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A defensible shuffle

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Last week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said while attending a Conservative meeting he was getting ready to shuffle his cabinet. This week, several government officials confirmed that Harper really is ready to change the seating arrangement at his cabinet table.

With a shuffle on his mind, Harper should use this opportunity to put one minister in a different portfolio, assuming the minister stays in the cabinet. He is Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor.

O'Connor has experience in the Armed Forces, having served as a brigadier– general, but this experience hasn't seemed to help him in the House of Commons, where battles are fought with words, not bullets.

O'Connor has never really seemed fully in control of the ministry. At times, he appeared to be ill–advised, such as during discussions of prisoners in Afghanistan. On other occasions, he appeared to misunderstand Canadians, such as the time the government tried to stop journalists from covering the return of fallen soldiers at the air base at Trenton, Ont. Furthermore, O'Connor has recently been contradicted by Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier about the future of Canadian forces in Afghanistan and the progress the Afghan forces have made.

To be fair, it should be noted that ever since Canadian troops were sent to fight in Afghanistan, the Defence Ministry has been a much more important portfolio than it previously was. The minister's job, therefore, is more difficult than it has been.

The minister can no longer act as a caretaker just looking after the ministry. Canada is at war, and our involvement in Afghanistan has produced a significant number of casualties. The minister has to be able to make complex decisions and then convince the country that those decisions are right.

If the prime minister is still looking for someone to step into the defence minister's office, he could consider Jim Prentice, currently the Indian affairs minister. Prentice has shown that he can handle a complex ministry with skill and aplomb.

Afghan health–care improving, despite the setbacks

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BYLINE: PRAFUL C. PATEL
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WORD COUNT: 624

A few weeks ago, the Washington Post published a heartbreaking story of Afghanistan's health–care system breaking down as the insurgency seems to advance. Medical workers have disappeared (one was beheaded), doctors are seeking safer places to work and clinics are running out of medicine because deliveries have become too dangerous. The added cruelty of this news is that Afghanistan's health system had just begun to turn a corner.

Today, 40,000 more Afghan babies a year are living beyond their first birthday than survived to that age in 2002. Recent household surveys and health facility assessments carried out by experts from Johns Hopkins University indicate how rapid progress in the health sector has been. The infant mortality rate has declined 24 per cent since the fall of the Taliban in December 2001. The number of mothers who have someone skilled to help them give birth has increased from fewer than 50,000 in 2002 to more than 190,000 in 2006.

The expansion of health services has meant that every year, 15,000 more cases of tuberculosis are properly diagnosed and treated than were under the Taliban. Routine polio immunization rates have doubled.

Overall, the researchers found, residents of rural communities have dramatically greater access to health services, and the quality of those services has improved markedly.

I've seen some of this turnaround. I recently paid a surprise visit to a simple health centre in a mountainous part of Samangan province late one afternoon. Happily, I was the one surprised: At 5 p.m., the staff was still present and cheerfully looking after patients.

Like all the other health centres my colleagues and I have visited recently in Badakshan, Baghlan, Sar–e Pol, Balkh and Parwan, this one was clean and well stocked, and it had a trained female health worker available to look after female patients and their children. This worker was one of more than 1,000 newly trained community midwives.

After she finished counselling a young mother, I asked the health worker a few questions. She was typically shy but was also clearly — and rightfully — proud of her work and skills. This woman came from a distant village where she was one of few women who could read or write. She had received 18 months of training from a non–governmental organization using a curriculum developed by Afghanistan's ministry of public health.

The progress in Afghanistan has been impressive and the improvements in citizens' lives tangible. But it is important to keep in mind where the country was just five years ago: in the ashes of war and brutal oppression. There is still so much to do.

The international community can help sustain the achievements made so far. The first and most urgent task is to help improve security. The Taliban has been cynically targeting health workers and health facilities with devastating effect.

In Helmand province in the south, 11 of 440 health workers have been killed in the past year, and nearly half of all health facilities there have been closed. This becomes perfect propaganda for the Taliban, which tells villagers that the government cannot provide them with services. Without dramatically improved security, it's hard to see how health services can improve further. Indeed, we are seeing the negative effects as health workers are burdened, too, by trauma casualties among civilians caught in the crossfire.

The international community must also keep providing financial support.

It's an old military adage that seems to offer the best advice for going forward: Make sure you don't reinforce failure, and make very sure you reinforce success. When a breakthrough is occurring, additional support is critical to victory. The health sector in Afghanistan requires urgent reinforcement.

Praful C. Patel is vice-president of the World Bank's South Asia region.

Pakistan's Musharraf pulls out of tribal council

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WORD COUNT: 74

Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf abruptly announced yesterday he would not attend a traditional tribal council that he was to have opened jointly in Afghanistan today with his Afghan counterpart.

Pakistan has been angry over official and unofficial suggestions by U.S. politicians that American forces should stage unilateral strikes at al-Qaida figures believed to be taking shelter in Pakistan's tribal lands if Musharraf's government failed to do so.

Soldier charged

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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript
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A soldier charged with manslaughter in the death of a comrade in Afghanistan last year is one step closer to facing court martial.

Master Cpl. Robbie Fraser, of Cornwall, P.E.I., was charged with manslaughter and negligent performance of duty in the Aug. 9, 2006, death of Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh.

Fraser's case has been proceeding slowly toward court martial — the military court for charges involving military law — but advanced to a critical stage last week.

The commanding officer has referred the charges to the director of military prosecutions, Jonathon Juteau, a spokesman with the Defence Department in Ottawa said.

The case would then go to the court martial administrator to book a court martial if there is sufficient evidence and enough interest to pursue a prosecution.

Opposition says Ottawa delayed report into death

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(Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 262

Opposition parties accused the Tory government Wednesday of delaying the release of the findings of military investigations into two incidents in which Canadian soldiers were accidentally killed by American firepower in Afghanistan.

"This is damage control, pure and simple," said Liberal MP Denis Coderre. "Let's call a spade a spade."

On Tuesday, the army released the findings of a board of inquiry that blamed a lack of co-ordination among Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces in a March 2006 battle where Pte. Robert Costall was accidentally machine-gunned by American special forces.

The inquiry report and separate military police investigation found that the U.S. commander failed to properly outline the location of forces defending Forward Operating Base Robinson, and that Canadians did not warn American troops about their movements as insurgents were trying to overrun the outpost.

The board also found that Canadian troops were not wearing infrared beacons that could have distinguished them from enemy fighters.

The Canadian inquiry report was finished and presented for approval to the chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, on March 8, 2007, according to documents released by the military.

Military police, who conducted a separate probe to see whether Canadians soldiers should be charged, formally wrapped up their investigation on June 8, 2007, said Lt.-Col. Bud Garrett, a senior officer with the National Investigative Service.

Coderre said it's hard to believe that five months were needed to get Hillier's signature on the report and to liaise with American authorities.

But a spokeswoman for Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said the government had no say in the process.

"We don't ever intervene in investigations," said Isabelle Bouchard. "We get the findings when they come through the chain of command. And even then the minister only gets an FYI."

Deputy Liberal leader's about-face on Iraq war is troubling

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)
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PAGE: 4
COLUMN: Foreign policy
BYLINE: Bob Bergin
ILLUSTRATION: Ignatieff
WORD COUNT: 769

If Michael Ignatieff were any other Canadian intellectual who very publicly changed his mind on America's war in Iraq (now saying he thinks it was wrong for the U.S. to invade), there likely wouldn't be near the firestorm of debate over his mea culpa.

Since he has switched ideological horses midstream, Canadians need to know whether he has changed his mind on Canada's two most pressing foreign policy issues: Canada's mission in Afghanistan and the Responsibility to Protect.

It is important to know that because the former Cambridge, Oxford and Harvard professor and widely published author is now the deputy leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Having been to northern Iraq in 1992 and seen Saddam Hussein's destruction of Kurds' and Shia Muslims' marshlands, habitat and 5,000-year-old way of life, Ignatieff publicly supported the United States' 2003 invasion of Iraq.

But that was three years before he entered Canadian federal politics, aspiring to be the Liberal leader.

On the weekend, the New York Times published a two-page reversal of Ignatieff's position on Iraq and his reasons for it in its glossy Sunday magazine.

He wrote that emotion was behind his initial support for it, not the harsh light of cross-examination and argument that he has apparently discovered as a politician.

He wrote that he failed to ask whether Iraq's Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites could hold together in peace what Hussein held together by terror.

With Hussein's ethnic cleansing of nearly 200,000 Kurds in northern Iraq in 1988 – often using gas, the killing of up to 5,000 Kurd civilians in Halabja also in 1998, the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the campaign against Kurds and Sunni Muslims in 1992, there are those who still think that the world is better off without Saddam Hussein.

But, agree with Ignatieff or not, at least elite American and some Canadian readers know what Ignatieff now thinks about the wisdom of America's 2003 invasion.

The problem with Ignatieff's sudden change of heart is that it raises troubling questions among those who have read his works for years and thought that he had coherent foreign policy principles and positions.

Long before 9/11, in his 1998 book *The Warrior's Honour*, Ignatieff – who had been to Afghanistan – questioned how the Taliban's Islamic Jihad could be squared with human rights, women's rights and how the laws of war could be taught to people who had never heard of the Geneva Conventions.

He had witnessed first-hand thousands upon thousands of Albanian refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1999 and in 2000 argued in *Virtual War* for the decisive use of military force against nation states which massacre its own citizens.

The ethnic cleansing was halted in 1999 when NATO warplanes – without United Nations Security Council resolution authorization – bombed Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian troops and para-militaries in Kosovo and Serbia for 78 days.

Ignatieff was later a member of the Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which published *The Responsibility to Protect* in 2001.

It argued that the international community has a moral imperative to intervene militarily to resolve humanitarian crises in failed and failing states such as the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo. It also argued that if the United Nations Security Council fails to act, then regional coalitions like NATO, ad hoc coalitions or individual states ought to in its absence.

Ignatieff's thinking in *Virtual War* is marbled like seams of gold through rock in *The Responsibility to Protect*, which has now been endorsed by the United Nations and is central to Canada's International Policy Statement put forward by the previous Liberal government in 2005.

Then, last year in May when Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government introduced a debate in the House of Commons to extend Canada's mission in Afghanistan to February 2009, Ignatieff was among just 24 Liberals who supported the mission.

In September 2006, he repeated his support for the mission even as the bodies of five Canadian dead returned home from the battlefield, saying Canadians had to keep "their moral promise to Afghans."

At the time, 32 Canadians had been killed. Today, at 66, that number is more than double and the 40,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan are anything but the overwhelming military force Ignatieff advocates.

One wonders, with his sudden change of heart, if Ignatieff is asking himself some of the hard questions about Afghanistan that he thinks U.S. President George W. Bush should have asked about Iraq.

In the end, Ignatieff has ignored his own past personal empathy for the Kurds in Iraq, so why should he worry about Afghans?

Are the Afghans next on his switch list, despite Canada's moral promise?

What about our responsibility to protect?

Americans know what you think, Mr. Ignatieff, Canadians are waiting. – Bob Bergen, PhD, is a Research Fellow with the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) in Calgary. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of CDFAI, its Board of Directors, Advisory Council, Fellows or Donors. Learn more about the CDFAI at www.cdfai.org.

Friendly–fire case moves toward court martial

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Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.08.09
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CHARLOTTETOWN (CP) – An Island soldier charged with manslaughter in the death of a comrade in Afghanistan last year is one step closer to facing possible court martial.

Master Cpl. Robbie Fraser, a native of Cornwall, P.E.I., was charged with manslaughter and negligent performance of duty in March in the Aug. 9, 2006, death of Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh.

Fraser's case has been proceeding slowly toward possible court martial – the military court for charges involving military law – but advanced to a critical stage last week.

The commanding officer has referred the charges to the director of military prosecutions, Jonathon Juteau, a spokesman with the Defence Department in Ottawa told the Charlottetown Guardian.

The case would then go to the court martial administrator to book a court martial if there is sufficient evidence and enough interest to pursue a prosecution.

Fraser's gun reportedly discharged while the soldier was travelling in the cramped confines of a military vehicle along a bumpy road during a routine patrol somewhere outside Kandahar.

Walsh died of a gunshot wound.

Pakistani president pulls out of peace meeting

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Chronicle–Herald
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SECTION: World
PAGE: A8
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Jason Straziuso
WORD COUNT: 344

KABUL – Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf pulled out Wednesday from a council of hundreds of Pakistani and Afghan tribal leaders aimed at reining in militant violence.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said Musharraf was cancelling his trip to Kabul because of "engagements" in Islamabad.

Pakistani political analyst Talat Masood said, however, that Musharraf probably was responding to recent U.S. criticism of Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, which has included suggestions that the U.S. could carry out unilateral military strikes against al–Qaida in Pakistan.

"He is trying to convey a strong message to the United States. There have been a lot of statements coming out of Washington about violating Pakistan's sovereignty and so on," Masood said.

The four–day "peace jirga," due to start Thursday, is already being boycotted by delegates from Pakistan's restive South and North Waziristan regions amid fear of Taliban reprisals.

The absence of Musharraf, Pakistan's army chief and most powerful figure, could further undermine its effectiveness.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said that Musharraf had phoned Afghan President Hamid Karzai to say he couldn't attend, and that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz would take his place.

The idea of the jirga emerged from a September 2006 meeting in Washington of U.S. President George W. Bush, Karzai and Musharraf that focused on ways to combat rising border violence.

The Taliban, ousted by U.S.–led forces in late 2001, have stepped up attacks in the past two years. The violence has killed thousands, raising fears for Afghanistan's fledgling democracy.

U.S. military and Afghan officials say Taliban militants enjoy a safe haven in Pakistani border regions, particularly Waziristan, where Washington also fears al–Qaida is regrouping.

The 650 delegates – 350 from Afghanistan, and about 300 from Pakistan – will meet in an oversized tent in Kabul that was used for the 2004 loya jirga that created Afghanistan's post–Taliban constitution. The delegates' main focus will be security and terrorism, but they will also talk about economic development and fighting drugs.

Taliban representatives are not involved.

Mohammed Mohaqeq, the No. 2 official for Afghanistan at the jirga, was still optimistic about its prospects because it showed the two governments were co-operating.

"From the Afghanistan side, all the people who hold power are participating," he said.

Masood said, however, that Musharraf's cancellation revealed tensions between the neighbours.

"It shows that the chemistry between Karzai and him (Musharraf) is so poor that he wants to back out at the last minute," he said.

N.L. ponders law that protects reservists' jobs

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Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.08.09
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BYLINE: Tara Brautigam
WORD COUNT: 420

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. – Legislation will be introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador to protect the jobs of military reservists while they're serving overseas, the province's labour minister said Wednesday.

The move comes after a Newfoundland man returned to the province this week after serving in Afghanistan, but is now looking for employment after he lost his job at a car dealership.

Labour Minister Shawn Skinner said legislation requiring employers to hold the jobs of reservists is no different from laws that ensure maternity leave for mothers who give birth, or compassionate care for those tending to the terminally ill.

"I believe it's not an unreasonable request to make of an employer that when somebody wants to go and serve their country, that you hold their job until such time that they come back," Skinner said in an interview.

Maj. Wallace Noseworthy, a reservist with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, returned Tuesday to the province. He could not be reached Wednesday, but he told CBC News that he chose to leave his job after his employer, Humber Motors Ford Ltd. in Stephenville, refused to grant him a leave of absence to serve overseas.

Calls to the car dealership were referred to its general manager in Corner Brook, but he could not be reached for comment.

Marilyn Tucker, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council, said it's not easy for some employers, especially small businesses, to hold a position for reservists while they're away.

"How do you replace a key employee or senior employee or a highly skilled employee in a labour market that is exceptionally tight anyway, and you're trying to replace someone for a six-month period?" Tucker said.

"Businesses may not be able to survive if they lose key employees and are unable to replace them."

But she added that the majority of employers are able to hold jobs for workers who decide to serve overseas.

Skinner said the legislation, which is already in effect in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, could come as early as the fall.

The issue of job protection for reservists struck a chord earlier this year in New Brunswick after the provincial government said a reservist would be offered employment on his return from Afghanistan after he quit his job at NB Power.

Maj. Sean Courty stepped down last year as a security official at a nuclear generating station when the Crown corporation denied his request for a leave of absence before he departed for Afghanistan.

The Department of National Defence currently has no position on the issue, Lt.-Cmdr. Margaret Morris said.

About 30 per cent of the 2,500 Canadian Forces personnel stationed in Afghanistan are reservists, Morris said.

'I believe it's not an unreasonable request to make of an employer that when somebody wants to go and serve their country, that you hold their job until such time that they come back'

N.L. says new legislation to protect jobs of reservists

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.09

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A8

COLUMN: Across the country

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: ST. JOHN'S, N.L.

WORD COUNT: 133

Legislation will be introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador to protect the jobs of military reservists while they're serving overseas, the province's labour minister said Wednesday.

The move comes after a Newfoundland man returned to the province this week after serving in Afghanistan, but is now looking for employment after he lost his job at a car dealership.

Labour Minister Shawn Skinner said legislation requiring employers to hold the jobs of reservists is no different from laws that ensure maternity leave for mothers who give birth, or compassionate care for those tending to the terminally ill.

"I believe it's not an unreasonable request to make of an employer that when somebody wants to go and serve their country, that you hold their job until such time that they come back," Skinner said in an interview.

Island soldier still awaits word on if he will be court martialled; One year has passed since Robbie Fraser's alleged shooting incident

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.08.09

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: Jim Day

ILLUSTRATION: Fraser

WORD COUNT: 370

An Island soldier charged with manslaughter in the death of a comrade in Afghanistan last year is one step closer to facing possible court martial.

Master Cpl. Robbie Fraser, a native of Cornwall, was charged with manslaughter and negligent performance of duty in March in connection with the Aug. 9, 2006, death of Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh.

Fraser's case has been proceeding slowly towards possible court martial – the military court for the trial of offences against military law – but advanced to a critical stage last week.

The commanding officer has referred the charges to the director of military prosecutions (DMP), Jonathon Juteau, a spokesman with the Defence Department in Ottawa, told The Guardian.

"Once DMP is finished with their post-review, they will hand over to the court martial administrator to book a court martial if there is sufficient evidence and whether there is enough interest to pursue prosecution, said Juteau.

Fraser's gun reportedly discharged while the soldier was travelling in the cramped confines of a military vehicle along a bumpy road during a routine patrol somewhere outside Kandahar. Walsh died of a gunshot wound.

Walsh's family, Malpeque MP Wayne Easter, and many others have been urging the federal government to show compassion and leniency towards Fraser. In May, Easter tabled a petition in the House of Commons calling on the military to treat incidents such as Walsh's death as unfortunate accidents that do not warrant such stiff response as a manslaughter charge.

Shelley Good, a prime player in the petition that was signed by more than 5,000 people, received a letter from Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor a few weeks ago simply clarifying Walsh's situation, said Kevin Walsh, the soldier's father.

Kevin said O'Connor noted in his letter that serving the public's interest would impact how the case proceeds.

Kevin said the case has dragged on. The incident occurred exactly one year ago today with Robbie's fate remaining very much up in the air.

"It's been very frustrating for all of us because we are just waiting day to day," he said.

Island soldier still awaits word on if he will be court martialled; One year has passed since Robbie Fraser's a

Now the situation becomes more anxious with Robbie Fraser's fate appearing closer at hand.

Kevin said his son, who was in P.E.I. visiting family two weeks ago, expects further movement in his case within the next two weeks.

Kevin said Robbie has been back to his regular duties for some time in Manitoba at CFB Shilo as a member of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry regiment.

"He's pretty good actually," he said.

"He's kind of decided he is going to move on with things . . . He's doing not too bad."

jday@theguardian.pe.ca

Case of P.E.I. soldier charged with manslaughter proceeding

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DATE: 2007.08.09

SECTION: News

PAGE: A9

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Jim Day

DATELINE: Charlottetown

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Walsh died of a gunshot wound.

Province to protect jobs of reservists; Department of Labour will introduce legislation to hold positions for soldiers

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.08.09

SECTION: National

PAGE: A5

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Tara Brautigam

ILLUSTRATION: Shawn Skinner

WORD COUNT: 367

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Maj. Sean Courty stepped down last year as a security official at a nuclear generating station when the Crown corporation denied his request for a leave of absence before he departed for Afghanistan.

N.L. gov't says it will introduce legislation to protect jobs of reservists

DATE: 2007.08.08
KEYWORDS: BUSINESS DEFENCE LABOUR
POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 401

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. (CP) _ Legislation will be introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador to protect the jobs of military reservists while they're serving overseas, the province's labour minister said Wednesday.

The move comes after a Newfoundland man returned to the province this week after serving in Afghanistan, but is now looking for employment after he lost his job at a car dealership.

Labour Minister Shawn Skinner said legislation requiring employers to hold the jobs of reservists is no different from laws that ensure maternity leave for mothers who give birth, or compassionate care for those tending to the terminally ill.

"I believe it's not an unreasonable request to make of an employer that when somebody wants to go and serve their country, that you hold their job until such time that they come back," Skinner said in an interview.

Maj. Wallace Noseworthy, a reservist with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, returned Tuesday to the province. He could not be reached Wednesday, but he told CBC News that he chose to leave his job after his employer, Humber Motors Ford Ltd. in Stephenville, refused to grant him a leave of absence to serve overseas.

Calls to the car dealership were referred to its general manager in Corner Brook, but he could not be reached for comment.

Marilyn Tucker, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council, said it's not easy for some employers, especially small businesses, to hold a position for reservists while they're away.

"How do you replace a key employee or senior employee or a highly skilled employee in a labour market that is exceptionally tight anyway, and you're trying to replace someone for a six-month period?" Tucker said.

"Businesses may not be able to survive if they lose key employees and are unable to replace them."

But she added that the majority of employers are able to hold jobs for workers who decide to serve overseas.

Skinner said the legislation, which is already in effect in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, could come as early as the fall.

The issue of job protection for reservists struck a chord earlier this year in New Brunswick after the provincial government said a reservist would be offered employment on his return from Afghanistan after he quit his job at NB Power.

Maj. Sean Courty stepped down last year as a security official at a nuclear generating station when the Crown corporation denied his request for a leave of absence before he departed for Afghanistan.

The Department of National Defence currently has no position on the issue, Lt.-Cmdr. Margaret Morris said.

About 30 per cent of the 2,500 Canadian Forces personnel stationed in Afghanistan are reservists, Morris said.

Top copy: Opposition says Tory government delayed friendly fire reports

DATE: 2007.08.08

KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 78

EDITORS: The following top copy from Ottawa has just moved:

OTTAWA _ Opposition parties accused the Tory government Wednesday of delaying the release of the findings of military investigations into two incidents in which Canadian soldiers were accidentally killed by American firepower in Afghanistan. ``This is damage control, pure and simple," said Liberal MP Denis Coderre. ``Let's call a spade a spade." 625 words. By Murray Brewster. BC-Afghan-Cda-Friendly-Fire.

CP Ottawa

INDEX:Politics

DATE: 2007.08.08

KEYWORDS: POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 130

YELLOWKNIFE, Northwest Territories — Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called his ministers to Ottawa next week for an anticipated cabinet shuffle.

But government sources say there will be no new spots for any backbench M–P's.

Several government officials say the prime minister wants to meet with his ministers privately, the same way he did before his last cabinet shuffle in January.

One government source says the changes will not include any promotions to cabinet from the Conservative back benches, but could result in demotions for some existing ministers.

The speculation begins with Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor, who struggled under persistent opposition attack in the Commons last spring.

And with Quebec–based soldiers currently in Afghanistan, his limited command of French could seriously handicap government efforts to defend the mission in that province.

Revenue Minister Carol Skelton could also be on the move after announcing her impending retirement from politics.

(CP)

bjk

Afghan–Kidnappings

DATE: 2007.08.08

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 132

GHAZNI, Afghanistan — South Korea's ambassador reportedly told tribal elders from eastern Afghanistan today that Korean aid organizations will pull out of the country in a month.

It's an apparent effort to help free 21 South Korean hostages being held by Taliban militants.

Afghan T–V station Tolo reports the South Korean ambassador also said Korea won't let any more of its citizens or aid organizations travel to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile the governor of the region where the hostages are being held says South Korean officials and Taliban militants are close to agreeing on a location for a face–to–face meeting.

The governor also says he thinks the Taliban's demand of a release of prisoners is a dead issue, but that a ransom payment might solve the hostage crisis.

Twenty–three South Koreans were abducted July 19th as they travelled by bus from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar.

Two of the captives have since been executed by the Taliban.

(AP)

PTH

War in Afghanistan may be a lost cause

IDNUMBER 200708090107
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Letter
PAGE: AA07
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 208

Afghan heroin hitting our streets,

Mounties warn

Aug. 6

While 60 per cent of the heroin on Canada's streets and 92 per cent of the world supply comes from Afghanistan, Canada has pledged a paltry \$18.5 million to promote alternate livelihoods. This can be made up in one drug shipment.

The West is missing the point: Heroin is a traditional crop in Afghanistan, a way of life that is encouraged by the local populace and supported by the Taliban. Heroin is their main source of funds. The attempt to win over the people at the lower levels – while noble and a humanitarian effort – is completely ineffective and counterproductive.

History has shown that Afghanistan cannot be brought into line. Britain and the former Soviet Union are prime examples of failed attempts. What is the answer? Crop defoliation, through the use of Agent Orange of the Vietnam era, is out of the question. A massive invasion to destroy the Taliban and stamp out the heroin industry is perhaps an alternative. In the meantime, the West is being deluged with the most insidious drug known to humans and Canada is losing brave soldiers fighting a losing battle.

The time has come for Canada to fish or cut bait. Address the problem at the source.

Garry Oman, Toronto

How has Stephen Harper's Conservative minority government performed so far?

IDNUMBER 200708090095
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: AA08
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 541

Can we get rid of this clown and his band of idiots now? Please!

Kerry Hartman, Kingston

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has performed as expected. He fits the description of an emperor with no clothes, who continues to hoodwink the public and the media with doubletalk while he pursues his own agenda. He continues to renege on Kyoto. He secured the engagement of Canada in a combat role in the war in Afghanistan from the rebellious five Liberals – Ignatieff, Tonks, Petersen, Graham and Cullen – together aided by the abstention of 12 prominent Liberals. He managed the designation of Quebec as a province with special status, and avoided the hand-wringing caused by Meech Lake and Charlottetown. He refused to introduce early learning centres for Canadian children by bribing parents with cash incentives that do not cover the cost of daycare in spite of the documented research to the contrary. An intellectual? No. A charlatan.

Mary Serniak, Toronto

Since becoming prime minister, Stephen Harper has cozied up to George W. Bush and said that Israel's attack on Lebanon was a measured one. In order to please Bush, he has sent troops to Afghanistan to fight a senseless so-called "war" there, which has claimed the lives of many innocent civilians there, as well as Canadian troops, and has cost taxpayers billions of dollars. Aside from these things, I cannot honestly say that the Harper government has done anything that has made my life any better.

John Missios, Toronto

It has not been two years of minority Conservative government, rather, 18 months, the average lifespan of a minority government. A major newspaper should know the facts.

Andrew Miller, Toronto

I had extremely low expectations from this government to begin with, and they have met my extremely low expectations. So what should I answer in the survey? That they met my expectations? These surveys are usually misleading and inaccurately represent true opinions.

Jason Paquette, Toronto

It would be difficult to imagine a worse prime minister than Brian Mulroney, but Stephen Harper looks like he's giving it a shot.

Ed Butts, Guelph

I see very little positive from this government's performance – scandals, flip-flops, mismanagement of major issues (e.g. climate change, the Afghan mission). This government needs a cabinet shuffle that includes replacing the Prime Minister.

Mark Sturman, Bowmanville

In order to gain the respect of the world, it takes dedication, reliability and a government that is committed to ensuring the values of Canadians are clearly represented in its actions. Although the previous government had many flaws, there were certain fundamental elements that were always protected. One of these elements is the perception of Canada in the eyes of the world as being a peacekeeping nation. Take a moment to think about and compare the price of what we are paying as a result of the actions of our Prime Minister. Canada, once considered a country famous for its peacekeepers, has now changed its image because of its new aggressive nature. Also, Harper does whatever he feels like, not what the public demands. Everything is kept secret and that's not good for this country.

Surjit Singh Flora, Brampton

Pakistan considering a state of emergency

IDNUMBER 200708090089
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA01
BYLINE: MATTHEW PENNINGTON
SOURCE: Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 442

The Pakistan government of embattled President Gen. Pervez Musharraf says it may impose a state of emergency because of "external and internal threats" and deteriorating law and order in the volatile northwest near the Afghan border.

The news came hours after Musharraf abruptly announced he was cancelling a planned trip to Kabul, Afghanistan, today to attend a U.S.-backed tribal peace council aimed at curtailing cross-border militancy by the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Tariq Azim, Pakistan's minister of state for information, said the emergency declaration is being considered because some sentiment coming from the United States – including from Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama – over the possibility of U.S. military action against Al Qaeda in Pakistan "has started alarm bells ringing and has upset the Pakistani public."

The remarks helped trigger a 17-minute phone call early today from U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Musharraf, a senior State Department official said. Pakistan is a key U.S. anti-terrorism ally.

Musharraf's decision to cancel his participation on the eve of the gathering in Kabul was widely interpreted not only as a snub to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, but also as a rebuke to the Bush administration, which had enthusiastically backed the idea of the council nearly a year ago while the two leaders were visiting Washington.

A Musharraf aide said the president would meet his cabinet later today. Pakistani television networks reported that a declaration of an emergency was imminent, although senior officials said no final decision had been made.

Despite Azim's remarks, it appeared the motivation for a declaration of an emergency would be the domestic political woes of Musharraf, who took power in a 1999 coup.

His popularity has dwindled and his standing has been badly shaken by a failed bid to oust the country's chief justice – an independent-minded judge likely to rule on expected legal challenges to Musharraf's bid to seek a new five-year presidential term this fall.

During a state of emergency, the government can restrict the freedom to move, engage in political activities or form groups, and impose other limits such as restricting parliament's right to make laws or even dissolving parliament.

"These are only unconfirmed reports although the possibility of imposition of emergency cannot be ruled out and has recently been talked about and discussed, keeping in mind some external and internal threats and the law and order situation," Azim told Associated Press.

"I cannot say that it will be tonight, tomorrow or later. We hope that it does not happen. But we are going through difficult circumstances so the possibility of an emergency cannot be ruled out."

Azim also referred to recent Pakistani action against militants in northwestern border areas that he said resulted in many soldiers' deaths.

Water-treatment plant heads to Canadian base in Kandahar; Facility will provide parched troops with a million gallons per day

IDNUMBER 200708090127
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Business
PAGE: E3
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Victoria Times Colonist, CanWest News Service/ Tom Goldbach of Specific Mechanical stands atop the water treatment plant that was shipped to Afghanistan from Victoria. ;
KEYWORDS: WATER SUPPLY; WATER; NATURAL RESOURCES
DATELINE: VICTORIA
BYLINE: Carla Wilson
SOURCE: Victoria Times Colonist; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 380

VICTORIA – International troops at the scorching Kandahar air base will soon be quenching their thirst with fresh, clean water treated in a massive industrial-strength, stainless-steel system built in Greater Victoria.

The 18-tonne plant was designed by Calgary's FilterBoxx Packaged Water Treatment Solutions and produced by Specific Mechanical Systems in Saanich.

It will go into service late next month in Afghanistan.

Staff at both companies have been busy putting together the \$1-million-plus contract, awarded by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and managed by Atco Frontec, in just over a month.

The "final push" was on last week, said Tom Goldbach, engineering supervisor at Specific Mechanical, which has about 50 employees.

Winning this contract gives FilterBoxx a chance to show to the military it can produce industrial-grade, reliable systems, company president Troy Lupul said from Calgary. Much of the company's work is for Canada's oilpatch.

"You don't get too many jobs to show your international ability and I'm really proud of the fact that we as Canadians can go out and showcase how good we really are," Lupul said.

The "very heavy-duty" water-treatment system will be installed in a day and be attached to a reservoir. From there, water will run through 25-centimetre pipes.

The water-treatment plant was designed to be set up on a skid or mobile foundation.

Two wells supply water to the system, which can filter a million gallons a day to supply international security forces, Lupul said.

Water-treatment plant heads to Canadian base in Kandahar; Facility will provide parched troops with a million

Water in that area of Afghanistan is now supplied by several small treatment plants in different areas, he said. It's not uncommon to find that water in the wartorn country is contaminated with diesel fuel.

A series of filters eliminates sand and grit, hydrocarbons and bacteria. Ultra-violet light further disinfects the water and chlorine is added for extra protection, he said.

This is the second water-treatment plant FilterBoxx has supplied to Afghanistan.

In 2003, a six-tonne system was delivered to Kabul. Currently the largest water treatment plant in the country, it was also put together in conjunction with Specific Mechanical Systems, Lupul said.

On trips to Afghanistan, Lupul has seen first-hand what clean water means to exhausted, dust-covered troops. They guzzle water after returning from duty and sometimes use their water bottles to spray themselves for relief from the heat. The average daily maximum temperature at Kandahar in August is 34C, with zero precipitation.

"They work pretty hard over there. They have to be completely hydrated because of the temperatures."

FilterBoxx, with annual gross revenues of \$12 million, and Specific Mechanical have been working together for about six years and have co-operated on about 400 projects, Lupul said.

"We are doing some really high-tech things for the oil and gas sector and building it all in Victoria — 100 per cent."

Water-treatment plant heads to Canadian base in Kandahar; Facility will provide parched troops with a million

Pakistan close to declaring emergency

IDNUMBER	200708090015
PUBLICATION:	Edmonton Journal
DATE:	2007.08.09
EDITION:	Final
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	A4
COLUMN:	World Digest
KEYWORDS:	TERRORISM; FOREIGN RELATIONS; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; NUCLEARWEAPONS; PRESIDENTS; ARMAMENTS
DATELINE:	ISLAMABAD
SOURCE:	CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT:	91

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan's embattled President Pervez Musharraf is considering imposing a state of emergency due to "external and internal threats" to the country.

Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azeem said the measure had been discussed and could not be ruled out, as Musharraf battles an upsurge in militant violence in the volatile tribal regions bordering Afghanistan.

Official sources said Musharraf had called a meeting of his top aides later Thursday at his camp office in Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, after which a proclamation of a state of emergency was likely.

Making a difference Canuck photographer changes focus to help out in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG	0708090476
PUBLICATION:	The Toronto Sun
DATE:	2007.08.09
EDITION:	Final
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	33
ILLUSTRATION:	4 photos 1. 3 photos by Mary Kate MacIsaac, World Vision Young girls stroll unaccompanied by male family members (men pictured are no relation), on their way to class at Naswan Girls School in Qala-i-Naw, in western Afghanistan. 2. Safiqa, 9, shows a map of Afghanistan in her textbook. 3. Adala, 20, is one of the few female teachers in the country. 4. photo of KATE MACISAAC Life-altering
BYLINE:	ROSALYN SOLOMON, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT:	304

Mary Kate MacIsaac needed a ride to the Gaza Strip to do an interview for a documentary.

She not only got a lift, but a life-changing job offer.

The 38-year-old documentary photographer helped her driver drag two suitcases full of penicillin to a hospital across no man's land in the Gaza Strip in exchange for the ride. Her driver was the head of World Vision and offered her a job as a communications manager.

After working in the Middle East and Asia for about 10 years, MacIsaac spent the last two years in Afghanistan.

"It's been heartbreaking work, but when people see opportunities are possible, it gives them so much hope and that's what I'm seeing in Afghanistan everyday," MacIsaac said.

Originally from Calgary, MacIsaac is the only Canadian among 10 World Vision international aid workers in Afghanistan. MacIsaac is working in western Afghanistan in rural areas and was also able to use her photography skills to capture life in these areas.

She has helped with health programs that provide immunization to children and provide training to midwives. Because of immunization and health training, she said they have helped reduce the infant mortality rate by 18%.

"One out five children will die before their fifth birthday which is an erratical thought for Canadians," she said.

The backbone of the aid program, however, is education and women's literacy. MacIsaac said under the Taliban regime about six years ago, 1 million boys were studying religious teachings, while no girls were in school.

After the Taliban's fall, 5.1 million children are in school and 1.7 million of them are girls.

"You're not going to have a healthy country unless you have mothers who are able to read," she said. "An educated mother is much more likely to want educated children. So education is key to the future of Afghanistan."

MacIsaac said Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan is "not in vain," although almost all Canadian presence is in Kandahar, far from where World Vision is operating. She said the 4:1 ratio between military and humanitarian spending needs to be fixed.

"If the efforts in Afghanistan are about helping the people, we have to get their voices heard," she said.

MacIsaac has one year left in her contract with World Vision. KEYWORDS=OTHER NEWS

Tories grilled on friendly fire

SOURCETAG 0708090689
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 42
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 236

Opposition parties accused the Tory government yesterday of delaying the release of the findings of military investigations into two incidents in which Canadian soldiers were accidentally killed by American firepower in Afghanistan.

"This is damage control, pure and simple," said Liberal MP Denis Coderre. "Let's call a spade a spade."

On Tuesday, the army released the findings of a board of inquiry that blamed a lack of co-ordination among Canadian, U.S. and Afghan forces in a March 2006 battle where Pte. Robert Costall was accidentally machine-gunned by American special forces.

The inquiry report and separate military police probe found that the U.S. commander failed to properly outline the location of forces defending Forward Operating Base Robinson, and that Canadians did not warn U.S. troops about their movements as insurgents were trying to overrun the outpost.

The board also found that Canadian troops were not wearing infrared beacons that could have distinguished them from enemy fighters.

The Canadian inquiry report was finished and presented for approval to the chief of defence staff, Gen. Rick Hillier, on March 8, 2007, according to documents released by the military.

Military police, who conducted a separate probe to see whether Canadian soldiers should be charged, formally wrapped up their investigation on June 8, 2007, said Lt.-Col. Bud Garrett, a senior officer with the National Investigative Service.

Coderre said it's hard to believe that five months were needed to get Hillier's signature on the report and to liaise with American authorities.

But a spokesman for Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor said the government had no say in the process. "We don't ever intervene in investigations," said Isabelle Bouchard. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Dead soldier's relative protests Calgary's decal ban

IDNUMBER 200708090051
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Capital & Van. Isl.
PAGE: B2
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 203

A relative of a soldier who died in Afghanistan last month says he would drive from Vancouver Island to Calgary to convince that city's council to allow Support our Troops decals on municipal vehicles.

Tim McGrath, father in-law of the late Cpl. Jordan Anderson, said Calgary aldermen should reconsider the decision they made last month to ban the decals from city vehicles. "I was disgusted," McGrath said from his home in Nanaimo.

He said the least council members can do is follow the Alberta government's lead and let employees voluntarily put the decals on municipal vehicles to show support for the troops.

McGrath's son in-law was one of six Canadian soldiers who died July 4 when their armoured vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Kandahar province.

"The majority of Canadians do support our troops, regardless of what the Calgary politicians say," he said.

Mayor Dave Bronconnier suggested the city sell the donated decals at city facilities and donate the money to the local Military Family Resource Centre.

Bronconnier, who has received letters supporting both sides of the issue, has said the decision shouldn't suggest Calgary City Hall doesn't support Canadian soldiers. "The difference is council has said the way to show support is not by putting a decal on a dump truck," he said.

"It is ... to show support for our troops in other, tangible ways."

McGrath said the mayor's comments make his stomach turn.

"I would ride to Calgary and argue why they should do it," he said.

One last bribe, and out of Afghanistan; First-hand experience shows police corruption is a major problem

IDNUMBER 200708090037
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A10
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: DUBAI, United Arab Emirates
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 648

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates – In the end, Afghan police performed as expected. They pocketed a couple more bribes to help this stranded columnist sneak through the Kabul airport without a proper exit visa while an officer resurfaced to partially justify the palm grease I slipped him a week ago.

After a final heart-stopping \$50 bill handed to an officer checking passports at the boarding ramp of yet-another jet, I finally escaped Afghanistan on Tuesday after a week of involuntary confinement due to paperwork confusion.

The nagging problem was a departure stamp on my visa showing I had left the country on a date when I was actually sweating with a platoon of soldiers in the middle of Kandahar province.

I had — and still have — no explanation for the stamp, so I can't really blame the authorities for being suspicious.

But the picture-perfect proof of Afghanistan security corrupted to its core was on display in the junior police officer blocking access to the diplomatic entrance at 6 a.m. Tuesday.

A billboard asking visitors to report anyone taking bribes was over his head.

And yet, he was full of promises and winks that left no doubt that he was seeking a salary subsidy from me as I languished for hours around the gate, watching yet another flight depart with my seat empty on a non-refundable ticket.

The way it was explained later by a U.S. army security whiz, all the 'mentors' who monitor regular officers were off protecting Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai upon his return from a meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush, which meant it was a bonanza of a payoff payday.

Even on monitored days, police corruption is a serious problem here. They are loathed more than feared and respected not a bit by the average Afghan.

It's hard to blame police for being susceptible to bribes given the average cop's \$70-per-month salary, which is usually reduced as senior officers skim off a piece of the payroll on its way down the chain of command.

One last bribe, and out of Afghanistan; First-hand experience shows police corruption is a major problem

My little problem is but a paintbrush stroke in a much bigger picture, but when a Canadian journalist is cleared for takeoff after Canadian Ambassador Arif Lalani personally calls in favours and there's still a crooked cop blocking the exit with his hand out, one can only imagine what average Afghans encounter when they try to deal with their government.

Lalani, who I can say with openly declared bias is a top-notch ambassador with the perfect staff for any stranded Canadian to have in his corner, agrees there's a problem and sees a Canadian role in finding a solution.

He thinks Canada should work to better train police, improve their equipment and get their pay increased — all areas under the mandate of the international security force.

But given how corruption seems both endemic and epidemic in Afghanistan, one wonders if improvement is not decades away.

Take the police captain who prevented me from catching my first flight Tuesday morning.

By the afternoon, he was guiding me through the airport to passport control after pocketing a \$50 bribe.

And the officer I slipped \$150 to a week earlier when my problems first surfaced at passport control? He disappeared then, but recognized me instantly Tuesday and said something to passport officers which seemed to move things along.

During my involuntary stay in Kabul, many sympathizers have shared stories of palm grease being the only lubricant that works in dealing with the Karzai government.

The Canadian owner of a guest house says he has to bribe the power company to keep the lights on.

He has no choice.

If he was forced to depend on his generator for electricity, "my profits would disappear."

A businessman confided he has to constantly bribe government officials to keep his guns registered, which are critical when you're operating a security protection service.

Arguably, all this is just the Afghan way. But add up all the airline tickets sacrificed, the cost of hotels and fixers during the delay, the new visa application and the bribes and my employers paid \$4,000—plus for an improper stamp on an Afghan visa.

That's a stiff price for a business to deal with a mistake I would argue was mostly made by government employees.

Or course, the ultimate irony of my ordeal came after the final bribe when the door finally closed on a Dubai-bound jet and I let out a sigh of relief to be free of the place forever.

I turned on my iPod, hit the shuffle button and burst into laughter to strange looks from the guy beside me.

A song came on I haven't heard in years — Supertramp's Take the Long Way Home.

And what a long strange trip it's been.

One last bribe, and out of Afghanistan; First-hand experience shows police corruption is a major problem

Taliban stage several attacks in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200708090031
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 116

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Troops repelled an ambush by rebel fighters in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing several near a base that dozens of Taliban tried to storm a day earlier, the U.S.–led coalition said.

Insurgents also attacked another base in the south overnight but were driven back and seven were killed, Afghan officials said separately, in another of a series of incidents in the south and east of the country.

In the ambush, insurgents unleashed gun and rocket fire on a coalition and Afghan patrol from several buildings in a remote district in Uruzgan province, the force said in a statement. The soldiers stormed the buildings, clearing them of insurgents, it said.

Pakistan considers state of emergency

IDNUMBER 200708090033
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A15
COLUMN: Asia Report: News From the Region
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; TERRITORIAL ISSUES; FOREIGN RELATIONS;
PRESIDENTS;NUCLEAR WEAPONS
DATELINE: ISLAMABAD
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 274

Pakistan's embattled President Pervez Musharraf is considering imposing a state of emergency due to "external and internal threats" to the country, a government spokesman said early Thursday.

Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azeem told AFP the measure had been discussed and could not be ruled out, as Musharraf battles an upsurge in violence in the volatile tribal regions bordering Afghanistan.

"I cannot confirm whether a decision has been taken or not," Azeem said.

Official sources said Musharraf had called a meeting of his top aides later Thursday at his camp office in Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, after which a proclamation of a state of emergency was likely.

"The president will chair a meeting to decide about a state of emergency in the country," one source, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

The speculation about a state of emergency came just hours after Musharraf abruptly pulled out of a three-day tribal council due to begin in Afghanistan today, aimed at ending Taliban and al-Qaeda-sponsored terrorism.

Musharraf told Afghan President Hamid Karzai he could not attend due to "engagements in the capital," opting to send Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in his place.

"People are seriously worried about external threats to Pakistan," Azeem said, adding lawmakers had termed the situation "a very serious matter" during a debate in parliament.

He cited violent unrest in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan and recent threats by some U.S. officials of possible unilateral strikes on supposed al-Qaeda safe havens on Pakistani soil.

Musharraf has been angered by accusations from Washington that Pakistan has become a safe haven for al-Qaeda and a regrouped Taliban.

Azeem said the security situation was deteriorating in North West Frontier Province — ruled by an alliance of Islamic parties — and that military operations in the border areas were resulting in "loss of precious lives."

African players on run after tourney

IDNUMBER 200708090030
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
KEYWORDS: HOCKEY
DATELINE: DENMARK
SOURCE: Times of London
WORD COUNT: 128

African participation in the Homeless World Cup, a football tournament designed to improve the confidence of former vagrants, was under review Wednesday night after 15 players went on the run at the finals in Denmark.

The competition's aim — to offer a golden opportunity for homeless people to change their lives — was taken literally by seven players from Burundi, four from Liberia, three from Cameroon and one from Afghanistan.

Danish police were looking for the players Wednesday night, but admitted that they could easily have travelled farther afield in the Schengen system of 15 "borderless" EU countries, which do not require visitors to show passports. The players' visas expired on Monday, after the tournament ended.

Danish police said they would arrest and deport the runaways, if they were found.

TRADITIONAL COUNCIL Musharraf backs out of Afghan–Pakistani meeting

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072210214

DATE: 2007.08.09

PAGE: A15

BYLINE: JON HEMMING

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: REUT

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Kabul AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 312

WORD COUNT: 312

JON HEMMING Reuters News Service KABUL Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf pulled out of a traditional council of Afghan and Pakistani leaders at the last minute yesterday, dealing a blow to efforts to combat Islamist militants who have destabilized both countries.

The three–day council, or jirga , was agreed to by the presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan in Washington late last year to bring together the two often–feuding, but important U.S. allies to seek a common strategy against al–Qaeda and the Taliban.

Mr. Musharraf's late withdrawal, citing other engagements, is a second setback for the jirga , already hit with a boycott by some Pakistani tribal groups.

"The President assured the Afghan President of Pakistan's full support in making the joint peace jirga a success," Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said Mr. Musharraf told Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a telephone call. Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz is to attend the talks in his place.

Afghan officials often accuse Pakistan of harbouring Taliban and al–Qaeda fighters in order to keep its neighbour weak.

Pakistan denies the charge and points out it has arrested a number of senior al–Qaeda leaders and is battling its own Taliban threat in tribal areas along the disputed Afghan border.

About 175 Pakistani officials, politicians and tribal elders are to attend the jirga , in a large marquee in the Afghan capital, alongside a similar number from Afghanistan. Another gathering will be held in Pakistan, but no date has yet been set.

U.S. officials say al–Qaeda is regrouping in Pakistan and have not ruled out strikes inside Pakistani territory. Pakistan rejects such statements as "irresponsible and dangerous" and has said only its troops could carry out operations on its soil.

Pakistan does acknowledge cross–border incursions by the Taliban and their al–Qaeda allies, but says growing insecurity in Afghanistan is due to its neighbour's own internal issues.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Pakistan; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign relations; internal security; terrorism; conferences

PERSONAL NAME: Pervez Musharraf

ORGANIZATION NAME: al-Qaeda; Taliban.

THE AFGHAN MISSION British, U.S. clash over fighting tactics Commander says he asked American Special Forces to leave because of civilian deaths they have caused

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072210213

DATE: 2007.08.09

PAGE: A15 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: CARLOTTA GALL

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: NYT

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: SANGIN, AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 893

WORD COUNT: 888

CARLOTTA GALL New York Times News Service SANGIN, AFGHANISTAN A senior British commander in Helmand province said recently that he had asked that U.S. Special Forces leave his area of operations because the high level of civilian casualties they had caused was making it difficult to win over local people.

A U.S. military spokesman denied that such a request had been made, formally or otherwise. But concern over civilian casualties and their consequences underlines differences of opinion among U.S.

and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in Afghanistan on tactics for fighting Taliban insurgents.

A precise tally of civilian casualties is difficult to pin down, but one reliable count puts the number killed in Helmand this year at close to 300, the majority caused by foreign and Afghan forces rather than the Taliban.

"Everyone is concerned about civilian casualties," the senior British commander said. "Of course it is counterproductive if civilians get injured, but we've got to pick up the pack of cards that we have got. Other people have been operating in our area before us." After 18 months of heavy fighting, the British commanders say they are finally making headway in securing key areas such as this town, and are now in the difficult position of trying to win back support among local people whose lives have been devastated by aerial bombings.

U.S. Special Forces have been active in Helmand since U.S. forces first entered Afghanistan in late 2001. British forces arrived last spring and now have command of the province with about 6,000 men deployed. U.S. Special Forces have continued to assist in fighting insurgents, operating as advisers to Afghan national security forces.

It is these small teams that are coming under criticism, since their tactic is to work in small units that rely on air strikes for cover due to their inability to defend themselves if they encounter large groups of insurgents. Such Special Forces teams have often called in air strikes in Helmand and other places where civilians have subsequently been found dead.

In just two cases, air strikes killed 31 nomads west of Kandahar in November last year and another 57 villagers, half of them women and children, in western Afghanistan in April. In both cases, U.S.

Special Forces were responsible for calling in the air strikes.

British officers on the ground in Helmand, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Americans had caused the major share of the civilian casualties in their area. They expressed concerns that the Americans' extensive use of air power was proving counterproductive and turning the people against the foreign presence.

The chief British press officer in Helmand, Colonel Charles Mayo, defended the U.S. Special Forces, saying they were essential to NATO's efforts to clear out heavily entrenched Taliban insurgents.

A U.S. military spokesman said Special Forces would continue to operate in Helmand for the foreseeable future. But the senior British commander, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that in Sangin, which has been calm for the past month, there was no longer a need for U.S. Special Forces. "There aren't large bodies of Taliban to fight any more; we are dealing with small groups and we are trying to kick-start reconstruction and development," he said. On a rare visit to Helmand in mid-July, a journalist encountered children who were still suffering wounds sustained in a bombing raid. Their father, Mohammadullah, brought them to the gate of the British army base seeking help.

His son, two-year-old Bashir Ahmed, listless and stick-thin, seemed near death. The boy and his sister Muzlifa, 7, bore terrible shrapnel scars. NATO doctors had removed shrapnel from the boy's abdomen at the time of the raid and had warned his father that he might not survive, but two months later he was still hanging on.

The father said the bombing raid killed six members of his family and wounded five. His wife lost an arm, and the children's grandmother was killed, he said.

Altogether, he said, 20 people were killed in the air strikes after Taliban fighters came through the village. He figured that the planes had bombed them mistakenly, since the Taliban had been fighting U.S. forces well below the village at the time.

He said that he opposed the Taliban, but that after the bombing raid, the villagers were so angered that most of the men who survived went off to join the insurgents.

"The Americans are killing and destroying a village just in pursuit of one person," said another local, 24-year-old Mahmudullah, referring to al-Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden. "So now we have understood that the Americans are a curse on us, and they are here just to destroy Afghanistan." "They can tell the difference between men and women, children and animals but they are just killing everyone. And they claim to respect human rights, but this is obviously a violation of human rights," he said.

A trained mullah from the village of Kutaizi, half an hour from Sangin, he reacted with sarcasm at the idea that reconstruction and assistance could change the minds of the people: "First they kill me, and then they rebuild my house? What is the point when I am dead and my son is dead? This is not of any worth to us."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Great Britain; United States; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; foreign policy; air strikes; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Taliban; Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION British, U.S. clash over fighting tactics Commander says he asked American Special

The torture of being Iggy

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND
MAIL
IDN: 072210160
DATE: 2007.08.09
PAGE: A17
BYLINE: MARGARET
WENTE
SECTION: Comment Column
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE:
WORDS: 708
WORD COUNT: 730

MARGARET WENTE I was for the invasion of Iraq, once upon a time. I thought it was a good idea, on humanitarian grounds, to knock out one of the worst bad guys in the world. Then I got mugged by reality.

Today, battered, bruised and wiser, I am keenly interested in what my fellow liberal interventionists have to say now. After all, it was they – not the ideologues in the White House – who made the most compelling case for war on wider moral grounds. So you can imagine how eagerly I devoured Michael Ignatieff's piece in Sunday's New York Times Magazine. It was called Getting Iraq Wrong.

Too bad it was all about him.

In it, Iggy reveals his great discovery, which I now share with you. There's a big difference between being a politician and a philosopher! Intellectuals, he says, don't have to worry about the real-world consequences of their ideas, while politicians do. This discovery has been a chastening, yet enlightening, experience. It has made him humbler, yet wiser, and even more qualified to be a leader.

What a great prime minister he'd be! Okay, so I added that last sentence myself. The piece is obviously crafted for at least two audiences. At home, it's designed to get the millstone of Iraq off his neck for good. He was wrong, he's sorry, now let's move on. Internationally, it's designed to remind people that Michael Ignatieff the public intellectual is still alive, even if he has unaccountably moved to some backwater to dabble in local politics.

Some people are criticizing Iggy for publishing his climbdown in The New York Times. Personally, I think it's smart PR, on account of the Lorne Greene effect. That is, you get 10 times more attention for anything you do in the U.S. than anything you do in Canada.

Iggy gives the impression that what he really aspires to be is a philosopher king – a big thinker who also knows his way around the dark alleys of Kosovo and Kurdish Iraq. He likes reminding us that the world's a tough place where good men must make hard choices.

He likes to agonize over these choices out loud. He also wants to make certain that you don't confuse his Iraq mistake with George Bush's Iraq mistake. His mistake flowed from his emotions ("I saw what Saddam Hussein did to the Kurds"), while Mr. Bush's was the product of his God-struck ideology. "It is an obstacle to clear thinking to believe that America's foreign policy serves God's plan to expand human freedom," he writes.

In fact, the politician that Iggy most resembles is Tony Blair, the greatest liberal interventionist of them all. Mr. Blair's mistake, as Roy Jenkins pointed out, wasn't that he was amoral. It was that he was too moral. He thought it was wicked to stand by while Saddam's sadists drilled nail guns through people, and he believed that the suffering Iraqis, given half a chance, would embrace freedom and democracy and generally behave just like us. That was an obstacle to clear thinking, too. But Iggy doesn't mention Tony Blair. Nor does he discuss the wider foreign policy lessons to be drawn from this error, or how they might apply to the West's nation-building efforts in Afghanistan.

Iggy implies that he has sacrificed a lot to go into politics, because politics is not much fun. It's awfully mean and phony. You have to watch your every word. You have to pretend to have emotions you don't have. Charm, stamina and money usually count for more than good ideas. People stab you in the back. But it's a price that men of vision must be prepared to pay. He ends on this extraordinary note: "Daring leaders can be trusted as long as they give some inkling of knowing what it is to fail. They must be men of sorrow acquainted with grief, as the prophet Isaiah says . . . who know they are in politics to make their country better." Michael Ignatieff as Jesus Christ? Yikes. The guy is more ambitious than I thought.

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ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM:politicians; political; iraq war; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Michael Ignatieff

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party

PRIVACY RIGHTS Canadian singer enters the fray over MD's story of soldier's death

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072210151

DATE: 2007.08.09

PAGE: A15

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 527

WORD COUNT: 536

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Singer-songwriter Loreena McKennitt has dived into the controversy over a doctor's graphic first-person description of the dying moments of a Canadian soldier at a military hospital in Afghanistan, accusing the doctor of invading the family's privacy and breaching his code of ethics as a doctor.

Ms. McKennitt lashed out at Kevin Patterson, the B.C. doctor and author who used the death of Corporal Kevin Megeney, a Nova Scotia reservist, on the operating table as the climax of a 7,000-word memoir he penned for Mother Jones magazine about his month working at the base hospital in Kandahar.

"The real issue of this story is not that gruesome details of war were divulged, but rather that a soldier and his family's privacy was invaded," Ms. McKennitt wrote in a posting on Mother Jones's website.

"Hopefully, Dr. Patterson secured the permission of the soldier's family to disclose his identity. If not, this is a deeply regrettable breach, not only of his own code of ethics as a doctor and quite possibly in his duty to the Department of National Defence, but significantly to the privacy of the soldier and his family at a time of exceptional vulnerability." Dr. Patterson has conceded he never asked permission from the Megeney family before writing the account. His actions are currently the subject of two separate investigations by the Department of National Defence, which had hired him as a civilian internist to work at the military hospital because of a shortage of military doctors.

Ms. McKennitt recently won a long legal battle in Britain to censor publication of a biography by a onetime friend, whose contents the singer alleged breached her privacy.

Dr. Patterson has said that because the soldier's death was covered in the news media – he was shot in his tent at the base in an incident that remains under investigation – he did not need to seek permission.

Ms. McKennitt describes Dr. Patterson's explanation as "disingenuous and self-serving." "A media mention is a very different matter than exposing the intimacies of a person's death," she writes. Unless there is a true public interest in disclosing personal information and unless permission is first sought, the media are simply involved in "prurient voyeurism for financial gain." In a telephone interview from her home in Stratford, Ont., Ms.

McKennitt said she was concerned that people might think the Canadian Forces were simply trying to hide disturbing images of the Afghan mission. "Support of the war or the mission has nothing to do with it. It has everything to do with privacy." Ms. McKennitt is honorary colonel of 435 Squadron, a search-and-rescue

squadron based in Winnipeg.

Medical ethicists and doctors say that Dr. Patterson may find himself under investigation for breaching his responsibilities as a physician by the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons, which is responsible for his medical licence.

Clare Jeffrey, editor of Mother Jones, defended Dr. Patterson.

She backed the decision to name Cpl. Megeney, saying that "not naming him seemed like false anonymity at best. From a journalist's perspective, it seemed disingenuous at best."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; war deaths; privacy; medical ethics; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Loreena McKennitt; Kevin Patterson; Kevin Megeney

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Caption Only

IDNUMBER 200708090098
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C9
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Bruno Schlumberger, Ottawa Citizen / BEARINGGIFTS FOR SOLDIERS: Cody Clark, 12, has raised money to collect 150 bears to send overseas to soldiers wounded in Afghanistan. ;
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 4

NO TEXT

Living in fear just gives government more control

IDNUMBER 200708090036
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: Trevor DeBlock
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 342

Recently, the RCMP released a warning that Afghan heroin is making its way into Canada, and is becoming an increasing threat to our people. Must we forget that the coalition countries have occupied this territory since 2001?

These findings released by the RCMP are very interesting to those who understand the 2006 report numbers released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. This really should come as no surprise to anyone who has done his or her research. However, to those who have not, these findings will probably start up the shameful "fear factor" that governments are so fond of perpetrating these days.

You see, by passively allowing this influx of heroin on the streets, it can create a sense of panic or urgency in the people. This in turn actively justifies a need for a more martial law-like existence. And frankly, why would our governments not be justified? The majority of Canadians are obviously living in fear everyday of their lives anyway. One can judge the rate of fear by seeing society's ever-increasing need to try to control everything.

Those addicted to this unjustified fear are left with no choice but to rely on our governments to restrict our civil liberties and implement more control over its citizens.

However, relying on our governments to provide this false sense of security comes with a price. Just ask the American people how they feel about the Patriot Act, and the newly passed Eavesdropping bill.

By the way, both of these American policies directly affect us Canadians as well. Security gathered by scrutinizing the population is very demeaning to those who enjoy living a free existence with civil liberties. A better way would be to rehabilitate all the people who live in fear, to live a spiritual life free of dysfunctional performance. It would also be refreshing to see our government spend more money rehabilitating those addicted to substances, and stop wasting ridiculous amounts of money in Afghanistan.

TREVOR DeBLOCK

Windsor

Afghan police corruption can be costly -- especially to me

IDNUMBER 200708090046
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
COLUMN: Don Martin
DATELINE: DUBAI, United Arab Emirates
BYLINE: Don Martin
SOURCE: The Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 713

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — In the end, Afghan police performed as expected. They pocketed a couple more bribes to help this stranded columnist sneak through the Kabul airport without a proper exit visa while an officer resurfaced to partially justify the palm grease I slipped him a week ago.

After a final heart-stopping handing of a \$50 bill to an officer checking passports at the boarding ramp of yet another jet, I finally escaped Afghanistan on Tuesday after a week of involuntary confinement due to paperwork confusion.

The nagging problem was a departure stamp on my visa showing I had left the country on a date when I was actually sweating with a platoon of soldiers in the middle of Kandahar province. I had — and still have — no explanation for the stamp, so I can't really blame the authorities for being suspicious.

But the picture-perfect proof of Afghanistan security corrupted to its core was on display in the junior police officer blocking access to the diplomatic entrance at 6 a.m. Tuesday. A billboard asking visitors to report anyone taking bribes was over his head.

And yet, he was full of promises and winks that left no doubt what he was seeking a salary subsidy from me as I languished for hours around the gate, watching yet another flight depart with my seat empty on a non-refundable ticket.

The way it was explained later by a U.S. army security whiz, is that all the "mentors" who monitor regular officers were off protecting Afghan President Hamid Karzai upon his return from a meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush, which meant it was a bonanza of a payoff payday.

Even on monitored days, police corruption is a serious problem here. They are loathed more than feared, and respected not a bit by the average Afghan.

It's hard to blame police for being susceptible to bribes given the average cop's \$70-per-month salary, which is usually reduced as senior officers skim off pieces of the payroll on its way down the chain of command.

My little problem is but a paintbrush stroke in a much bigger picture, but when a Canadian journalist is cleared for takeoff after Canadian Ambassador Arif Lalani personally calls in favours and there's still a crooked cop blocking the exit with his hand out, one can only imagine what average Afghans encounter when

they try to deal with their government.

Lalani — who I can say with openly declared bias is a top-notch ambassador with the perfect staff for any stranded Canadian to have in his corner — agrees there's a problem and sees a Canadian role in finding a solution.

He thinks Canada should work to better train police, improve their equipment and get their pay increased — all areas under the mandate of the international security force.

But given how corruption seems both endemic and epidemic in Afghanistan, one wonders if improvement is not decades away.

Take the police captain who prevented me from catching my first flight Tuesday morning. By the afternoon, he was guiding me through the airport to passport control after pocketing a \$50 bribe.

And the officer I slipped \$150 to a week earlier when my problems first surfaced? He disappeared then, but recognized me instantly Tuesday and said something to passport officers that seemed to move things along.

During my involuntary stay in Kabul, many sympathizers have shared stories of palm grease being the only lubricant that works in dealing with the Karzai government.

The Canadian owner of a guest house says he has to bribe the power company to keep the lights on. He has no choice. If he was forced to depend on his generator for electricity, "my profits would disappear."

A businessman confided he has to constantly bribe government officials to keep his guns registered, which are critical when you're operating a security protection service.

Arguably, all this is just the Afghan way. But add up all the airline tickets sacrificed, the cost of hotels and fixers during the delay, the new visa application and the bribes, and my employers paid \$4,000—plus for an improper stamp on an Afghanistan visa.

That's a stiff price for a business to deal with a mistake I would argue was mostly made by government employees.

Or course, the ultimate irony of my ordeal came after the final bribe when the door finally closed on a Dubai-bound jet and I let out a sigh of relief to be free of the place forever.

I turned on my iPod, hit the shuffle button and burst into laughter to strange looks from the guy beside me. A song came on I haven't heard in years — Supertramp's Take the Long Way Home.

And what a long strange trip it's been.

Don Martin is a columnist for the Calgary Herald. E-mail: dmartin@canwest.com.

From the fog, a lesson

IDNUMBER 200708090040
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.08.09
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 466

The death of any Canadian soldier is a sobering event. When a soldier dies not from enemy fire, however, but as the result of accident or misadventure, it's natural that we express anger as well as sorrow.

Yet the reality of warfare is that the battlefield — any battlefield — is an unpredictable environment, a place of extreme stress and physical danger, where the stakes are huge, where circumstances change and where decision-making processes are compressed. Outcomes are not easily controlled.

The "fog of war" is a real phenomenon, and investigators believe it played a role in the death of Canadian Pte. Robert Costall. Pte. Costall, who was 22, died more than a year ago in Afghanistan, in a firefight with Taliban insurgents. The bullets that killed him were fired not from Taliban fighters but from a U.S. Army gunner.

Pte. Costall was a victim of so-called friendly fire.

The Canadian military investigated the incident and announced this week that no charges will be laid. "No one person or persons met the requirements for blame," concluded the report. From what is known of the firefight, the conclusion is the appropriate one.

The battle took place in pitch-black conditions, and it was ferocious. According to news reports, the Taliban attacked from three sides, with mortars, machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Analysts believed it to be the most significant battle involving Canadian soldiers in at least three decades.

The board of inquiry report agreed that coalition forces made mistakes that led to the death of Pte. Costall.

The report uses military jargon — there was "incomplete co-ordination and control" and "poor situational awareness" — but in plain English this means, simply, that in the darkness of night, under the stress of the situation, the good guys lost track of where their buddies were.

Advances in technology and training have minimized battlefield confusion over the generations, and will continue to do so.

The report rightly indicates that improvements can and should be made in equipment and communications techniques. But no matter how professional and disciplined an army is, there will always be variables that it cannot control. Training and technology can help soldiers adjust to the unexpected, but nothing can prevent the unexpected from happening.

More than a century ago Matthew Arnold, in his great poem *Dover Beach*, wrote of the dark plain: "Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight/Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Literary critics have debated the meaning of his reference to "ignorant" armies, often projecting an anti-war sentiment into it, but really Arnold was expressing perfectly the chaotic, untamed nature of armed conflict.

No one knows who will die on that dark plain and who will live to fight another night. Even the best armies are in this sense ignorant. In wars past, "friendly fire" incidents were little remarked upon, perhaps because they were not identified as such. A casualty was a casualty.

It speaks well of Canada that, today, every military death is deemed worthy of scrutiny, study and, of course, grief.

Musharraf set to impose emergency rule; Experts say move designed to delay elections as public opinion turns against military leader

IDNUMBER 200708090025

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.08.09

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A6

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Press Information Department / Gen. Pervez Musharraf, citing security concerns, is expected to declare a state of emergency in Pakistan as early as today. Critics see it as a move to block democratic elections. ;

DATELINE: ISLAMABAD

BYLINE: Khalid Qayum and Naweena A. Mangi

SOURCE: Bloomberg News; with files from The Los Angeles Times

WORD COUNT: 472

ISLAMABAD – President Pervez Musharraf, facing the biggest test to his eight-year military rule, is poised to impose emergency rule in Pakistan because of deteriorating security in the South Asian nation, a government official said yesterday.

"Given the external and internal threats we are facing, especially on the border areas, the possibility of emergency cannot be ruled out," Junior Information Minister Tariq Azeem said in a telephone interview with GEO television.

Earlier, Gen. Musharraf announced that he would not attend a traditional tribal council that the Pakistani leader was to have opened jointly in Afghanistan today with his Afghan counterpart. The decision was widely interpreted not only as a snub to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, but also as a rebuke to the Bush administration, which had enthusiastically backed the idea of the council nearly a year ago while the two leaders were visiting Washington.

Official sources said Gen. Musharraf had called a meeting of his top aides for today at his camp office in Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, after which a proclamation of a state of emergency was likely.

Rashid Qureshi, the spokesman for Gen. Musharraf, earlier denied reports the president plans to suspend citizens' rights.

Opposition to Gen. Musharraf has escalated as he plans to ask lawmakers for a second five-year presidential term before parliamentary elections in January.

A key ally of U.S. President George W. Bush, the 63-year-old Pakistani leader faces dwindling support in the United States, where Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said he would consider sending in American troops if Gen. Musharraf didn't take a tougher line against al-Qaeda.

"Everything is being done because the president wants to stay in power," Nasir Aslam Zahid, a former Supreme Court judge, said in a phone interview.

Gen. Musharraf doesn't want to seek re-election in a new parliament because opposition parties and Islamic groups are drawing increasing support in Pakistan.

"This is a bad idea and will backfire on Musharraf," Michael Krepon, co-founder of the Henry L. Stimson Centre in Washington, said about emergency rule. "The history of military-led governments imposing emergency rule in Pakistan should be instructive."

Under Pakistan's 1971 constitution, the president can suspend legal and parliamentary rules if "the security of Pakistan, or any part thereof, is threatened by war or external aggression, or by internal disturbance beyond the power of a provincial government to control."

In that case, the right to speak, move around the country or form a political party can be suspended. Elections scheduled for January could be put off because the period of the National Assembly can be extended for up to 12 months.

The imposition of emergency rule has to be submitted for parliamentary approval within 30 days, and the decision can be challenged in the Supreme Court, said Mr. Zahid, the former judge.

Pakistan's opposition parties have demanded Gen. Musharraf quit as the president and the army chief and restore full civilian rule in the country, while the religious parties oppose his support for the global war against terrorism.

Despite great family loss, boy just can't stop giving

IDNUMBER 200708090001

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.08.09

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Bruno Schlumberger, The Ottawa Citizen / CodyClark, 12, is sending his first batch of 100 'Cody's Cuddlers' to injured Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan to help them feel better and let them know a child back home cares. He's also giving the bears in memory of his father, who died of cancer in 2006. ;

BYLINE: Shelley Page

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 1411

Twelve-year-old Cody Clark and his mother, Jan, will today deliver 100 teddy bears — known as Cody's Cuddlers — to the Department of National Defence, which will transport them to soldiers wounded in Afghanistan.

It's the latest plan Cody has hatched to spread goodwill and love through the simple gesture of giving a teddy bear. But as Mrs. Clark confessed on the phone yesterday, there are logistical problems.

She has to find a car. The beater she owns rarely works and she can't afford to get it fixed, so she's working the phones to get a loaner for the trip in from Kemptville. She jokes that she could take their tractor lawn mower, but it's broken, too. And with Mrs. Clark recovering from her second knee reconstruction surgery and in need of a hip replacement, she and her son can't exactly hitchhike.

Spend time in the home of one of Canada's most acclaimed and dedicated young philanthropists, and it becomes obvious that it's the Clarks who could use a bit of help. But, instead of asking, they steadfastly continue to search for ways to help others.

"We believe that what goes around comes around," says the 49-year-old mother. "We hope and pray that one day our situation will get better."

Nothing is easy in the Clark house, located on a plot of land on a lonely road outside of Kemptville. Freckled Cody, a sports loving bear of a boy, sits at home most days because his mom can't afford to send him to camp with his friends. And although Cody recently learned he'd been named to the Top 20 Under 20 in Canada for all his philanthropic work, not all the mail brings good news. Much of it comes from bill collectors.

Since Steve Clark — Cody's father — died of cancer in February 2006, his wife and son have struggled mightily to survive.

The \$900 in funeral bills have gone unpaid, as have the repairmen she's hired to do the household work that her husband once did. The house she can barely afford seems like it's falling apart around her, she says. There are still two roughly patched holes near the bottom of one wall in their living room where Mr. Clark smashed head first into the drywall after his cancer-wracked body was seized by a stroke. Cody witnessed the fall, and then comforted his father until the ambulance arrived to take him to hospital, where he died 17 days later.

Mr. Clark was laid off around the time he was diagnosed with cancer, then Cody's mother was diagnosed with level 3 melanoma, so all the savings were drained and the family had to turn to the government for financial assistance. Mrs. Clark now has to pay the province back \$14,000 — a lawyer helped her fight to reduce the bill from \$28,000 — for the disability her husband received for a year while he was dying.

Because of her knee and hip problems she drags herself to her \$12-per-hour job cleaning the homes of sick and dying people, mostly cancer patients. She also receives a small pension from Britain, from which she emigrated before Cody was born, which she uses to try to make the \$195-a-week mortgage payments.

"We have simple tastes, we have simple things, and we have our house. People will probably say, 'She has a house and she should be thankful,' that there are people way worse off than us, and we know that. We are just struggling to keep it," she says almost apologetically, her voice a whisper, for she is uncomfortable speaking about the difficult situation she and her son are in. Of the house, she says, "It's what we had together, it's all I have left of him."

Mrs. Clark hasn't spoken about the problems in detail before, in large part because she doesn't want to cloud her son's good works.

"Cody never complains. He'll go cut the grass and I'll pay him \$5 and he uses it to buy stuff for a Comfort Kit. Nothing fancy, just something to make another child feel better," she says. "He'll say, 'Oh mom, don't worry, it doesn't matter,' but I know he'd like to be out doing something with his friends," she says, full of worry for her son's future. She says he has taught her how to live fully when everything seems to keep going wrong.

"The truth is, his sweet heart is in the right place."

In four years, Cody has raised more than \$25,000 and delivered 235 kits — containing books, blankets, videos, toys and rattles — to children in hospital to make their stay more comfortable and less frightening. He was named an Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year for 2002 and was selected as North Grenville's Hal Anthony Citizen of the Year in 2003. In 2005, he received the Governor General's Caring Canadian award for outstanding volunteer efforts. He was elected into the Kids Hall of Fame in 2005.

Cancer has been part of Cody's life since he was five, when his father was diagnosed with lung cancer that eventually spread to his brain. The following year, his mother was diagnosed with melanoma. Although Cody was very young, he knew his life had changed forever.

"I had this awful feeling I was going to be an orphan," he recalls thinking. As his father got sicker and times got tougher, Cody watched friends and neighbours rally around his parents, bringing "food, funds and hugs" to help them battle their illnesses. Friends quietly paid the electric bill or dropped food hampers at the door. Cody saw how vital these gestures were, and the difference they made to his parents. He was raised on a belief that you help people in need, and it seemed as natural as drinking water.

When Cody was seven, he learned his pal, Brenna, needed a new heart. Everyone, of course, felt bad for the girl, but Cody didn't want to wallow in his worry for her, he wanted to help. He asked his community to help him "buy" Brenna a new heart. He participated in Jump Rope For Heart, which is held each year in elementary schools across North America. He raised \$2,500. He also collected 2,500 signatures on a petition to keep the cardiac unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario open, which he presented to an area politician.

Then, recurring ear infections landed Cody in hospital. Suddenly, he was the patient. He was bored silly and asked his mother to bring him some toys from home. But if he was bored, he realized other hospitalized children might be, too. An idea was born.

His mother said that if Cody wanted to act on his idea, he would have to raise the money, and so he spent eight hours standing at a grocery store collecting coins.

"I knew then how dedicated he was," recalls Mrs. Clark. The result was Cody's Comfort Kits. As Cody's ambitions grew, so did his need for funds to fill his kits. He held his first "Cody's Poor Boy Supper" in 2003 when he was eight, and raised several thousand dollars by selling tickets and holding an auction. While the hundreds of people who have since attended those annual dinners probably think that calling it a "Poor Boy" dinner was a catchy way to attract funds, Cody was being honest.

His latest plan to deliver bears to wounded soldiers was almost dismissed by his mother. "I have to stop telling him that things can't be done. He always proves me wrong."

Cody wanted to write Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and offer to send his bears to the wounded heroes of Afghanistan, many of whom are recovering in a German hospital. Cody told his mother he wanted to thank the soldiers for making his life a safer one.

Maybe the soldiers would feel better knowing a child in Canada wanted to thank them. Cody also wanted to give the bears in memory of his father.

His mother predicted he would never get a response.

But he did. Mr. O'Connor wrote back and said he supported the idea. Cody needed the money to buy the bears and approached the students at Nationview Public School in South Mountain, outside Kemptville. They raised more than \$1,200 to buy the first 100 bears.

Cody hopes to inspire other people to "help thank the heroes of Canada" — helping him to raise more than \$5,000 to purchase and send more bears. Anyone wishing to help him in his efforts can contact Ron Woodward of Linkeze Sales Inc. at 613-224-8846 ext. 32.

As for the Clarks' financial situation, Mrs. Clark remains hopeful.

"If the people who knew us knew how bad it really is, they would be shocked. But I just know we won't be in this boat forever."

You can reach Jan Clark at codyscomfortkits.com, or contact Shelley Page at spage@thecitizen.canwest.com

Pakistan considers invoking state of emergency; 'External, Internal Threats' Could Prompt The Order

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ISLAMABAD – General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's embattled President, is considering imposing a state of emergency because of "external and internal threats" to the country, a government spokesman said early this morning.

Tariq Azeem, the deputy information minister, said the measure had been discussed and could not be ruled out, as Gen. Musharraf battles an upsurge in insurgent violence in the volatile tribal regions bordering Afghanistan.

"I cannot confirm whether a decision has been taken or not," he said.

Official sources said the Pakistan President had called a meeting of his top aides later today at his camp office in Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, after which a proclamation of a state of emergency was likely.

"The President will chair a meeting to decide about a state of emergency in the country," said one source who asked not to be named.

Earlier, private Pakistani television channels had reported Gen. Musharraf was preparing to declare a state of emergency imminently, but government spokesmen denied there were any such plans.

The speculation came just hours after the Pakistani leader abruptly pulled out of a three-day tribal council due to begin in Afghanistan today, aimed at ending Taliban and al-Qaeda-sponsored terrorism.

He told his host Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President, he could not attend because of "engagements in the capital," and sent Shaukat Aziz, the Prime Minister, in his place.

"People are seriously worried about external threats to Pakistan," Mr. Azeem said, adding that lawmakers had termed the situation "a very serious matter" during a debate in parliament.

He cited violent unrest in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan and recent threats by some U.S. officials of possible unilateral strikes on supposed al-Qaeda bases on Pakistani soil.

Gen. Musharraf has been angered by Washington's accusations that Pakistan has become a safe haven for al-Qaeda and a regrouped Taliban.

Mr. Azeem said the security situation was deteriorating in North West Frontier Province, which is ruled by an alliance of Islamic parties, and military operations in the border areas were resulting in "loss of precious

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lives."

"Keeping in mind the prevailing situation, one cannot rule out the possibility that the provision of the constitution relating to imposition of emergency be issued," the minister said.

Political analysts and opposition leaders have feared that Gen. Musharraf, who is going through his weakest period since coming to power in a 1999 coup, might resort to an emergency because of difficulties he faces in getting re-elected by the sitting assemblies while still army chief.

He wants to be re-elected in uniform between mid-September and mid-October before national and provincial assemblies are dissolved for parliamentary elections due in December or January.

A not-so-secret meeting in Abu Dhabi in late July with Benazir Bhutto, a former prime minister and leader of the largest opposition party, to try to agree terms for power sharing was indicative of how desperate his position has become.

A declaration of state of emergency would mean the suspension of fundamental rights stipulated in the constitution, legal sources said.

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Save us, Rambo; Everybody denounces Rambo – until they need him

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: ARND WIEGMANN REUTERS / A German protester holds a poster depicting George W. Bush as Rambo. Many people are critical of the U.S., but rely on its protection. ;
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In the upcoming fourth installment of the Rambo franchise, Sylvester Stallone is shackled up in Bangkok when a group of Christian missionaries comes through, wanting to use his boat to get to Burma. "Burma's a war zone," John Rambo lectures them in his signature warble. He initially refuses, the missionaries chide him for being insensitive, and he later relents under pressure, taking the lot up the river.

As expected, the missionaries fall victim to the bad guys (evidently Burmese villains are still acceptable on-screen), and endure torture and whatnot. And who's expected to save them? Why, the guy who warned them it was so dangerous in the first place. No Jimmy Carter-style negotiations here – Rambo punches off heads and rips out throats as he saves the day in the trailer that's already become an Internet classic.

Watching the latest hostage crisis in Afghanistan reminds us how much the U.S. is the world's Rambo – criticized for being too militaristic, but inevitably expected to do the dirty work.

Last year, against their own government's advice, 1,000 to 2,000 Korean Christians and their kids showed up in Kabul to hold what they called a peace festival, something Afghan clerics called a proselytization festival.

"The government is concerned that the event could lead to a repeat of the 2004 abduction and killing of (aspiring missionary) Kim Sun-il by insurgents in Iraq," South Korean newspaper Chosun Ilbo reported at the time. That would turn out to be sadly prophetic.

The Afghan government booted the Koreans out of the country as the Korean churches remained defiant. Fast forward to last month, when a group from the Saemmul Presbyterian Church entered Afghanistan, did not notify the government of its trip so as to fly under the radar, and did not request security, instead taking a chartered bus up the extremely dangerous Kabul-Kandahar highway.

You couldn't have given the Taliban a better gift if you'd wrapped the bus in a red bow: The radicals took the 23 missionaries hostage, and killed two as the days dragged out. South Korea attempted to negotiate, but the Taliban demanded eight of their men held by the Afghan government be released. Afghanistan realized, as the rest of the world told them at the time, that agreeing to a prisoner swap for an Italian hostage in March just emboldened the Taliban to take more hostages.

South Korea had to impose a travel ban to Afghanistan after a pastor at the hostages' church said they'd only suspend programs "unwanted" by Afghans. From the moment of capture, South Korean anti-war activists hit the streets, decrying the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan – as if Christians would have been any safer with the Taliban still running the government – and demanding that the tiny Korean military presence (set to come home by the end of the year, anyway) be withdrawn.

This has turned, as most events do by seven degrees of separation or less, into the anti-U.S., anti-Bush blame-a-thon. When it became clear that the South Korean negotiations weren't doing a heck of a lot, Koreans began blaming the U.S. for not intervening by either "making" the Afghans hand over the Taliban fighters – encouraging Afghanistan to toss the lion a T-bone and fervently hope he doesn't crave any more meat – or otherwise rescuing the hostages.

So when the U.S. wasn't doing enough to solve their mess, South Koreans began protesting outside the U.S. embassy in Seoul.

"Koreans believe that, since this crisis is a part of the war on terror, the U.S. is the main party and not a third party," Chung Dong-young, a candidate in upcoming South Korean elections and former leader of the ruling party, wrote in an open letter to George W. Bush. "If President Bush was to step forward and save the hostages, then people around the world will continue praising you."

No one forced the missionaries to slip into a war zone, and they chose to run around without security. But it's another case of the U.S. as Rambo: The U.S. gets reamed because it supposedly bashes recklessly around the world with a machine-guns-first, questions-later style – but when things really hit the fan, which is the first country expected to solve the crisis du jour?

South Korea has one of the largest standing militaries in the world. That manpower would be a great help in both rescuing their own citizens and trying to wipe out the Taliban. But rather than inspire them to take responsibility and pony up more resources, this incident has had the opposite effect.

Why expend the energy when the U.S. can be your Rambo?

Musharraf pulls out of jirga; Afghan council. Upset with U.S. over military threats

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President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan abruptly announced yesterday he would not attend a traditional tribal council that the Pakistani leader was to have opened jointly in Afghanistan today with his Afghan counterpart.

Musharraf's decision to cancel his participation on the eve of the gathering in Kabul was widely interpreted not only as a snub to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, but also as a rebuke to the Bush administration, which had enthusiastically backed the idea of the council nearly a year ago while the two leaders were visiting Washington.

Pakistan has been angry over official and unofficial suggestions by U.S. politicians that U.S. forces should stage unilateral strikes at Al-Qa'ida figures believed to be taking shelter in Pakistan's tribal lands if Musharraf's government failed to do so.

Pakistan, which is in the midst of a major military offensive against militants in the semiautonomous border region, said any such U.S. action would be a violation of its sovereignty.

The three-day meeting in Kabul was meant to help the two neighbours, both of whom are important U.S. allies, arrive at a joint strategy for combating insurgents in the borderlands.

Musharraf said he was sending his prime minister, Shaukat Aziz, in his stead because he had other engagements in Islamabad, the federal capital.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said in a statement that Musharraf telephoned Karzai and "assured the Afghan president of Pakistan's full support in making the jirga a success." Even before Musharraf's pullout, the prospects for achieving any breakthrough at the gathering appeared slim. About one-third of Pakistan's originally designated delegation has declined to attend, including Pashtun tribal leaders from the Waziristan region, which has been the focal point of both the fighting and the search for Al-Qa'ida figures.

Musharraf, facing the biggest test to his eight-year military rule, may impose emergency rule because of deteriorating security in the south Asian nation, Junior Information Minister Tariq Azeem said.

"Given the external and internal threats we are facing, especially on the border areas, the possibility of emergency cannot be ruled out," Azeem said in an interview with GEO television, according to Bloomberg News.