

Table of Contents

<u>No charges in friendly–fire death; U.S. investigators blame fatigue, lack of communication for Canadian's death.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Canada pledges \$30M to aid Afghan rule of law.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Battle leaves two Taliban dead.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>A promise is a promise.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Backlash forces change in Harper tactics.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>PM's messages mixed on Canada's role in Afghanistan.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Search–and–destroy mission for insurgents underway.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Defence spending needs more oversight.....</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Letters House insurance increase fault of government policy.....</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Troops, Taliban battle in volatile Afghan district.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Rest, but no retreat.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Afghanistan battle kills two Taliban; Canadian, Afghan forces make strike in volatile district of Kandahar province.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Investigators say no charges in friendly–fire death of Canadian.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Rome conference pledges \$360 million to rebuild Afghan justice system.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>33 suspected militants killed in battle with Afghan, NATO forces.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Canada providing \$30 million to strengthen Afghan rule of law.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3rd Writethru CP News Budget – Tuesday, July 3, 2007.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Canadian, Afghan forces battle insurgents in volatile Zhari district.....</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>INDEX:International, Justice, Politics.....</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>U.S. investigators recommend no charges in friendly–fire death of Canadian.....</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Ayman al Zawahiri.....</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Report urges no charges in friendly fire deaths; U.S. probe says fatalities of Canadian, American are 'understandable'.....</u>	<u>38</u>

Table of Contents

<u>Coalition on Kandahar power play; 2 insurgents dead, 2 hurt as Canadians lead Operation Drag-On.....</u>	40
<u>Army says no charges.....</u>	42
<u>U.S. soldier goes scot-free for friendly fire deaths Army investigator recommended no charges for killing Canuck.....</u>	43
<u>Canada at risk of terror strike.....</u>	45
<u>NATO blames Taliban for civilian deaths.....</u>	47
<u>Canadian troops kill two Taliban.....</u>	49
<u>Millions for law in Kandahar.....</u>	51
<u>Soldier slowly recovering from Afghanistan axe attack.....</u>	52
<u>No charges recommended in friendly fire death: report.....</u>	54
<u>THE AFGHAN MISSION: GUILTY OF SEX ASSAULT, 22-YEAR-OLD PRIVATE SEEKS ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE Should convict serve time or country? Quebec judge weighs fate of 'very good soldier' who raped friend's 18-year-old sister.....</u>	55
<u>FRIENDLY FIRE: SOLDIERS' DEATHS Investigator recommends withholding charges against U.S. machine-gunner.....</u>	57
<u>Injured city soldier's next posting: Ponoka; Axe attack leaves long recovery from brain injury.....</u>	59
<u>No charges in friendly fire death of local soldier; U.S. army investigator says death 'understandable' in context of battle.....</u>	61
<u>NATO regrets Afghan civilian deaths; But officials stress Taliban responsible for carnage.....</u>	63
<u>Nation's terror rating boosted.....</u>	65
<u>Accountability where it counts.....</u>	67
<u>Report blames friendly fire for soldier's death.....</u>	69
<u>Afghan casualty improving.....</u>	70
<u>Waving the flag won't bring back fallen soldiers.....</u>	71
<u>Terrorism a many-headed hydra.....</u>	72

Table of Contents

<u>Ottawa, Toronto top terror targets; Canadian cities among six in North America believed to be most in danger.....</u>	73
<u>No charges in friendly fire death of Canadian, U.S. army recommends.....</u>	75
<u>Soldier hit by axe now speaking, fiancé says; Capt. Trevor Greene to get specialized treatment at only centre offering long-term care.....</u>	76
<u>Rationale for sacrificing lives in Afghan war not made clear.....</u>	78
<u>Terror threat status rises in Canada: report.....</u>	79
<u>Canada's terror risk 'elevated'; Ottawa, Toronto face greatest danger, but report has no specific data on pending attack.....</u>	81
<u>Canadian soldier slowly recovers from axe attack; For a year, he could barely whisper, but now Capt. Trevor Greene can speak, move his arms and lift his head, writes Meghan Hurley.....</u>	84
<u>NATO regrets civilian deaths, but Taliban is to blame, Canadian minister says; Military tactics, procedures to be reviewed.....</u>	86
<u>Defeatism leads to defeat.....</u>	88
<u>Unneeded fashion advice; Why is the Globe portraying female war correspondents as soldier sex objects?.....</u>	90
<u>Terror threat elevated; Canada at risk: panel. Al-Qa'ida plans 'spectacular' summer: secret U.S. report.....</u>	92
<u>NATO regrets civilian deaths.....</u>	95
<u>Terror threat rises in Canada; U.S. report fears imminent al-Qaeda attack.....</u>	97
<u>Soldier attacked with axe sees speech improvements.....</u>	99
<u>NATO regrets civilian deaths in Afghanistan.....</u>	100
<u>Can democracies win wars of choice?.....</u>	102
<u>Canada helping to build Afghan rule of law.....</u>	104

No charges in friendly–fire death; U.S. investigators blame fatigue, lack of communication for Canadian's death

IDNUMBER 200707040121
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: MONTPELIER, VT.
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 346

A U.S. army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine–gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated nighttime battle last year in Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army yesterday about the friendly–fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said one document, a report written by an American army officer whose name was blacked out.

The officer said Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006.

They were moved into the field of fire of the machine–gunner, who was at a special forces compound inside the base, the report said.

It said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified in the report, caused him to fire at the rooftop position where Stone and other soldiers were, fighting off an attack by Taliban forces.

In the report and a second one yesterday, the army said an inadequate defence plan and fatigue contributed to the tragedy, as did a lack of communication and supply problems at the base in Helmand province in Afghanistan.

In the reports, one investigator said he spoke with the two special forces soldiers manning two machine–guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the fatal shots, but their statements "lack credibility," the investigator said.

The special forces report said the small base, established a month earlier, had been under near–daily attack. It had acute supply problems and its soldiers were exhausted, the report said.

Canadian reinforcements arrived by helicopter after dark, creating confusion, the report said. The attack began about 1:45 a.m. March 29 with mortars followed by rocket–propelled grenades and small arms fire.

No charges in friendly–fire death; U.S. investigators blame fatigue, lack of communication for Canadian's death

Stone went to the roof of the building and was hit in the back by a machine– gun bullet. Costall and other Canadian soldiers were on a berm outside the gate. Costall was hit by two shots, either of which would have been fatal.

Costall, 22, was a machine–gunner with 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and grew up in Gibsons, B.C.

No charges in friendly–fire death; U.S. investigators blame fatigue, lack of communication for Canadian's de

Canada pledges \$30M to aid Afghan rule of law

IDNUMBER 200707040114
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: ROME
SOURCE: Canadian Press, Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 450

Canada is providing more than \$30 million in funding to help establish rule of law in Afghanistan, a country torn by years of war and political upheavals.

Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs and international trade, highlighted this aspect of Canada's assistance for Afghanistan at an international conference in Rome on yesterday.

At the conference, international donors pledged \$360 million US yesterday to train judges, build new prisons and enact other measures to strengthen Afghanistan's judicial system at a conference overshadowed by concerns over civilian casualties caused by NATO forces.

Over the next three years, Canada will provide at least \$10 million annually to Afghanistan for a program to train judges, prosecutors and informal dispute-resolution workers in Kandahar province.

As well, there will be \$1.2 million for the construction of three substations for the Afghan National Police in Kandahar province. This is in addition to three substations recently funded and built by the Department of National Defence.

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to back the Afghan government. Most of them operate in Kandahar province.

"Where terrorism in its most atrocious form remains an almost daily occurrence, as is regrettably the case in some parts of Afghanistan, justice will seem elusive still," said Afghan president Hamid Karzai.

Canada will also step up the presence of Correctional Service Canada personnel in Afghanistan. They are advisers to help build a prison system that respects rule of law and human rights.

The funding mentioned by Guergis is part of Ottawa's \$1.2 billion commitment to Afghanistan to 2011.

At the conference, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said the alliance would do everything in its power to avoid civilian casualties and that deaths of innocent people would be investigated. He stressed, however, that Taliban and other extremists were in a "different moral category" from coalition soldiers who inadvertently cause civilian casualties.

"Our opponents mingle and mix with innocent civilians," he said on the sidelines of the conference.

"We do not intentionally kill; they behead people, they burn schools, they kill women and children."

"That said, NATO will do and has to do everything in its ability to prevent civilian casualties. For NATO, every single civilian life lost in Afghanistan is one too many."

The issue has been a sensitive one for the international military mission in Afghanistan. Over the weekend, Afghan officials said 45 civilians were killed in a bombing by NATO and the U.S.-led coalition in Helmand province.

Karzai, who has asked international forces to take better care of Afghan lives, has sent a team to investigate.

The Rome meeting, gathering officials and legal experts, looked at ways to improve a justice system that has been destroyed by years of violence. Karzai told the conference that urgent priorities included low salaries, poor infrastructure and the training of personnel.

The \$360 million in new donated funds would be devoted to the training of judges and rebuilding prisons and other facilities, Italian Foreign Ministry officials said at the conference. Some projects would take up to four years to complete, they said.

Officials would not break down the donations by country.

Battle leaves two Taliban dead

IDNUMBER 200707040113
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 288

Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early yesterday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, had earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a "small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of (the insurgents) are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

"If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the

ground.

"The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick. "My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains a volatile area.

A promise is a promise

IDNUMBER 200707040093
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Cliff Coffin
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 251

Regarding the June 18 editorial, Make Equalization Fair For All Canada, The Record heaps praise on Stephen Harper for reneging on his promise to uphold the Atlantic accords and portrays the two Atlantic premiers as the villains when in reality it is the other way around.

Regardless of whether the accords are right or wrong, a promise broken to gain a position is, in my opinion, a form of fraud. This is exactly what Harper did to win the election. This should not surprise anyone when he surrounds himself with cronies from the Mike Harris government.

The Record should reverse its statement and stop protecting this prime minister who has no credibility.

This government has a disgusting record of coverup and not living up to its commitments, whether it's aid to Africa, the Kyoto accord; the Atlantic accords; the broken promise to Saskatchewan; the billions of dollars left on the table to settle the softwood lumber deal; the disgusting personal attack ads on Stephane Dion; his refusal to have a public inquiry in the RCMP affair; his statement about the Atlantic provinces being a culture of defeat; the lavish budget gift to Quebec to appease the Bloc for support to stay in power, whose only interest in Canada is to destroy it; and the recent controversy over the burial expenses of our soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

This government is not worthy of majority support and should never be re- elected.

Cliff Coffin

Cambridge

Backlash forces change in Harper tactics

IDNUMBER 200707040091
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Insight
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / Prime Minister Stephen Harper uses a pair of binoculars at a Canadian observation post near Khandahar during his visit to Afghanistan in May. ;
BYLINE: JOHN F. CONWAY
SOURCE: FOR THE RECORD
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 1263

Surprising many, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has declared that Canada's military involvement in the Afghanistan war could end in February 2009, right on schedule.

This has all the appearances of an intelligent political flip-flop. Harper had previously tied his political star to the Afghan misadventure, browbeating Parliament into extending the commitment beyond the original 2006 commitment to 2009. He was determined to stay the course and whip up patriotic, pro-war hysteria in Canada as part of his re-election strategy.

Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier and Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor have argued all along that the mission will take 10 years or more, and that Canada should stay. All military planning, including the purchase of tanks and helicopter gun ships, has been premised on staying the course. This direction was never contradicted by Harper, and indeed, Harper kept sending signals that Canada would stay for the long haul — at various times saying Canada would never "cut and run," "the only exit strategy is success," "we can't just put our weapons down and hope for peace," and "we can't set arbitrary deadlines."

Has he really changed his mind? Not for a minute. Harper is simply shifting from Plan A to Plan B.

The Harper government's Plan A, with the unprecedented direct involvement of the military in domestic politics and drum beating support from the Canadian media, involved an all-out propaganda offensive to win Canadians' support for this ugly, illegal war in the service of American hegemony in the region. There were soldiers fanning out to schools across the land. Big "support our troops" rallies were organized by the Tories, using troops, military families and communities dependent on military installations to construct a false image of broad public support.

There were the visuals of returning caskets of the dead and the tears of their comrades and families on prime time TV. Our embedded "journalists" presented relentlessly pro-mission news reports from the front. The prime minister smeared opponents of the mission as supporters of the Taliban, and critics concerned about the torture and abuse of detainees as vilifiers of our brave troops on the ground.

No sneering blow was too low for Harper against those who dared oppose, or even criticize, the mission.

Harper was convinced he could rally public opinion to support the war. He failed. A majority of Canadians still oppose the war, and two in three want the mission ended in February 2009.

Harper's sudden switch to Plan B appears to revolve around recent events in Quebec. The Royal 22nd Regiment (the Vandoos), based in Valcartier, are scheduled to deploy 2,300 troops in Afghanistan at the end of July. In a desperate propaganda effort to reduce the 70 per cent opposition to the war among the Quebecois, the Harper government orchestrated a 2,000-troop parade through Quebec City. This caused an uproar in the Quebec National Assembly, and on the streets of Quebec City when the marching troops were greeted by a large antiwar protest.

The propaganda offensive also involved sending 1,700 troops to a CFL game in Montreal, and individual soldiers fanning out to 18 cities and towns in Quebec to carry the pro-war message.

It was a big mess for Harper. It all backfired. Not only did it not work, but it hardened opposition to the war not only in Quebec but across Canada.

Our troops do what Parliament orders when they go off to fight, whether the mission is wise and justified or foolhardy and unjustified. They are doing their military duty, and they have no choice. But by embarrassing our troops by directly involving them in the domestic political debate, the Harper government has repeatedly crossed the line.

Hillier has crossed the line as well. He should insist that troops under his command will not be used for such political purposes. As columnist Barbara Yaffe put it, "We are asking our soldiers, among many other things, to try to win hearts and minds over in Afghanistan. They shouldn't be required to do that job on the home front, too." But they were, because Harper was not prepared to roll up his sleeves and go into Quebec to try to win support for his war.

So what is Harper's Plan B? He still believes in the war, he still wants to fight it, and to stay the course. But it is not bringing him the public support he expected to help win re-election. And if he continues to bulldoze ahead without regard to public opinion, he will lose the next election.

Certain parts of Plan A will continue — the propaganda effort will be ratcheted up and the media will continue to loyally beat the war drum. Harper may fire O'Connor, his defence minister, for cosmetic reasons, given the mess he made of the mission, the detainee issue, and the funeral expense embarrassment.

The kernel of Plan B was contained in the prime minister's statement in Parliament on the end of the mission. His full statement was that the mission would end "unless" the opposition parties agree to extend it (remember he bullied them into extending it once already in 2006). Any extension would have to have "some degree of consensus" because Harper does not "want to send people into a mission if the opposition at home is going to undercut the dangerous work they're doing in the field."

Plan B will, therefore, involve a continuing attack on the opposition parties, and on the antiwar movement, as soft on terrorism, de facto supporters of the Taliban, and of betraying our troops on the ground. This will be a very vicious campaign which will include a more determined effort to whip up public hysteria and fear about the terrorist threat at home, and continuing efforts to link the Taliban to that threat.

Therefore, you can expect the trial of at least some of the accused Toronto "terrorists."

And more than likely there will be some high-profile raids on "terrorist cells" to the accompaniment of hysteria news coverage.

As the fear level is cranked up, Harper will point the finger at the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc, accusing them of giving aid and comfort to terrorists and stabbing our troops in the back. This "stab-in-the-back" accusation has been used quite successfully in the past. The U.S. Republicans used it repeatedly to rout the Democrats, alleging that the liberal media, the radical anti-war movement and the Democrats stabbed U.S.

troops in the back during the Vietnam War.

Make no mistake. Harper has not changed his mind on the Afghan War. He is just changing his tactics to manipulate the opposition parties and public opinion into support for the war. Things are going to get even uglier than they have been in Canadian politics. Harper believes he is right and the rest of us are wrong. He is angry and arrogant. He is confrontational. And he is shrewd.

On the big issues, Harper never admits an error and remains determined to get his way. To do so, he will do whatever it takes (and whatever he can get away with as the holder of the most powerful office in the land).

And if Plan B doesn't work, and it probably won't, Harper will withdraw the troops and lay the blame for Canada's failure to help fight the "war on terror" squarely on the shoulders of the opposition parties and the anti-war movement.

Ideologically speaking, it is a win-win situation for Harper. No matter what happens Harper will be vindicated because he is never wrong. The rest of us are just too soft and too stupid to get it.

John F. Conway is a professor and chair of the department of sociology and social studies at the University of Regina.

PM's messages mixed on Canada's role in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707040089
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Insight
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: MOHAMED ELMASRY;
BYLINE: MOHAMED ELMASRY
SOURCE: FOR THE RECORD
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 771

A recent poll suggests that two-thirds — or 67 per cent — of Canadians want the country's military mission in Afghanistan to end as scheduled in 2009. According to the polling firm Decima Research, this result has been true "in every region of Canada, among men and women, all age and income groups and among both urban and rural residents."

Only 26 per cent of respondents to the same survey thought Canada's military mission should be extended "if that is necessary to complete our goals there."

But what, exactly, are Canada's goals in Afghanistan?

Just a few days after those poll results were made public, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer flew to Ottawa to meet Prime Minister Stephen Harper and urge Canada to continue the fight in Afghanistan beyond this country's self-imposed deadline of February 2009.

"I know how dramatic it is if Canadian soldiers pay the highest price," de Hoop Scheffer said. "But I still say, you are there for a good cause ... you are there to defend basic universal values."

His plea came one day after three Canadian soldiers were killed, bringing to 60 the number of Canadian troops who've lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

But the "good cause" of which he speaks now has a serious credibility problem for many Canadians, who are seeing de Hoop Scheffer as a paid salesman who repeats what U.S. President George W. Bush has been saying since 9/11 about terrorism, democracy, freedom, etc.

And like Bush, de Hoop Scheffer seems to have minimal respect for human lives. This means any human lives — those of Afghan men, women and children, who are killed daily; those of Canadians killed far from home; and those of his fellow Dutch citizens who number among the international forces posted there.

In the meantime, an association of Quebec-based antiwar activists, the War on War Coalition, has sent individual letters to 3,000 Canadian military families urging eligible soldiers to refuse their upcoming deployments to Afghanistan.

The letter says that "the Afghan mission is a web of lies" and exhorts military personnel to reconsider going,

because "you are not obligated to go to Afghanistan to become cannon fodder in this unjust war."

The letter goes on to say that it is sent "in the spirit of dialogue and debate" and warns that Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan risk complicity in activities "tantamount to war crimes," such as civilian deaths.

The coalition also set up a protest in Quebec City to coincide with a military parade where 2,500 Canadian Forces soldiers — the bulk of them from Quebec — were bidding farewell to family and friends before going to Afghanistan.

"Our aim isn't to attack the soldiers or their families; we want to open ... the debate on our presence in Afghanistan and why we should participate in this conflict," said coalition spokesperson Joseph Bergeron. "We want them to know that the reasons they've been given for going aren't the real ones ... they are not going to instil democracy with the barrel of a rifle. The Afghans don't want them there."

Faced with such strong opposition to Canada's presence in Afghanistan, Harper has declared that Canada's military role in Afghanistan will continue past February 2009 only if there's a consensus on the home front among political leaders and Canadians.

"I will want to see some degree of consensus among Canadians about how we move forward after that," he said. "I would hope that the view of Canadians is not to simply abandon Afghanistan. I think there is some expectation that there would be a new role after February 2009, but obviously those decisions have yet to be taken.

"This mission will end in February 2009," Harper continued. "Should Canada be involved militarily after that date, we've been clear that (it) would have to be approved by the Canadian Parliament. ... I don't want to send people into a mission if the opposition is going to ... undercut the dangerous work (our soldiers) are doing in the field."

This was a dramatic change for Harper, who has said until recently that Canada will not "cut and run" from Afghanistan, a point he drove home during a visit to Kandahar just a month ago.

"You know that our work is not complete. You know that we cannot just put down our arms and hope for peace," Harper told Canadian troops then.

"You know that we can't set arbitrary deadlines and simply wish for the best."

But Harper's change of mind received a cool reception from the opposition. Liberal Leader Stephane Dion accused the prime minister of "creating ambiguity."

If Harper was "responsible," he would give notice to NATO and Afghanistan that Canada would be pulling out in 2009, Dion said.

"He should be very clear. He should say that the combat mission in Kandahar ends in February 2009."

And for the majority of Canadians, whose lives have been scarified for too long by the Bush–Harper–NATO war dance, February 2009 cannot come soon enough.

Dr. Mohamed Elmasry is the national president of the Canadian Islamic Congress. He can be reached at np@canadianislamiccongress.com

Search-and-destroy mission for insurgents underway

IDNUMBER 200707040069
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.07.04
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 372

Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early Tuesday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, had earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a "small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of (the insurgents) are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

"If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the ground.

"The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick.

"My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains a volatile area. Seven Afghan police died in a roadside bomb explosion in the district on Monday.

Canada maintains a contingent of about 2,500 troops in southern Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Most of the Canadians operate in Kandahar province, regarded as the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

When they were in government, the Taliban sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization. A U.S.-led coalition drove the Taliban from power after al-Qaida carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But Taliban militants are still fighting the international coalition supporting the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul.

Southern Afghanistan has seen fierce fighting recently.

Defence spending needs more oversight

IDNUMBER 200707040010

PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)

DATE: 2007.07.04

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: C8

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)

WORD COUNT: 445

A report last month by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives called No Bang for the Buck: Military contracting and public accountability raised some serious questions about the way our tax money is being spent by those involved with defence.

The study found that 40 per cent of military contracts in this country are non-competitive.

It said federal spending on multi-billion dollar military contracts has been mired in complaints of improper conduct as the government embarks on its \$17 billion build-up of aircraft, helicopters, warships and vehicles.

The report found the government itself has classified as non-competitive more than 40 per cent of the nearly 20,000 DND contracts awarded in 2006 to 2007.

The percentage of public dollars spent on non-competitive military contracts has doubled in the last two years, according to the study which examined thousands of federal contracts .

The findings contained in the report are disturbing for many reasons.

For one, it leaves Canadians with the perception our tax dollars are not being spent wisely and are being thrown at whomever can provide the military with what it needs as fast as they can.

If this is the case, it shows a glaring disregard for the money the government takes from us.

A scary element of this story is that the examination did not include the \$17 billion for the equipment buildup and most of the contracts studied did not cover the needs of Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan.

The question that jumps to mind is what would a similar examination down the road show with regard to use of those funds. Will we get the best bang for our buck?

If Canadian soldiers are going to be deployed abroad on missions, such as the one in Afghanistan, they should have what they need to do the job but not at any price.

In a news release, Bruce Campbell, executive director of the centre for policy alternatives, said the report raises the alarm on the use of public dollars and the need for greater transparency and federal accountability in military contracting.

It's hard to argue with that.

The issue of military procurement has been raised in the House of Commons with opposition members asking questions about the very issue contained in the centre's report.

But the government says it cannot afford to wait because our soldiers urgently need this equipment.

There is no time for a lengthy competitive process, they say.

Steven Staples, the report's author and director of the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, takes an opposing view.

He said the study shows that when fair competition and Parliamentary oversight are exercised, soldiers get better, more effective equipment, sooner and cheaper.

The report, meanwhile, has four main conclusions:

- The government should not sign any new major military contracts pending reports by the auditor general and the Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, expected by the end of the year;
- Ministers involved in defence procurement, especially the defence minister, should be at least a five years separated from working for any government contractors;
- The defence minister should be given clear responsibility for defence procurement;
- A new parliamentary standing committee should be established with responsibility for defence procurement and monitoring programs.

The government needs to act to make sure its procurement system buys the best bang for our buck.

Michael Staples covers the military for The Daily Gleaner. He can be reached at staples.michael@dailygleaner.com.

Letters | House insurance increase fault of government policy

IDNUMBER 200707040007
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.07.04
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: C7
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 1030

Justice Minister T.J. Burke has been in the news warning New Brunswickers of a looming increase in home insurance rates. He said it was not fault of the government of New Brunswick.

I believe that is not true. Over the last five years, I have seen a more than 50 per cent increase in the assessed value of my home. In turn, we have had to endure the same increase in taxes we pay on our homes, outpacing the rate of inflation by more than three times.

The government of New Brunswick determines this based on the market value of our homes. We are unfairly taxed because there is no guarantee this market value will be there when most of us sell our homes.

The government's market value is determined by two main factors: the cost of building new homes and the price of existing homes in the area. Important factors no longer used in determining this value are what percentage of the population is building new or selling existing homes and what percentage is not. When this is factored in, the true market value of our homes has not kept up with the rate of inflation.

When you factor that most people can no longer afford the basic upkeep of their home because of energy costs, the value of our homes has gone down.

Home insurance increases to keep up with the government's assessed values.

The government of New Brunswick did this; it may have not have been a Liberal government, but it was the government of New Brunswick. Its name is on the bill.

Burke should be concerned about this problem the government of New Brunswick has created. Will we see a decrease in the property tax rate to offset the higher cost to insure our homes? Will the formula the government uses to determine the value of our homes be corrected so it is not a tax-gouge?

John Staples

Fredericton

Good job on Canada Day

On behalf of the University of New Brunswick Varsity Reds Athletic program and head hockey coach Gardiner MacDougall, I would like to thank Civic Pride chairman Paul Wentzel and his energetic group of talented committee members and volunteers for bestowing the honour of parade marshal on our VReds men's hockey team at this year's Canada Day parade.

Winning the 2007 CIS hockey championship for our university and city has become a tremendous source of pride for our players, staff and fans.

The opportunity you afforded us to display the University Cup to thousands of people on Canada Day was very much appreciated. We certainly noticed the warm reception along the parade route.

Our players come from communities large and small all across this great nation, and while many could not be at the parade physically, they were here in spirit.

Some players look forward to teaching local youngsters at our summer hockey camp beginning this week.

It was a great Canada Day in Fredericton, and we thank you for allowing us to be part of it.

Dave Morell

Marketing/event manager

UNB Varsity Reds Athletics

Fredericton

Leo Hayes graduation beautiful

I recently attended the Leo Hayes High School graduation ceremony.

It was the most beautiful ceremony I've seen to date. It was very well organized and a joy to attend.

Those young adults have worked hard and accomplished much. It was wonderful to watch each of them walk across that stage and receive the recognition they deserve.

A lot went into their 12 years and it all came together in a beautiful ceremony. It was all done so well it was just a pleasure to watch.

I'm thankful I had the opportunity to attend this graduation.

Vona MacMillan

Dalhousie, N.B.

Support for our troops is not support for government's policy

In response to your editorial on supporting our troops in Afghanistan:

As Oliver Hardy used to say to Stan Laurel, "This is another fine mess you've gotten us into."

It is becoming harder and harder to outwardly support our government's involvement in this conflict. The rally days of 9/11 are receding in memory, and the U.S. has all but abandoned its involvement in Afghanistan. We have lost good men and women in battles that are not ours.

Say what you want about the government, we, as Canadians, cannot lessen our support of the men and women who are being sent into an environment where they are not wanted, appreciated or required.

We must find a way to separate supporting those who serve in the armed forces anywhere in the world, including Canada, from being interpreted as supporting the conflict in Afghanistan. How you support the individual soldiers is up to you. Signing cards, having your comments filmed, placing a sticker on your car are all laudable. I do not look on any of these activities as support for continuing the war or an excuse to continue Canada's mission. Do not group these two activities together.

If you are mad at the government, don't take it out on the troops by not supporting them on Canada Day. Show your anger in the democratic way. Write to your Member of Parliament, send letters to the Department of National Defence, write letters to the editor.

Do anything to get the word out we are not happy with Canada's involvement in this war.

And finally, when election day comes, show your support by voting for the party that will bring them home.

Donald Musson

Brantford, Ont.

Buildings are not sacred space

I read with interest Wilfred Langmaid's York House sacred space article in the June 29 Daily Gleaner.

Interestingly, Jesus also talked about sacred space. In effect, he said, "I am saving space for you at my place," and "You're precious to me. I want you to be with me."

See John's gospel, Ch. 14:1–3. He says: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

And in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Here he is claiming the real and ultimate sacred space is actually to be found only in him or through him. He claims this attribute exclusively for himself in order to bless us.

Buildings of any kind can hardly be considered sacred. Saving us from our sins is truly sacred. Buildings can be used in this sacred work, namely to point people to the only and living saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ. Because of him, we can know now, for sure, that at death, we will enter his sacred space, and escape the wrath of God that is coming on the earth.

This is what is sacred, and being sacred, if we willingly and agreeably accept his offer to us, frees us from God's condemnation and enables our escape from the fires of hell. He thinks that much of us.

Russell Crosby

Fredericton

Troops, Taliban battle in volatile Afghan district

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.07.04

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B3

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Stephanie Levitz

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 453

Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early yesterday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, had earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a "small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of [the insurgents] are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

"If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the ground.

"The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick.

"My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains a volatile area. Seven Afghan police died in a roadside bomb explosion in the district on Monday.

Canada maintains a contingent of about 2,500 troops in southern Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Most of the Canadians operate in Kandahar province, regarded as the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

When they were in government, the Taliban sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization. A U.S.-led coalition drove the Taliban from power after al-Qaida carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But Taliban militants are still fighting the international coalition supporting the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul. Southern Afghanistan has seen fierce fighting in the last several weeks.

More than 2,900 people – mostly militants – have been killed in insurgency-related violence in Afghanistan this year, according to an Associated Press tally of numbers provided by western and Afghan officials.

Police in Kabul, meanwhile, detained a man from Saudi Arabia whom they accused of planning suicide attacks against high-ranking government officials.

The 35-year-old man, identified as Yousuf Ibrahim, was detained after a brief scuffle with police yesterday, said Gen. Ali Shah Paktiawal, the head of criminal investigations for Kabul.

Rest, but no retreat

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.07.04

SECTION: Editorial

PAGE: A8

WORD COUNT: 346

PRIME MINISTER Stephen Harper is not big on consensus. But he did use the word the other day in a surprising context – the issue of Afghanistan, where consensus–building has not exactly been his strong suit.

Mr. Harper said he'd like to see some consensus among Canadians in general, not just parliamentarians, about our country's future role in Afghanistan. As it now stands, our troops are committed to what has primarily become a combat operation in the Kandahar area until February 2009. But a decision must be made soon about extending the Canadian mission there, so that our allies have adequate time to make plans, with or without us.

Finding another NATO country to step into the breach which Canada has filled, at the cost of 60 military lives over three years, won't be easy. But it will soon be necessary.

A non–stop Canadian combat deployment is not sustainable over the long term – in personnel and materiel. Our Armed Forces don't have the numbers or resources to rotate contingents of 2,500 in and out of Kandahar indefinitely. At some point, you have to let soldiers and reservists recharge their batteries lest they burn out.

If, as analysts say, stabilizing Afghanistan is a 30–year project and defeating the Taliban now looks like a generational struggle, then our European allies must be prepared to do some of the heavy lifting. Either that, or they leave the big players, the U.S. and the U.K., holding the bag – or the body bags – alone. Yet shouldn't all partners in an alliance do their part? (The Italians and Germans, who have contingents roughly the size of Canada's, won't allow their troops to battle the insurgency in the south and east unless there's an emergency.)

While a respite is in order for Canada, we hope, as Mr. Harper does, that the Canadian consensus won't support a full–fledged retreat, but rather a redeployment.

We believe we should even return to fight another day if duty calls. Right now, though, duty is calling our allies to relieve us on the front line.

Afghanistan battle kills two Taliban; Canadian, Afghan forces make strike in volatile district of Kandahar province

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.07.04

SECTION: World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Stephanie Levitz

WORD COUNT: 572

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early Tuesday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, had earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a "small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of (the insurgents) are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

"If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the ground.

"The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick.

"My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains a volatile area. Seven Afghan police died in a roadside bomb explosion in the district on Monday.

Canada maintains a contingent of about 2,500 troops in southern Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Most of the Canadians operate in Kandahar province, regarded as the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

When they were in government, the Taliban sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization. A U.S.-led coalition drove the Taliban from power after al-Qaida carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But Taliban militants are still fighting the international coalition supporting the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul. Southern Afghanistan has seen fierce fighting in the last several weeks.

More than 2,900 people – mostly militants – have been killed in insurgency-related violence in Afghanistan this year, according to an Associated Press tally of numbers provided by western and Afghan officials.

Police in Kabul, meanwhile, detained a man from Saudi Arabia whom they accused of planning suicide attacks against high-ranking government officials.

The 35-year old man, identified as Yousuf Ibrahim, was detained after a brief scuffle with police on Tuesday, said Gen. Ali Shah Paktiawal, the head of criminal investigations for Kabul.

Ibrahim had spent the last eight years in Afghanistan, fighting alongside the Taliban in Kandahar, Paktiawal said.

Ibrahim, speaking in Arabic, said he was not in Afghanistan to fight against the government.

"We are here to fight against the Russians, Americans, Jews and infidels," he said. "I am a mujahedeen (holy warrior) ... and I will fight against them until the end of the Earth."

Elsewhere, U.S.-led coalition troops killed a suspected militant and detained two others in eastern Afghanistan Tuesday, officials said. In neighbouring Zabul province, Taliban militants ambushed a police patrol Monday in the Mizan district, killing one policeman, said Ali Khail, spokesman for the Zabul governor.

A 30-minute gun battle ensued, leaving three suspected Taliban dead, he said.

'My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in.'

Investigators say no charges in friendly-fire death of Canadian

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.07.04

SECTION: World

PAGE: B8

COLUMN: Around the globe

SOURCE: AP

DATELINE: MONTPELIER, Vt.

WORD COUNT: 89

A U.S. Army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army on Tuesday about the friendly-fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said a report written by an American army officer whose name was blacked out.

Rome conference pledges \$360 million to rebuild Afghan justice system

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS JUSTICE DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 636

ROME (AP-CP) _ International donors pledged US\$360 million on Tuesday to train judges, build new prisons and enact other measures to strengthen Afghanistan's judicial system at a conference overshadowed by concerns over civilian casualties caused by NATO forces.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said the alliance would do everything in its power to avoid civilian casualties and that deaths of innocent people would be investigated. He stressed, however, that Taliban and other extremists were in a "different moral category" from coalition soldiers who inadvertently cause civilian casualties.

"Our opponents mingle and mix with innocent civilians," he said on the sidelines of the conference.

"We do not intentionally kill; they behead people, they burn schools, they kill women and children."

"That said, NATO will do and has to do everything in its ability to prevent civilian casualties. For NATO, every single civilian life lost in Afghanistan is one too many."

The issue has been a sensitive one for the international military mission in Afghanistan. Over the weekend, Afghan officials said 45 civilians were killed in a bombing by NATO and the U.S.-led coalition in Helmand province.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has asked international forces to take better care of Afghan lives, has sent a team to investigate.

The Rome meeting, gathering officials and legal experts, looked at ways to improve a justice system that has been destroyed by years of violence. Karzai told the conference that urgent priorities included low salaries, poor infrastructure and the training of personnel.

The \$360 million in new donated funds would be devoted to the training of judges and rebuilding prisons and other facilities, Italian Foreign Ministry officials said at the conference. Some projects would take up to four years to complete, they said.

Officials would not break down the donations by country.

Ottawa is providing more than C\$30 million to help establish rule of law in Afghanistan, said Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs and international trade. She highlighted this aspect of Canada's assistance at the conference.

Over the next three years, Canada will provide at least \$10 million annually for efforts to strengthen rule of law, including a program to train Afghan judges, prosecutors and informal dispute-resolution workers in Kandahar province.

As well, there will be \$1.2 million for the construction of three substations for the Afghan National Police in Kandahar province. This is in addition to three substations recently funded and built by the Department of National Defence.

Canada will also step up the presence of Correctional Service Canada personnel in Afghanistan. They are advisers to help build a prison system that respects rule of law and human rights.

The funding is part of Ottawa's \$1.2 billion commitment to Afghanistan to 2011.

Efforts to establish the rule of law in Afghanistan have been hindered by the lack of security, particularly in the southern part of the country where the Taliban has been resurgent.

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to back the Afghan government. Most of them operate in Kandahar province in the south.

“Where terrorism in its most atrocious form remains an almost daily occurrence, as is regrettably the case in some parts of Afghanistan, justice will seem elusive still,” said Karzai, the Afghan president.

The recent civilian deaths have sparked demands for compensation for the victims' families, and the subject, while not on the conference agenda, came up in discussions on the sidelines.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he was “very much saddened and troubled” by the civilian deaths and urged Afghan and international forces “to act strictly in accordance with international humanitarian law” — even in the face of a “shadowy and unscrupulous adversary.”

“We simply cannot hide from the reality that civilian casualties, no matter how accidental, strengthen our enemies and undermine our efforts,” he said.

“NATO in Afghanistan has got to provide justice to civilians harmed by their combat operations. That means immediate compensation and aid,” said Sarah Holewinski, executive director of the U.S.-based group CIVIC Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict, who attended the conference.

“The conference represents an important step in the international commitment in Afghanistan,” said Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema, co-chair of the conference with the UN and Afghan leaders.

33 suspected militants killed in battle with Afghan, NATO forces

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 100

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) _ Afghan and NATO forces clashed with Taliban militants in a dangerous southern region overnight, leaving 33 suspected insurgents dead, the provincial governor said Tuesday.

The joint forces carried out the nighttime operation in the Zhari district of Kandahar, said provincial governor Asadullah Khalid. Four other suspected militants were arrested, including three wounded in the battle. There were no casualties among Afghan or NATO forces, he said.

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest-ever operations last fall and remains a volatile region. Seven Afghan police died in a roadside bomb explosion in Zhari on Monday.

Canada providing \$30 million to strengthen Afghan rule of law

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 168

ROME (CP) _ Canada is providing more than \$30 million in funding to help establish rule of law in Afghanistan, a country torn by years of war and political upheavals.

Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs and international trade, highlighted this aspect of Canada's assistance for Afghanistan at an international conference in Rome on Tuesday.

Over the next three years, Canada will provide at least \$10 million annually to Afghanistan for a program to train judges, prosecutors and informal dispute-resolution workers in Kandahar province.

As well, there will be \$1.2 million for the construction of three substations for the Afghan National Police in Kandahar province. This is in addition to three substations recently funded and built by the Department of National Defence.

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to back the Afghan government. Most of them operate in Kandahar province.

Canada will also step up the presence of Correctional Service Canada personnel in Afghanistan. They are advisers to help build a prison system that respects rule of law and human rights.

The funding mentioned by Guergis is part of Ottawa's \$1.2 billion commitment to Afghanistan to 2011.

3rd Writethru CP News Budget – Tuesday, July 3, 2007

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 587

Here are the CP coverage plans as of 23:30 EDT. The CP editor handling World news in Toronto can be reached at 416-507-2165.

MONTPELIER, Vt. _ A U.S. army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in Afghanistan. Their deaths, ``while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," says one document written by an American army officer. 700 words. BC-Afghan-Cda-Friendly-Fire, 1st Writethru. Moved.

WASHINGTON _ President George W. Bush leaves the door open for an eventual pardon of convicted vice-presidential aide Lewis (Scooter) Libby. ``I rule nothing in and nothing out," Bush says, even as Democrats fume over his decision to erase Libby's prison sentence and the aide's supporters complain he should have been pardoned. 950 words. By Ben Feller. See Photo. BC-CIA-Leak-Trial, 2nd Writethru. Moved.

See also:

BC-CIA-Leak-Pardons-Glance. Moved.

BC-CIA-Leak-Analysis, 1st Writethru. Moved Datafile.

BC-Clinton-Interview. Moved Datafile.

LONDON _ The diverse group came together with a shared goal: to bring havoc and death to the heart of Britain. There was a doctor from Iraq, another from Jordan and two from India _ all in their 20s and some working together as medical colleagues. Experts say the plot was hatched in Britain, possibly in hospitals in Liverpool and Glasgow. 1,404 words. By David Rising. See Photo. BC-Britain-Terrorism, 4th Writethru. Moved.

See also:

BC-Britain-Terrorism-Timeline. Moved Datafile.

BC-Britain-Terrorism-Glance, 1st Writethru. Moved Datafile.

LONDON _ Ayman al-Zawahri, al-Qaida's No. 2. George Habash of the PLO. Mahmoud Zahar, the Hamas strongman in Gaza. All trained as doctors _ as did at least six suspects in the failed bomb attacks in Britain. While the notion of healers as killers is shocking, history shows a doctor's status in society can be misused for terrorist aims. By Thomas Wagner. 900 words. Thomas Wagner. BC-Doctors-As-Militants. Moved Datafile.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Afghan and Canadian forces clashed with Taliban militants in a dangerous southern region overnight, leaving a number of suspected insurgents dead, officials said Tuesday. There were

no casualties among coalition forces in the battle in the Zhari district of Kandahar province. NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the military used air strikes around daybreak and it was possible a ``small number of insurgents" were killed. 750 words. By Stephanie Levitz. BC–Afghanistan, 1st Writethru. Moved.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan _ The tension long brewing around the radical Red Mosque bursts into the open with street battles between security forces and black-robed fanatics mounting a vigilante anti-vice campaign. At least nine people are killed and scores wounded in the clash, which underlines concern of the spread of extremism in a country struggling to combat Taliban and al-Qaida militants. 900 words. By Stephen Graham. See Photo. BC–Pakistan–Radical–Mosque, 3rd Writethru. Moved.

CHICAGO _ Jurors at the Conrad Black fraud trial may have to continue deliberations after they return a verdict since they could be asked to determine how much money the former press baron will have to give up if he's convicted of any crimes. The nine women and three men weighing whether Black conspired to defraud shareholders out of millions of dollars retired last Wednesday. They were in their fifth day of deliberations on Tuesday, and are expected to continue their discussion until at least next week. 1,196 words. By Romina Maurino. BC–Conrad–Black–Trial, 3rd Writethru. Moved.

Canadian, Afghan forces battle insurgents in volatile Zhari district

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 550

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) _ Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early Tuesday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, had earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a ``small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

``I'm pretty good at identifying where some of (the insurgents) are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

``If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the ground.

``The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick.

``My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains a volatile area. Seven Afghan police died in a roadside bomb explosion in the district on Monday.

Canada maintains a contingent of about 2,500 troops in southern Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Most of the Canadians operate in Kandahar province, regarded as the birthplace of the extremist Taliban movement.

When they were in government, the Taliban sheltered Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida organization. A U.S.-led coalition drove the Taliban from power after al-Qaida carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But Taliban militants are still fighting the international coalition supporting the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai in Kabul.

Southern Afghanistan has seen fierce fighting in the last several weeks.

More than 2,900 people _ mostly militants _ have been killed in insurgency-related violence in Afghanistan this year, according to an Associated Press tally of numbers provided by western and Afghan officials.

Police in Kabul, meanwhile, detained a man from Saudi Arabia whom they accused of planning suicide attacks against high-ranking government officials.

The 35-year old man, identified as Yousuf Ibrahim, was detained after a brief scuffle with police on Tuesday, said Gen. Ali Shah Paktiawal, the head of criminal investigations for Kabul.

Ibrahim had spent the last eight years in Afghanistan, fighting alongside the Taliban in Kandahar, Paktiawal said.

Ibrahim, speaking in Arabic, said he was not in Afghanistan to fight against the government.

``We are here to fight against the Russians, Americans, Jews and infidels," he said. ``I am a mujahedeen (holy warrior) ... and I will fight against them until the end of the Earth."

Elsewhere, U.S.-led coalition troops killed a suspected militant and detained two others in eastern Afghanistan Tuesday, officials said.

In neighbouring Zabul province, Taliban militants ambushed a police patrol Monday in the Mizan district, killing one policeman, said Ali Khail, spokesman for the Zabul governor.

A 30-minute gun battle ensued, leaving three suspected Taliban dead, he said.

INDEX:International, Justice, Politics

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 271

OTTAWA (CP) _ A made-in-Canada online inventory of attempted bombings and hazardous-material incidents could be a crucial tool for global investigators by early next year.

``We'll be able to map world trends with this database," said RCMP Insp. John Bureaux, in charge of the Mounties' explosives disposal and technology section.

``We're doing tests right now, and we're hoping to go online early in the new year."

The RCMP is leading development of the electronic collection of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials. It will include details of actual attacks as well as attempted bombings, hoax devices, attempted thefts of dangerous items and missing explosives.

It's hoped that a database, complete with photos of radiation sources, could help front-line responders minimize injury and death during a real event.

A secure, web-based network would allow bomb technicians around the world to make real-time additions to the database, Bureaux said in an interview.

In the past, such information hasn't always been up-to-date because of paperwork delays and lack of data sharing.

The new system will include regulators responsible for licensing and reporting hazardous materials. And it will be offered free in different languages in an effort to create a global pool of the latest terror tactics, plus a log of lost or stolen explosives.

``Other countries that accept the database will record their own domestic incidents and we'll begin to share this," Bureaux said.

``We want a body of information that we can start to collect on bombings both in the war theatre in Afghanistan and countries around the world."

A final version is to be launched on the RCMP network and accessible to police and investigators in more than 500 locations across Canada.

Bureaux said the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission are among other federal partners who will use the tool.

U.S. investigators recommend no charges in friendly-fire death of Canadian

DATE: 2007.07.03

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 579

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) _ A U.S. Army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army on Tuesday about the friendly-fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said one document, a report written by an American army officer whose name was blacked out.

The officer said Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006.

They were moved into the field of fire of the machine-gunner, who was at a Special Forces compound inside the base, the report said.

It said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified in the report, caused him to fire at the rooftop position where Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall, fighting off an attack by Taliban forces.

In the report and a second one released Tuesday, the army said an inadequate base defence plan and fatigue contributed to the tragedy, as did a lack of communication from headquarters and significant supply problems at the base in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

In the new reports, one investigator said he spoke with the two Special Forces soldiers manning two machine-guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the fatal shots, but their statements "lack credibility," the investigator said.

The Special Forces report said the small base, established about a month earlier, had been under near daily attack. It had acute supply problems and its soldiers were exhausted, the report said.

At one point in February, soon after the base was established, the Americans had to use their own money to buy food for the Afghan soldiers with them, the report said.

The Canadian reinforcements arrived by helicopter after dark at the same time an 80-vehicle supply convoy arrived, creating confusion about where the vehicles and soldiers should be placed, the reports said. The attack began about 1:45 a.m. March 29 with mortars followed by rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire.

Stone went to the roof of the building where he was staying and was hit in the back by a machine-gun bullet that travelled through his body and into his head, according to the reports. He was not wearing body armour.

Costall and other Canadian soldiers were on a berm outside the gate. Costall was hit by two shots, either of which would have been fatal, the report said.

Costall, 22, was a machine-gunner with 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and grew up in Gibsons, B.C. The possibility of him being killed by friendly fire was raised earlier by his wounded comrades.

The battle effectively ended when coalition forces called in an air strike, the U.S. Army reports said.

Both reports are executive summaries of investigations into the tragedy. One was done for the U.S. Department of Defense command in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The second was prepared for the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Both were inadvertently excluded from a compact disk delivered to The Associated Press on Monday in response to a Freedom of Information Act request.

The documents released Monday marked the first official confirmation that friendly fire caused the deaths.

The U.S. investigation into possible friendly fire began the day after Stone and Costall were killed.

The Canadian military has also conducted an investigation but its report had not yet been released.

Stone, 52, of Tunbridge, joined the military after high school, but was in and out of the service several times over the course of 35 years.

He was on his third tour in Afghanistan.

Ayman al Zawahiri

IDNUMBER 200707040084
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA04
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 112

A leading Islamist ideologue, Zawahiri was the co-founder of Al Qaeda with Osama bin Laden and mentor of the late Iraq-based insurgent Abu Musab al Zarqawi. A surgeon with radical religious convictions, Zawahiri studied in Egypt and became a leader of the extremist Islamic Jihad faction. He joined bin Laden in Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight the Soviet army, then became an architect of global jihad. He published an Al Qaeda manifesto after the 9/11 bombings in 2001. Hunted by U.S. forces, Zawahiri is believed to be in Pakistan near the Afghan border.

Report urges no charges in friendly fire deaths; U.S. probe says fatalities of Canadian, American are 'understandable'

IDNUMBER 200707040071
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
BYLINE: Wilson Ring
SOURCE: Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 301

A U.S. Army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in southern Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in reports released by the army yesterday about the friendly fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said one report, written by an American army officer whose name was blacked out.

The officer said Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006.

They were moved into the field of fire of the machine-gunner, who was at a compound inside the base, the report said.

It said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified, causing him to fire at the rooftop position where Stone and other soldiers were fighting a Taliban attack.

Stone went to the roof of the building and was hit by a machine-gun bullet that travelled through his body and into his head, according to the reports. He was not wearing body armour.

Costall, 22, and other Canadian soldiers were on a berm outside the gate. A member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, he was hit by two shots, the report said.

Costall was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and grew up in Gibsons, B.C. The possibility of him being killed by friendly fire was raised earlier by his comrades.

The Canadian military has also conducted an investigation but its report had not been released. Canadian critics say it's shocking that Canadians heard first from Americans that friendly fire is officially being blamed for Costall's death.

"I think it is entirely inappropriate that we hear, and for the family to hear, about the results of the American investigation through the media," said NDP defence critic MP Dawn Black (New Westminster–Coquitlam).

A spokesperson for Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said the minister had not seen the report.

With files from the Star's Richard Brennan

Coalition on Kandahar power play; 2 insurgents dead, 2 hurt as Canadians lead Operation Drag-On

IDNUMBER 200707040066

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Ont

SECTION: News

PAGE: A14

ILLUSTRATION: A Canadian soldier from India Company looks for enemy combatants during a firefight yesterday against Taliban insurgents. Canadian troops from India Company and the NATO-led coalition surround a wounded Taliban fighter near Sangsar in the Zhari district of Kandahar province. No coalition troops were hurt. An unidentified Canadian soldier takes time to smoke a cigarette during a lull in fighting. A Canadian soldier cleans his weapons. A Canadian soldier from India Company looks for enemy combatants during a firefight yesterday against Taliban insurgents. An unidentified Canadian soldier takes time to smoke a cigarette during a lull in fighting. A Canadian soldier cleans his weapons. ;

BYLINE: Stephanie Levitz

SOURCE: Canadian Press

COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation

WORD COUNT: 246

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early yesterday, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, military officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. It was not clear how the discrepancy arose.

The troops had massed in the area of Sangsar under darkness for Operation Drag-On, a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents from the Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, along with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of (the insurgents) are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, careful to avoid hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes and ended the battle. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month on the ground.

"My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in," said Quick.

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains unstable.

Canada maintains a contingent of about 2,500 troops in southern Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Most of the Canadians are in Kandahar province, regarded as the birthplace of the Taliban.

Army says no charges

SOURCETAG 0707040322

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: MONTPELIER, Vt.

WORD COUNT: 92

A U.S. Army investigator has recommended no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Private Robert Costall and a U.S. soldier in Afghanistan last year.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army about the friendly-fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

A report written by a U.S. Army officer says their deaths, while regrettable, are "understandable in the context of this firefight."

The officer says Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006. KEYWORDS=WORLD

U.S. soldier goes scot-free for friendly fire deaths

Army investigator recommended no charges for killing Canuck

SOURCETAG 0707040593

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 28

ILLUSTRATION: file photo by CP Canadian Forces Pte. Robert Costall was hit by two shots fired by a U.S. machine-gunner.

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: MONTPELIER, Vt.

WORD COUNT: 442

A U.S. army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall and an American soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army yesterday about the friendly-fire deaths of Costall and Vermont National Guard 1st Sgt. John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said one document, a report written by an American army officer whose name was blacked out.

The officer said Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006. They were moved into the field of fire of the machine-gunner, who was at a Special Forces compound inside the base, the report said.

It said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified in the report, caused him to fire at the rooftop position where Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall, fighting off an attack by Taliban forces.

In the report and a second one released yesterday, the army said an inadequate base defence plan and fatigue contributed to the tragedy, as did a lack of communication from headquarters and significant supply problems at the base in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

In the new reports, one investigator said he spoke with the two Special Forces soldiers manning two machine-guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the fatal shots, but their statements "lack credibility," the investigator said.

The Special Forces report said the small base, established about a month earlier, had been under near daily attack. It had acute supply problems and its soldiers were exhausted, the report said.

At one point in February, soon after the base was established, the Americans had to use their own money to buy food for the Afghan soldiers with them, the report said.

The Canadian reinforcements arrived by helicopter after dark at the same time an 80-vehicle supply convoy arrived, creating confusion about where the vehicles and soldiers should be placed, the reports said. The attack began about 1:45 a.m. March 29 with mortars followed by rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire.

Stone went to the roof of the building where he was staying and was hit in the back by a machine-gun bullet that travelled through his body and into his head, according to the reports. He was not wearing body armour.

Costall and other Canadian soldiers were on a berm outside the gate. Costall was hit by two shots, either of which would have been fatal, the report said.

Costall, 22, was a machine-gunner with 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and grew up in Gibsons, B.C. The possibility of him being killed by friendly fire was raised earlier by his wounded comrades. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Canada at risk of terror strike

IDNUMBER 200707040052
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B6
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod, with a file from Jean-Francois Bertrand
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 648

OTTAWA — Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis released by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk-management firms, Canada is among 22 nations where the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car-bombings in London and Glasgow.

Also this week, two packages left at a Department of National Defence property in Ottawa — one containing books, the other miscellaneous articles — were suspicious enough to warrant a call to the Ottawa police's explosive disposal unit early Tuesday. The contents were deemed to be harmless.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law-enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns al-Qaida is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of The Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks.

Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

We're "trying to give businesses a perspective of where the threat of terrorism is greater and then it's for them to use that as an indicator to do more due diligence and more investigation if they're moving into countries that they haven't already operated in. Security services can do only so much," said Priestley.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S., and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe".

Three other Western nations this year — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up.

Twenty three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by Western counter-terrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaida terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active. And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

"There seems to be no central group that's co-ordinating activity on a global basis and, therefore, we're seeing softer targets being targeted and smaller scale attacks, like attacks on hotels, transport, and lately, these very unsophisticated devices," in Glasgow and London.

Ottawa Citizen

NATO blames Taliban for civilian deaths

IDNUMBER 200707040036
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B12
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 374

OTTAWA — NATO regrets the deaths and injuries it has accidentally caused among Afghan civilians and will continue to review its military procedures, Canada's junior foreign affairs minister said Tuesday.

But Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, also stressed that the Taliban bear ultimate responsibility for the carnage that has been inflicted on innocent civilians because they continue to use them as shields and violently opposes western efforts to rebuild the country.

"We regret the tragic loss of civilian life in Afghanistan and our thoughts are always with the family of the dead and injured Afghans," Guergis said from Rome where she was representing Canada at a major international conference on improving governance in Afghanistan.

"Canada, along with our NATO and ISAF partners, will continue to work closely with our Afghan partners to review tactics and procedures in order to minimize the risks to civilians," she added.

"It's important to remember that the Taliban extremists forcefully oppose efforts to improve the life of the Afghan people and it is they who must be held responsible for bringing violence to the Afghan people."

Guergis was echoing the NATO line as the issue of civilian casualties dominated the agenda in Rome at a landmark conference aimed at strengthening the rule of law in Afghanistan.

"Our opponent mingles and mixes with innocent civilians. They are in a different moral category," said NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who attended the conference along with his United Nations counterpart Ban Ki-moon. "We do not intentionally kill."

On Friday, air strikes that were aimed at Taliban targets in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand killed 62 insurgents as well as 45 civilians, according to locals.

A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, acknowledged that civilians had been killed but said that less than a dozen had died.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi welcomed representatives from 20 countries by stressing the need to reduce civilian casualties.

"Each time the military operations lead to civilian casualties, our efforts to conquer the hearts and minds of the entire Afghan population register a dramatic halt," Prodi said.

On Tuesday, Guergis announced \$30 million in Canadian funding that will be used to train judges and prosecutors, as well as to build three new police substations in Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops are based.

The Canadian contribution is part of the \$1.2 billion already pledged to Afghanistan to 2011.

Ottawa Citizen

Canadian troops kill two Taliban

SOURCETAG 0707040691

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 20

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters Canadian soldiers of India Company from the NATO-led coalition hold a position during a firefight against Taliban insurgents in Sangasar, Zari district in eastern Afghanistan yesterday.

BYLINE: STEPHANIE LEVITZ, CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 251

Canadian and Afghan forces conducted a search-and-destroy mission against the Taliban in a dangerous district of southern Afghanistan early yesterday morning, leaving at least two insurgents dead and two wounded.

No casualties were reported among Canadians and Afghan government troops in the operation, officials said.

An Afghan official, provincial governor Asadullah Khalid, earlier said 33 suspected insurgents were dead.

But the Canadian military said only two insurgents were killed and two others wounded. And NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said the battle killed a "small number of insurgents."

It was not clear how the discrepancy in casualty figures arose.

The troops massed in the area under darkness for Operation Drag-On, the latest in a series of military operations designed to clear insurgents out of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province.

Canadian soldiers, together with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, staked out areas known to be frequented by the Taliban and lay in wait for contact.

"I'm pretty good at identifying where some of them are," said Maj. Dave Quick, the officer commanding of India Company, the Canadian battle group leading the fight.

"If I knew where all of them were, we wouldn't have this."

Huddled behind the walls of abandoned compounds, the soldiers opened fire when they saw suspected enemies, mindful they should avoid accidentally hitting their Afghan allies.

The fighting continued until daybreak, when the troops called in air strikes. Canadian troops provided medical support to the wounded insurgents.

The Canadian military estimated they were fighting against 15 Taliban militants, even though the Kandahar government suggested twice that many were killed.

The battle came as the current rotation of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan are entering their last month.

"The most important part of this stage of the tour is not a body count on either side," said Quick.

"My soldiers are staying focused to keep themselves alive so we can set the conditions for the next battle group to come in."

Zhari was the site of one of NATO's largest operations last fall and remains volatile. Seven Afghan police died in a bomb explosion on Monday. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Millions for law in Kandahar

SOURCETAG 0707040690

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 20

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: ROME

WORD COUNT: 110

Canada is providing more than \$30 million in funding to help establish rule of law in Afghanistan.

Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs and international trade, highlighted this aspect of Canada's assistance for Afghanistan at an international conference in Rome yesterday.

Over the next three years, Canada will provide at least \$10 million annually to Afghanistan for a program to train judges, prosecutors and informal dispute-resolution workers in Kandahar province.

As well, there will be \$1.2 million for the construction of three substations for the Afghan National Police. This is in addition to three substations recently funded and built by the Department of National Defence.

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to back the Afghan government. Most of them operate in Kandahar province. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Soldier slowly recovering from Afghanistan axe attack

IDNUMBER 200707040094
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Lisa Petka Photography, CNS / Capt. TrevorGreene with his fiancée, Debbie Lepore, before he was injured. ;
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Meghan Hurley
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 297

EDMONTON — Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast by yelling for them.

During the year after he was struck in the head with an axe in Afghanistan, Greene could barely whisper.

In response to his fiancée's questions, he could only lift an eyebrow or blink. In addition to speaking, now he can move his arms and lift his head.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said from her Vancouver home.

For the past two months, Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week.

He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka, Alta. The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain-injured patients, where they get individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts.

It all began on March 4, 2006, when Greene was talking with elders in a village in Afghanistan. An attacker crept up from behind and struck him over the head with an axe.

The Edmonton-based soldier was flown to Germany, where doctors removed parts of his skull so his brain could swell. Two days later, Lepore and Greene's parents were by his side. Greene was put into a medically induced coma and later flown to the Vancouver General Hospital, where he underwent two surgeries to repair the gap in his skull.

After more than a year, he was transferred to a private-care rehabilitation centre in Langley.

But the blow to his head hasn't affected his mental state or his memory.

"His personality is the same, because that part of his brain wasn't damaged," Lepore said. "He's the same old Trevor."

Instead, the blow injured the area of the brain that controls motor functions, which means Greene will have to learn to move, walk, and talk all over again.

Lepore took time off work as a chartered accountant and eventually cut her work-week down to two days.

She and her two-year-old daughter Grace plan to move from Vancouver to Ponoka, south of Edmonton, by the end of July.

No charges recommended in friendly fire death: report

IDNUMBER 200707040083
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C.
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 75

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An investigator with the U.S. army has recommended that no charges be filed in the friendly fire shooting that killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall, 22, in Afghanistan last year.

The conclusion is revealed in new documents released by the U.S. army, the Associated Press reported yesterday.

Costall died in a nighttime battle with insurgents in March 2006, along with Sgt. John Thomas Stone of the Vermont National Guard.

Costall, a gunner with the First Battalion Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, grew up in Gibsons.

THE AFGHAN MISSION: GUILTY OF SEX ASSAULT, 22-YEAR-OLD PRIVATE SEEKS ABSOLUTE DISCHARGE Should convict serve time or country? Quebec judge weighs fate of 'very good soldier' who raped friend's 18-year-old sister

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071850218

DATE: 2007.07.04

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: INGRID PERITZ

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Montreal PQ

WORDS: 731

WORD COUNT: 650

INGRID PERITZ MONTREAL Before he was convicted of sexual assault, Pier-Olivier Boulet was a bright and well-regarded soldier who was eager to deploy to Afghanistan and start a promising career in uniform.

His superiors described him as "respectful," "a very good soldier," and said the young infantryman showed "strong potential" in the military.

Today, the 22-year-old Quebecker is at the heart of a legal controversy.

Is he, and society, better off if he serves his country – or serves time behind bars? He'll find out tomorrow when a Quebec Court judge rules on the appropriate punishment for the Royal 22nd Regiment soldier based in Valcartier, Que.

Private Boulet was found guilty this year in the rape of a friend's sister. While the Crown has asked for jail time, the soldier's lawyer has asked for an absolute discharge to enable Pte. Boulet to pursue his military career, arguing that he's more useful as a soldier than a prisoner.

"This man has a job. He's in the military to defend us," lawyer Richard Philippe Guay said in an interview. "Here we have a good soldier who can go to Afghanistan. He's an asset to society." The crime that sent the soldier's fortunes spiralling unfolded three years ago, before Pte. Boulet had joined the army. He had gone to celebrate a birthday at the home of his childhood friend outside Quebec City.

The friend's 18-year-old sister was there, and consumed so much alcohol during the evening that she couldn't stand on her own when she went off to bed. Pte. Boulet later showed up at her bedroom door and asked if he could come in. The teenager regarded him as a close family friend. She allowed him in. The two had sexual relations.

Pte. Boulet thought the matter was over. A year later, he signed up for the Canadian Forces and successfully underwent training.

The young woman, however, had felt the sex was forced on her, and became distraught. She couldn't concentrate on her studies, suffered from nightmares and insomnia, and says she lost her self-confidence.

She saw a psychologist and then turned to police. In February last year, more than a year-and-a-half after the party, Pte. Boulet was charged with sexual assault.

During his trial, the soldier testified he'd believed the woman had consented to sex. The Crown said she was so drunk she was vulnerable and in no position to consent.

In his February verdict Judge Carol St.-Cyr of Quebec Court concluded that Pte. Boulet hadn't reasonably tried to ensure the woman had consented. The judge called it a "flagrant case of voluntary blindness" and found him guilty of sexual assault.

Pte. Boulet left the courtroom and broke down in tears.

Now his future in the military is under a cloud. He will watch fellow soldiers from CFB Valcartier begin to deploy to Afghanistan this summer. His lawyer says serving in the military had been Pte.

Boulet's dream.

A Valcartier officer, Captain Adjutant Michel Arsenault, testified at his sentencing hearing in May that while his criminal conviction has jeopardized his future in the army, an absolute discharge would improve his chances of remaining in the Forces.

An absolute discharge results in no criminal record. A court can grant one if it considers it to be in the best interest of the accused and not contrary to the public interest.

(The Department of National Defence will have the final say about Pte. Boulet's fate. A spokesman in Ottawa wouldn't speculate on his future until the case is resolved.) Crown prosecutor Sarah-Julie Chicoine asked for two years less a day in jail for Pte. Boulet. She said an absolute discharge would send the wrong message.

"Is this the kind of soldier we want to represent our country in Afghanistan?" she asked.

Pte. Boulet, for his part, tearfully apologized to the court at his hearing. "I'm sorry for the harm I've done," he said, his voice breaking. "I have trouble finding the words that could soak up all the tears that have been spilled over this story." After hearing all sides, Judge St.-Cyr said he needed time before ruling on Pte. Boulet's punishment tomorrow. "It's a sentence," he told the courtroom, "that has heavy consequences for everyone."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: justice; sexual offences

PERSONAL NAME: Pier-Olivier Boulet

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

FRIENDLY FIRE: SOLDIERS' DEATHS Investigator recommends withholding charges against U.S. machine-gunner

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 071850152

DATE: 2007.07.04

PAGE: A11 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: WILSON RING

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: AP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: MONTPELIER, VT.

WORDS: 375

WORD COUNT: 336

WILSON RING Associated Press MONTPELIER, VT.

A United States Army investigator recommended that no charges be filed against the U.S. Special Forces machine-gunner who killed Canadian Private Robert Costall and a U.S. soldier during a heated night-time battle last year in Afghanistan.

The recommendation is in documents released by the army yesterday about the friendly-fire deaths of Pte. Costall and Vermont National Guard Sergeant 1st Class John Thomas Stone.

Their deaths, "while regrettable, are understandable in the context of this firefight," said one document, a report written by a U.S.

Army officer whose name was blacked out.

The officer said Pte. Costall and 37 other Canadian soldiers were sent to reinforce Forward Operating Base Robinson for an expected attack on March 28, 2006.

They were moved into the field of fire of the machine-gunner, who was at a Special Forces compound inside the base, the report said.

It said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified in the report, caused him to fire at the rooftop position where Sgt. Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall, fighting off an attack by Taliban forces.

In the first report, released Monday, and a second one released yesterday, the army said an inadequate base-defence plan and fatigue contributed to the tragedy, as did a lack of communication from headquarters and significant supply problems at the base in Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

One investigator said he spoke with the two Special Forces soldiers manning two machine guns in the area where the fatal shots were fired. Neither acknowledged firing the fatal shots, but their statements "lack credibility," the investigator said.

FRIENDLY FIRE: SOLDIERS' DEATHS Investigator recommends withholding charges against U.S. machine-gunner

Pte. Costall, 22, was a machine-gunner with 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was shot to death from behind, according to the first report.

Both reports are executive summaries of investigations into the tragedy. One was done for the U.S. Department of Defence command in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The second was prepared for the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C.

The documents released Monday marked the first official confirmation that friendly fire caused the deaths.

The Canadian military has also conducted an investigation but its report had not yet been released.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; United States; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; war deaths; accidents

PERSONAL NAME: Robert Costall

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Injured city soldier's next posting: Ponoka; Axe attack leaves long recovery from brain injury

IDNUMBER 200707040144
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Lisa Petka Photography, file / Capt. TrevorGreene with fiancée Debbie Lepore before he left for Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Meghan Hurley
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 394

EDMONTON – Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast in a tone of voice that sounded like he was yelling.

For a year after he received a blow to the head with an axe in Afghanistan, the Edmonton-based soldier could barely whisper. He could only lift an eyebrow or blink to respond to his fiancée.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said Monday from her Vancouver home. "Now it's a whisper, but it's a very loud whisper."

Since April 30, Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week. He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka. He should be there by the end of July.

The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain injury patients. They have individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts, said Spencer Bell, one of the centre's clinical co-ordinators.

On March 4, 2006, Greene was talking with elders in a village in Afghanistan when an attacker crept up from behind and struck him.

"The guy lifted up the axe and called out 'Allahu akbar' — the jihad prayer — and he swung the axe into Trevor's head," a fellow officer said at the time.

Greene was flown to Germany for neurosurgery.

Two days later, Lepore and Greene's parents were by his side. Greene was put into a medically induced coma and later flown to the Vancouver General Hospital.

After more than a year, he was transferred to a private-care rehabilitation centre in Langley, B.C.

The blow to his head didn't affect his mental state or his memory.

"His personality is the same, because that part of his brain wasn't damaged," Lepore said. "He's the same old Trevor."

The blow injured the area of the brain that controls motor functions, which means Greene will have to learn to move, walk and talk all over again.

A year after the attack, he still could not move. Now, he can touch every finger with his thumb. He can move his elbow, lift his wrist and open and close his hands. He can even hold up his head without using a headrest, Lepore said.

Family and friends are amazed at his slow but promising recovery.

In Germany, doctors removed parts of his skull so the brain could swell.

After he was flown to Vancouver, he had two operations to repair the gap in his skull.

Lepore took time off work as a chartered accountant and eventually cut her work week down to two days. She and her two-year-old daughter, Grace, plan to move from Vancouver to Ponoka by the end of July.

mhurley@thejournal.canwest.com

THE PONOKA ADVANTAGE

More about the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury:

- Its 800-plus staff includes 20 psychiatrists and MDs, 200 psychiatric and registered nurses and other professionals.
- Closest similar facility is in San Diego.
- Patients are 16 to 65 years old, and stay an average of eight months.

No charges in friendly fire death of local soldier; U.S. army investigator says death 'understandable' in context of battle

IDNUMBER 200707040138
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: (Pte. Robert) Costall;
KEYWORDS: WAR; COURT MARTIAL
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 272

An investigator with the U.S. army has recommended no charges be filed in the friendly fire shooting that killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall in Afghanistan last year.

The conclusion is revealed in new documents released by the U.S. army, the Associated Press reported Tuesday.

Costall died in a nighttime battle with insurgents in March 2006, along with Sgt. John Thomas Stone of the Vermont National Guard.

Both were shot from behind, according to a U.S. report released earlier this week.

Costall, 22, was a gunner with the Edmonton-based First Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He was born in Thunder Bay, Ont., and raised in Gibsons, B.C., about 50 kilometres northeast of Vancouver.

The newly released documents include a report written by a U.S. army officer that calls the deaths "regrettable," but says they were "understandable in the context of this firefight."

Other allied soldiers were also injured in the incident, which occurred at Forward Operating Base Robinson in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

The report said an "inaccurate target identification" that night by the gunner, who was not identified, caused him to fire at the rooftop position where Stone and other soldiers were crouched behind a wall as they fought off an attack by Taliban forces, according to AP.

A pair of reports cited fatigue and an inadequate base defence plan as contributing factors for the incident.

One report was done for the U.S. Department of Defense command in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The second was prepared for the 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C.

The Special Forces report said the small base, established about a month earlier, had been under near daily attack.

No charges in friendly fire death of local soldier; U.S. army investigator says death 'understandable' in conte

It had acute supply problems and its soldiers were exhausted, the report said.

Neither of two Special Forces soldiers manning the machine-guns would admit to firing the fatal shots when questioned by an investigator, the documents say.

However, the reports said those statements lacked credibility.

Two Canadian Forces reports into the incident have also been completed.

The reports are both under final review and will be released shortly, a Canadian military spokesman said this week.

NATO regrets Afghan civilian deaths; But officials stress Taliban responsible for carnage

IDNUMBER 200707040121

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A7

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / Canadian troops of India Company from the NATO-led coalition carry the body of a Taliban fighter near Sangasar, on Tuesday. Canadian and Afghan troops killed at least two Taliban, and captured two others. ; Colour Photo: Reuters / Canadian soldiers of India Company from the NATO-led coalition search for Taliban insurgents during a firefight in Sangasar, Zari district in eastern Afghanistan, on Tuesday. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; NOBEL PRIZE; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA

DATELINE: OTTAWA

BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield

SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 490

OTTAWA – NATO regrets the deaths and injuries it has accidentally caused among Afghan civilians and will continue to review its military procedures, Canada's junior foreign affairs minister said Tuesday.

But Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, also stressed that the Taliban bear ultimate responsibility for the carnage that has been inflicted on innocent civilians because they continue to use them as shields and violently oppose western efforts to rebuild the country.

"We regret the tragic loss of civilian life in Afghanistan and our thoughts are always with the family of the dead and injured Afghans," Guergis said from Rome where she was representing Canada at a major international conference on improving governance in Afghanistan.

"Canada, along with our NATO and ISAF partners, will continue to work closely with our Afghan partners to review tactics and procedures in order to minimize the risks to civilians," she added.

"It's important to remember that the Taliban extremists forcefully oppose efforts to improve the life of the Afghan people and it is they who must be held responsible for bringing violence to the Afghan people."

Guergis was echoing the NATO line as the issue of civilian casualties dominated the agenda in Rome at a landmark conference aimed at strengthening the rule of law in Afghanistan.

"Our opponent mingles and mixes with innocent civilians. They are in a different moral category," said NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who attended the conference along with his United Nations counterpart Ban Ki-moon.

"We do not intentionally kill."

On Friday, air strikes that were aimed at Taliban targets in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand killed 62 insurgents as well as 45 civilians, according to locals.

A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF,

acknowledged that civilians had been killed but said that less than a dozen had died.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi welcomed representatives from 20 countries by stressing the need to reduce civilian casualties.

"Each time the military operations lead to civilian casualties, our efforts to conquer the hearts and minds of the entire Afghan population register a dramatic halt," Prodi said.

On Tuesday, Guergis announced \$30 million in Canadian funding that will be used to train judges and prosecutors, as well as to build three new police substations in Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops are based.

The Canadian contribution is part of the \$1.2 billion already pledged to Afghanistan to 2011. Guergis said security and development go hand in hand, but she would not say whether she supports extending Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan beyond the current February 2009 commitment.

Guergis said it would be up to Parliament to decide whether to extend the military mission beyond February 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will end then unless a consensus is found in the House of Commons, a clear challenge to his political opponents.

Guergis, who was attending the conference on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, would not say whether she would argue for an extension of the military mission beyond 2009.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai told the conference a strong judiciary is key to rebuilding his country so innocent people can be protected and the guilty punished for their wrongdoing.

"The Afghan population wants the end of impunity and abuse of authorities," Karzai said.

CanWest News Service

Nation's terror rating boosted

IDNUMBER 200707040093
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 484

OTTAWA – Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis released by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk-management firms, Canada is among 22 nations where the threat rating has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car-bombings in London and Glasgow.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law-enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns al-Qaida is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of The Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S., and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe."

Three other western nations this year — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up.

Twenty three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by western counterterrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaida terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active.

And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

Accountability where it counts

IDNUMBER 200707040075
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
COLUMN: Lloyd Brown—John
BYLINE: Lloyd Brown—John
SOURCE: Special to The Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 929

In a recent undated letter from Federal Heritage Minister Bev Oda to her "colleagues," Oda asked them to provide examples of community activities "in your riding that you feel should be receiving federal funding." These activities could be "arts" or "heritage." Nice opportunity for riding by riding patronage (of the arts, of course) coming up.

Ms. Oda uses the rather worn expression "the New Federal Government." With all respects Ms. Oda, I certainly did not consider my car "new" after 16 months of wear and tear and, in my view, the same rule applies to Ms. Oda's increasingly ordinary appearing Conservative federal government.

Ms. Oda, in her letter, also noted that federal funding would be made available "through a diligent and accountable process to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent in an efficient and transparent manner." After all, this now "New—Used" government is trying to separate itself from its obviously despicable and perhaps immoral predecessor.

You see the "used Conservative" government of Stephen Harper is still making capital out of the Liberals' "sponsorship scandal" schmozzle. Fair enough.

To that end, Harper recently appointed a myriad of high-priced talent to "clean as a whistle" positions. On June 12 alone, a public sector integrity commissioner and a conflict of interest and ethics commissioner were appointed.

Yet, if you've ever sat about a campfire, you may recall the old adage about "the kettle calling the pot black." You see, in politics, if you are seeking to gain political mileage from another's indiscretions, you will need to be exceptionally "squeaky clean" yourself.

MUSINGS

Recent musings by Canada's auditor general and a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives on Canada's defence spending suggest that the Conservatives of today are beginning to smell a tad like the sponsorship crowd of yesterday.

In 1962, the Glassco Report on the Organization of the Government of Canada, among other things, argued that more efficient and effective government administration (public management) would follow if public managers were given greater freedom to manage — as in the private sector. It took years for the concept "let the managers manage" to gain a hold on federal public administration. Under Brian Mulroney and then Jean Chretien, the "new public management" emerged complete with government credit cards and a capacity to

award contracts without competitive bids or even public notice.

Termed "sole-source" agreements, the intent is to permit managerial flexibility, improve the speed with which contractual obligations are fulfilled and enhance economy, effectiveness and efficiency (the Three Es). Sole-source agreements do make sense, but their flexibility comes at a price to public accountability and the capacity of Parliament to adequately supervise the placing of such contracts.

Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that much of what we have witnessed these past few years in the form of abuse of public confidence by senior — often appointed — public officials (fiddled expense accounts, luxurious alleged business trips and worse) is a byproduct of the "new public management."

Arguably, the sponsorship scandal emerged in part because of the flexibility permitted appointed public officials who perceived their role not as serving the public, but as both serving a political party and their personal interests. Of course, there is no excuse for any official responsible for public money failing to act in the best interests of the public served.

Now the issue has emerged once more and it is sole-source defence supply and provisioning contracts. Between 2004–05 and 2006–07, sole-source defence contract awards increased from 15 per cent of defence spending to 34 per cent. In other words, over a third of contracts awarded for military support and supply have gone to contractors known to Defence Department or Public Works or ministerial suppliers. This could be billions of dollars.

FORMER LOBBYIST

The current national defence minister — himself a former lobbyist for defence suppliers — is responsible, of course, for all these sole-sourced contracts. It has been suggested that these untendered, non-competitive contracts are essential to support the mission in Afghanistan. It is claimed that a long drawn out competitive bidding process would impair Canada's capacity to achieve its objectives. Yet, there is substantial evidence that many of the sole-source contracts have nothing directly to do with the Afghan mission. They could be assigned to competitive bids.

The entire sole-source defence business is beginning to smell just a smidgen like the sponsorship affair. Heritage Minister Oda might well send her letter to her colleagues the Defence minister and the minister of Public Works. Gadzooks, wasn't it Public Works that was somewhat involved in the sponsorship funny money business?

Are we on the same road as Americans and their defence contracts? Since the U.S. became mired in Iraq, non-tendered contracts — for example, to Haliburton Corporation and its subsidiaries — have become a multibillion dollar slush fund. Accountability is out the door because the U.S. is at war.

Is Canada in such a condition of "war" in Afghanistan that accountability for public money no longer matters?

I'm sorry, but I'm beginning to think that there may not be all that many differences between saving Canada's unity by sponsorship "hook or crook" and the potential for the same path to be trodden under the pretext that Canada's mission in Afghanistan is to save that country with the same lack of accountability used by Chretien's government to save Canada. I wonder if accountability really matters any more to any federal government — well, except for Ms. Oda.

Lloyd Brown-John is professor emeritus, public administration, at the University of Windsor.

Report blames friendly fire for soldier's death

IDNUMBER 200707040029
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
COLUMN: National Briefs
SOURCE: Star News Services
WORD COUNT: 61

A U.S. army investigation has concluded friendly fire from a U.S. Special Forces soldier was responsible for the March 2006 death in Afghanistan of a Canadian soldier.

Pte. Robert Costall died in the nighttime battle with insurgents, along with Sgt. John Thomas Stone of the Vermont National Guard.

Both were shot from behind, the U.S. report said, according to the Associated Press.

Costall, 22, was a gunner with the First Battalion Princess Patricia's Light Infantry.

Afghan casualty improving

IDNUMBER 200707040003
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: D8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Trevor Greene;
DATELINE: EDMONTON
BYLINE: Meghan Hurley
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 231

EDMONTON – Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast by yelling for them.

During the year after he was struck in the head with an axe in Afghanistan, Greene could barely whisper.

In response to his fiancée's questions, he could only lift an eyebrow or blink. In addition to speaking, now he can move his arms and lift his head.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said from her Vancouver home.

For the past two months, Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week.

He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka, Alta.

The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain-injured patients, where they get individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts.

On March 4, 2006, Greene was talking with elders in a village in Afghanistan. An attacker crept up from behind and struck him over the head with an axe.

The Edmonton-based soldier needed several operations to repair the gap in his skull. But the blow to his head hasn't affected his mental state or his memory.

"His personality is the same, because that part of his brain wasn't damaged," Lepore said. "He's the same old Trevor."

Instead, the blow injured the area of the brain that controls motor functions, which means Greene will have to learn to move, walk, and talk all over again.

A year after the attack, he still couldn't move. Now, he can touch every finger with his thumb.

He can move his elbow, lift his wrist and open and close his hands. He can hold up his head without using a headrest, Lepore said.

Waving the flag won't bring back fallen soldiers

IDNUMBER 200707040030
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A12
BYLINE: Elwin Mowry
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 178

Re: Harper looks for consensus on Canada's future in Afghanistan, June 23

Our deepest sympathy goes to the families of the three Canadian soldiers recently killed by a roadside bomb as they rode in an unarmed all-terrain vehicle in Afghanistan. This should not have happened.

We support our troops wherever they are sent and acknowledge they will do their best to represent Canadians and our beliefs in freedom and peace. I am, however, concerned about the federal government's policies in Afghanistan. It has communicated no clear plan of action and exit strategy, like the United States government's silence on Iraq.

I would ask of our government and senior military advisers: Who blundered by authorizing the use of this ridiculous motorized vehicle in a combat situation where roadside bombs are a common occurrence?

Good business practices, which should apply to the military as well, provide staff with the proper tools for success. Failure to do so results in those on the firing line paying the price. Waving our flag will not bring these soldiers back to their families.

Elwin Mowry

Coquitlam

Terrorism a many-headed hydra

IDNUMBER 200707040026
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A12
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; CRIME; GREAT BRITAIN; AFGHANISTAN
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 528

The failed bombings in London and Glasgow seem all the more shocking because British authorities say several doctors were among the plotters, but in truth this ought not to surprise.

By Tuesday, eight people had been arrested in connection with two fizzled car bombs in London and a botched suicide attack on Glasgow Airport. As many as six are doctors from the Middle East or India.

Islamist terrorism is a many-headed hydra. It is Pakistani children from comfortable families, brainwashed in madrassas, answering the angry call of a Saudi millionaire. It is a third generation of Palestinians born and raised in refugee camps and guided by selfish leaders. It is alienated young Britons or Americans or Canadians who slip into the orbit of charismatic imams who tell them they can find meaning in destruction. It is opponents of secular authoritarian regimes such as Egypt's finding in mosques the only safe places to criticize their governments. And it is, perhaps, a group of professional healers with perverse politics and a twisted understanding of what it means to do no harm.

The prospect that these men and women formed a terrorist ring in Britain is not bizarre: Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy in al-Qaeda, is an Egyptian surgeon and the son of a professor of pharmacology. The believed ringleader of the July 7, 2005, suicide attacks on London's Tube, Mohammad Sidique Khan, was married and a well-regarded youth worker with a university degree. Shehzad Tanweer, another Tube bomber, was also a university graduate. Many of the 9/11 hijackers were well-educated — including a teacher, an urban-planning graduate and several law students — and could have had prosperous lives.

The conventional wisdom on building peaceable societies is that all participants must have something to lose by breaking the peace. This is the strategic reason we are risking so much trying to rebuild Afghanistan: Beyond the humanitarian imperative, we believe that the nihilistic Taliban will find no purchase in a country where everybody lives well and young people can expect to do better than their parents. Finding successful doctors loading cars with gasoline bombs and trying to detonate them in downtown London might suggest that strategy is pointless.

It is not. We don't use the same weapons to attack each of the hydra's heads. At home, we keep known radical clerics under observation and arrest them if they cross the line into criminality or encourage others to do so. In Afghanistan, we help Afghans create a functioning economy so they can fend off radicals for themselves, and we hope success there will kick the struts out from under the argument that NATO troops are only there to advance the agenda of imperialists who want to take whatever Muslims have.

Hatred transcends social and economic class. Suicide terrorism is not always born of "desperation." But it's also true that the better off people are in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the less sense this sort of radicalism will make.

Ottawa, Toronto top terror targets; Canadian cities among six in North America believed to be most in danger

IDNUMBER 200707040017
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; SECURITY
DELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 559

OTTAWA — Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis released by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk-management firms, Canada is among 22 nations where the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car-bombings in London and Glasgow.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law-enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns al-Qaida is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of The Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks.

Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

Ottawa, Toronto top terror targets; Canadian cities among six in North America believed to be most in danger

We're "trying to give businesses a perspective of where the threat of terrorism is greater and then it's for them to use that as an indicator to do more due diligence and more investigation if they're moving into countries that they haven't already operated in. Security services can do only so much," said Priestley.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S., and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe."

Three other western nations this year — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up.

Twenty three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by western counter-terrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaida terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active. And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

No charges in friendly fire death of Canadian, U.S. army recommends

IDNUMBER 200707040015
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final C
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: COURT MARTIAL; WAR; CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 91

An investigator with the U.S. army has recommended no charges be filed in the friendly fire shooting that killed Canadian Pte. Robert Costall in Afghanistan last year.

The conclusion is revealed in new documents released by the U.S. army, the Associated Press reported Tuesday.

Costall died in a nighttime battle with insurgents in March 2006, along with Sgt. John Thomas Stone of the Vermont National Guard. Both were shot from behind, according to a U.S. report released earlier this week. Costall, 22, was a gunner with the First Battalion Princess Patricia's Light Infantry.

Soldier hit by axe now speaking, fiance says; Capt. Trevor Greene to get specialized treatment at only centre offering long-term care

IDNUMBER 200707040012

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A6

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: supplied / Capt. Trevor Greene, shown in happier days in a photo supplied by his fiance Debbie Lepore, is speaking, moving his arms and lifting his head a year after being attacked with an axe while speaking with a village elder during a tour of duty in Afghanistan. ;

DATELINE: EDMONTON

BYLINE: Meghan Hurley

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 260

EDMONTON – Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast by yelling for them.

During the year after he was struck in the head with an axe in Afghanistan, the Vancouver soldier could barely whisper.

In response to his fiance's questions, he could only lift an eyebrow or blink. In addition to speaking, now he can move his arms and lift his head.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said this week from her Vancouver home.

For the past two months, Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week.

He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka, Alta. The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain-injured patients, where they get individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts.

Greene was attacked March 4, 2006, while talking with elders in an Afghan village. The assailant crept up from behind and struck him over the head with an axe.

Greene underwent two surgeries to repair the gap in his skull at Vancouver General Hospital. After more than a year, he was transferred to a private-care rehabilitation centre in Langley.

The blow to his head hasn't affected his mental state or his memory. "His personality is the same, because that part of his brain wasn't damaged," Lepore said. "He's the same old Trevor."

The blow did injure the area of the brain that controls motor functions, which means Greene will have to learn to move, walk and talk over again.

Soldier hit by axe now speaking, fiance says; Capt. Trevor Greene to get specialized treatment at only centre

He can touch every finger with his thumb. He can move his elbow, lift his wrist and open and close his hands. He can hold up his head, Lepore said.

Rationale for sacrificing lives in Afghan war not made clear

IDNUMBER 200707040056
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Ralph Ibanez
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 254

And just what are going to be the consequences of pulling our troops out of Afghanistan?

In Peace advocate ignores realities of Afghan pullout (SP, June 25) Darren Toews dismisses Michael Murphy's call to stop the senseless deaths of Canadian troops in Afghanistan as just "peace movement" nonsense without regard for the consequences.

Perhaps he could tell us what we are accomplishing by keeping our troops there. Perhaps the Soviet Union should have asked itself that before it lost thousands of lives and caused the loss of many more.

I can almost hear the warmongers: "We'll bring home our troops when the job is done." But what's the job? Canadians were made to believe that we went there to fight terrorism, but we're now fighting the Taliban, the "bad guys" who oppressed their people but have never attempted to attack other countries.

They even offered to give away Osama Bin Laden to a neutral country. If U.S. President George Bush had been serious about fighting terrorism he would have taken this offer without hesitation.

We are now told that we are fighting to save the people of Afghanistan from the tyranny of the Taliban. What a convenient change of purpose. Why, then, are we not sending troops to Sudan, where already more than 250,000 people have been murdered?

Keeping our young soldiers dying in Afghanistan won't prevent what's already happening there. Can we learn the lessons of history, or do we have to wait, like the U.S.S.R., to have thousands coming home dead before we realize that a guerrilla movement cannot be defeated in Afghanistan?

Ralph Ibanez

Saskatoon

Terror threat status rises in Canada: report

IDNUMBER 200707040030
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: National
PAGE: B6
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 521

OTTAWA — Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis released by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk-management firms, Canada is among 22 nations where the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car-bombings in London and Glasgow.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law-enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns al-Qaida is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official told ABCNews.com.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of The Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks. Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S., and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe."

Three other western nations this year — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up. Twenty-three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by western counter-terrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaida terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active. And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

"There seems to be no central group that's co-ordinating activity on a global basis and, therefore, we're seeing softer targets being targeted and smaller scale attacks, like attacks on hotels, transport, and lately, these very unsophisticated devices," in Glasgow and London.

Canada's terror risk 'elevated'; Ottawa, Toronto face greatest danger, but report has no specific data on pending attack

IDNUMBER 200707040149
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 846

Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk management firms, Canada is among 22 countries in which the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007 to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car bombings in London and Glasgow.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, although a secret U.S. law enforcement report, prepared for the Department of Homeland Security, warns that al-Qaeda is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of the Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms.

Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks. Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

We're "trying to give businesses a perspective of where the threat of terrorism is greater and then it's for them to use that as an indicator to do more due diligence and more investigation if they're moving into countries

Canada's terror risk 'elevated'; Ottawa, Toronto face greatest danger, but report has no specific data on pending

that they haven't already operated in. Security services can do only so much," said Mr. Priestley.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counterterrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S.

"Elevated" is the third of five levels (below "high" and "severe"). Three other western nations — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up this year. Twenty-three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

As they have been in previous Aon reports, Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Because two of terrorism's central aims are to destabilize western governments and disrupt national economies, Ottawa and Toronto are "target-rich environments," Mr. Priestley said in an interview from London.

As well, Canada's global image as a safe, terror-free zone is misleading, he said.

"If you've looked at terrorism over the last 10, 15 years in Canada, there's been an awful lot of recruitment, oblique funding, organization and planning going on to mount attacks in other countries.

"What we're seeing now (in Canada) is a similar sort of situation that we have in the U.K., where potentially there are plots, there are people embedded within the community who are prepared to carry out acts of terrorism," at home rather than abroad.

"Perception is not always correct. There are things that are going on. The failed plot in Toronto is a good example of activity, intentions and capability within a country that most people think is pretty removed from these sorts of incidents."

Aon's 2005 terrorism risk analysis predicted London was at increased danger from terrorism, in part because of Britain's rigid support of the war in Iraq.

Three months later, four suicide bombers detonated explosives on the city's transit system, killing 52 rush-hour commuters.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by western counterterrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaeda terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active. And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

"There seems to be no central group that's co-ordinating activity on a global basis and, therefore, we're seeing softer targets being targeted and smaller scale attacks, like attacks on hotels, transport, and lately, these very unsophisticated devices," in Glasgow and London.

Canada's terror risk 'elevated'; Ottawa, Toronto face greatest danger, but report has no specific data on pen

--

Scare in ottawa

Ottawa police's bomb unit rushed to a Department of National Defence property after two suspicious packages were found at the site.

Staff at the DND building at Star Top and Innes roads came across the packages at 11 p.m. Monday, and quickly called in the bomb squad.

The squad used mobile devices to open the boxes and once the contents were deemed to be harmless, the area was declared safe about 4:30 a.m., said Const. Marty Rukavina.

Canadian soldier slowly recovers from axe attack; For a year, he could barely whisper, but now Capt. Trevor Greene can speak, move his arms and lift his head, writes Meghan Hurley.

IDNUMBER 200707040137

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Graham Thomson, the Edmonton Journal / Capt. Trevor Greene has astonished his caregivers with his ability to speak, move his arms and lift his head after a head injury he suffered when he was attacked with an axe in Afghanistan last March. ;

DATELINE: EDMONTON

BYLINE: Meghan Hurley

SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal

WORD COUNT: 363

EDMONTON – Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast by yelling for them.

During the year after he was struck in the head with an axe in Afghanistan, Capt. Greene, who grew up in Orleans, could barely whisper. In response to his fiancée's questions, he could only lift an eyebrow or blink.

In addition to speaking, he can now move his arms and lift his head.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said this week from her Vancouver home.

For the past two months, Capt. Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week.

He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka, Alta. The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain-injured patients where they get individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts.

It all began on March 4, 2006, when Capt. Greene was talking with elders in a village in Afghanistan. An attacker crept up from behind and struck him over the head with an axe.

The Edmonton-based soldier was flown to Germany, where doctors removed parts of his skull so his brain could swell.

Two days later, Ms. Lepore and Capt. Greene's parents were by his side. Capt. Greene was put into a medically induced coma and later flown to the Vancouver General Hospital, where he underwent two surgeries to repair the gap in his skull. After more than a year, he was transferred to a private-care rehabilitation centre in Langley, B.C.

The blow to his head has not affected his mental state or memory.

"His personality is the same, because that part of his brain wasn't damaged," Ms. Lepore said. "He's the same old Trevor."

Instead, the blow injured the area of the brain that controls motor functions, which means Capt. Greene will have to learn to move, walk and talk all over again.

A year after the attack, he still couldn't move. Now, he can touch every finger with his thumb. He can move his elbow, lift his wrist and open and close his hands. He can also hold up his head without using a headrest, Ms. Lepore said.

Ms. Lepore took time off work as a chartered accountant and eventually cut her work-week down to two days. She and her two-year-old daughter, Grace, plan to move from Vancouver to Ponoka, located south of Edmonton, by the end of July.

NATO regrets civilian deaths, but Taliban is to blame, Canadian minister says; Military tactics, procedures to be reviewed

IDNUMBER 200707040136

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, said NATO will review its military procedures in Afghanistan to reduce risks to civilians. ;

BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 423

NATO regrets the deaths and injuries it has accidentally caused among Afghan civilians and will continue to review its military procedures, Canada's junior foreign affairs minister said yesterday.

But Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, also stressed that the Taliban bear ultimate responsibility for the carnage that has been inflicted on innocent civilians because they continue to use them as shields and violently oppose western efforts to rebuild the country.

"We regret the tragic loss of civilian life in Afghanistan, and our thoughts are always with the family of the dead and injured Afghans," Ms. Guergis said from Rome, where she was representing Canada at a major international conference on improving governance in Afghanistan.

"Canada, along with our NATO and ISAF partners, will continue to work closely with our Afghan partners to review tactics and procedures in order to minimize the risks to civilians," she added.

"It's important to remember that the Taliban extremists forcefully oppose efforts to improve the life of the Afghan people, and it is they who must be held responsible for bringing violence to the Afghan people."

Ms. Guergis was echoing the NATO line as the issue of civilian casualties dominated the agenda in Rome.

"Our opponent mingles and mixes with innocent civilians. They are in a different moral category," said NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who attended the conference along with his UN counterpart, Ban Ki-moon. "We do not intentionally kill."

On Friday, airstrikes that were aimed at Taliban targets in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand killed 62 insurgents as well as 45 civilians, according to residents.

A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, acknowledged that civilians had been killed, but said fewer than a dozen had died.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi welcomed representatives from 20 countries by stressing the need to reduce civilian casualties.

NATO regrets civilian deaths, but Taliban is to blame, Canadian minister says; Military tactics, procedures to

"Each time the military operations lead to civilian casualties, our efforts to conquer the hearts and minds of the entire Afghan population register a dramatic halt," Mr. Prodi said.

Yesterday, Ms. Guergis announced \$30 million in Canadian funding that will be used to train judges and prosecutors, as well as to build three new police substations in Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops are based.

The Canadian contribution is part of the \$1.2 billion already pledged to Afghanistan to 2011.

Ms. Guergis said security and development go hand in hand, but she would not say whether she supports extending Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan beyond the current February 2009 commitment. She said it would be up to Parliament to decide whether to extend the military mission.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will end then unless a consensus is found in the House of Commons, a clear challenge to his political opponents.

Defeatism leads to defeat

IDNUMBER 200707040100
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: David Warren
BYLINE: David Warren
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 846

One really has to wonder about the efficiency of the British National Health Service after seeing how incompetently a group of Islamist doctors carried off their weekend car-bombing and fire-throwing attacks in London and Glasgow. Not one death; not even a successful suicide.

We can thank the indiscretion of the British police for the information that the persons since rounded up were mostly doctors and laboratory technicians working for the NHS. "Of Asian origin." Am I jumping to conclusions by guessing that they were all fanatical Muslims? (That not one was a fanatical Methodist?)

On the other hand, they seem to have been paid well — doctors often are. Two almost identical, incompetently rigged Mercedes were found outside London night clubs. From what I can make of media reports, "controlled explosions" had also to be carried out on a car about to be dispatched from a Glasgow mosque, and on three fire hydrants placed suspiciously (if also ludicrously) on the pavement outside a London tube station. The general configuration appears to be (once again) according to current Islamist practice in Iraq: the two-part explosion. Not simultaneous in any given location, but successive. The first bomb kills as many people as possible, attracting onlookers and a rescue operation. The second kills as many of them as possible.

Some parallel operation in Australia may also have been intended, judging from the urgency of police searches there. A man arrested at Brisbane airport, trying to flee to India, was a hospital registrar recently arrived from England.

The attack on Glasgow Airport leaves us still scratching our heads. An SUV was driven into a passenger terminal. Failing to get inside, its two riders then emerged, in flames, shouting "Allah! Allah!" — trying to hurl Molotov cocktails, before being wrestled to the ground by police. It sounded like the dress rehearsal for a Monty Python skit.

And yet it was a brilliant success. For within minutes — just because this scene happened at an airport — new regulations were being posted around the world to search all air travellers in new, more expensive, more time-consuming and more demeaning ways.

In general, all these terror attempts were a brilliant success. The BBC and the rest of the British mainstream media immediately piped out sympathetic pieces about the beleaguered Muslim community, and aired demands for withdrawal from Iraq. In other words, exactly the publicity the Islamists wanted. And the new British prime minister, though he sounded firm and resolute, is understood to be looking for ways to get out of Tony Blair's unpopular war.

We can safely assume that the timing of the British terror attempts was intended to coincide with the change in government leadership, in exactly the same way as the terror hits on the Madrid railway system were timed for the Spanish general election in 2004. The tactic works. The terrorists successfully swung that election to the party that would cut and run from Iraq. And had several hundred Britons been killed, as the NHS doctors intended, demands for British withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, in both the media and Parliament, would have been overwhelming.

The problem with defeatism is that it leads to defeat — not to peace. Ask the Spaniards whose tour bus convoy was driven into by an exploding car in Yemen over the same weekend. At least ask those who survived. They may well have thought they could safely visit that country's archeological sites, since al-Qaeda must appreciate the lengths to which Spain has gone to make itself inoffensive. But no: al-Qaeda considers not the behaviour of Spain, but the existence of Spain, to be offensive. Their propaganda is unambiguous: The terror will stop when "Al Andalus" returns to Shariah.

It is ridiculous to imagine that the West will somehow surrender to the Islamists from fear of (often slapstick) terror attacks. Or even from fear of the luckier terror strikes that have happened, and are sure to happen again — for even a portable nuclear device, or packed biological weapon, is unlikely to kill more than a small proportion of a big city's population. Life could go on.

And yet, when one looks at the response to an attack in which there were no fatalities, the idea ceases to be ridiculous. For the prevailing view among our self-sainted elites, in media and government, is that we must always reward a terror strike with new concessions, and always retreat where the enemy confronts us. And among the deracinated urban masses who vote the latter into power, the demand is for safety, even at the price of slavery. This is perfectly expressed in the public outpouring of obeisance to Islam after each Islamist hit.

Such spineless whimpering is, in turn, a powerful inspiration to the most ardent Islamists to try further terror strikes. We might as well unroll a huge banner, that reads, "Please! Hit us again!"

David Warren's column appears Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Unneeded fashion advice; Why is the Globe portraying female war correspondents as soldier sex objects?

IDNUMBER 200707040102
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: National
SECTION: Issues & Ideas
PAGE: A13
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 632

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan —The way The Globe and Mail wrote it last weekend, women journalists in Afghanistan should wear a burka to keep sand out of their hair, buy special bulletproof vests to accommodate their breasts and wear mascara, the better to bat long feminine eyelashes at smitten checkpoint guards.

The story, under the headline "Conflict isn't pretty, but you can be," has been circulating at military headquarters. Canadian women journalists embedded here were understandably unimpressed by the outrageous smear.

But since they won't write the Globe to protest the piece as fictional fashion advice that portrays female war correspondents as soldier sex objects, allow me.

The writer of the drivel is one Jenn Gearey, who claims to have done time in Darfur, Afghanistan and Iraq as a Canadian reporter. Funny, but her name rang no bells in the media tent here and a Google search produced only fluff stories on topics like the time she had an unwanted purple elephant tattoo removed from her ankle.

The harsh reality is that women journalists covering the Afghanistan war are in a gender-neutral work environment and every bit the hard-nosed match of their male colleagues.

The two women (there are only four men) journalists here this month — Mellissa Fung of CBC and Stephanie Levitz of Canadian Press — join a long list of senior reporters volunteering at considerable personal risk to cover this conflict alongside soldiers.

Both have successfully lobbied military brass to place them in harm's-way locations where bullets are being exchanged with the Taliban and rocket-launched grenades are landing — hazardous spots this male has yet to tread.

When they go out in public wearing a burka, it's not for hair protection but to stay alive in a region where female foreigners are prized kidnapping material. Even in a burka, they risk being exposed the minute they extend an uncovered arm or stumble in their unfamiliar attire.

Besides, there's no allowance for femininity on this base — women share tents with snoring males at the airfield and crash on bumpy cots or hard ground while out with the troops. Never is the sound of a hair-dryer

Unneeded fashion advice; Why is the Globe portraying female war correspondents as soldier sex objects?

heard.

As CBC's Fung pointed out sarcastically, the 50 C heat would quickly sweat off the makeup and turn melting mascara into rivers of black, even if women were inclined to coat themselves in the stuff, as the story recommended.

The parade of Canadian women reporting this 18-month conflict has posted a proud record. Calgary Herald reporter Renata D'Aliesio went on a patrol for 17 straight days at the height of some serious Taliban activity last summer to get an up-close look at real military action. Nobody here can recall a longer stay outside the relatively safe confines of the Kandahar Air Field.

The Globe's Christie Blatchford is arguably the toughest, no-nonsense, get-me-to-the-front-line columnist to cover this conflict. Why she doesn't go apoplectic at her own paper making space for this hatchet job on her journalistic sisters is beyond me.

CTV's Lisa LaFlamme was damn near hit by mortar fire while on patrol here -- and soldiers on the scene still shake their heads at how she pushed them to go deeper into danger.

Canadian Press writer Sue Bailey travelled inside a very dangerous Kandahar area last fall on her own for hard-to-get interviews on the plight of women, and slept with a knife under her pillow for protection on the advice of her guest-house host.

These women didn't have much time for the Globe's suggestions that female war correspondents paint their toenails to hide the dirt. Or shave legs because "war zones have army men who are fit and will look at you like a goddess."

Alas, Gearey's article wasn't meant to be tongue-in-cheek. So here's some unsolicited advice for her: Stick to writing about tattoo removals, and know that serious women reporters leave the beauty tips at home so they can cover the front line in their uniquely professional fashion.

dmartin@canwest.com

KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES

Unneeded fashion advice; Why is the Globe portraying female war correspondents as soldier sex objects?

Terror threat elevated; Canada at risk: panel. Al-Qa'ida plans 'spectacular' summer: secret U.S. report

IDNUMBER 200707040163
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; WAR; SECURITY; CONSPIRACY
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: IAN MACLEOD
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 770

Canada faces an elevated risk of a terrorist strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

In a global terrorism analysis published by Chicago-based Aon Corp., one of the world's largest insurance and risk-management firms, Canada is among 22 countries where the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning came after Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded last weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car-bombings in London and Glasgow.

Two packages left at a Department of National Defence property in Ottawa – one containing books, the other miscellaneous articles – were suspicious enough to warrant a call to the Ottawa police's explosive disposal unit early yesterday. Staff at the DND building came across the packages at 11 p.m. Monday, and quickly called in the bomb squad. Once the contents were deemed to be harmless, the area was declared safe about 4:30 a.m., Constable Marty Rukavina said.

Officials in both countries stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law-enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns Al-Qa'ida is planning a terrorist "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of the Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks.

Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

We're "trying to give businesses a perspective of where the threat of terrorism is greater and then it's for them to use that as an indicator to do more due diligence and more investigation if they're moving into countries that they haven't already operated in. Security services can do only so much," Priestley said.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the United States, and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe."

Three other Western countries this year – Britain, France and Norway – also had attack levels bumped up.

Twenty-three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terrorist plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable.

In the United States, New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Because two of terrorism's central aims are to destabilize Western governments and disrupt national economies, Ottawa and Toronto are "target-rich environments," Priestley said.

As well, Canada's global image as a safe, terrorism-free zone is misleading, he said.

"If you've looked at terrorism over the last 10, 15 years in Canada, there's been an awful lot of recruitment, oblique funding, organization and planning going on to mount attacks in other countries.

"Perception is not always correct; there are things that are going on," he said.

Aon's 2005 terrorism risk analysis predicted London was at increased danger from terrorism, in part because of Britain's rigid support of the war in Iraq.

Three months later, four suicide bombers detonated explosives on the city's transit system, killing 52 rush-hour commuters.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by Western counter-terrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the Al-Qa'ida terrorist network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small, independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active. And because security has been vastly increased around many major potential targets, such as government sites and critical infrastructure, they are going after more vulnerable targets.

"There seems to be no central group that's co-ordinating activity on a global basis and, therefore, we're seeing softer targets being targeted and smaller scale attacks, like attacks on hotels, transport, and lately, these very unsophisticated devices," in Glasgow and London.

NATO regrets civilian deaths

IDNUMBER 200707040113

PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette

DATE: 2007.07.04

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A15

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: FINBARR O'REILLY REUTERS / Canadian troopsevacuate a wounded Taliban fighter yesterday near Sangasar in Zari district in eastern Afghanistan. Canadian and Afghan National Army troops engaged Taliban fighters in Sangasar, killing at least two and capturing two more wounded fighters. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM

DATELINE: OTTAWA

BYLINE: MIKE BLANCHFIELD

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 413

NATO regrets the deaths and injuries it has accidentally caused among Afghan civilians and will continue to review its military procedures, Canada's junior foreign affairs minister said yesterday.

But Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, also stressed that the Taliban bears ultimate responsibility for the carnage that has been inflicted on innocent civilians because they continue to use them as shields and violently opposes western efforts to rebuild the country.

Guergis, who was in Rome representing Canada at a major international conference on improving governance in Afghanistan, was echoing the NATO line as the issue of civilian casualties dominated the agenda.

"Our opponent mingles and mixes with innocent civilians. They are in a different moral category," said NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who attended the conference along with his United Nations counterpart Ban Ki-moon. "We do not intentionally kill." On Friday, air strikes that were aimed at Taliban targets in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand killed 62 insurgents as well as 45 civilians, according to locals.

A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, acknowledged that civilians had been killed but said that less than a dozen had died.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi welcomed representatives from 20 countries by stressing the need to reduce civilian casualties.

"Each time the military operations lead to civilian casualties, our efforts to conquer the hearts and minds of the entire Afghan population register a dramatic halt," Prodi said.

Guergis yesterday announced \$30 million in Canadian funding that will be used to train judges and prosecutors, as well as to build three new police substations in Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops are based.

The Canadian contribution is part of the \$1.2 billion already pledged to Afghanistan to 2011. Guergis said security and development go hand in hand but she would not say whether she supports extending Canada's

military involvement in Afghanistan beyond the current February 2009 commitment.

Guergis said it would be up to Parliament to decide whether to extend the military mission beyond February 2009.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will end then unless a consensus is found in the House of Commons, a clear challenge to his political opponents.

Guergis, who was attending the conference on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, would not say whether she would argue for an extension of the military mission beyond 2009.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai told the conference a strong judiciary is key to rebuilding his country so innocent people can be protected while the guilty could be punished for their wrongdoing.

"The Afghan population wants the end of impunity and abuse of authorities," Karzai said.

Terror threat rises in Canada; U.S. report fears imminent al-Qaeda attack

IDNUMBER 200707040178
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Herald Archive, Reuters / Ottawa is among six North American cities on heightened terror alert. ;
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; SECURITY; INVESTIGATIONS; CRIME; CANADA; GREATBRITAIN
BYLINE: Ian MacLeod, Tony Seskus
SOURCE: CanWest News Service; Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 674

Canada faces an elevated risk of a terror strike, with Ottawa and Toronto among six North American cities in particular danger, says a report by a panel of international security experts.

As secret U.S. government reports warn of an impending al-Qaeda terror "spectacular," Alberta government and energy industry officials say the alert level here is unchanged at "low."

"They repeated there is no increased threat to Canada at this point in time, but it is always worth keeping your eyes open," said Greg Stringham, vice-president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

He added the industry remains "vigilant" about protecting critical infrastructure.

In a global terrorism analysis released by insurance giant Aon Corp., Canada is among 22 nations where the threat rating for terrorism has been heightened for 2007, to an "elevated" status from the previous "guarded" rating.

"Looking at the terrorist organizations within Canada, their capabilities, their intentions, the various plots that have been stopped by security services, we increased the rating," said Justin Priestley, executive-director of Aon Crisis Management in London.

The warning comes as Canadian and U.S. airport and border crossing security was upgraded over the weekend in response to the attempted terrorist car bombings in London and Glasgow.

"Events in Britain are not causing any significant shift in effort given that we already got a lot of measures under way," said Brenda Kenny of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association.

She said most companies have detailed security measures in place and work with authorities to ensure the appropriate level of diligence is followed.

Bryce Paton of the Calgary Airport Authority said staff continue to use "increased vigilance" in the wake of the British attacks, but added there is no specific threat against Canada or any specific airport.

However, a British Airways flight to Calgary from London was cancelled Tuesday, affected by a security scare at London's Heathrow airport.

Officials in Canada and the U.S. stress they have no specific information about pending attacks, though a secret U.S. law enforcement report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, warns al-Qaeda is planning a terror "spectacular" this summer.

"This is reminiscent of the warnings and intelligence we were getting in the summer of 2001," a senior official with access to the document told ABCNews.com.

The comment is similar to a remark two weeks ago by Germany's deputy interior minister that terrorist "chatter" picked up by authorities there has reached a level similar to the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

More than 200 countries were rated in this year's annual analysis for Aon by a panel of security experts from a subsidiary of The Risk Advisory Group, one of Europe's leading business intelligence and security firms. Largely aimed at the international business and business investment communities, the assessment is based on the intent, capability and likelihood of terrorists staging attacks.

Information is drawn from open-source and "privileged" intelligence data.

We're "trying to give businesses a perspective of where the threat of terrorism is greater and then it's for them to use that as an indicator to do more due diligence and more investigation if they're moving into countries that they haven't already operated in. Security services can do only so much," said Priestley.

Countries are scored on five threat indicators: known and active groups or networks operating in the country; their aims and stated objectives; their track record of terrorist activity; their operational capabilities to stage attacks; and the ability of a nation's counter-terrorism efforts to reduce those capabilities.

Canada's "elevated" threat level is now the same as that of the U.S., and "elevated" is the third of five levels, below "high" and "severe".

Three other western nations this year — Britain, France and Norway — also had attack levels bumped up. Twenty-three, including Ireland and Israel, had levels lowered.

Ottawa and Toronto, where 18 people were arrested last summer in an alleged terror plot to strike government buildings, were singled out, as they have been in previous Aon reports, as the Canadian cities particularly vulnerable. In the U.S., New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles were named.

Globally, the analysis credits better co-ordination and intelligence-gathering by western counterterrorism officials with an apparent weakening of the command-and-control functions of the al-Qaeda terror network, especially in Afghanistan.

The downside, however, is that small independent groups and individuals, far more difficult for security officials to detect, are increasingly active.

Soldier attacked with axe sees speech improvements

IDNUMBER 200707040170
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
COLUMN: Newsmakers
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Trevor Greene;
SOURCE: Herald News Services
WORD COUNT: 165

Capt. Trevor Greene startled his caregivers on the weekend when he asked for eggs and toast by yelling for them.

During the year after he was struck in the head with an axe in Afghanistan, Greene could barely whisper.

In response to his fiancée's questions, he could only lift an eyebrow or blink. In addition to speaking, now he can move his arms and lift his head.

"We've always been able to communicate, but it's just gotten better because he started to talk with one word, then more words and then a whisper," Debbie Lepore said from her Vancouver home.

For the past two months, Greene has been getting speech therapy twice a week.

He will soon get specialized treatment at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury in Ponoka, in central Alberta. The centre is the only place in Canada that offers long-term care for brain-injured patients, where they get individualized treatment programs created by a team of experts.

But the blow to his head hasn't affected his mental state or his memory. "His personality is the same," Lepore said.

Instead, the blow injured the area that controls motor functions, and he will have to relearn to move, walk and talk.

NATO regrets civilian deaths in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200707040159
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / A Canadian soldier from India Company, part of the the NATO-led coalition, looks for enemy targets during a firefight Tuesday with the Taliban in the Sangasar, Zari district, in eastern Afghanistan. ; Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / A Canadian soldier guards a position near Sangasar on Tuesday during fighting between the NATO-led coalition and Taliban. A Canadian army official said at least two Taliban fighters were killed. ; Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / A Canadian soldier has a cigarette break during a lull in fighting. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; ORGANIZATIONS; DEFENCE; PROPAGANDA; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 373

NATO regrets the deaths and injuries it has accidentally caused among Afghan civilians and will continue to review its military procedures, Canada's junior foreign affairs minister said Tuesday.

But Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs, also stressed that the Taliban bear ultimate responsibility for the carnage that has been inflicted on innocent civilians because they continue to use them as shields and violently oppose western efforts to rebuild the country.

"We regret the tragic loss of civilian life in Afghanistan and our thoughts are always with the family of the dead and injured Afghans," Guergis said from Rome, where she was representing Canada at a major international conference on improving governance in Afghanistan.

"Canada, along with our NATO and ISAF partners, will continue to work closely with our Afghan partners to review tactics and procedures in order to minimize the risks to civilians," she added.

"It's important to remember that the Taliban extremists forcefully oppose efforts to improve the life of the Afghan people and it is they who must be held responsible for bringing violence to the Afghan people."

Guergis was echoing the NATO line as the issue of civilian casualties dominated the agenda in Rome at a landmark conference aimed at strengthening the rule of law in Afghanistan.

"Our opponent mingles and mixes with innocent civilians. They are in a different moral category," said NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who attended the conference along with his United Nations counterpart Ban Ki-moon.

"We do not intentionally kill."

On Friday, air strikes that were aimed at Taliban targets in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand killed 62 insurgents as well as 45 civilians, according to locals.

A spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, acknowledged that civilians had been killed, but said that less than a dozen had died.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi welcomed representatives from 20 countries by stressing the need to reduce civilian casualties.

On Tuesday, Guergis announced \$30 million in Canadian funding that will be used to train judges and prosecutors, as well as to build three new police substations in Kandahar province, where Canada's 2,500 troops are based.

The Canadian contribution is part of the \$1.2 billion already pledged to Afghanistan to 2011.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said the mission will end then unless a consensus is found in the House of Commons, a clear challenge to his political opponents.

Online Extras

For Don Martin's column from Afghanistan log on to calgaryherald.com

Can democracies win wars of choice?

IDNUMBER 200707040145
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.07.04
EDITION: Final
SECTION: The Editorial Page
PAGE: A14
COLUMN: Barry Cooper
KEYWORDS: FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Barry Cooper
SOURCE: For The Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 672

Last week, Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor spoke at a Kingston conference convened to examine what lessons the military has learned from its conduct of "stabilization operations." These range across the full spectrum of war—fighting intensity, from old-fashioned peacekeeping as in sunny Cyprus, to bloody combat as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

O'Connor's audience was knowledgeable — many were seasoned Canadian and American officers — and not a few were skeptics.

Much of his message was government boilerplate.

After the "decade of darkness" under the Liberals, his first task was to rebuild the Canadian Forces (CF). No longer would the CF hitchhike to war or arrive in a desert wearing green camo suitable for European forests.

The Afghanistan experience confirmed the need for a more robust army. All the elements of the Cold War "legacy arsenal," once thought unnecessary for stability operations, have proven useful — tanks as well as light armoured vehicles, along with G-Wagons and Nyalas. Today, the CF leads the fight in Kandahar and the Afghan National Army (ANA) provides support.

The goal is to reverse those roles and train the ANA so they can defend their country and ensure it never again becomes a sanctuary for terrorists. Since the ANA once was unable even to show its face in Kandahar, its presence there today is a measure of success.

But the main purpose of the CF is not to instruct the ANA and even less to kill insurgents, O'Connor said. They're there to provide security so Foreign Affairs can organize the job of rebuilding civil society.

Obviously, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the "provincial reconstruction teams" can accomplish nothing if the work they do during the day is blown up at night.

So the main question O'Connor and the government want Canadians to focus on is whether Afghanistan is better off today than it was a year or two ago — both for the Afghan people and in terms of Canadian interests.

Everything the minister said was true, but it was not the whole truth. Over the next two days, the skeptics indicated that a genuine strategy required an explanation of how Canadian political interests are being pursued in Afghanistan. Granted, al-Qaeda has been denied sanctuary, but al-Qaeda no longer needs an entire country

to inspire terrorists to attack London, Toronto or Madrid.

What, if anything, has been learned? And by whom?

As far as the military is concerned, learning typically means responding to failure. Soldiers are doers, not thinkers, one of them said, so it is useless to expect any serious strategic reflections, let alone learning, from them. "We learn tactically," said another.

On the civil reconstruction side, a senior bureaucrat from CIDA said his people were adept at implementing "process," by which he meant shuffling paper between offices in Ottawa.

In Afghanistan, CIDA was in the business of delivering multi-year, multi-million dollar projects to the national and provincial governments.

Unfortunately, the needs are found in the villages, not the administrative capitals. If anything useful got done, he said, it was in spite of official policy and because of informal co-operation between junior people on the ground in CIDA and in the CF.

He added that "movement protocols," which means protecting CIDA people with military escorts, reduced their effectiveness because they looked ready for combat, not construction.

He drew a picture of young, energetic, enthusiastic CIDA officers riding around risk-free in LAVs, trying to help but never actually helping. They were akin to the young, energetic and enthusiastic Saudis in Peshawar in the 1980s, who would walk into Afghanistan, shoot off a few AK-47 rounds, and go home with stories of jihad adventures. So long as CIDA forbids taking risks, it will accomplish little.

A U.S. general drew a conclusion applicable to both Canada and the U.S.: the army is at war, not the country.

Some 3,000 U.S. and 60 Canadian families have felt directly the deadly effects of war, but for the rest of us, these stability campaigns are accompanied by emotional disengagement.

Afghanistan and Iraq are wars of choice for Canada and the United States. Can democracies win wars of choice? And if stabilization operations are waged to keep development teams safe rather than effective, why bother?

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

Canada helping to build Afghan rule of law

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.07.04

PAGE: A9

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 158

CP Wire ROME — Canada is providing more than \$30 million in funding to help establish rule of law in Afghanistan, a country torn by years of war and political upheavals.

Helena Guergis, secretary of state for foreign affairs and international trade, highlighted this aspect of Canada's assistance for Afghanistan at an international conference in Rome on Tuesday.

Over the next three years, Canada will provide at least \$10 million annually to Afghanistan for a program to train judges, prosecutors and informal dispute-resolution workers in Kandahar province.

As well, there will be \$1.2 million for the construction of three substations for the Afghan National Police in Kandahar province.

This is in addition to three substations recently funded and built by the Department of National Defence.

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to back the Afghan government.

Most of them operate in Kandahar province.

Canada will also step up the presence of Correctional Service Canada personnel in Afghanistan. They are advisers to help build a prison system that respects rule of law and human rights.

The funding mentioned by Guergis is part of Ottawa's \$1.2-billion commitment to Afghanistan to 2011.

— Canadian Press {Rome ITALY}