.

Last year, Denmark decided to sell its Sperwers because of technical issues and problems in operating the aircraft. Canada bought those UAVs.

In a 2004 report, army officials acknowledged problems with the Sperwer but noted that the UAV had significant growth potential.

# New drones could save troops' lives: Senator; Afghan Mission

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**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Graphic/Diagram: / (See hardcopy for Graphic);  
**BYLINE:** Stewart Bell  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**NOTE:** Koreans to be freed, A12Andrew Coyne, A15  
**WORD COUNT:** 582

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Canadian troops in Afghanistan urgently need new spy planes, in part so they can spot where the Taliban is planting roadside bombs, says the chairman of the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence.

Senator Colin Kenny said the government should skip the normal tendering process for military contracts and buy state-of-the-art unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, for the Canadian Forces in Kandahar.

"I would be very happy if they said, 'Look, we have to make a major purchase of these at some point but we're going to sole-source six or eight, whatever the appropriate number is, to deal with Afghanistan, and we need them now,'" he said.

UAVs are small, remote-control planes with cameras mounted on them — flying robots that soar above conflict zones, providing a bird's-eye view that allows troops to watch the movements of enemy forces.

In Afghanistan, Canada uses French-made CU-161 Sperwer UAVs. While the Sperwers have proven effective, they do not work in the intense heat of the Kandahar summer and cannot fly for more than a few hours at a time.

During a nighttime firefight with the Taliban in July, for example, the Sperwer was not able to stay airborne for the entire battle. The ground troops were left without an eye in the sky for up to two hours at a time while UAVs were brought down and relaunched.

The crews that operate the UAV program are said to be growing frustrated with the Sperwers, which have been flying only during cooler nighttime temperatures this summer. Some soldiers believe Canadian lives could have been saved if they had more up-to-date UAVs.

The Canadian Forces would not comment on any shortcomings of the Sperwer, saying that doing so would only help the Taliban.

"It's not good to talk about those things," said Lieutenant Paul Finnemore, public affairs officer for the Chief of the Air Staff.

He said the military had no plan to replace the Sperwer until at least 2009, when Canada's Afghan mission is scheduled to end.

"They're going to continue to use that system, so there are no plans underway at the moment to replace the tactical UAV system."

Expert Tom Ehrhard said he did not understand why Canada was not using UAVs like the Predator and Scan Eagle to support its mission in Afghanistan. While the Sperwer works well in some circumstances, the Predator is "the most in-demand system in the field" and the Scan Eagle has much longer endurance, he said.

"There's a whole menu of combat-proven systems that's available at this point because of the explosion of demand for UAVs on the battlefield," said the retired U.S. Air Force colonel, now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington policy think-tank.

The Scan Eagle can stay in the air for at least 20 hours — 10 times longer than the Sperwer — at less cost, sending aerial images to field commanders in real time. The British Army uses them, as well as the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force.

The Australian Army is currently using the Scan Eagle about 100 kilometres north of the Canadians in Afghanistan. Australia paid about \$17-million for six months of service, said Ian Glenn, chairman of ING Engineering, an Ottawa firm that is working on the Scan Eagle, which is produced jointly by Insitu and Boeing.

UAVs that can log more flight hours stand a better chance of spotting the Taliban at work, said Mr. Glenn, who is also president of the non-profit group Unmanned Vehicle Systems Canada.

"It's about having the ability to see what's going on. Just hypothetically, say you were able to get around 100 hours a month flying time, and you were able to increase that to 1,000 hours a month, then I think you would actually be able to see more things."

**KEYWORDS:** ESPIONAGE; WAR

# **SOUTH KOREAN MISSIONARIES TO BE RELEASED; Taliban Hostages; Deal Tied To Removal Of South Korean Troops From Afghanistan; The New York Times, With Files From News Services**

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290129  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A12  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: AFP, Getty Images / Relatives of SouthKorean hostages in Afghanistan cheer after learning the Taliban have agreed to release 19 missionaries. ;  
**DATELINE:** SEOUL  
**BYLINE:** Choe Sang-Hun  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 685

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SEOUL – The Taliban said yesterday they would release 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive in Afghanistan since mid-July, signalling an end to a hostage crisis that has gripped the country for 41 days.

It was unclear when exactly the captives would be freed. Cheon Ho-seon, a spokesman for Roh Moo-hyun, the South Korean President, said it would take "some time" before they returned home.

In Afghanistan, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a spokesman for the Taliban, said the hostages would be released in groups over the next several days.

"We are not releasing them all at one time," he said.

Another Taliban negotiator explained the delay was because the hostages are being held in different locations.

The 23 South Koreans were captured by the Taliban soon after their arrival in Afghanistan as they travelled by bus from the capital Kabul to Kandahar.

Back home, family members shed tears and embraced one another as they gathered at the Saemmul Church south of Seoul where a vigil has been maintained throughout the 41-day ordeal, during which the Taliban killed two male hostages and released two women.

Their spokesman, Cha Sung-min, almost overcome with emotion at a press conference, expressed sorrow the news could not be shared with the dead hostages.

"We feel very sorry for causing so much concern to the people. It is very regrettable that we cannot share this good news with the relatives of the late Pastor Bae Hyung-kyu and brother Shim Sungmin," he said.

"It was all possible due to the government's help and we thank everybody for being there for us. The No. 1 hero are the South Korean citizens. Thank you very much," said Seo Jeung-bae, whose son and daughter were among the hostages.

SOUTH KOREAN MISSIONARIES TO BE RELEASED; Taliban Hostages; Deal Tied To Removal Of South

The church has been criticized in South Korea for sending inexperienced volunteers to the volatile Muslim country. South Korea is the world's second biggest source of Christian missionaries, many of them working in hot spots.

Mr. Roh, whose term ends in February, has been under intense domestic pressure to win the safe return of the volunteers, mostly women in their twenties and thirties. "Together with the families of the hostages and with all South Korean people, we welcome the agreement to release 19 South Koreans," he said.

Mr. Cheon said in return for their release, South Korea had agreed to keep to its earlier plan to withdraw its 200 troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year and to stop all evangelical activities in Afghanistan by Christian groups from South Korea. He insisted there were no other Taliban conditions. This means the Taliban appeared to have dropped their central demand — the release of eight of their imprisoned fighters.

Amin Farhang, the Afghan Trade and Industry Minister, criticized the South Korean government for pulling its troops out of the country and expressed the hope other nations would not follow Seoul's example. "If every government were to do this it would be the beginning of a kind of capitulation," he told Germany's Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger newspaper. "It's like a demand of the Taliban."

The result of capitulation will likely be more abductions, he added.

Why the Taliban decided to accept the agreement was unclear. The holding of female hostages is widely frowned upon in Afghan culture and the rebels may have decided that continuing to detain the women would undermine their public standing. In the past, the Taliban have released hostages after receiving ransom payments; they have also reneged on agreements. Afghan officials said they were hopeful the Taliban would abide by the latest deal.

"We are waiting for the practical implementation of this agreement," said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the provincial police chief in Ghazni, 140 kilometres south of Kabul, where the talks were held.

"We are all optimistic that this agreement will be implemented."

Two Indonesian government officials, two members of the Afghan Red Crescent and a local elder acted as mediators in the negotiations. Face-to-face talks resumed yesterday after a hiatus of several days, when the two sides remained in touch by telephone.

The kidnapping of the Koreans on July 19 was the largest case of abductions in the resurgent Taliban campaign since U.S.-led troops ousted the Islamists from power in 2001. One day earlier, Taliban fighters seized two German aid workers and five Afghan colleagues in Wardak province. The Taliban have killed one German, but are still holding the other along with four Afghans. One Afghan escaped.

**KEYWORDS:** HOSTAGES; WAR; TERRORISM; KIDNAPPING

# Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290124

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2007.08.29

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** Editorials

**PAGE:** A14

**ILLUSTRATION:** Color Photo: / U.S. NAVY MATE 3RD CLASS SHAWN HUSSONG /REUTERS  
Soldiers get off a U.S. CH-47 Chinook helicopter in Iraq. Canada sold similar choppers to the Netherlands in the 1990s. ;

**BYLINE:** Ian Jones

**SOURCE:** National Post

**WORD COUNT:** 115

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Re: Liberal Policies Are Taking Their Toll, Lorne Gunter, Aug. 27.

Nobody enjoys reading a good Liberal bashing editorial as much as me. Especially when it's delivered by Lorne Gunter. However, he states bluntly that we can blame the Liberals for deaths in Afghanistan. But it was Brian Mulroney's government that sold the country's CH-47 Chinook medium-lift helicopter fleet to the Dutch in the 1980s. The result is that our troops must rely on the airlift assets of the British, Americans and, ironically, the Dutch. Both the Liberals and Conservatives must share in the responsibility for the deterioration of our Armed Forces.

Ian Jones, Mississauga, Ont.

**KEYWORDS:** 0

# Spare us the pseudogrief

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290117  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** Editorials  
**PAGE:** A14  
**BYLINE:** Morton Doran  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 186

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Whatever happened to the sense of balance and perspective? Manufactured grief at the death of otherwise unremarkable people is rampant -- roadside floral and teddy bear shrines, candlelight vigils orchestrated by strangers, Internet grief chat-rooms and the like. What should we make of the trivialization of the meaning of hero? Each and every Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan is hailed a "hero," feted with ramp and repatriation ceremonies and then transported along the newly minted "Highway of Heroes," when in fact most really just suffered the bad luck of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

How did previous generations handle the deaths of over 100,00 Canadian soldiers buried overseas in the two great wars, without elaborate pomp and ceremony? How did people manage to prevail without the benefit of grief counsellors or orchestrated adhoc vigils? This epidemic of pseudogrief, like political correctness, has overtaken society. One can only hope that both of these fads will soon fade.

Morton Doran, Fairmont. B.C.

**KEYWORDS:** 0

# Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290116

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**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** Editorials

**PAGE:** A14

**BYLINE:** Jessie Jacklin

**SOURCE:** National Post

**WORD COUNT:** 164

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Lorne Gunter is to be commended for placing blame where it should be. Unfortunately most people are quick to point the finger at Stephen Harper and George Bush for the war in Afghanistan. Obviously, to many, geography and history are not a priority.

The closest I have ever been to war was in Curacao during the Second World War, where German submarines would aim a few torpedoes toward the island and try to damage oil tankers. At times the Germans would surface and board schooners bringing food and vegetables from Venezuela to the island. The frightened seamen were then given a chance by the Germans to swim in shark-infested waters or be shot. Fortunately, the British Army, and, later, U.S. servicemen, arrived.

It is a government's obligation to see that its military is fit and well equipped at all times. Whatever can be done to provide maximum protection for our troops must be done with no costs spared.

Jessie Jacklin, North Vancouver.

**KEYWORDS:** 0

# Our soldiers deserve proper weaponry

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**IDNUMBER** 200708290115  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** Editorials  
**PAGE:** A14  
**BYLINE:** Emmanuel Samoglou  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 133

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Re: Harper Has Nothing To Fear, editorial, Aug. 27.

On the page opposite of Lorne Gunter's article, the Post's editorial board argues that when Canada's Armed Forces' mission is "properly explained," support hovers around 80%. But is Mr. Gunter's article an example of this "proper explaining"? His argument that the previous Liberal government is to blame for Canada's precarious position in Afghanistan is ludicrous. It was Stephen Harper's government that changed the scope of Canada's mission to a more combative role, despite knowing full well that Canada lacked the necessary equipment to fight a war.

The results have been disastrous. Of the 69 military casualties, 61 have occurred since Jan. 23, 2006 — the day Stephen Harper was elected prime minister.

Perhaps readers shouldn't rely on the National Post to do the "explaining."

Emmanuel Samoglou, Toronto.

**KEYWORDS:** 0

# Pollsters asked wrong question

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Re: "Support for military role is holding steady" (Gazette, Aug. 25).

What does it really mean when 51 per cent of Canadians polled say they support our mission in Afghanistan? Aside from teetering perilously near the 50/50 mark, what would be their position if Canada invoked conscription?

The question should read: "Would you still support the mission if your children were drafted?"

Victor Schukov

Pointe Claire

# Anti-IED vehicles delayed until fall; Husky, Buffalo and Cougar designed to detect and disarm roadside bombs

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**KEYWORDS:** WILDLIFE; ANIMAL ATTACKS; DANGEROUS ANIMALS; CATS  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** ANDREW MAYEDA  
**SOURCE:** Canwest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 329

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The Canadian military should see the arrival this fall of a new system of vehicles for detecting and clearing improvised explosive devices, Canada's top military commander here said yesterday.

The military quietly announced in May it would purchase 16 specialized anti-IED vehicles from the U.S. military for \$29.6 million. The vehicles were originally expected to arrive in August.

But Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche told Canwest News Service yesterday the vehicles are now expected to arrive in the fall.

"When you conduct operations and so on and you have additional vehicles like that that can clear the mines and make sure the area is safe, it's always a good thing," he said.

"Because, as we know, most of the casualties that we've had in the past few months have been essentially due to IEDs."

The challenge of dealing with IEDs, normally planted at the side of roads or bridges, has become one of the biggest thorns in the side of the Canadian military.

Of the 25 Canadian soldiers killed so far this year in Afghanistan, all but three have been killed by IEDs.

The threat has exposed the vulnerability of the convoys that regularly ply the roads west of Kandahar City to supply Canada's various forward operating bases.

The new system includes three vehicles that specialize in unearthing and neutralizing buried IEDs: The Husky, the Buffalo and the Cougar.

The Husky is a tractor-like vehicle equipped with a metal detector that scans the side of the road and the road bed for explosives.

The Buffalo has an extendable arm and remote-control camera that can physically expose the bomb so it can be identified at a safe distance.

The Cougar is essentially an armoured personnel carrier that would transport Canada's explosive ordinance teams and their array of tools, including anti-IED robots.

The Husky will be acquired through the U.S. army, while the Buffalo and Cougar will be bought from the U.S. Marine Corps.

"In the world, it's one of the best, if not the best, (system)," Laroche said. "The Americans are using the system for a while. They have been using it in Iraq quite a lot, so I think it will be good for Canada to have that."

Sixty-nine Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

Canada's military commitment ends in 2009, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he will seek the consensus of Parliament before extending the mission.

# Outmoded drones put us at risk, soldiers say; Unmanned aircraft have flaws, but supplier says inexpensive fixes are available

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**KEYWORDS:** ESPIONAGE; WAR; AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS; ARMAMENTS  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**BYLINE:** DAVID PUGLIESE  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 323

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Canadian troops in Afghanistan are being put at risk because of the limited capabilities of the aerial drones that provide them with surveillance, say soldiers on the ground.

The use of Sperwer unmanned aerial vehicles, known as UAVs, in Kandahar is being hindered by extremely hot temperatures, the aircraft's limited endurance as well as serviceability issues, military officers said privately. Those limitations also have resulted in gaps in surveillance during recent firefights in the Kandahar area, putting soldiers at risk, they add.

Defence Department officials in Ottawa declined, for reasons of operational security, to discuss specifics related to the Sperwer's performance.

But the firm handling the Sperwer contract, Rheinmetall Canada, says it's been standing by for months with low-cost improvements that will significantly increase the aircraft's endurance and which could be put in place in a matter of days in some cases.

The St. Jean sur Richelieu-based company says it has yet to hear back from the Defence Department.

The unmanned aerial vehicles have become a valuable fixture on the Afghan battlefield. During firefights, the drones transmit information back to commanders on the ground giving them details about enemy movements.

Sylvain Lefrançois, a senior Rheinmetall Canada manager, said all UAVs can be limited by the extreme operating conditions and temperatures in Afghanistan. But he said the company has produced a new launcher for the Sperwer that will increase its endurance by 50 per cent.

"This is available and it's ready to go," he said. "We have informed the customer it can be delivered in 15 days."

Lefrançois said the company also informed the Defence Department months ago it has a more powerful engine that also will significantly increase its endurance.

Liberal Senator Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate's defence committee, said he also has heard about the UAV concerns from Kandahar, a situation that should prompt the government to immediately deal with the

Outmoded drones put us at risk, soldiers say; Unmanned aircraft have flaws, but supplier says inexpensive

problem. Kenny said if the solution is to purchase a new UAV, then "someone should be out there with a cheque right now."

Ottawa Citizen

# Portrait of fallen soldier stolen; Painting taken from Ottawa gallery

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.08.29  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / Heidi Conrod has offered to reproduce this portrait of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, which was stolen in early August. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** ART GALLERIES; ART; WORLD WAR II; NAZISM  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 166

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A portrait painted of a Canadian soldier killed in June in Afghanistan has been stolen just before a family friend, who purchased the artwork, could pick it up from an Ottawa gallery and give it to the dead man's girlfriend.

The portrait of Laval native Sgt. Christos Karigiannis was painted by Ottawa artist Heidi Conrod and stolen from Dale Smith Gallery in early August.

The police are investigating.

Conrod said in an interview yesterday the purchaser had wanted to give the portrait to Karigiannis's girlfriend, who lives in Kingston, Ont.

Neither Conrod nor Dale Smith released the names of the purchaser or the girlfriend. "I feel terrible for them," Conrod said.

The artist has offered to create another painting of Karigiannis if the original is not located.

The girlfriend did go to the Ottawa gallery to view the painting before it was stolen.

She and her friend, the purchaser, were allowed to spend some time alone with the artwork.

"It was quite emotional," Smith said.

The portrait was one of three paintings of Canadian soldiers killed on June 20 when their unarmoured vehicle was struck by roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

The three soldiers were all from the Edmonton-based 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

The other two soldiers were Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe.

Ottawa Citizen

# Taliban to free 19 hostages; Mostly women in their 20s and 30s. Agreement with South Korea includes withdrawal of troops, Christian groups

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: POOL, GETTY IMAGES / Relatives of kidnapped SouthKorean hostages in Afghanistan celebrate news yesterday that the Taliban have agreed to free the hostages after nearly six weeks in captivity. ;

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; FOREIGN RELATIONS; FAMILY REUNIONS; TERRORISM; NUCLEARWEAPONS; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN

**DATELINE:** SEOUL

**BYLINE:** Choe Sang-Hun

**SOURCE:** New York Times; Reuters contributed to this report

**WORD COUNT:** 508

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The Taliban agreed yesterday to release 19 South Korean church volunteers held captive in Afghanistan since mid-July, the South Korean government announced, signalling an end to a wrenching hostage crisis that has gripped the country for 41 days.

It was unclear when exactly the hostages would be freed.

Cheon Ho-seon, a spokesperson for President Roh Moo-hyun, said it would take "some time" before the hostages returned home.

Taliban representative Qari Mohammad Bashir confirmed a deal was struck.

"By the end of 2007, they will withdraw their forces from Afghanistan," Bashir told reporters, standing side by side with Korean negotiators in Ghazni province.

"They will not send to Afghanistan those they sent for promulgation of ... Christianity and will ban others from coming again for promulgation of Christianity," he said.

"All Korean nationals in any field working in Afghanistan will leave Afghanistan by the end of August," he said, adding that the Taliban would start freeing the hostages today.

Roh, whose term ends in February, has been under intense domestic pressure to win the safe return of the hostages, most of them women in their 20s and 30s.

"Together with the families of the hostages and with all South Korean people, we welcome the agreement to release 19 South Koreans," Roh said.

His spokesman, Cheon, said that in return for their release, South Korea had agreed to keep to its earlier plan to withdraw its 200 troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year, and to stop all evangelical activities in Afghanistan by Christian groups from South Korea.

Cheon said there were no other Taliban conditions.

The Taliban appeared to have dropped their central demand, which was the release of eight of their imprisoned fighters.

Why the Taliban decided to accept the agreement was unclear. The holding of female hostages is widely frowned upon in Afghan culture, and the Taliban may have decided that continuing to hold the Koreans would undermine its public standing.

In the past, the Taliban has released hostages after receiving ransom payments; it has also reneged on agreements to release hostages.

Afghan officials said yesterday that they were hopeful the Taliban would abide by the deal.

"We are waiting for the practical implementation of this agreement," said Ali Shah Ahmadzai, the provincial police chief in Ghazni, the central Afghan town where the talks were held.

"We are all optimistic that this agreement will be implemented."

Two Indonesian government officials, two members of the Afghan Red Crescent and a local elder acted as mediators in the negotiations in Ghazni.

Face-to-face talks resumed there yesterday after a hiatus of several days, during which the two sides remained in touch by telephone.

During the talks, the South Korean government repeatedly noted that its troops were already scheduled to leave this year. And it issued public appeals to the Afghan and U.S. governments to show "flexibility" over the Taliban prisoners they hold.

Both nations responded that they could not compromise on their policy of refusing to accede to demands from terrorists.

Cheon said the South Korean government had explained to the Taliban "that we had engaged in sincere talks with the Afghan government over the release of prisoners, but it really was outside our authority and ability."

"Our explanations have worked," he said.

Taliban fighters seized a total of 23 South Korean Christian volunteers on July 19 while they were travelling by bus from Kabul, the capital, to the southern city of Kandahar.

The captors killed two hostages, both men, after a series of deadlines passed without their demands being met.

But when South Korea entered direct negotiations with the militants last month, two women were freed in what the Taliban called a gesture of good will.

Taliban to free 19 hostages; Mostly women in their 20s and 30s. Agreement with South Korea includes with

# More Quebecers ship out solemn sendoff; Latest rotation to Afghanistan. Double funeral to be held tomorrow near Valcartier

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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Francis Vachon, The Gazette / Cpl. SteeveBégin says goodbye to niece Corinne Provencher at the Valcartier military base. The final 118 soldiers of the latest Quebec-led rotation left for Afghanistan yesterday. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** VALCARTIER  
**BYLINE:** KEVIN DOUGHERTY  
**SOURCE:** The Gazette  
**WORD COUNT:** 538

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"It's hard." Chantale Descarie was eloquently simple in expressing her feelings as her husband, Cpl. Marcel Descarie, prepared to board a plane to Afghanistan yesterday, part of the final 118 soldiers of the latest Quebec-led rotation of Canadian troops on their way to a mission few Quebecers support.

Cpl. Descarie said while public support in Canada and other NATO countries for the mission might be mixed, his family supports it.

"They understand we are going there to help," he said.

Flags at the Valcartier military base flew at half staff to honour three Quebec soldiers who were killed last week by improvised explosive devices – the favourite weapon of Taliban insurgents – as Canada's fourth rotation, including 44 soldiers based in Valcartier, 57 from Edmonton and 17 based in Petawawa, Ont., readied for departure.

Funerals for Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne and Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier will be held tomorrow near Valcartier.

Yesterday, their families, which have requested a limited media presence at the funerals, issued a statement thanking Canadians for "the incredible show of support during the repatriation (of their sons' bodies) in Trenton on Aug. 26." "Veterans, ambulance workers, firefighters, police officers and citizens alike were present to pay their last respects to the fallen soldiers," said the statement made public by the Canadian Forces.

"A crowd of thousands gathered along the road separating Trenton airport from Toronto to salute the passing procession. Many were even perched on overpasses or parked alongside of Highway 401," the statement said.

"The Duchesne and Mercier families were deeply touched by this spectacular demonstration of support.

"Christian and Mario's families would like to emphasize the sacrifice of all Canadian soldiers deceased during the foreign mission. They gave their lives to allow others to hope for a brighter future.

"From the Duchesne and Mercier family, sincere thanks and keep supporting your troops."

Sarah Chayes, a former NPR radio reporter who returned to Afghanistan to help with the rebuilding effort, wrote in her book *The Punishment of Virtue* that Pakistan's intelligence service is behind the Taliban and that the insurgents freely cross the border between Afghanistan and safe areas in Pakistan.

"Everybody knows this but nobody discusses it in public," said Capt. Martin Rivard, a telecommunications officer who will be in Afghanistan for nine months.

Most of the 2,500-member rotation, under the command of Valcartier-based Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, are there for six months.

While the core of soldiers in the fourth rotation of 2,500 troops are from Quebec, that number includes 170 soldiers from units outside Quebec (or seven per cent of the total) and 300 reservists (12 per cent) from Quebec. Of those, about 150 are from Montreal units and the rest of the province.

Of the 2,330 Quebec-based soldiers on this mission, 800 belong to the fabled Royal 22e Régiment canadien-français, known to anglophones as the Van Doos.

Rivard said if there is less-than-unanimous support for the mission, it because people don't know that the NATO mission aims to rebuild Afghanistan and allow Afghans to develop a form of democracy.

"They haven't been informed of the purpose of the mission," Rivard said.

"Maybe we don't talk enough about the good part of the mission," added Pte. Laurent Proulx, of the 12th Armoured Regiment of Canada, who is a crew member in a Leopard battle tank.

Proulx said the mission is a "challenge," but added, "It's part of my job."

Proulx, 20, joined the army cadets as a teenager and has been in the regular forces for two years.

"I signed up to defend Canadian values," he said.

Capt. Tanya Lévesque from Chicoutimi said the deaths and woundings of Canadian soldiers are "unfortunate."

But: "It's part of the job."

Lévesque will spend most of her time at the Kandahar base.

"It's my job," she said. "I take the risks that come with it."

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