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# Troops secure Afghan–Pakistan border for meeting of officials; Frontier outpost site of regular meetings to discuss joint issues

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SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan (CP) – A convoy of Canadian armoured vehicles rumbled down the main street of this frenetic frontier outpost yesterday to temporarily secure the border for a delegation of Afghan government and security officials meeting with their counterparts in Pakistan. Traffic – cars, trucks, motorcycles and the occasional donkey cart – came to a standstill as the soldiers pulled up to a neglected-looking archway with broken windows and peeling paint, the flag of Pakistan flying atop it. At its base lay a stone plaque, long bereft of paint, depicting a pair of shaking hands. Soon, the area was swarming with Canadian and American soldiers as high-powered military leaders from Kandahar province poured over the border toward the Pakistani town of Chaman, about eight kilometres away. "Every couple of months, all the senior leadership on both sides of the Afghan–Pakistan border get together to talk about border issues," said Maj. Steve Graham, commander of Reconnaissance Squadron from the Royal Canadian Dragoons, which provided security for the crossing. "A number of important government and military police officials from the Afghanistan side, specifically from Kandahar province, are going down to Pakistan to talk to their counterparts about joint border issues." The only member of the delegation representing coalition forces was Brig.-Gen. Tim Grant, the commander of Canadian forces in Afghanistan. His role was primarily to help get the two sides talking about issues such as border security.

# Afghan leaders demand troop pullout; Kabul parliamentarians losing patience with coalition forces after civilian deaths

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Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled "a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged yesterday of 21 villagers killed in air strikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesperson said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 5 1/2-year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

"One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. "It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law. Presidential officials were not available for comment yesterday. However, Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. Special Forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of air strikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed "three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region that has seen heavy fighting this year.

The coalition said a "significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the air strikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be independently verified. The incident is just the latest in a string of operations in which Afghans have lamented civilian casualties.

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

Nicholas Lunt, a NATO spokesperson in Afghanistan, said it was "quite clear" the Afghan parliament was making a statement about how military operations are carried out. He said NATO took the issue "very, very seriously."

He said NATO leaders know their ability to operate depends on the support of Afghan people and that civilian deaths undermine the mission. NATO country ambassadors have explored in the last two days ways to more closely involve the Afghans in military plans.

# Expert says Canadian troops are making a difference in Kandahar

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The efforts of Canadian soldiers in the Kandahar area of Afghanistan are not being wasted, an expert on the topic said Wednesday.

Lee Windsor, the deputy director of the Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick, has recently returned from a three-week stint in the troubled region.

Progress is being made, Windsor said in an interview.

"The key message is that things have changed fundamentally in Kandahar province over the past six months," he said.

For one thing, he said, there's no large massing of Taliban troops that have to be dealt with yet this spring, as was the case last year.

That has opened up a number of opportunities to reach out and help ordinary Afghans, he said.

"Essentially, our battle group and the Afghan national army has created a secure bubble around Kandahar City and the agricultural areas just outside the city," Windsor said. "The drug gangs and Taliban are kind of held on that perimeter. The battle group is creating a shield around what is called the Kandahar City-Afghan development zone.

"This has created conditions whereby the provincial reconstruction team can actually do its job."

Canada has 2,500 troops in Afghanistan – with 1,150 falling under control of The Second Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (2RCR) battle group from Canadian Forces Base Gagetown.

Windsor said debate in Canada on whether the Afghan mission should continue is based on information that's four-to-six months old.

"Anybody who is trying to make up their minds as to whether we should stay or go should make that decision knowing that we're now in the position to deliver real, serious support and aid," Windsor said.

The idea is for the Kandahar region to have the same success as has been achieved in the north and west of the country, he said.

Establishing security in Kandahar is critical, Windsor said, because it's probably the most important road junction in south Asia – serving as a hub for four continents.

For years traffic has been stifled by various conflicts, but now the highways are full of trucks carrying potatoes, wheat, pomegranates, almonds and other agricultural products, he said.

With a lack of Taliban, farmers are returning to the land and growing things other than poppies and marijuana.

Windsor, who was in the country when eight battle-group soldiers died in less than a week, said Canadian troops have done a magnificent job in the area.

The biggest concern for soldiers following the deaths was that people back in Canada would think nothing was being accomplished and would want to end the mission just when success was being achieved, Windsor said.

Windsor will be delivering a public lecture on Afghanistan today at 7:30 p.m. at the Wu Conference Centre.

In the meantime, Windsor, along with military historian David Charters and Brent Wilson, also of the Gregg Centre, are in the process of writing a book on the mission.



# Letters | Tie yellow ribbons for troops

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I am trying to get everyone interested in the yellow-ribbon campaign to show support for our troops. It seems to be growing every day in our fair city.

I am so proud of our troops fighting in Afghanistan to maintain the freedom we enjoy so much in this country.

I highly encourage everyone to display a yellow ribbon, the Canadian flag or anything else to show our support and admiration for our Armed Forces and our men and women who currently find themselves in harm's way.

Cathy DeLong

Fredericton

Justin Trudeau gets it right

I once thought if I lived to be 100, I'd never agree with a Trudeau.

I stand corrected.

Apparently, Trudeau, the younger, made a startling statement to a group of New Brunswick teachers: segregation breeds resentment.

Imagine these words from the offspring of the granddaddy of all segregationists.

Justin Trudeau went so far as to say we didn't need two school boards or systems. Again, I agree wholeheartedly. Duality costs twice as much if not more and produces an inferior product.

This is the main reason the rest of Canada sees us as a have-not province. Remember there is only one set of taxpayers – us.

Another truth just dawned on me: If Dion thinks Justin is wrong, he must be right.

Len Bennett

Durham, N.B.

Pesticide bans do work

With reference to City says no to ban by Heather McLaughlin in the May 8 Daily Gleaner, I am an Ottawa-based writer and retired intelligence analyst, currently an honorary Canadian observer with the Pesticide Working Group based in Washington, D.C.

Industry has good reason to fear municipal pesticide bans as this is the only effective way to protect public health in this connection in Canada.

The Gleaner's story said "Fredericton city councillors agree with horticulturists, golf-course owners and lawn-care companies that giving municipalities the right to ban pesticides isn't right for New Brunswick." However, it's important to note these horticulturists are exclusively those who speak for the pesticide application industry.

Is Fredericton's city council aware Ontario and Quebec explicitly rejected the integrated pest management accreditation because it amounts to nothing short of capitulation to the pesticide industry's self-interest?

In effect, IPM maintains the status quo and abandons the pursuit of improved public health via reducing the environmental cancer rate and protection for children who are especially vulnerable.

IPM is sarcastically known as "improved pesticide marketing" and this speaks volumes except to Fredericton's city council. There is no evidence IPM decreased the incidence of blanket spraying. All it does is abdicate the necessary municipal control over pesticide use and eliminates municipal governments' ability to monitor the impact of pesticides on public health.

IPM negates the application of time-proven, non-toxic methods of lawn maintenance based on healthy soil and beneficial organisms that are eliminated by application of pesticides – proven toxic poisons that kill these beneficial organisms.

It is industry spokesmen, almost exclusively, who tell us pesticide bans do not work. Obviously, it is in their own self-interest to maintain this, regardless of whether or not it is true.

If municipal pesticide bans didn't work, there would be no point in the pesticide industry working so hard to discredit

them.

K. Jean Cottam, PhD

Nepean, Ont.

Ad campaign complaint silly

This is in response to the article published in the May 4 Daily Gleaner about Ashley Hunter and the McDonald's ad campaign. I found the article to be absolutely ridiculous.

Ashley Hunter has to come to terms with life and get over herself. It was made very clear that this was a coincidence and not meant to harm Ashley's credibility.

She claims people will associate her with this advertisement. Who are these people? I personally do not take McDonald's ads overly seriously. I doubt many people do.

The only people who may make the connection are family and friends of Ashley Hunter. Before this article, I did not know Ashley Hunter, and most certainly did not associate her with the McDonald's ad.

But I sure do now.

Matt Hill

Fredericton

ATVs take trails from walkers

Lately, there's been lively debate on the rights of all-terrain vehicle owners. I think it's time to stick up for the rights of walking people.

Carmen Avenue in Barker's Point is littered with the usual cups, tires, packaging and heaps of garbage. It seems drivers open their windows or tailgates at any conveniently unoccupied lot, toss their trash on the side of the road and move on.

A walk in the wooded area between Carmen Avenue and Route 8 bypass is impossible. The trails are too deeply rutted by ATVs, churned into a series of deep mud holes. Every 10 feet lies a pile of smashed television sets, sofas, mattresses and old rugs among the trees.

People deserve clean places to walk. It's a basic right. Is that too much to ask?

Nowadays, there can be no peaceful, pleasant walk in nature unless you go to Odell Park. The only other place we can take a stroll is in sentimental

poetry.

Ken Corbett

Fredericton

Canadian Tire dollars reduced

With the ever-increasing price of gas, consumers are looking for every way possible to get a little back.

For us, the consolation for putting more than \$150 a week into the gas tank was the Canadian Tire money we would get back. We religiously collected the multiplier coupons and always made sure we put 70 litres in to get the maximum allowed for each fill-up.

There is only one Canadian Tire gas bar in Fredericton. Many times I've headed back into the city to fill up. It was worth it.

After diligently saving for months at a time, my husband and I would take turns going on Canadian Tire shopping sprees. One month, I got a storage cabinet for my kitchen; another time, he bought a pressure washer.

One winter, we put four new tires on our van, more than half bought with Canadian Tire money.

A few weeks ago, the clerk handed me my receipt and \$1.80 in Canadian Tire money. I was taken aback. "Shouldn't it be \$3?" I asked.

Not anymore. Apparently, Canadian Tire has cut almost in half the coupon amount.

I called the company's toll free number and was told the change is a pilot project. The woman thanked me for my feedback.

I urge everyone who appreciates Canadian Tire dollars as we do to call the company at 1-866-217-1106 and object to this change.

The price of life is going up; if anything so too should Canadian Tire dollar coupons.

Tammy Dempsey

Gagetown, N.B.

# Stress injuries serious issue

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GI Joe never got stressed.

Likewise Superman and every character John Wayne ever played.

We suspect this view is at the base of a dispute between Armed Forces personnel and area psychologists. Tough guys don't show stress.

But we'd like to point out GI Joe is a plastic doll, Superman a cartoon character and John Wayne's persona just that, a persona. Inspirational though those characters might be, they are not flesh and blood.

Our soldiers are flesh and blood. They willingly go to the ends of the Earth, witness atrocities no person should have to see and live day in, day out not knowing if that car ahead is wired to blow up or if that man in the marketplace has a gun under his clothes.

Soldiers have a perfectly normal reaction when they show signs of what the Canadian military calls operational stress injuries. Perhaps the best known of these is post traumatic stress disorder, but many disorders fall into the category the Forces define as any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed by a Canadian Forces member.

This week retired major Kent Carswell, a 40-year veteran, talked to a Daily Gleaner reporter about his military career and his struggle with operational stress injury. Among many other duties, Carswell served in Bosnia and Rwanda where he was held hostage twice and witnessed mass slaughter, among other horrors.

Not surprisingly, he, in his words, turned into "a prize asshole."

It's interesting how he describes the first signs of the stress: friction where there had been none before. He ran toward gunfire, not away, but figured that was what he was trained to do. He found himself being difficult for no apparent reason. It took years for him to realize that he had a serious problem.

But when he sought help from the military, he was told it was merely "a progression of ... being an asshole."

The military took a "walk it off" attitude. It was several more years before a military captain finally recognized something was wrong and helped Carswell get treatment.

We worry that the length of time it took the military to acknowledge Carswell needed treatment is a sign this stress disorder could still carry a stigma as many mental illnesses do.

That two civilian psychologists who treat soldiers suffering from stress disorders feel strongly enough to speak out about communications breaking down between the military and local psychologists is worrisome.

They point to a 2002 military ombudsman's recommendation which called for better co-ordination of efforts in treating soldiers, a recommendation they say is being ignored.

The good news is CFB Galetown has increased four-fold the number of staff who treat soldiers struggling with this syndrome.

It's crucial the base beef up help available to soldiers who will need it when they return from duty in Afghanistan.

We urge the military to prepare for the onslaught of problems that will plague soldiers. The best first step is to accept that operational stress injuries are as serious and as legitimate as a bullet wound.

# Canada seeks formal detainee rules; Handover of Taliban captured at sea subject of talks with U.S., officials say

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Canada and the United States held talks last fall to set formal rules for the handover of Taliban and al–Qaida fighters captured by Canadian warships at sea.

The talks began with a visit to Washington last October by two senior members of the Defence Department's judicial branch, one of them a naval commander, and the exchange continued with at least one followup visit last winter, defence sources told The Canadian Press. It's unclear, however, whether the two countries have since signed an agreement.

The revelation comes amid the uproar over torture and abuse allegations involving militants transferred to Afghan authorities by Canadian soldiers.

Federal officials at both the Defence Department and Foreign Affairs declined to discuss the negotiations.

"The Government of Canada regularly engages on a number of levels on many issues with our allies and partners," Tanya Barnes, a Defence spokeswoman, said in a terse e–mail.

"Obviously, such consultations on operational questions are not made public."

New Democrats recently tabled in the Commons a heavily censored memo, dated Oct. 12, 2006, to Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor which referred to the handling of detainees at sea.

With the exception of one paragraph, the memo was entirely blanked out. But defence sources confirmed it was the initial request to open talks with the Pentagon.

Given O'Connor's decision last year to continue periodic deployments of warships to support the U.S.–led war on terror, Defence Department legal experts believed it was prudent to have an up–to–date arrangement in place, said the sources.

Canada has had procedures for its sailors to follow if they capture a terrorist, but there has been no formal understanding between the two countries, said a leading human–rights group.

"The secrecy surrounding these talks is disturbing," said Alex Neve of the Canadian branch of Amnesty International.

Canada seeks formal detainee rules; Handover of Taliban captured at sea subject of talks with U.S. officials

"There isn't much information available at all as to how those kinds of transfers at sea are handled; what kind of numbers we're talking about; how long the practice is underway.

"We need complete transparency with respect to the agreements, arrangements, understandings, protocols that Canada enters into with other countries regarding the treatment of prisoners."

With the return of HMCS Ottawa in March, Canada currently has no warships deployed in the Persian Gulf, where Canada's contribution to the naval war on terror most often takes place.

Until Canada signed a much-criticized arrangement with Afghan authorities in December 2005, captured Taliban fighters on the ground in the war-torn country were routinely handed over to U.S. authorities. Critics such as Amnesty and the opposition parties were concerned those detainees would end up in the American detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The fate of terrorists captured at sea has been a low-profile issue, partly because Canada's naval contribution has been modest and it's unclear whether any prisoners have been taken in the hundreds of ship boardings that have taken place.

But Neve said the issue is as important as the recent controversy with Afghanistan because it also speaks to Canada's human-rights record.

Canadian warships have been involved in United Nations blockade enforcement against Iraq in the Gulf for years. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, that role was expanded under American command to include the hunt for members of the former Taliban regime and al-Qaida leaders, who were trying to slip away to other countries.

There was, according to 2003 briefing notes prepared for the previous Liberal government, an informal arrangement in place that was "legitimized by the fact that Canada is an armed conflict with al-Qaida-Taliban arising from the government's decision to exercise its right of collective self defence" under the UN Charter.

"Any person identified as [al-Qaida or Taliban] is turned over to U.S. forces as soon as possible," said the note.

"This turnover is documented to ensure that subsequent tracking at a later date is possible to determine the eventual disposition of the individual."

Canadian naval commanders were directed to contact "U.S. navy higher command" if they came across a suspicious vessel or individual.



# Fighting for a lost cause

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**COLUMN:** Speaking out

**BYLINE:** David Morris

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Next week, Nichola Goddard's father will forego his birthday celebration to instead mark the first anniversary of his daughter's death in Afghanistan. Here in Kingston, Nichola – Canadian casualty No. 16 and our country's first female soldier to die in front–line combat – will be remembered for the many ways she touched this community while a student at Royal Military College.

Over the last year, the blood of another 38 dead or dying Canadians has momentarily dampened the dust in a country a world away. In total, 54 Canadian families, and who knows how many Afghan families, will forever grieve the loss of a child, a sibling, a parent. And for what?

Our involvement in this folly stems from nothing more than the Chretien government's inability to stand up to the Bush gang. We traded our integrity for a leading role in a historically lost cause, and we continue to trade bodies – mostly of our young people – to save face. To the woeful extent that we care, we accept jingoistic chest–beating for the truth.

"We're righting a global wrong" is the spin, as if our military could or should be an instrument of international development; as if we didn't have a wealth of wrongs needing righting in our own glass house. How about poverty, or our Third World–like aboriginal reserves, or our contribution to global warming? How about Omar Khadr, the 20–year–old Canadian imprisoned without trial since the age of 15 in an American offshore gulag? Let's risk making a squeak on his behalf before we get too full of ourselves.

He or she "died a hero," we intone when one of our own dies in this misguided attempt to impose our neighbour's culture on a foreign land. We absolve ourselves of responsibility for that death with the macabre notion that posthumous praise was all a young person could live for; that our platitudes – no matter how fittingly bestowed – will fill the void for a grieving family in the many sorrowful years to come.

"He died doing what he wanted to be doing," we repeat, ignoring the reality that young people – particularly ones with such training and reinforcement – have no sense of their own mortality.

Our rationalization comes to its illogical, morally corrupt conclusion in the notion that any one of these deaths is justified by the death of more; that patriotism and "support" for our troops precludes our challenging the loss of lives in our name.

Were there a chance that, like Nichola Goddard's father, we would spend our next birthday similarly mourning the loss of our child, how long would we allow this "mission" to continue?

– David Morris is a husband and father who has an interest in business and a passion for community development. He is a member of the Whig–Standard's Community Editorial Board.

# "Canadians are our enemies'; Ex-Taliban talks about need for negotiations to resolve conflict

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**BYLINE:** Scott Taylor

**ILLUSTRATION:** Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul residence. (SCOTT TAYLOR)

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LOCAL AFGHANS do not think the Americans and Canadians are neutral and are here for peace and stability in Afghanistan, says a former senior Taliban cleric.

"The people in Kandahar are thinking that the Canadians, the British and Americans are all enemies since they are killing us, they are destroying our villages," former Taliban official Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef said in an exclusive interview.

"They are capturing us and they are abusing us."

In a large private mansion in the western suburbs of Kabul, Zaeef now resides under virtual house arrest. Before 9-11, however, he was a senior official in the Taliban regime.

As ambassador to Pakistan when the U.S. launched their military intervention into Afghanistan in 2001, Zaeef became the last public spokesman for the rapidly collapsing Taliban.

Arrested by Pakistani intelligence in January 2002, he was subsequently handed over to the Americans and interned at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre for three years and 10 months.

Although he was subsequently cleared of terrorism charges and returned to Afghanistan, Zaeef is forbidden from returning to his home in the volatile Panjwahi district. Monitored in his movements by the Afghan authorities, Zaeef nevertheless receives regular visitors from the Kandahar region.

"The problem increases day by day and the distance between the government and the people has become worse," he explained. "I think the foreigners, especially the Americans, had the opportunity to do something in Afghanistan last year, in 2002, 2003 and 2004. I think they have no opportunity now. They killed a lot of people and still the struggle is continuing."

Throughout the interview, Zaeef repeatedly made the point that he no longer speaks on behalf of the Taliban and that since his incarceration in Guantanamo Bay, he has not had contact with his former colleagues.

He had a recent meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, imploring him to open a dialogue with the insurgents and he does not rule out himself playing a role in those peace talks.

"Negotiation and dialogue is the solution," said Zaeef. "The solution is not with the foreigners. The foreigners had six years, but they didn't bring security, they didn't bring stability and they didn't satisfy the people."

One of the obstacles to a negotiated settlement between the Taliban and the Karzai government is the fragility of the current Afghan administration.

"The government has no control, they have no power," said Zaeef. "They have no independence to negotiate. They want to talk to the Taliban, they want a solution. (Karzai) is not able. He is crying in front of the media. He is powerless."

If the U.S. military were to withdraw, the Karzai government would not last a week, Zaeef said. The Americans have repeatedly stated they will not negotiate with terrorists and in Afghanistan that means the Taliban and al-Qaida.

"Terrorism, in this case, is an American definition," said Zaeef. "Now in Pakistan, in Arab countries, in Iran, people are thinking this is not fighting against terrorists. This is fighting against Islam."

While Zaeef urges a negotiated settlement, he warns the window for such a possibility is not open-ended.

"After two years, then there will be no more opportunities," he said. "If the country is being bombed, if someone is being killed, if the village is destroyed, if the situation becomes worse, it is Afghans who suffer. Canadian soldiers are killed here, but our casualties are more."

Zaeef estimates that since the American intervention in 2001, more than 50,000 Afghans have died in the fighting. As the killing continues, those Afghans joining the insurgency are increasingly doing so for reasons of personal revenge.

"Americans are enemies, Canadians are enemies," said Zaeef. "They are supporting each other. There is no difference."

()

This is the first in a series of articles from Scott Taylor as he travels through Afghanistan. In one of his upcoming articles, he will write about his exclusive interview with notorious Afghan warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Gen. Dostum claims he will be able to end the war in six months.

# Canada, U.S. discuss shipboard prisoner exchanges

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A4

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Murray Brewster

**WORD COUNT:** 524

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OTTAWA – Canada and the United States held talks last fall to set formal rules for the handover of Taliban and al–Qaida fighters captured by Canadian warships at sea.

The talks began with a visit to Washington last October by two senior members of the Defence Department's judicial branch, one of them a naval commander, and the exchange continued with at least one followup visit last winter, defence sources told The Canadian Press. The revelation comes amid the uproar over allegations of torture and abuse of militants transferred to Afghan authorities by Canadian soldiers.

Officials at both the Defence Department and Foreign Affairs declined to discuss the negotiations.

"The government of Canada regularly engages on a number of levels on many issues with our allies and partners," Tanya Barnes, a Defence spokeswoman, said in a terse e–mail.

"Obviously, such consultations on operational questions are not made public."

Late Wednesday, Defence Department spokesman Marc Raider said no agreement has been struck.

New Democrats recently tabled in the Commons a heavily censored memo, dated Oct. 12, 2006, to Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor which referred to the handling of detainees at sea.

With the exception of one paragraph, the memo was blacked out. But Defence sources confirmed it was the initial request to open talks with the Pentagon.

Given O'Connor's decision last year to continue periodic deployments of warships to support the U.S.–led war on terror, Defence Department legal experts believed it was prudent to have an up–to–date arrangement in place, said the sources.

Canada has had procedures for sailors to follow if they capture a terrorist, but there has been no formal understanding between the two countries, said a leading human–rights group.

"The secrecy surrounding these talks is disturbing," said Alex Neve of the Canadian branch of Amnesty International.

"There isn't much information available at all as to how those kinds of transfers at sea are handled; what kind of numbers we're talking about; how long the practice is underway.

"We need complete transparency with respect to the agreements, arrangements, understandings, protocols that Canada enters into with other countries regarding the treatment of prisoners."

With the return of HMCS Ottawa in March, Canada currently has no warships deployed in the Persian Gulf, where Canada's contribution to the naval war on terror most often takes place.

Until Canada signed a much-criticized arrangement with Afghan authorities in December 2005, captured Taliban fighters on the ground in the war-torn country were routinely handed over to U.S. authorities. Critics such as Amnesty and the opposition parties were concerned those detainees would end up in the American detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The fate of terrorists captured at sea has been a low-profile issue, partly because Canada's naval contribution has been modest and it's unclear whether any prisoners have been taken in the hundreds of ship boardings that have taken place.

But Neve said the issue is as important as the recent controversy with Afghanistan because it also speaks to Canada's human-rights record.

Canadian warships have been involved in United Nations blockade enforcement against Iraq in the Gulf for years. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, that role was expanded under American command to include the hunt for members of the former Taliban regime and al-Qaida leaders, who were trying to slip away to other countries.

'There isn't much information available at all as to how those kinds of transfers at sea are handled; what kind of numbers we're talking about; how long the practice is underway.'

# Afghans asking for ceasefire talks; Government stung by number of civilian deaths

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

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**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** KABUL

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Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled "a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged Wednesday of 21 villagers killed in air strikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesman said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 5 1/2-year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

"One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. "It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law. Presidential officials were not available for comment Wednesday. However, Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. special forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of air strikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed "three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region that has seen heavy fighting this year.

The coalition said a "significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the air strikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be independently verified. The incident is just the latest in a string of operations in which Afghans have lamented civilian casualties.

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

On Tuesday, U.S. military officials apologized and paid compensation to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded by Marines Special Forces who fired on civilians after a suicide attack in eastern Afghanistan in March.

"We don't want their money and apologies. If somebody loses one of his family members, an apology won't bring him back," said Haji Lawania, who was injured in the incident and whose father and nephew were killed.

# CNA honours Newfoundlander for service in Afghanistan

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

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**SECTION:** Front

**PAGE:** A1

**BYLINE:** Barb Sweet

**ILLUSTRATION:** Capt. Christine Matthews; Marlene Smadu, president of the Canadian Nurses Association (left) and federal Health Minister Tony Clement (right) present Capt. Christine Matthews with her award this week in Ottawa. – Photo courtesy the Canadian Nurses Association

**WORD COUNT:** 840

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As Capt. Christine Matthews describes the daily routine for a nurse in Kandahar, Afghanistan, one might picture the most well known TV show depicting wartime medicine – "MASH."

Matthews' routine sounds like scenes of the "MASH" medical team off and running at any hour when helicopters brought the daily load of casualties. Except Kandahar is no Hollywood and the trauma is not make believe.

"Lots of days, I look around and say 'Is this really my life?' because it seems so surreal," Matthews said on the phone from Ottawa about her last stint in Kandahar – she leaves to go back in February.

"But when you're touching patients and they have a warm pulse beating, for sure it's real life and not a movie."

Matthews, a native of Grand Bank, did a six-month stint in Kandahar, beginning February 2006 and doesn't hesitate to go back.

"We have 2,000 soldiers over there who go outside that wire every day. The least I can do is go over there and make them feel safe and cared for if something happens to them," she said.

Matthews was among a group of nurses recently returned from Kandahar honoured Wednesday by the Canadian Nurses Association at the Nursing Sisters' Memorial on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

Describing herself as a "late bloomer," Matthews joined the Canadian Forces at 26, in 1996.

After earning her nursing degree at MUN, she was posted to Halifax. "I always wanted to be a nurse and at the time it was very difficult to find work as a nurse. The military was hiring. It was a way to have a job and serve my country," she explained.

Matthews volunteered to go to Kabul in 2003. There, she had her first encounter with war injuries.

But it was only a couple of serious incidents, far from the mayhem that is 24-7 in Kandahar.

"It's a totally different area of the country. Kabul was much more stable," Matthews said, noting she was out in the community there where she saw women relaxing custom and wearing the burkas (traditional Muslim dress for women) less.



But in Kandahar, she doesn't leave the camp.

"Kandahar was a tough one ... Our beds (in the hospital) were always full of soldiers ... There was no down time," Matthews said of work at the military field hospital, one of Canada's most dangerous and busy medical missions in recent history.

"When a (Canadian) casualty comes through the door, everybody knows everyone and it's as if we are dealing with a member of our family." Matthews describes the Kandahar camp as a small town, 1,000 less souls than in Grand Bank, where her parents, Patricia and Arch, still live.

If she is on a day shift, she rises at 5:30 a.m. to exercise, shower and eat breakfast. It's then a kilometre-and-a-half walk to work.

"It's already 40 C out. When you're on your way to work, you keep your eyes open for any helicopters. It means you have to rush to get there," she said.

If she works an evening shift, by the time she returns to her quarters, her pager is likely going off to summons her back to work – they are on call 24-hours a day.

"We work together as a team, all the nurses just take care of each other. We use any humour we can find. We cry and laugh together," Matthews said of getting through the tough days.

If the camp is under rocket attack, the nurses get patients who are ambulatory to a bunker. Otherwise they are covered in their beds with a blanket made out of flak jacket material.

But nothing is ever really bullet proof.

The nurses themselves don't usually wear the vests at all while on duty.

"Your body temperature rises exponentially, sweat starts dripping off you. It's difficult to start an IV or give medical care. It's a personal choice," Matthews said of their decision not to wear the cumbersome, heavy vests.

With patients, the nurses give as much as they can.

"You put on that extra smile no matter how tired you are," she said. Matthews might cry with the soldiers, hold their hand or even talk to family back home for them.

One soldier who came in injured, but not critically, was upset because his friend died in the same attack. He asked Matthews to speak to his father.

"I told him he had a really big job, and that is not to worry. His son was going to be just fine and I'm going to take care of him," she said of the phone conversation.

Another time, during a rocket attack, Matthews helped a fellow Newfoundlander to the bunker. He started to bleed and said, "I think I'm going to bleed to death."

Matthews, trying to comfort him, replied, "'You're just bleeding all over my floor and making a mess.' We got our accents going and he was just fine, laughing."

After Kandahar, she returned to Canada and completed a critical care specialty certification in Halifax and spent time in Petawawa, as a platoon commander running training exercises.

The former marathoner and tri-athlete works in the emergency room at the civic campus of the Ottawa Hospital until her army training begins in August. Matthews was also deployed on a disaster assistance relief team mission to Pakistan in 2005, assisting earthquake victims.

"People were lined up looking for your help," she said of the experience. While there, she delivered a couple of babies in camp cots in a tent. "We ran the hospital 24/7. We did everything we had been trained to do, without the stress of the bombs," she said.

In 2000, Matthews led a group of military colleagues in full combat gear on a 160-kilometre, four-day march in Holland, replicating the liberation route of Canadian soldiers in the Second World War.

Matthews said her mother wants her to slow down. Still, she said her mother was quick to tell VIPs in Ottawa when Matthews represented nurses at the war memorial last Remembrance Day how proud she was of her daughter .

"She understands what we do is very important," Matthews said.

[bsweet@thetelegram.com](mailto:bsweet@thetelegram.com)

# A decade of change and upheaval

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May 6, 1953: Anthony (Tony) Charles Lynton Blair born

in Edinburgh. Studied law

at Oxford, specializing in trade union and employment law.

1980: Married Cherie Booth, with whom he has three sons and a daughter.

1997

May 1: Blair's

Labour party wins general election by a landslide.

Aug. 31: Diana, Princess of Wales, right, is killed in Paris car crash; Blair pays tribute to her as "the people's princess."

1998

April 10: Good Friday agreement leads to Northern Ireland Assembly.

Dec. 16: U.S. and British forces launch air and missile attacks on Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

1999

March–June: Britain joins NATO war in Yugoslavia over attacks on Kosovo Albanians.

Oct. 26: Deal ends right of most hereditary peers to sit in House of Lords.

2000

March 11: Blair travels to Russia, becoming first Western European leader to meet acting President Vladimir Putin.

May 20: Cherie Blair gives birth to son Leo.

2001

Feb. 23: Blair becomes first

A decade of change and upheaval

European leader to meet

President George W. Bush.

June 7: Labour re-elected in second landslide.

Sept. 11: Blair vows to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with U.S. after 9/11 attacks on World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Sept. 20: Blair attends joint session of Congress; Bush says America has "no truer friend" than Britain.

Oct 7: U.S. and British air and missile strikes against the

Taliban in Afghanistan begin.

2002

Sept. 24: Blair publishes

dossier, later discredited, on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Dec. 10: Cherie Blair apologizes for embarrassing the government over involvement of Australian con man in her

purchase of apartments.

2003

March 17: Robin Cook, leader of the House of Commons, resigns over Iraq days before the U.S.–British invasion.

March 18: Commons votes by 412 to 149 in favour of military action after Blair signals he will quit if defeated.

March 20: U.S. launches first "shock and awe" air strikes on Baghdad.

April 9: Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad toppled.

July 17: Blair tells joint session of Congress "history will forgive" the Iraq war.

Dec. 13: Saddam found by U.S. forces in a hole near his hometown of Tikrit.

2004

Sept. 28: Blair says he was wrong about weapons of mass destruction.

2005

May 5: Labour wins third consecutive general election, but with just 36 per cent of vote.

July 7: Four suicide bombers kill 52 in attacks in London; 700 injured.

July 28: IRA announces end of its armed campaign.

2006

Jan. 26: Britain deploys 3,300-strong military task force to southern Afghanistan's Helmand province.

March 21: Scotland Yard launches inquiry into the alleged sale of honours by the

Labour party.

April 13: Des Smith, a former adviser on sponsors for city academies, is arrested in cash-for-honours inquiry scandal.

July 12: Blair's chief fundraiser Lord Levy arrested.

Dec. 14: Blair questioned for first time by detectives in cash-for-honours inquiry.

2007

Jan. 26: Blair

questioned again

by detectives.

March 26: Democratic Unionist leader Ian Paisley and Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams strike deal to restore power-sharing government in Northern Ireland.

SOURCE: Press Association

# Casualties infuriate locals

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It matters not that Canadian troops were nowhere near an Afghan civilian caught in the crossfire of a firefight here earlier this week and killed as he slept outdoors.

On the streets of Kandahar, they're being blamed for it.

"The Canadian convoy was passing on this road and some Taliban shot at them, " says the owner of a bakery who arrived at his premises early Monday morning to discover the tin roll-down shutters of his establishment riddled with bullet holes.

"In revenge, they fired on decent Afghans and killed one man."

More in sorrow than anger, the bakery owner – who would not give his name – pleaded for greater care to be taken by NATO troops in Afghanistan to avoid civilian casualties, suggesting convoys use an alternate route when travelling through the densely populated provincial capital.

"My request to the government and NATO is to change the road for the convoys, so that they don't have trouble with us and we don't have trouble with them."

It was, in fact, not a Canadian convoy at all. The coalition troops involved in this incident were British, a source confirmed to the Star yesterday.

The bakery owner didn't actually witness these events. But so are rumours started and spread, such that they come to carry the weight of fact.

And at this moment, Afghanistan is seething with resentment towards both their national government and NATO troops over successive tragedies in recent weeks where non-combatants, including women and children, have been slain by the U.S.-led coalition: 13 last week in Marouf, 51 a fortnight ago in Herat.

On Tuesday, the American military took the unusual step of apologizing publicly and profusely for civilian casualties – people killed in indiscriminate firing by a Marines Special Operations unit after their convoy was rammed by a suicide bomber in March – while compensating the victims' families.

"I stand before you ... deeply, deeply ashamed and terribly sorry that Americans have killed and wounded innocent Afghan people," is what Col. John Nicholson, an army brigade captain in eastern Afghanistan, said he told the families of the 19 killed and 50 wounded.

The families were paid \$2,000 (U.S.) for each death, said Nicholson. It was an overt acknowledgment that there was no justification for opening fire on blameless civilians on an open stretch of road near Jalalabad.

Canadians have also paid for their mistakes. A year ago, when an innocent man was killed on the roundabout in central Kandahar City – the taxi in which he was riding with six family members had failed to heed shouted orders to stop from a Canadian convoy parked on the shoulder – a financial settlement was arranged for his survivors. The amount has never been revealed but sources told the Star yesterday that family received \$12,000 (U.S.).

Monday's incident occurred at about 1 a.m. on Durrahi Rd., the main Kandahar City thoroughfare.

Several men were conversing, some dozing, outside the bakery when firing suddenly erupted.

"We were chatting and one of my friends was sleeping," Saddiqullah, 32, recounted from his bed at Mirwais Hospital.

"We heard firing and when I turned my head towards my friend, I saw that he had been shot. I was going to help him when I was shot myself. After that, I have no idea what happened."

Saddiqullah was struck in the thigh and upper arm.

Someone claimed to have seen machine-gun fire coming from a yellow military vehicle. That was immediately and wrongly associated with the Nyala military vehicles used by Canadians, who now – according to Star interviews in the city yesterday – are suffering the blowback to their professional reputation.

Yet Maj. Alex Ruff, commander Hotel Company combat team, said he has not sensed any spike in ill-will against Canadians, and that troops use only "proportional force."

"We take every opportunity to ensure, before we engage anybody, that we positively identify the enemy. The last couple of days we had a couple of engagements where the Taliban were hiding among women and children inside compounds."

On such occasions, said Ruff, Canadian troops pass on the opportunity to fight with insurgents.

"When we know that there are civilians in an area, we won't engage where they're at."

Their rules of engagement essentially forbid shoot-first tactics.

"Until they actually fire upon us, or do something where we catch them in the act, to us they are civilians."

A statement issued by the International Security Assistance Force claimed that Monday's convoy was ambushed as it passed through a civilian area. The convoy was struck by rocket-propelled grenades, followed by heavy calibre small arms fire.

Lt. Col. Mike Smith, spokesperson for Regional Command South, said one civilian was killed and two wounded when they were caught in the ensuing crossfire, after a "Taliban extremist ambush" of the convoy.

"They (the Taliban) chose the time and the location of the attack, deliberately putting the lives of civilians at risk. ISAF soldiers go to great lengths to minimize the risk to civilians, but this incident will be fully investigated by the ANP (Afghan National Police), supported by ISAF."

Civilian lives lost as "collateral damage" have increasingly infuriated Afghans and sparked protests.

Canadian troops under Ruff's command, travelling with an Afghan National Army platoon in Zhari District, were also involved in heavy fighting this week, with two dozen insurgents killed and at least six suspected

Taliban taken prisoner. Yet Talib Khan, a Taliban military leader, disputed these claims in a telephone interview with the Star yesterday, conducted through a translator.

"We lost no fighters but we did destroy two Canadian vehicles."

Ruff snorted at that. "They can say whatever they want. We know what we witnessed and what we took out – 20-plus in the last two days as confirmed kills."



# Realists, neo-cons and Vulcans

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America's front-loaded primary system means we likely will know the Republican and Democratic candidates for president just nine months from now.

And because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – plus the widespread perception that America's international credibility has been damaged – foreign policy will play a far greater role in this campaign than usual.

Presidential contenders and political commentators are emphasizing the need for a return to "realism." But realism in foreign policy is such an elastic term that it is almost meaningless.

The real question is whether the next U.S. president will be a Vulcan.

No, not the sort with pointy ears and logical minds. The term was coined by a group of foreign-policy advisers to George W. Bush in the 1999 while he was running for president. They took their name from a huge statue of Vulcan, the Roman god of fire, in Birmingham, Ala., the hometown of Condoleezza Rice.

What was interesting about the Vulcans is that they included both traditional realists like Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld and Rice, and neo-conservatives like Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle.

That makes the term Vulcan useful for cutting through the intellectual haze that surrounds the words realist and neo-conservative. Realists generally favour stability and the narrow pursuit of national interests. The neo-cons are more ambitious, promoting the spread of American-style democracy and capitalism.

Despite these differences, the Vulcans were united by a simple and muscular approach to foreign policy. James Mann, in his collective biography *The Rise of the Vulcans*, outlined four common principles:

An emphasis of American military power.

The primacy of traditional national security issues over economic factors in policy-making.

A belief that American power and ideals are a force for good in the world.

An optimistic assumption that America is strong and getting stronger.

From the sound of it – and despite Iraq – there are still a lot of Vulcans vying for the presidency. Take this from, surprisingly, Barack Obama: In an April 23 speech to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs he called

on the United States to build "the first truly 21st century military ... A 21st century military to stay on the offence, from Djibouti to Kandahar."

Of course, Obama distanced himself from the Bush administration by talking about the need to rebuild alliances and use diplomatic means where possible. But he returned again and again to the idea of America's global leadership and restated Washington's right to act unilaterally "to protect ourselves and our vital interests."

As for the possibility of a conflict between American leadership and the need to act in concert with allies, or how he would weigh the respective merits of these competing priorities in decision-making, he was silent.

In this, he is much like the leading Republican contenders. John McCain in a major foreign policy speech in Germany in February also spoke of the need for America to rebuild its alliances, specifically NATO. Yet he went on to mention Afghanistan, a conflict that is tearing NATO apart.

He said: "There should be no divergence among the allies over Afghanistan – it is a quintessentially multilateral operation that should not admit unilateral restrictions that may endanger its success."

But there is divergence, and there are "unilateral restrictions," notably the refusal of key NATO countries to send troops to the hot combat zone in the south. Faced with reluctant allies in some future crisis, would a President McCain not act? Unlikely.

Another top Republican, Mitt Romney, told an Israeli audience in January that the Iranian nuclear program represents "the greatest threat to the world since the fall of the Soviet Union, and before that, Nazi Germany."

While he said he wants to work with America's European allies and even China on this issue, Romney went on to say: "We can't sit idle while we wait for more co-operation." That sounds a lot like George Bush speaking to the United Nations about Iraq in late 2002.

No Republican, and probably no Democrat, would be prepared to give any ally, or the United Nations, veto-power over U.S. policy. And most leading candidates in both parties continue to insist on American global leadership and the right to use force unilaterally. On the Republican side, there is support for more dollars for the Pentagon and a bigger army.

There are some non-Vulcans out there. John Edwards is one, also Hillary Clinton. Among the serious candidates who have made detailed foreign policy statements, they are the two who put the greatest emphasis on diplomacy and multilateralism.

But the central tenets of the Vulcan creed – an emphasis on military power and the aggressive assertion of American global leadership – remain well entrenched in the political class. Candidates who ignore or oppose these ideas will do so at their peril.

Fred Edwards is a member of the Star's editorial board.

# Angry at civilian deaths, Afghan legislators call for ceasefire

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KABUL – Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled "a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged Wednesday of 21 villagers killed in air strikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesman said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 5 1/2-year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

"One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. "It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law. Presidential officials were not available for comment Wednesday. However, Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. special forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of air strikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed "three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region that has seen heavy fighting this year.

The coalition said a "significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the air strikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be independently verified.

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

At Kandahar airfield, Canada's contingent tried hard to distance itself from the fresh controversy.

Canadian troops take pains to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means holding fire on Taliban militants when they seek refuge among women and children, a key combat officer said Wednesday.

Maj. Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting earlier this week, insisted Canadian soldiers take the issue seriously.

"We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds, but we won't engage them. It's not what we do," Ruff said.

"We know there are civilians in and about the area and we won't engage where they're at."

# Canada U.S. want formal rules for terror suspects caught at sea: sources

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OTTAWA (CP) \_ Canada and the United States held talks last fall to set formal rules for the handover of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters captured by Canadian warships at sea.

The talks began with a visit to Washington last October by two senior members of the Defence Department's judicial branch, one of them a naval commander, and the exchange continued with at least one follow-up visit last winter, defence sources told The Canadian Press.

The revelation comes amid the uproar over allegations of torture and abuse of militants transferred to Afghan authorities by Canadian soldiers.

Officials at both the Defence Department and Foreign Affairs declined to discuss the negotiations.

"The government of Canada regularly engages on a number of levels on many issues with our allies and partners," Tanya Barnes, a Defence spokeswoman, said in a terse e-mail.

"Obviously, such consultations on operational questions are not made public."

Late Wednesday, Defence Department spokesman Marc Raider said no agreement has yet been struck with the Americans.

New Democrats recently tabled in the Commons a heavily censored memo, dated Oct. 12, 2006, to Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor which referred to the handling of detainees at sea.

With the exception of one paragraph, the memo was entirely blacked out. But Defence sources confirmed it was the initial request to open talks with the Pentagon.

Given O'Connor's decision last year to continue periodic deployments of warships to support the U.S.-led war on terror, Defence Department legal experts believed it was prudent to have an up-to-date arrangement in place, said the sources.

Canada has had procedures for its sailors to follow if they capture a terrorist, but there has been no formal understanding between the two countries, said a leading human-rights group.

"The secrecy surrounding these talks is disturbing," said Alex Neve of the Canadian branch of Amnesty International.

"There isn't much information available at all as to how those kinds of transfers at sea are handled; what kind of numbers we're talking about; how long the practice is underway.

"We need complete transparency with respect to the agreements, arrangements, understandings, protocols that Canada enters into with other countries regarding the treatment of prisoners."

With the return of HMCS Ottawa in March, Canada currently has no warships deployed in the Persian Gulf, where Canada's contribution to the naval war on terror most often takes place.

Until Canada signed a much-criticized arrangement with Afghan authorities in December 2005, captured Taliban fighters on the ground in the war-torn country were routinely handed over to U.S. authorities. Critics such as Amnesty and the opposition parties were concerned those detainees would end up in the American detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The fate of terrorists captured at sea has been a low-profile issue, partly because Canada's naval contribution has been modest and it's unclear whether any prisoners have been taken in the hundreds of ship boardings that have taken place.

But Neve said the issue is as important as the recent controversy with Afghanistan because it also speaks to Canada's human-rights record.

Canadian warships have been involved in United Nations blockade enforcement against Iraq in the Gulf for years. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, that role was expanded under American command to include the hunt for members of the former Taliban regime and al-Qaida leaders, who were trying to slip away to other countries.

There was, according to 2003 briefing notes prepared for the previous Liberal government, an informal arrangement in place that was "legitimized by the fact that Canada is an armed conflict with al-Qaida-Taliban arising from the government's decision to exercise its right of collective self defence" under the UN Charter.

"Any person identified as (al-Qaida or Taliban) is turned over to U.S. forces as soon as possible," said the note.

"This turnover is documented to ensure that subsequent tracking at a later date is possible to determine the eventual disposition of the individual."

Canadian naval commanders were directed to contact "U.S. navy higher command" if they came across a suspicious vessel or individual.

Photographs of the ship and its occupants were to be taken and uploaded to the Americans, who would search their terrorist database for possible matches.

Neve said it's not known whether the Defence Department wanted to set up a protocol to allow Canada to check on those detainees, the way it has now struck a revised arrangement with the government of Afghanistan.

"We just don't know because they won't tell us," he said.

The 2003 note was written just after the U.S. invaded Iraq and contained references to what Canadians were supposed to do if they came across fleeing members of Saddam Hussein's crumbling regime.

# Sarnia councillor wants name of soldier killed in Afghanistan on city's cenotaph

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE SOCIAL

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 200

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SARNIA, Ont. (CP) \_ A southwestern Ontario city councillor says he would like to see the name of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan name inscribed on the cenotaph in Sarnia.

Cpl. Brent Poland, 37, a Sarnia native and long-time resident of the Lake Huron village of Camlachie, was the first Sarnian to die in action since the Korean War when he was killed by a roadside bomb on Easter Sunday.

Currently, the cenotaph contains the names of over 200 local men killed in the two world wars or the Korean conflict.

Councillor Jim Foubister sees no reason why both Poland and Sarnian Daniel Crone, who died in the Boer War, shouldn't be commemorated on the cenotaph, provided there's enough space for their names.

He says they've made the supreme sacrifice and their names should be on it.

Poland was the second Lambton County resident to die in Afghanistan. The first was Pte. Will Cushley, who was from Port Lambton.

St. Clair Mayor Steve Arnold says there has been talk of inscribing Cushley's name on the cenotaph in Wallaceburg, where he attended high school. There is no cenotaph in Port Lambton.

Still, there is a tribute to Cushley in the township.

``We've placed bricks on the river trail for Pte. Cushley," Arnold said.

Putting the names of Cushley and Poland on cenotaphs in Wallaceburg and Sarnia ``would be a wonderful thing to do for the men," he said.

(Sarnia Observer)

# Pentagon announces new combat force rotation for Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 291

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WASHINGTON (AP) \_ The United States will maintain a heightened level of U.S. troops in Afghanistan well into 2008, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

The 101st Airborne's commanding general and his headquarters staff, plus the division's 4th Brigade, will deploy early next year, the Pentagon said. They will replace the 82nd Airborne Division's headquarters and its 4th Brigade.

Extra combat troops are in Afghanistan in anticipation of a tougher fight in coming months against Taliban rebels, who have demonstrated a more organized, better trained resistance, particularly in the southern part of the country.

The Pentagon did not say how long the new units would stay in Afghanistan, but Defence Secretary Robert Gates recently said all units in Afghanistan and Iraq would deploy for up to 15 months instead of the normal 12 months.

While President George W. Bush's troop increase in Iraq has aroused widespread public and congressional opposition, there has been little dissent over efforts to intensify U.S. operations in Afghanistan. Both conflicts, however, are continuing to put severe strains on a military that is constantly scrambling to find fresh troops and equipment to send to the war zones.

At the start of this year the Pentagon decided to double the number of U.S. combat brigades in Afghanistan, from one to two, and in February it announced that the higher level would be maintained through the end of the year.

With Wednesday's announcement, that level would be maintained into 2008 and possibly well beyond.

The other combat brigade in Afghanistan is the 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, which is due to be replaced this summer.

The total number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan is about 25,500, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said. They include about 14,000 who are operating as part of a NATO force known as the International Security Assistance Force.

Canada has some 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, most based in southern Kanadahar province.



# Canadian soldiers guard Afghan–Pakistani border as two governments meet

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 113

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SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan (CP) \_ Canadian soldiers stood guard at the Pakistan border Wednesday as Afghan government and security officials met to discuss border issues with their Pakistani neighbours.

The two sides get together every few months to discuss security and other issues that come up along their shared boundary.

Soldiers closed the border for nearly two hours as they waited for the delegation to arrive.

It includes Brig.–Gen. Tim Grant, the commander of Canadian forces in Afghanistan, who is representing coalition forces at the meeting.

Canada has established a significant military presence in this district of southern Kandahar province in an effort to stem the flow of Taliban insurgents across the border.

An estimated 12,000 people cross the border every day at Spin Boldak, about 70 kilometres southeast of Kandahar city.

# Call for ceasefire, talks with Taliban shows impatience with Afghan mission

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 679

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KABUL (AP) \_ Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled ``a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged Wednesday of 21 villagers killed in air strikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesman said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 5 1/2-year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

``One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. ``It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law. Presidential officials were not available for comment Wednesday. However, Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. special forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of air strikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed ``three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region that has seen heavy fighting this year.

The coalition said a ``significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the air strikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be independently verified. The incident is just the latest in a string of operations in which Afghans have lamented civilian casualties.

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

On Tuesday, U.S. military officials apologized and paid compensation to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded by Marines Special Forces who fired on civilians after a suicide attack in eastern Afghanistan in March.

“We don't want their money and apologies. If somebody loses one of his family members, an apology won't bring him back,” said Haji Lawania, who was injured in the incident and whose father and nephew were killed.

The U.S. military also says it is looking into reports from Afghan officials that 51 civilians died in air strikes and fighting in the western province of Herat last month.

According to an Associated Press tally based on reports from Afghan and Western officials, 238 civilians have been killed by violence this year, including at least 102 blamed on NATO or the U.S.-led coalition. Those numbers do not include the 21 reported killed Tuesday.

Nicholas Lunt, a NATO spokesman in Afghanistan, said it was “quite clear” the Afghan parliament was making a statement about how military operations are carried out. He said NATO took the issue “very, very seriously.”

“I do not consider this at the moment a decisive vote on our status here and I think it would be wrong to interpret it that way, but I think it is definitely a warning shot across NATO's bows to take notice of the concerns,” Lunt said.

He said NATO leaders know their ability to operate depends on the support of Afghan people and that civilian deaths undermine the mission. He said NATO country ambassadors have explored in the last two days ways to more closely involve the Afghan government in military planning.

Lunt said “negotiations should be encouraged” if militants are prepared to respect Afghan laws.

However, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a purported Taliban spokesman, said the group rejected any type of negotiations “until the Americans leave Afghanistan.”

He also said the Taliban would “take revenge” on coalition troops for any civilian deaths caused in Sangin.

# Afghan–Taliban–Talks

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 106

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KABUL, Afghanistan — Foreign troops in Afghanistan could be prevented from shooting first and asking questions later under a new Afghan bill.

The upper house of the Afghan parliament passed a bill yesterday banning international forces, including Canadians, from firing weapons and launching raids, unless they are attacked or have consulted the Afghan army.

The bill also calls on the government to open dialogue with Taliban fighters.

The bill needs to be approved by the lower house and signed by President Hamid Karzai before coming law.

The bill says negotiations should only be held with Afghan Taliban militants, not Pakistani Taliban fighters or al–Qaida operatives.

The aim is to persuade the militants to give up their fight against the government.

An official at NATO's International Security Assistance Force isn't commenting.

(AP)

NMC

# INDEX:Defence, International, Justice

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**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 117

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TORONTO – Lawyers for Canadian Abdullah Khadr, who is fighting extradition to the U.S. on terrorism charges, say their client was treated unconstitutionally while being held in a Pakistani jail.

Defence lawyer Dennis Edney says his client received no legal advice during the 14 months he was held in Pakistan.

Edney says his client was allegedly tortured during that time, despite repeated meetings with officials from the FBI, the RCMP and CSIS.

He argues that Khadr was asked the same questions repeatedly and often in the presence of a Pakistani guard who was allegedly involved in his torture.

Edney says any attempts by the FBI to inform Khadr of his rights was a `sham.'

The 26-year-old faces charges of buying weapons for al-Qaida and plotting to kill American troops in Afghanistan if he's extradited to the U.S.

(BN)

# Canadian military backs away from anger over civilian deaths

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100101  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A11  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 433

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Canadian troops take pains to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means holding fire on Taliban militants when they seek refuge among women and children, a key combat officer said yesterday.

Canada's contingent here tried hard to distance itself from fresh controversy over civilian deaths inflicted by international operations in Afghanistan.

A U.S. bombing that reportedly killed 21 civilians this week and shootings by British soldiers that left a Kandahar man dead have revived feelings among some Afghans that the foreign troops pay little heed to innocents caught in the crossfire.

In Kabul, Afghan legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban, which promised to avenge the air strike.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 5 1/2-year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

But Maj. Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting of its own this week, insisted Canadian soldiers take the issue very seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," said Ruff. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds but we won't engage them. It's not what we do.

"We know there are civilians in and about the area and we won't engage where they're at."

Ruff heads a combat team that was attacked two days' running by the Taliban earlier this week, forcing it into firefights that resulted in more than 20 of the insurgents being killed.

He said some of the Taliban hid among civilians as they fled the battle but were not firing at Canadians at the time.

Although the Canadians did not go after them, they continue to be under surveillance by "higher assets," said Ruff.

Earlier this week, at least 21 civilians, including women and children, were reportedly killed after U.S. special forces called in airstrikes against Taliban fighters in the Sangin district of neighbouring Helmand province. Some of the insurgents had taken shelter in villagers' homes during the battle, said the Helmand governor.

In a separate incident, British soldiers shot and killed a civilian man in Kandahar this week after a convoy came under rifle and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

Ruff said he was not concerned that the deaths would spark a backlash against Canadians, who look similar in camouflage to coalition partners and may not be easily distinguished by Afghans.

"We behave in a professional manner and we get that out there every time," he told reporters. "We get out on the ground, we interact with the individuals, the local nationals, we tell them we're Canadian and we're there to support them

"They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

# Deceased soldier

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100133  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**SOURCE:** The StarPhoenix  
**WORD COUNT:** 54

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A story about the late Master Cpl. Allan Stewart, published April 12, included two errors. Stewart grew up in Trout Brook, N.B., but was living in Petawawa, Ont., at the time of his death. Following a two-week leave, he returned to Afghanistan April 2.

The StarPhoenix regrets the errors.



# Canadian forces don't expect backlash over civilian deaths

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100070  
**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** B9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: (Alex) Ruff;  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 419

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Canadian troops take pains to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means holding fire on Taliban militants when they seek refuge among women and children, a key combat officer said Wednesday.

Canada's contingent here tried hard to distance itself from fresh controversy over sometimes deadly collateral damage inflicted by international operations in Afghanistan.

A U.S. bombing that reportedly killed more than 20 civilians and shootings by British soldiers that left a Kandahar man dead have revived feelings among some Afghans that the foreign troops pay little heed to innocents caught in the crossfire.

But Maj. Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting earlier this week, insisted Canadian soldiers take the issue very seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," said Ruff. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds but we won't engage them. It's not what we do.

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"They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

Meanwhile, the Afghan senate passed a bill Tuesday that called for international military operations to stop unless they are co-ordinated with the Afghan government. The proposed legislation is considered a swipe at the international mission here.

And a U.S. army commander apologized and paid compensation to the families of Afghans killed and wounded when marines opened fire on a busy stretch of road near Jalalabad in March.

(National Post)

# A plea for parley A former Taliban honcho says the only hope for war-torn land is negotiation

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100393

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 10

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul mansion, says time is running out on if there is to be a negotiated peace in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** SCOTT TAYLOR

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 424

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Local Afghans do not think the Americans and Canadians are neutral and are here for peace and stability in Afghanistan, says a former senior Taliban cleric.

"The people in Kandahar are thinking that the Canadians, the British and Americans are all enemies since they are killing us, they are destroying our villages. They are capturing us and they are abusing us," former Taliban official Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef said in an interview.

In a mansion in the western suburbs of Kabul, Zaeef lives under virtual house arrest. Before 9/11 he was a senior official in the Taliban regime. As ambassador to Pakistan when the U.S. launched its intervention into Afghanistan in 2001, Zaeef became the last public spokesman for the rapidly collapsing Taliban. Arrested by Pakistani intelligence in January 2002, he was handed over to the Americans and interned at Guantanamo Bay for almost four years.

Although he was cleared of terrorism charges and returned to Afghanistan, Zaeef is forbidden from returning to his home in the Panjwaii district. But he receives regular visitors from the Kandahar region.

"The problem increases day by day and the distance between the government and the people has become worse," he explains. "I think the foreigners, especially the Americans, had the opportunity to do something in Afghanistan last year, in 2002, 2003 and 2004. I think they have no opportunity now. They killed a lot of people and still the struggle is continuing."

Zaeef insists he no longer speaks for the Taliban and has not had contact with his former colleagues. He had a recent meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai imploring him to open a dialogue with the insurgents.

"Negotiation and dialogue is the solution. The solution is not with the foreigners," says Zaeef. "The foreigners had six years but they didn't bring security, they didn't bring stability and they didn't satisfy the people."

One of the obstacles to a settlement is the fragility of the Afghan administration. "The government has no control, they have no power, they have no independence to negotiate. They want to talk to the Taliban, they want a solution," says Zaeef.

The Americans insist they won't negotiate with terrorists and in Afghanistan that means the Taliban and al-Qaida.

"Terrorism in this case is an American definition," says Zaeef. "Now in Pakistan, in Arab countries, in Iran, people are thinking this is not fighting against terrorists, this is fighting against Islam."

While Zaeef urges a negotiated settlement, he warns the window for such a possibility is not open-ended. "After two years then there will be no more opportunities," he says. "If the country is being bombed, if someone is being killed, if the village is destroyed, if the situation becomes worse, it is Afghans who suffer."

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Scarborough schoolkids meet a real superhero -- a Canadian Afghanistan veteran who now walks on titanium legs

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**SOURCETAG** 0705090737

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 6

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo of JODY MITIC He wants to be a 20-year soldier 2. photo by Alex Urosevic, Sun Media Jody Mitic is surrounded by admirers at Scarborough's Kennedy Public School yesterday after he talked to them about the mission in Afghanistan, where he lost his legs to a land mine. 3. photo by Alex Urosevic, Sun Media He strolls with his new titanium legs.

**BYLINE:** JOE WARMINGTON

**WORD COUNT:** 654

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To walk a mile in Jody Mitic's shoes you have to stand on titanium.

And, like all "superheroes," have plenty of courage.

The trained sniper in the Royal Canadian Regiment of the Canadian Armed Forces showed just how much he has once again yesterday as he took a step in the right direction.

And then another.

Yes, less than five months after he stepped on a land mine in Afghanistan, blowing off both of his feet and lower legs, the 30-year-old Brampton native yesterday took his first steps outside without any assistance.

Take that, Taliban. You didn't see that coming -- just as Mitic didn't expect to be blown up so heinously. Your gutless sneak attack may have had him down. But not for long.

"I think he's actually a little taller now," teases his brother Cory of Jody's new magic legs, attached to stumps below his knees.

"If you are going to have any amputation they say the one below the knees is the good kind," Jody says with humour.

Strong kid.

For Mitic a step in any direction is amazing considering he should actually be dead or certainly wheelchair bound. But those who planned for that don't know Master Cpl. Jody Mitic.

Watch and learn. Some sixth graders, ages 11 and 12, did exactly that at Kennedy Public School in Scarborough.

They were witness to the big step in Mitic's recovery but the inspiring went both ways.

Scarborough schoolkids meet a real superhero -- a Canadian Afghanistan veteran who now walks on titanium

"I thought since I was coming to the school today I would leave my cane in the truck," said Mitic.

The kids inspired him.

"It felt good to walk in here without it. I had walked around in my apartment but never outside like this. Up until now I was afraid of falling.

It was the first time and other than almost (tumbling) at the door of the classroom it went well," he said laughing.

The kids with names like Jimmy, Meghan, Patrick, Kingsley, Vivien, Irvin, Milo, Ruina, Chloe were thrilled to be part of it. Real nice kids in Mr. (David) Pollard and Ms (Erika) Csombok's class.

Smart. They were right up to speed on Mitic and all of the realities of the war in Afghanistan.

And man did they have some good questions for him: "What do you think of people who say you shouldn't be there?" was one.

"How do you handle when people stare?" was another.

And the toughest was "did you kill anyone?" Mitic handled them well: "Until the job is done, you can't leave," he said, adding Canadian soldiers have helped ensure that girls can now go to school and boys are permitted to read more than just one sanctioned religious book.

On being stared at he said, "I don't worry about it." He said it happens but that's okay.

On the tougher question of being a soldier in combat and what can happen he said, "I won't answer that today but maybe when you are 18 we can meet and we can talk about it."

It was a pretty interesting day of learning for sure. It was a lesson in reality that the students have been working on for months. They called it their "superhero project". They compared what they see with Spider-Man with the kind of efforts and sacrifice soldiers like Mitic make on behalf of them.

It was their way of showing support but also at having a frank look at the world.

Mitic said he was heartened by the invite and the warm sentiment. "But I don't feel like a superhero. I am not a superhero because I stepped on a land mine," he said. "I feel I was just doing my job." It's a difficult job. He was walking in a line and the three soldiers in front of him stepped right over the trap, which was a heavy bomb just waiting for someone to step in the wrong place.

Jody was the one. When the bomb went off, his pals went into overdrive to save him. "I did my best to not go into shock for them," he said.

Soon after he was in surgery. Then airlifted to Germany. And then airlifted again to Sunnybrook hospital and then to St. John's Rehab Centre.

And yesterday he's walking again.

"I hope to be able to be able to go back," he said. "I may not be able to run around chasing the Taliban as before but maybe I could do some paperwork or help the guys get their equipment ready. It's a good goal to maybe go back. But it could take a couple of years." He actually doesn't know what the future holds. Recently engaged, he'd love to stay in the service for another 10 years and finish out a 20-year commitment if possible.

Scarborough schoolkids meet a real superhero -- a Canadian Afghanistan veteran who now walks on titanium

He loves his country.

All of the wounded I have spoken with seem to share the same sentiment.

Capt. Wayne Johnston, who has been working on the Sapper Mike McTeague Wounded Warrior Fund to help get wounded soldiers CDs, DVDs and other time occupiers during recovery, tells me there's a tremendous amount of loyalty these men and women have to their fellow soldiers still in battle.

Every day he admires their commitment.

Jody Mitic and all of the rest of them are heroes as far as I am concerned.

And while it is true you can take away his legs he has shown it's not going to take away his ability to walk.

The students of Kennedy Public School saw that first hand in their superhero yesterday.

KEYWORDS=TORONTO AND GTA

# No Leafs, no problem Between Detroit, Ottawa and Buffalo, there still is lots of hockey to be had

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**SOURCETAG** 0705090836

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.09

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Sports

**PAGE:** S5

**ILLUSTRATION:** graphic by Tim Peckham, Sun Media THE GOAL–DEN TRIANGLE There's no Stanley Cup fever again this year in Toronto, but three hockey hot–spots are a mere slapshot away.

**BYLINE:** LANCE HORNBY, SUN MEDIA

**WORD COUNT:** 314

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Surrounded by a triple–case of playoff fever on its borders, Leafs Nation is going to lose some sleep in the coming days.

The Ottawa Senators, Buffalo Sabres and Detroit Red Wings are all in the Stanley Cup semi–final and don't think Toronto fans won't hear about it as their closest geographical rivals work their way toward the final.

But the Leafs don't think they will lose fans.

"If we were in a sustained period of missing the playoffs it would be different," said Tom Anselmi, executive vice–president and COO of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Ltd. "But we missed the playoffs by a point. We know winning is what counts and that we're not there is disappointing, but I don't see us eroding."

Anselmi says he has a new perspective on what hockey means in Canada after getting back from Afghanistan this week. He was one of the Leafs reps when the six Canadian teams sent delegations for an alumni tour of the armed forces base. About 1,500 personnel showed their favourite team colours to the visitors, but really it was all about a chance for the war–weary to see someone from home, view the Stanley Cup and just take a break from their difficult mission.

And last week at a breakfast for Ottawa–area businessmen, Senators' Toronto–born owner Eugene Melnyk told Leafs fans they should get behind his team, the last Canadian entry in the tournament. Montreal was the most recent Canadian club to win the Cup in 1993, with Toronto ending Ottawa's chances four times in playoffs, but unable to break its own 40–year curse.

"All you Leafs fans, all I can say is get on the bandwagon because we're going all the way this year," Melnyk said. "C'mon, we're here, you're there and we want you here. If we were knocked out and it was Calgary (still alive), I'd be watching every single game. If it was Vancouver, I'd be watching every single game."

KEYWORDS=HOCKEY



# A plea for parley A former Taliban honcho says the only hope for war-torn land is negotiation

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100319

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 23

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul mansion, says time is running out on if there is to be a negotiated peace in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** SCOTT TAYLOR

**DATELINE:** KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

**WORD COUNT:** 439

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Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul mansion, says time is running out on if there is to be a negotiated peace in Afghanistan.

Local Afghans do not think the Americans and Canadians are neutral and are here for peace and stability in Afghanistan, says a former senior Taliban cleric.

"The people in Kandahar are thinking that the Canadians, the British and Americans are all enemies since they are killing us, they are destroying our villages. They are capturing us and they are abusing us," former Taliban official Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef said in an interview.

In a mansion in the western suburbs of Kabul, Zaeef lives under virtual house arrest. Before 9/11 he was a senior official in the Taliban regime. As ambassador to Pakistan when the U.S. launched its intervention into Afghanistan in 2001, Zaeef became the last public spokesman for the rapidly collapsing Taliban. Arrested by Pakistani intelligence in January 2002, he was handed over to the Americans and interned at Guantanamo Bay for almost four years.

Although he was cleared of terrorism charges and returned to Afghanistan, Zaeef is forbidden from returning to his home in the Panjwaii district. But he receives regular visitors from the Kandahar region.

"The problem increases day by day and the distance between the government and the people has become worse," he explains. "I think the foreigners, especially the Americans, had the opportunity to do something in Afghanistan last year, in 2002, 2003 and 2004. I think they have no opportunity now. They killed a lot of people and still the struggle is continuing."

Zaeef insists he no longer speaks for the Taliban and has not had contact with his former colleagues. He had a recent meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai imploring him to open a dialogue with the insurgents.

"Negotiation and dialogue is the solution. The solution is not with the foreigners," says Zaeef. "The foreigners had six years but they didn't bring security, they didn't bring stability and they didn't satisfy the people."

One of the obstacles to a settlement is the fragility of the Afghan administration. "The government has no control, they have no power, they have no independence to negotiate. They want to talk to the Taliban, they want a solution," says Zaeef.

The Americans insist they won't negotiate with terrorists and in Afghanistan that means the Taliban and al-Qaida.

"Terrorism in this case is an American definition," says Zaeef. "Now in Pakistan, in Arab countries, in Iran, people are thinking this is not fighting against terrorists, this is fighting against Islam."

While Zaeef urges a negotiated settlement, he warns the window for such a possibility is not open-ended. "After two years then there will be no more opportunities," he says. "If the country is being bombed, if someone is being killed, if the village is destroyed, if the situation becomes worse, it is Afghans who suffer."  
KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Poland's name may be added to cenotaph

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100553  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** City &Region  
**PAGE:** C7  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of BRENT POLAND Sarnia-born soldier died in Easter Sunday bombing in Afghanistan.  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** SARNIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 163

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A Sarnia city councillor says he would like to see the name of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan name inscribed on the cenotaph in the city.

Cpl. Brent Poland, 37, a Sarnia native and long-time resident of the Lake Huron village of Camlachie, was the first Sarnian to die in action since the Korean War when he was killed by a roadside bomb on Easter Sunday.

Currently, the cenotaph contains the names of over 200 local men killed in the two world wars and the Korean conflict.

Councillor Jim Foubister sees no reason why both Poland and Sarnian Daniel Crone, who died in the Boer War, shouldn't be commemorated on the cenotaph, provided there's enough space for their names.

He says they've made the supreme sacrifice and their names should be on it.

Poland was the second Lambton County resident to die in Afghanistan. The first was Pte. Will Cushley, who was from Port Lambton.

Steve Arnold, mayor of the township St. Clair, which includes Port Lambton, says there has been talk of inscribing Cushley's name on the cenotaph in Wallaceburg, where he attended high school. There is no cenotaph in Port Lambton.

Still, there is a tribute to Cushley in the township.

"We've placed bricks on the river trail for Pte. Cushley," Arnold said. KEYWORDS=LOCAL

# A plea for parley A former Taliban honcho says the only hope for war-torn land is negotiation

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100744

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 60

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul mansion, says time is running out on if there is to be a negotiated peace in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** SCOTT TAYLOR

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 424

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Disbelief in accuseds' hometown

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100733  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 36  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** DEBAR, Macedonia  
**WORD COUNT:** 279

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Three Muslim brothers who allegedly helped plot to kill soldiers at a U.S. army base have roots in one of Europe's most pro-American corners, a region that remains grateful to the United States for ending the Kosovo war.

Dritan Duka, 28, Shain Duka, 26, and Eljvir Duka, 23, were arrested in New Jersey this week in what U.S. authorities said was a bungled scheme to blow up and gun down soldiers at Fort Dix. The three were born in Debar, a remote town on Macedonia's rugged border with Serbia's Kosovo province.

Relatives in the ethnic Albanian-populated town of 15,000 said they had not seen the brothers in more than two decades, but expressed disbelief yesterday that the three would attack the United States.

"We all have been supporters of America. We were always thankful to America for its support during the wars in Kosovo and Macedonia," a cousin, Elez Duka, 29, told The Associated Press.

"These are simple, ordinary people and they've got nothing to do with terrorism. I expect their release and I expect an apology," he said, waving his hands. "I see injustice. These are ridiculous charges."

His indignation captured the mood among Slavic Muslims in Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania – places that have repeatedly expressed gratitude to the U. S. for intervening in the 1998–99 Kosovo war and a 2001 ethnic conflict that pushed Macedonia to the brink of civil war.

Albania was among the first countries to answer Washington's call for troops to help support U.S.-led military offensives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In and out of Debar, people struggled to reconcile those feelings with the indictment of the three, plus a fourth ethnic Albanian suspect, Agron Abdullahu, 24.

Two other men also were arrested: Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, 22, a Palestinian born in Jordan, and Serdar Tatar, 23, born in Turkey.

U.S. authorities have not given details of the alleged plot, or said if a date had been set for an attack.

They said only that the accused were training and buying weapons. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Canadians won't fire if women, children present: officer; 'We're very much reflective of canadian society'

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100132  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A18  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** National Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 342

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KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Canadian troops take pains to avoid civilian casualties even if it means not firing on Taliban fighters when they hide among women and children, a key combat officer said yesterday.

Canada's contingent tried hard to distance itself from fresh controversy over sometimes deadly collateral damage inflicted by international operations in Afghanistan.

A U.S. bombing that reportedly killed more than 20 civilians and shootings by British soldiers in which a Kandahar man died have revived feelings among some Afghans that the foreign troops pay little heed to innocents caught in the crossfire.

But Major Alex Ruff, whose unit was involved in two days of intense fighting this week, said Canadian soldiers take the issue seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," he said. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds, but we won't engage them. It's not what we do.

"We know there are civilians in and about the area, and we won't engage where they're at."

Maj. Ruff heads the Hotel combat team, which was attacked by the Taliban this week, forcing it into firefights that resulted in more than 20 insurgents being killed.

He said some Taliban hid among civilians as they fled, but were not firing at Canadians at the time. Although the Canadians did not go after them, they continue to be under surveillance by "higher assets."

At least 21 civilians, including women and children, were reportedly killed after U.S. special forces called in airstrikes against Taliban fighters in the Sangin district of neighbouring Helmand province .

Some of the insurgents had taken shelter in villagers' homes during the battle, said the Helmand governor.

In a separate incident, British soldiers shot and killed a civilian man in Kandahar this week after a convoy came under rifle and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

Canadians won't fire if women, children present: officer; 'We're very much reflective of canadian society'

Maj. Ruff said he did not believe the deaths would spark a backlash against Canadians, who look similar in camouflage to coalition partners and may not be easily distinguished by Afghans.

"We behave in a professional manner and we get that out there every time," he said. "We get out on the ground, we interact with the individuals, the local nationals, we tell them we're Canadian and we're there to support them ...

"They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM



# Civilian deaths sap NATO forces' support; Deadly air strike; Afghan president facing pressure for talks with Taliban

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100131

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A18M

**ILLUSTRATION:** Color Photo: / (See hardcopy for Photo Description); Color Photo: Abdul Malek, AFP, Getty Images / An Afghan man, wounded during military operations on Tuesday, lies inside a vehicle en route to a hospital in Helmand province yesterday. ; Map: Source: News Services Andrew Barr, National Post / (See hardcopy for Map) ;

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Ismail Sameem

**SOURCE:** Reuters, with files from Agence France–Presse

**WORD COUNT:** 604

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – An air strike by Western forces on Tuesday killed 21 civilians, including women and children, the governor of Afghanistan's Helmand province said yesterday, reporting the latest in a series of civilian deaths that have undermined support for the war against the Taliban.

The incident, which brings to more than 80 the number of civilian deaths blamed by Afghan officials on Western troops in the past two weeks, comes as President Hamid Karzai faces rising pressure to halt the bloodshed and find a way to start peace talks with Taliban insurgents.

The air strike on Tuesday night hit houses in a village in the Sangin district of southern Helmand province, where Western forces have been hunting Taliban fighters in recent weeks, said Assadullah Wafa, the Governor of Helmand.

"Last night, NATO forces carried out an operation in Sangin and as a result of its bombing, 21 civilians, including women and children and men, have been killed," he said.

NATO said its security force had not been active in that area on Tuesday, but Mr. Wafa may have been referring to a clash involving U.S.–led coalition troops hunting Taliban near Sangin, in which one coalition soldier was killed the same day.

A U.S. military spokesman said he had heard reports about civilians killed in the clash but his information was that apart from the soldier, the only people killed were Taliban.

The bombing in Helmand — a Taliban stronghold and the key drug–producing region of Afghanistan — began just before midnight Tuesday during a 16– hour battle between coalition and Afghan soldiers and the Taliban.

"Around 30 people are dead," a villager named only Noorullah told Agence France–Presse by telephone. "The number might rise because there are still people under the debris."

Civilian deaths sap NATO forces' support; Deadly air strike; Afghan president facing pressure for talks with Taliban

He said most of the dead and wounded were women and children. "We took the wounded children to the foreign forces base to show them who they have bombed."

While most civilian casualties in Afghanistan in recent years have been linked to the Taliban, a rising number of deaths in "friendly fire" from Western troops has added to pressure on the government.

Last week Mr. Karzai summoned commanders of the coalition and the separate NATO-led force to protest, while the Afghan parliament's upper house called on Tuesday for increased efforts to negotiate with the Taliban and an end to Western military operations against them.

During the Sangin battle, some of the attackers took shelter in compounds that may have been occupied by civilians, the coalition said in a statement.

"Coalition close air support aircraft destroyed three enemy command and control compounds including an enemy underground tunnel network," the statement said.

The coalition said its intelligence indicated the involvement of foreign fighters and men from an area of the western province of Herat, where there were similar heavy battles over the weekend of April 27.

UN and Afghan investigations last week found that about 50 civilians had been killed in the fighting in Herat, which involved coalition and Afghan soldiers as well as U.S. Special Forces.

The coalition initially denied there had been civilian casualties, saying 136 Taliban fighters were killed.

Residents in the eastern province of Nangarhar are meanwhile accusing the coalition of killing six civilians late April, including two women.

The incident was not far from an area where U.S. Marines opened fire on civilians in March after a suicide bombing. The U.S. commander for eastern Afghanistan, Army Colonel John Nicholson, said in Washington on Tuesday that 19 people were killed and 50 injured in that incident.

Col. Nicholson told reporters he was "deeply, deeply ashamed and terribly sorry that Americans have killed and wounded innocent Afghan people."

The insurgency being led by the extremist Taliban with the support of its allies, notably the al-Qaeda network, has steadily picked up pace despite the efforts of about 50,000 foreign soldiers and fledgling Afghan security forces.

More than 1,200 people have been killed this year, most of them rebels. Roughly 200 civilians have been killed in military action and Taliban attacks.

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS

# Kabul police showcase key terror suspect; Charged with assassinating former afghan PM

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100130

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A18

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell

**SOURCE:** National Post

**WORD COUNT:** 436

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KABUL – The Kabul police captured a key terrorism suspect yesterday, and went to unusual lengths to tout their coup.

As a journalist arrived for a meeting on a different matter, the head of criminal investigations proudly revealed the arrest of Sher Ahmad on charges of assassinating a former Afghan prime minister last week — and then offered up the suspect for a photograph.

Two doors down, the journalist and a translator were ushered into a room where a neatly dressed Mr. Ahmad sat on a well-stuffed sofa, being quietly interrogated by two officers.

He seemed unfazed by the flashing of a camera as he spoke animatedly to detectives. Finally, another officer shooed the visitors out of the room.

Mr. Ahmad is charged with killing Abdul Sabur Farid Kuhestani, a conservative Afghan senator who was prime minister for a few weeks in 1992.

Farid, as he is known, was shot dead last Wednesday by assailants who had set up an ambush for him as he left his home to drive to a mosque, police and media sources said at the time.

Mr. Farid was prime minister for just over a month in mid- 1992 during the bloody conflict that pitted different factions of the anti-Soviet mujahedeen against each other.

At the time, he had been a leading member of the Islamist Hezb-i-Islami party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now labelled a terrorist group by some and involved in the insurgency against the current government.

Unlike his former leader, Mr. Farid decided after the fall of the Taliban to take part in the democratic process.

Alishah Khan Paktiawal, the Kabul police criminal investigation chief, said the suspect in the killing is actually a current cohort of Mr. Hekmatyar. "He is very close to Hekmatyar. This is not a small fish."

He alleged that the accused is unrepentant and steadfastly supports Mr. Hekmatyar and his party. Beyond that, Mr. Paktiawal did not offer a motive for the crime. More arrests are expected.

The shooting of Mr. Farid was part of a deteriorating security situation in Kabul in recent months following a

period of relative stability. Police are under pressure to show they are tackling the problem.

The same day as the assassination, a bomb blast killed a bus driver and injured several police officers. A rocket hit a crowded Kabul neighbourhood earlier this week, injuring several people, while a man dressed in an Afghan national police uniform shot and killed two American soldiers helping train the police.

Another parliamentarian, Mawlawi Islam Mohammadi, was shot dead in January as he headed from his house to a mosque in Kabul. Mr. Mohammadi was the Taliban governor of Bamiyan province when the regime destroyed two statues of Buddha dating back 1,500 years.

Back at Mr. Paktiawal's spacious office, a local TV journalist interviewed him and other officers about the arrest. Then the officer watched their tape played back on his large TV.

Kabul television stations did not appear to have a photograph of the suspect, however.

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN

# A plea for parley A former Taliban honcho says the only hope for war-torn land is negotiation

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**SOURCETAG** 0705100606

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 10

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, in his Kabul mansion, says time is running out on if there is to be a negotiated peace in Afghanistan.

**BYLINE:** SCOTT TAYLOR

**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 424

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One of the obstacles to a settlement is the fragility of the Afghan administration. "The government has no control, they have no power, they have no independence to negotiate. They want to talk to the Taliban, they want a solution," says Zaeef.

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KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Iranian weapons 'not from Tehran'

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100150  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A22  
**COLUMN:** Fast Track  
**KEYWORDS:** NUCLEAR POWER; NUCLEAR REACTORS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service; AFP; AP  
**WORD COUNT:** 78

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The NATO-led force said it was looking into weapons with Iranian markings that were intercepted in Afghanistan but there were no indications they were provided by the Iranian government. General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of United States, said last month that U.S.-led coalition forces had found Iranian-made mortars and explosives in Afghanistan that were destined for the Taliban.

# Suspect charged with killing ex-PM; Ally of another former PM

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100141  
**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A22  
**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; WAR; STOWAWAYS; NUCLEAR WEAPONS;  
CRIME;AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** TOM BLACKWELL  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 150

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The Kabul police captured a key terrorism suspect yesterday.

Sher Ahmad is charged with killing Abdul Sabur Farid Kuhestani, a conservative Afghan senator who was prime minister for a few weeks in 1992.

Farid, as he is known, was shot dead May 2 by assailants who had set up an ambush for him as he left his home to drive to a mosque, police and media sources said at the time.

Farid was prime minister for just over a month in mid-1992 during the bloody conflict that pitted different factions of the anti-Soviet mujahedeen against each other.

At the time, he had been a leading member of the Islamist Hezb-i-Islami party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now labelled a terrorist group by some and involved in the insurgency against the current government.

Unlike his former leader, Farid decided after the fall of the Taliban to take part in the democratic process.

Alishah Khan Paktiawal, the Kabul police criminal investigation chief, said the suspect in the killing is actually a current cohort of Hekmatyar. "This is not a small fish," Paktiawal said.



# 'Give me six months'; An Afghan warlord has a plan to eradicate the Taliban

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100140

**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A22

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: DAVID GUTTENFELDER, AP FILE PHOTO / Dostum, on horse, still has many supporters – mostly in the north of Afghanistan. He ran, and lost, in elections in 2004. ;

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; BOMBINGS; AFGHANISTAN

**DATELINE:** SHEBIRGHAN, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** DAVID PUGLIESE

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 455

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A former Afghan warlord who helped the United States defeat the Taliban in late 2001 says he can do the same thing again if President Hamid Karzai and his military backers just give him the word.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum says he could raise 10,000 seasoned combat veterans from the days of fighting the Taliban to crush the insurgency. His proposal would involve Afghan soldiers from all the country's ethnic groups, fighting alongside another 10,000 troops from the international forces.

"Then you would see what will happen in just six months," he said through an interpreter in a rare interview from his stronghold in northern Afghanistan. "If President Karzai gives me the power, I can guarantee him and assure the international community and the people of Afghanistan that we can play a significant role in defeating and breaking the back of the Taliban."

The joint force would pursue and destroy the Taliban, Dostum said, even if it has to go into the lawless Pakistani territories along the border with Afghanistan, a key recruitment and operational base for the Taliban.

Dostum, 53, is chief of staff of the Afghan army, but his position is considered largely ceremonial. In fact, some senior government members don't trust him and worry that he is consolidating his power and secretly rearming his forces.

Dostum denied this, pointing out that he was the first to disarm and support Afghan's elected government.

The general has survived over the decades by making deals with various powerbrokers in Afghanistan. He fought with the Soviets during the bloody occupation and war that engulfed the country from 1979 to 1989. Later, he threw his support behind anti-Communist forces.

After the Sept. 11, 2001, Al-

Qa'ida attacks on the United States, Dostum's troops helped U.S. special forces and CIA operatives defeat the Taliban. The general's tanks and cavalry, backed by U.S. air power, routed the Taliban in a matter of months.

Dostum, whose men have a reputation as ruthless and skilled fighters, has been accused of war crimes for his actions both during Afghanistan's wars and after the Taliban defeat.

Dostum says NATO and the U.S. are making a mistake by building the Afghan national army along the lines of a western military force because ANA troops are no match for seasoned Taliban fighters. The answer, he maintains, are the hardened combat veterans from Afghanistan's past wars.

NATO and the United States see the Afghan army as key to their eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan. Afghan troops are fighting alongside international forces and NATO hopes that the Afghan army will take on an increasing role on the battlefield.

Some Western diplomats in Kabul say it would be impossible to use his troops because of Dostum's past abuses on the battlefield. Others, however, contend that he remains a major powerbroker in the north and that few major Afghan leaders don't have blood on their hands from the country's wars.

# Air strike kills 20 civilians; Insurgents took shelter in homes. Canadians take pains to avoid casualties – even if it means holding fire – major says

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100139

**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A22

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: ABDUL KHALEQ, AP / An Afghan man holds a dripyesterday for a man apparently wounded by air strikes in Helmand province. The strikes were called in Tuesday by U.S. special forces soldiers fighting insurgents in the southern province. ;

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** NASRAT SHOIAB and TOM BLACKWEL

**SOURCE:** AFP; CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 387

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Bombing by foreign forces killed 20 to 30 Afghan villagers, a governor and witness told AFP yesterday in the latest claim of heavy civilian casualties in anti-Taliban operations.

The U.S.-led coalition confirmed it had called in "air support" amid intense battles with Taliban fighters in the southern province of Helmand on Tuesday that had killed an unknown number of rebels and a coalition soldier. Some of the insurgents had taken shelter in villagers' homes during the battle, the Helmand governor said.

In a separate incident, British soldiers shot and killed a civilian man in Kandahar this week after a convoy came under rifle and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

A U.S. military spokesperson, Major Chris Belcher, said of the incident in Helmand: "There were enemy casualties in (the) operation last night – I don't have an exact number," he said.

The coalition is smarting from claims of mounting civilian casualties after nearly 60 other people were said to have been killed in its operations late last month, according to investigations and residents.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai summoned commanders of the coalition and the separate NATO-led force, and other top foreign diplomats, last week to protest.

Canada's contingent here tried hard yesterday to distance itself from the fresh controversy over the civilian deaths, which have revived feelings among some Afghans that the foreign troops pay little heed to innocents caught in the crossfire.

Canadian troops take pains to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means holding fire on Taliban militants when they seek refuge among women and children, a key combat officer said.

Major Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting of its own this week, insisted

Air strike kills 20 civilians; Insurgents took shelter in homes. Canadians take pains to avoid casualties – even

Canadian soldiers take the issue very seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," Ruff said. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds but we won't engage them. It's not what we do.

"We know there are civilians in and about the area and we won't engage where they're at."

Ruff said he was not concerned that the deaths would spark a backlash against Canadians, who look similar in camouflage to coalition partners and may not be easily distinguished by Afghans.

"We behave in a professional manner and we get that out there every time," he told reporters. "We get out on the ground, we interact with the individuals, the local nationals, we tell them we're Canadian and we're there to support them.

"They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

# Ex–Afghan warlord ready to take on Taliban; Just give him the word, he'll raise 10,000 troops

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100187

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Hoang Dinh Nam, Agence France–Presse, GettyImages / Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, left, says he can help defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan if President Hamid Karzai and his military backers just give him the go–ahead. ;

**DATELINE:** SHEBIRGHAN, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** David Pugliese

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**NOTE:** Afghanistan: Legislators pass motion for ceasefire with Taliban, Page B1

**WORD COUNT:** 787

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SHEBIRGHAN, Afghanistan – A former Afghan warlord who played a key role in helping the U.S. defeat the Taliban in late 2001 says he can do the same thing again if President Hamid Karzai and his international military backers just give him the word.

Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum said he could raise 10,000 seasoned troops, combat veterans from the days of fighting the Taliban, to crush the ongoing insurgency. His proposal would involve 10,000 Afghan soldiers from all ethnic groups in the country to fight alongside an equal number of troops from the international forces now in the country.

"Then you would see what will happen in just six months," he explained in a rare interview from his stronghold in northern Afghanistan.

"If President Karzai gives me the power, I can guarantee him and assure the international community and the people of Afghanistan that we can play a significant role in defeating and breaking the back of the Taliban."

Speaking through an interpreter, Gen. Dostum said such a force would pursue and destroy the Taliban even if it has to go into the lawless Pakistani territories along the border with Afghanistan, where the Taliban recruit and operate.

Gen. Dostum, 53, is currently chief of staff of the Afghan army. but that is considered a largely ceremonial position. Some in the government of Mr. Karzai don't trust the general and worry that he is consolidating his power and secretly re–arming his forces, something Gen. Dostum denies.

The general has survived over the decades by making deals with various powerbrokers in Afghanistan. He fought on the side of the Russians during the bloody occupation and war that engulfed the country from 1979 to 1989. Later, he threw his support behind anti–Communist forces.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on the United States, Gen. Dostum's troops joined with U.S. special forces and CIA operatives to play an important role in defeating the Taliban.

The general's tanks and cavalry, backed by U.S. air power, routed the Taliban in a matter of months. His men have a reputation of being ruthless and skilled fighters.

Gen. Dostum, who has been accused of war crimes for his actions both during Afghanistan's earlier wars and in the aftermath of the Taliban defeat, dismisses concerns that he poses a threat to the Karzai regime. He points out that he was the first to disarm and support Afghan's elected government.

But Gen. Dostum said NATO and the U.S. are making a mistake by creating the fledgling Afghan National Army (ANA) along the lines of a western military force. The ANA are no match for seasoned Taliban fighters, he added. The answer, he maintains, are the hardened combat veterans from Afghanistan's previous wars.

"The Taliban are recruiting people who know war and suffering and have nothing to lose," he explained. "Of course they will be tougher than the ANA recruits."

NATO and the U.S. see the ANA as key to their eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan. Afghan troops are already fighting alongside international forces and NATO hopes that at some point the Afghan army will be able to take on even more of a role on the battlefield.

In the last year, the Taliban have rebounded and launched numerous attacks on civilians and international and Afghan forces.

Gen. Dostum said he warned Mr. Karzai in 2002 that although the Taliban were on the run, they should be pursued and destroyed. In the following years he said he continued to tell the Afghan government that if something wasn't done about Taliban remnants, they would regroup.

Dostum said his warnings were ignored and what he predicted has come to pass.

"The Taliban are now becoming more and more powerful, they are regrouping and bringing more fighters from Pakistan."

He said his presence in the north is key to preventing the Taliban from conducting operations there. And certainly there have only been a few attacks on international forces in the north. Almost all Taliban activity is focused in the the south, where Canadians and British forces are stationed.

But some western diplomats in Kabul say the general is no longer a force to be reckoned with in Afghanistan. They say it would be impossible to use his troops because of Gen. Dostum's past abuses on the battlefield.

But others argue that he is still a major powerbroker in the north and that there are few of the major Afghan leaders who don't have blood on their hands from actions during the country's ongoing wars.

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, a former senior Taliban official, agreed that Gen. Dostum is a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield, adding that he is "a big killer." But the mullah said if Gen. Dostum, a Uzbek, was allowed to command a new army, he would face an uprising from Afghanistan's Pashtun ethnic group, who hate him.

Gen. Dostum said Afghanistan is in a once in a lifetime position in which the international community wants to help the country rebuild. It's a chance that may never come again, he says, and it is too important an opportunity to allow the Taliban to jeopardize it.

# THE AFGHAN MISSION 'The people who bombed us are bad guys' Survivors of U.S. air strike that killed 21 civilians bring their wounded en masse to nearby military base

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL

**IDN:** 071300232

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**PAGE:** A12 (MAP)

**BYLINE:** GRAEME SMITH

**SECTION:** International News

**EDITION:** Metro

**DATELINE:** SANGIN DISTRICT, AFGHANISTAN

**WORDS:** 1103

**WORD COUNT:** 1024

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GRAEME SMITH SANGIN DISTRICT, AFGHANISTAN Bleeding and moaning softly, dozens of injured women and children fled the fighting in a northern valley of Helmand province yesterday after a night of U.S. air strikes that killed an estimated 21 civilians.

Their stories of terror amid thunderous attacks from the sky will add to the pressure on Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has recently grown more strident in his protests against civilian deaths inflicted by foreign troops.

Rising concern about civilian casualties was also seen as a factor behind a law proposed by Afghanistan's Senate this week calling for talks with Taliban insurgents and urging international forces to halt their operations in the country unless attacked.

A grim tally emerged as angry villagers brought their injured and dead to Forward Operating Base Robinson, an outpost shared by Canadian, British, and U.S. troops. There were seven women, three men and two children among the dead; five women, five men and 15 children were injured.

Helmand governor Assadullah Wafa estimated the total number of dead civilians at 21, and said he plans to investigate.

Survivors arrived in the town of Sangin in a ragtag stream of vehicles, some of them riding along with bodies of slain relatives.

Many of the victims were related to each other, living in a cluster of villages about 24 kilometres northeast of Sangin District Centre.

Rahmatullah, who is 13 and uses only one name, seemed to forget the shrapnel wound on his hand as he watched British medics treating his uncle. Four of his other relatives were killed, he said, but he dragged two of his brothers alive from the mud rubble of a house.

"The people who bombed us are bad guys," Rahmatullah said. "They should attack the Taliban, not us." The violence started Tuesday when U.S. Special Forces were ambushed by suspected Taliban insurgents using

rocket-propelled grenades and smaller weapons.

The Americans had been trying to secure a river valley that runs from Sangin to Kajaki, which serves as a strategic heartland for the opium trade and is the most important electricity corridor in southern Afghanistan. A U.S. soldier was shot and killed.

Documenting what happened next is difficult, as Sangin remains too dangerous to travel independently. The U.S. Special Forces declined to comment, but a U.S. military spokesman told The Associated Press that aircraft killed "a large number of insurgents." The spokesman said he could not confirm any civilian deaths.

Anecdotal reports suggest that the U.S. forces pulled back after a heated firefight with the insurgents and called in air support, including Apache attack helicopters, F-18 fighter jets and an AC-130 gunship. It's not clear which of the aircraft fired, but the attacks resulted in an initial count of 39 Taliban killed.

The governor suggested that the air strikes happened after insurgents took shelter in civilian homes; the use of human shields is an increasingly common Taliban tactic.

However, the villagers denied that fighters were sheltering in their houses. Many of the injured came from tribes such as the Alokozai and Barakzai, not usually seen as hostile to the government.

"We had not seen the Taliban for the last 10 days," said Daru Khan, a white-bearded tribal elder who accompanied his injured wife and other family members to the military outpost.

Mr. Khan said the bombing started in the late evening and continued into yesterday morning. He hid inside his home, but ventured out at dawn to find his brother's home destroyed and nearby trees flattened.

His brother was alive, lying beside a wall.

Two children were dead on the other side of the compound, but Mr. Khan's terrified brother yelled at him to stay away from the corpses.

"He was afraid to go collect them," he said. "He said, 'Don't go there! They will bomb you, too!'" Another resident of the same village, which is known as Barakzai, said the Taliban started the trouble by ambushing the Americans but that fight was far away from his ravaged village.

"This is completely wrong behaviour by the foreigners, and it's always happening now," Jan Mohammed said by telephone. "It's like Shindand, and the shopkeepers in Kandahar." Late last month, an investigation was launched into reports that perhaps 50 civilians were killed in U.S. air strikes in Shindand, in western Afghanistan.

Many people in the south also remember the reaction of British troops to a bombing in Kandahar city last December; at least seven people were shot throughout the city during the aftermath.

Army Colonel John Nicholson, U.S. commander for eastern Afghanistan, apologized on Tuesday for the deaths of 19 civilians shot by U.S.

soldiers about a month ago in Nangarhar province.

As in many such cases, the ordinary Afghans caught in the latest incident say they feel trapped between warring factions. Rahmatullah said he hasn't been able to attend classes since the Taliban visited his school a year ago and cut the heads off four students. Yesterday morning, he said he saw 12 of his neighbours lying dead and a girl with her foot blown off by the foreigners' bombs. Both sides are brutal, he said.

THE AFGHAN MISSION 'The people who bombed us are bad guys' Survivors of U.S. air strike that killed 21



"We ran when we heard the bombs," he said, with a shrug. "Still, they found us." By the numbers 5,043 Minimum number of civilians killed in Afghanistan by U.S. or NATO troops since the war began on Oct. 7, 2001, according to figures compiled from media and NGO reports.

Source: Afghan Victim Memorial Project An eye for an eye Killing civilians in Afghanistan not only causes unintended deaths, it creates unintended enemies for U.S. and NATO troops.

Pashtuns, the most common ethnic group in the country, live by a centuries-old tribal code of honour called the Pashtunwali, and one of its central tenets is badal , or revenge. If a member of one's family is killed, the blood of the aggressor or the aggressor's family must be spilled. An unavenged death is the deepest shame a Pashtun can carry, and neither time, compensation nor uneven odds can erase the obligation for payback.

There's a saying that goes: "A Pashtun waited 100 years, then took his revenge. It was quick work." Pashtun lore is filled with tales of family members devoting their entire lives to seeking retribution for a slain relative and accounts of weak individuals settling scores with much stronger opponents.

In this way, civilian deaths not only create anger among members of the population, they make Afghans duty-bound to take up arms against coalition forces. Staff gsmith@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; United States

SUBJECT TERM: strife; air strikes; deaths; social structure; statistics

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

# AFGHAN SOCIETY Disabled fall through the cracks of war

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL  
**IDN:** 071300231  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**PAGE:** A12  
**BYLINE:** SONYA FATAH  
**SECTION:** International News  
**SOURCE:** SPCL  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, AFGHANISTAN  
**WORDS:** 683  
**WORD COUNT:** 677

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SONYA FATAH Special to The Globe and Mail KABUL, AFGHANISTAN When the U.S.–led bombing of Afghanistan began in the winter of 2001, Shawzia, now 25, was in the living room with her father and sister. She remembers hearing a plane rumble overhead before the bombs began to fall.

Shawzia's father and one sister died instantly, but she survived.

Her face was completely disfigured and over the months that followed, she began to lose her sight. Today, Shawzia is almost blind. The right side of her face has ballooned and slowly begun to encroach on the left side of her face. She is in constant pain.

"I would be happy today if she had also died," says Modira, Shawzia's mother, as she sits beside her disabled daughter. Shawzia, too, says she often wishes herself dead. When she walks down the street, people call her names and laugh at her. Her mother, a widow in a patriarchal culture, feels like one of many Afghan women left to pick up the pieces in a place with few services for the disabled.

War–related injuries account for about 17 per cent of Afghanistan's 747,000 to 867,000 disabled people, according to a report released by Handicapped International. In 2005, the NGO reported that at least 2.7 per cent of the population had "severe difficulties in everyday functioning," a number that has likely risen since then.

The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled (recently renamed the Ministry of Social Labour, Martyrs and Disabled), makes a distinction between people disabled in war — by land mines or cluster bombs or in fighting — and those with congenital disabilities. Only war victims receive a meagre pension from the ministry.

"Part of the problem is even the government's mentality is that war victims are special because they have sacrificed their lives for a cause, and others are disabled because God does not like them," says Afghan Disabled Union's Omara Khan.

The stigma also means many disabled Afghans live in virtual isolation, cut off from society and unable to integrate.

"Civil society doesn't really exist here. Most of the services provided here are pretty basic or non–existent.

Everything is new or has recently been set up," says Arnaud Quemine, field program director for Handicapped International.

A number of international aid groups provide assistance in Kabul, although in rural Afghanistan, there is nothing. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been running a rehabilitation centre for the past 15 years, providing prosthetics and other services.

Handicapped International helps run a Community Centre for the Disabled in Kabul's Karta Sei district.

Saifuddin Nezami, the director at the centre, said he sees hundreds of people who feel hopeless. "A man came to me yesterday," he said.

"He told me, his wife had kicked him out. She told him, 'You are not able to bring me any money or any food. What is the difference between you and me? You are a nuisance. Please leave the house.' The man was desperate. He said, 'Please help me. Or I will take some fuel and burn myself.' " The stigma in a country where one in every five families has a disabled person is part of the problem. "If there is a disabled child in the house, the opportunities for schooling, for training and for anything else go to the non-disabled child," says Tina Singleton, Handicapped International's project manager at the community centre.

"In the Ministry of Works and Public Affairs there is a rule that says that anyone who is disabled more than 60 per cent does not have the right to work in government." Mr. Nezami looks at his leg, severed above the knee. "I don't have the right to work in government." More than 70 per cent of disabled children cannot go to school, Mr. Nezami says. "Disability doesn't mean inability," says Mr. Nezami, whose centre has trained a good number of disabled people and found jobs for them. "But, in our country, they are not allowed to take part in society. So, a kind of grudge is created in their heart."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; war victims; disabled persons; social structure; statistics

# With friends like these ...; Self-proclaimed leaders of Canada's anti-war movement do themselves, and the cause of peace, a disservice by associating with terrorists

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A13

**PNAME:** Arguments

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Mohammed Salem, Reuters / Far-left members of Canada's purported peace leadership have developed strong alliances with extremist Islamist movements, including members of Hamas, above, which Canada has identified as a terrorist group. ;

**BYLINE:** Terry Glavin

**SOURCE:** Citizen Special

**WORD COUNT:** 1186

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This week, the Citizen provided its readers with a rare glimpse of a scandal that has severely damaged Canada's ability to effectively engage in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and it has nothing to do with the ill-treatment of Taliban detainees ("Canadian antiwar activists sat down with terror groups," May 8).

The scandal involves a bizarre, backroom alliance between key leaders of Canada's so-called "anti-war" movement and the Islamist far-right. The Citizen story was an account of a recent gathering in Cairo that had gone largely unreported in the English-speaking world.

The Cairo meeting brought together hundreds of militants and activists from around the world. One of the largest contingents was a 20-member Canadian delegation that included the key leaders of such groups as the Toronto Stop the War Coalition, the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, and Canada's umbrella anti-war organization, the Canadian Peace Alliance.

Among the Islamist participants at the Cairo gathering were scores of activists from Egypt's barely tolerated Muslim Brotherhood, several senior officials with Lebanon's illegal police-statelet Hezbollah, and members of the politburo of Hamas -- the Jew-hating suicide-bomb fanatics that the Canadian government properly recognizes as terrorists.

It was encouraging to see that the Citizen had made the effort to inquire into what happened in Cairo, but the gathering there was only the latest milestone in an ongoing convergence of the far left and the far right that has been proceeding quietly within the confines of Canada's anti-war movement for some time.

Canada's conservative news media are by their nature disinclined to subject the internal goings-on of left-wing organizations to any vigorous scrutiny, and the country's more liberal journalists have tended to give self-professed anti-war leaders a free pass. As a result, the activists who made their way to Cairo last month had long enjoyed a privileged and prominent position in some of the most emotional and divisive public debates in Canada's recent history.

With friends like these ...; Self-proclaimed leaders of Canada's anti-war movement do themselves, and the cause of peace, a disservice by associating with terrorists.

These people don't deserve the status they've been afforded. They've filled the vacuum created by the influence of the flaccid American counterculture in Canada, and they have done incalculable damage to the necessary debates Canadians should be having about this country's policies in Afghanistan.

For too long, progressive Canadian Muslims have been crying out for some proper attention to this disgraceful state of affairs. For too long, they have been ignored.

More than a year ago, 11 prominent Canadian Muslims issued a desperate plea, warning that "a section of the left" in Canada was foolishly offering itself up to be put to the purposes of theocratic reactionaries. A "curtain of fear" had fallen over much of Canada's intellectual class, the Muslims asserted, and the result was that much of the left had rendered itself incapable of recognizing fascists when they're cloaked in an "ethnic" or "religious" guise.

Not three months ago, "anti-war" leaders who later travelled to Cairo to swap notes with Hamas and Hezbollah were partying with Iranian diplomats in Richmond Hill, Ont., at an elaborate celebration of the 28th anniversary of Iran's Khomeinist revolution. This regime, we should remember, is run by mullahs who routinely admit to fantasies of seeing Israel incinerated. They have presided over the slaughter of thousands of trade unionists, student activists, feminists, socialists, gay people, ethnic minorities and journalists.

Just this week, the brave Canadian Muslim leader Tarek Fatah, who abandoned the New Democratic Party because of its head-in-the-sand approach to the challenge of religious sectarianism, was telling a Toronto newspaper that the activist opponents of Canada's mission in Afghanistan had become so deluded in their strange alliances that they were now marching alongside "the very people who would hang them."

The section of the left in Canada that has prostrated itself before the Islamist far right revolves around a sect that runs the Canadian operations of disgraced British MP George Galloway's primary support base — the Socialist Workers Party. Mr. Galloway's Respect Party is functionally an alliance between the SWP and the rightist Muslim Association of Britain.

Just as the SWP captured the leadership of Britain's Stop the War Coalition, in Canada this same sect now provides the staff positions for the Canadian Peace Alliance and the Toronto Stop the War Coalition, as well as the leadership of the War Resisters Support Campaign and other allied groups.

But you've got to hand it to these people. They have successfully framed the debate on the left about Canada's policies in Afghanistan, and about Canada's approach to the tragedy of the Middle East. They are among the leading authors of a widely accepted narrative against which NDP leader Jack Layton must now pass muster in order to maintain the allegiance of a vocal component of the NDP's support base.

In that narrative, the Taliban are not the brutal tormentors of the proud Afghan people. George W. Bush is, and so are NATO and the Canadian military. In that narrative, Canadian soldiers are not friends of the Afghan people. They are part of an imperialist army of occupation. In that narrative, Afghanistan and Iraq are conflated in a single quagmire. Zionists control pretty well everything. Israel is always wrong.

If you notice that Hezbollah attributes American support for Israel to a Masonic conspiracy, or that Hamas is a death cult that boasts of turning Palestinian children into human bombs with which to kill Jews, you'll risk being tarred an Islamophobe. If you point out that there is absolutely nothing progressive or liberal or brave about the fashionably strident "troops out" position on Afghanistan, it won't matter that you've been a person of the left all your life, as I have been. You will be called a warmonger, a neoconservative, a red-baiter, and worse.

And that's what the road to Cairo was paved with.

With friends like these ...; Self-proclaimed leaders of Canada's anti-war movement do themselves, and the

It's been a long and tortuous journey. A major turning point was the seminal 1994 tract written by SWP theorist Chris Harman, *The Prophet and the Proletariat*. It called on the world's socialists, disoriented by the collapse of Soviet socialism, to throw in their lot with the "anti-imperialism" of Islamist theocrats.

But the road to Cairo has origins that reach farther back than that. It's not as though the far left and the far right have never converged before.

And the Canadian left will survive. None of this is to suggest that especially horrible things will necessarily follow from the spectacle of Canadian "anti-war" activists enjoying, rather too much, the transgressive frisson that comes from sharing their affections with violent, extreme-right wingnuts in far-away places.

But there already has been a casualty in all this. Before the nations of the world, Canada could have produced a robust, vigorous and broadly popular progressive movement, disciplined by the duty of solidarity and committed to the ongoing liberation of Afghanistan from one of the ugliest tyrannies history has ever known.

That opportunity was lost. We may never get it back.

Terry Glavin's latest book is *The Sixth Extinction: Journeys Among the Lost and Left Behind* (Thomas Dunne Books). He is the editor of Transmontanus Books and an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia. He lives in Victoria, B.C.

# Kabul fires 'warning shot' at NATO; Legislators urge ceasefire, talks with Taliban over civilian deaths

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**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Abdul Malek, Agence France–Presse, GettyImages / Afghan parliamentarian Abdul Ahmad Zahidi says legislators are calling for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban because of mounting civilian casualties. 'It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't.' Above, a man wounded in a U.S. airstrike in Helmand province is taken to hospital. ;

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** Jason Straziuso and Tom Blackwell

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press and National Post

**NOTE:** War in Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 721

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KABUL – Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled "a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged yesterday of 21 villagers killed in airstrikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesman said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 51/2–year international military mission is crumbling after a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

"One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. "It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law.

Presidential officials were not available for comment yesterday. However, Mr. Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. special forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of airstrikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed "three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region.

The coalition said a "significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the airstrikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be verified. The incident is just the latest in a string of operations in which Afghans have lamented civilian casualties.

A Canadian military official, meanwhile, said engaging in a fight with Taliban who are hiding out among civilians is "not what we do."

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Mr. Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

On Tuesday, U.S. military officials apologized and paid compensation to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded by Marines Special Forces who fired on civilians in March.

"We don't want their money and apologies. If somebody loses one of his family members, an apology won't bring him back," said Haji Lawania, who was injured in the incident and whose father and nephew were killed.

Nicholas Lunt, a NATO spokesman in Afghanistan, said it was "quite clear" the Afghan parliament was making a statement about how military operations are carried out. He said NATO took the issue "very, very seriously."

"I do not consider this at the moment a decisive vote on our status here and I think it would be wrong to interpret it that way, but I think it is definitely a warning shot across NATO's bows to take notice of the concerns," Mr. Lunt said.

He said NATO leaders know their ability to operate depends on the support of Afghan people and that civilian deaths undermine the mission.

Mr. Lunt said "negotiations should be encouraged" if militants are prepared to respect Afghan laws.

But Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a purported Taliban spokesman, said the group rejected any type of negotiations "until the Americans leave Afghanistan."

In a separate incident this week, British soldiers shot and killed a civilian man in Kandahar after a convoy came under rifle and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

Maj. Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting of its own earlier this week, said Canadian soldiers take the issue of civilian casualties very seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," said Maj. Ruff. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds, but we won't engage them. It's not what we do."



"We know there are civilians in and about the area and we won't engage where they're at."

Maj. Ruff said he was not concerned that the recent civilian deaths would spark a backlash against Canadians, who look similar in camouflage to coalition partners.

"We behave in a professional manner and we get that out there every time," he told reporters. "We get out on the ground, we interact with the individuals, the local nationals, we tell them we're Canadian and we're there to support them..... They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

# Police show off terror suspect

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100138  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.05.10  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** B1 / FRONT  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** The National Post  
**NOTE:** War in Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 196

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KABUL – The Kabul police captured what they said is a key terrorism suspect, and went to some unusual lengths yesterday to tout their coup.

As a CanWest journalist arrived for a meeting on a different matter, the head of criminal investigations proudly revealed the arrest of Sher Ahmad on charges of assassinating a former Afghan prime minister last week -- and then offered up the suspect for a photograph.

Two doors down, the journalist and a translator were ushered into a room where a neatly dressed Mr. Ahmad sat on a well-stuffed sofa, being quietly interrogated by two officers.

He seemed unfazed by the flashing of a camera as he spoke animatedly to detectives. Finally, another officer shooed the visitors out of the room.

Mr. Ahmad is charged with killing Abdul Sabur Farid Kuhestani, a conservative Afghan senator who was prime minister for a few weeks in 1992, after the fall of the Taliban.

Before that, he was a member of the Islamist Hezb-i-Islami party, now labelled a terrorist group by some, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Alishah Khan Paktiawal, the Kabul police criminal investigation chief, said the suspect in the killing is a current cohort of Mr. Hekmatyar.

"This is not a small fish," Mr. Mr. Paktiawal said.

Beyond the suspect's alleged links to Mr. Hekmatyar, Mr. Paktiawal did not offer a motive for the crime. More arrests are expected.

# Kabul fires 'warning shot' at NATO; Legislators urge ceasefire, talks with Taliban over civilian deaths

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**IDNUMBER** 200705100137

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen

**DATE:** 2007.05.10

**EDITION:** Early

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** B1 / FRONT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Abdul Malek, Agence France–Presse, GettyImages / Afghan parliamentarian Abdul Ahmad Zahidi says legislators are calling for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban because of mounting civilian casualties. 'It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't.' Above, a man wounded in a U.S. airstrike in Helmand province is taken to hospital. ;

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** Jason Straziuso and Tom Blackwell

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press and National Post

**NOTE:** War in Afghanistan

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KABUL – Legislators angered by mounting civilian deaths have sent a sharp warning to U.S. and NATO commanders, passing a motion for a military ceasefire and negotiations with the Taliban.

The resolution, which NATO labelled "a warning shot" across its own bow, came as reports emerged yesterday of 21 villagers killed in airstrikes, a toll that a Taliban spokesman said the militia would avenge.

The proposal from the upper house of parliament, which also calls for a date to be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops, suggests that Afghan support for the 51/2–year international military mission is crumbling amid a series of civilian deaths.

The motion reflects legislators' belief that negotiations with militants would be more effective than fighting, said Aminuddin Muzafari, the secretary of the upper house.

"One of the reasons I want this bill implemented is because of the civilian deaths caused by both the enemy and international forces," said Abdul Ahmad Zahidi, a parliamentarian from Ghazni province. "It's difficult to prevent civilian deaths when the Taliban go inside the homes of local people. How can you prevent casualties then? You can't."

Parliament's lower house and President Hamid Karzai must endorse the proposal for it to become law.

Presidential officials were not available for comment yesterday. However, Mr. Karzai has repeatedly said he is open to talks with Taliban.

The resolution passed Tuesday, hours before U.S. special forces battling insurgents in Helmand province called in a series of airstrikes.

The U.S.-led coalition said it destroyed "three enemy command and control compounds" near Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region.

The coalition said a "significant" number of militants died in the 16-hour battle, which pitted insurgents against U.S. and Afghan government troops. One coalition soldier also died.

However, Helmand Gov. Assadullah Wafa said militants had sought shelter in Afghan homes and that the airstrikes had killed at least 21 civilians.

Neither account could be verified. The incident is just the latest in a string of operations in which Afghans have lamented civilian casualties.

A Canadian military official, meanwhile, said engaging in a fight with Taliban who are hiding out among civilians is "not what we do."

While a majority of civilian deaths over the years have been caused by Taliban attacks, fatalities caused by international forces have enraged villagers and sparked angry protests around Afghanistan in recent weeks, prompting Mr. Karzai to warn that Afghans have run out of patience with such losses.

On Tuesday, U.S. military officials apologized and paid compensation to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded by Marines Special Forces who fired on civilians in March.

"We don't want their money and apologies. If somebody loses one of his family members, an apology won't bring him back," said Haji Lawania, who was injured in the incident and whose father and nephew were killed.

Nicholas Lunt, a NATO spokesman in Afghanistan, said it was "quite clear" the Afghan parliament was making a statement about how military operations are carried out. He said NATO took the issue "very, very seriously."

"I do not consider this at the moment a decisive vote on our status here and I think it would be wrong to interpret it that way, but I think it is definitely a warning shot across NATO's bows to take notice of the concerns," Mr. Lunt said.

He said NATO leaders know their ability to operate depends on the support of Afghan people and that civilian deaths undermine the mission.

Mr. Lunt said "negotiations should be encouraged" if militants are prepared to respect Afghan laws.

But Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a purported Taliban spokesman, said the group rejected any type of negotiations "until the Americans leave Afghanistan."

In a separate incident this week, British soldiers shot and killed a civilian man in Kandahar after a convoy came under rifle and rocket-propelled grenade attack.

Maj. Alex Ruff, whose unit was embroiled in two days of intense fighting of its own earlier this week, said Canadian soldiers take the issue of civilian casualties very seriously.

"Canadians conduct our business as we conduct it and we're very much reflective of Canadian society," said Maj. Ruff. "We had a couple of incidents where the Taliban were hiding amongst women and children inside compounds, but we won't engage them. It's not what we do."

Kabul fires 'warning shot' at NATO; Legislators urge ceasefire, talks with Taliban over civilian deaths

"We know there are civilians in and about the area and we won't engage where they're at."

Maj. Ruff said he was not concerned that the recent civilian deaths would spark a backlash against Canadians, who look similar in camouflage to coalition partners.

"We behave in a professional manner and we get that out there every time," he told reporters. "We get out on the ground, we interact with the individuals, the local nationals, we tell them we're Canadian and we're there to support them ... They quickly realize they can recognize the Canadian flag. It's the way we behave."

# On war, a little diplomacy couldn't hurt Peace talks with the Taliban? Not if you're waiting for a push from Canada

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LAWRENCE MARTIN News reports out of Kabul say the Afghan senate has backed proposals to hold negotiations with the resurgent Taliban to end the bloodshed in Afghanistan. According to the proposals, Western coalition troops should halt their search and destroy missions against Taliban fighters and other militants.

Tuesday's senate decision was, in part, motivated by escalating discontent over civilian casualties at the hands of foreign forces.

Yesterday, right on the heels of the vote, 21 more civilians were killed by U.S. air strikes.

As could be predicted, the Afghan diplomatic push got a ho-hum reception in Canada. Not one party leader in Question Period picked up on it. Although impetus for negotiations with the Taliban is gaining in many quarters – even among some U.S. Republicans – don't look to Ottawa. Canada used to lead the way on such peace initiatives; now we take a back seat.

The Liberals, once our foremost advocates of the diplomatic solution, have not been heard. The governing Conservatives, so enamoured of people in uniform, are not terribly interested. It is left to the NDP's Jack Layton to carry the banner of negotiation and diplomacy.

And for his troubles, he is derided as "Taliban Jack." In Afghanistan, as countless experts have pointed out, there are diplomatic openings. Just this week, a former top Taliban official, Abdul Salam Zaeef, said a settlement with President Hamid Karzai's government is possible. The Taliban are not monolithic: There are moderate elements, radical elements and elements that aren't even Taliban. Diplomacy holds out the possibility of at least bringing moderates on board while isolating the extremists. And diplomacy comes at little cost: If it's tried and fails, it's back to battlefield, where you were anyway.

But many of our leaders are more inclined to the school of thought of our top soldier, General Rick Hillier. You don't negotiate with the enemy. You don't talk to scumbags. You impose military solutions and let the goodwill – we can see this in Iraq – flow from there.

Lessons of history, it goes without saying, are not heeded. Peace with the Irish Republican Army came only after negotiations – with the terrorists. No one thought you could negotiate a peace with the Soviet evil empire. It happened.

On war, a little diplomacy couldn't hurt Peace talks with the Taliban? Not if you're waiting for a push from Ca

If our leaders need more examples, they could ask Peggy Mason, a former disarmament ambassador to the United Nations who's now with the Ottawa-based Rideau Institute. She drew up a list of civil wars or regional conflicts where people finally awoke from the killing and got to the bargaining table. "Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Sudan. Oh yes, and even Bosnia [Dayton accords]." You have a choice: You can get to the table early, or you can let the years of killing stack up.

In Kabul, the senate action comes as the war, like so many of those other conflicts, takes on a no-end-in-sight look. The Afghan senate usually works closely with Mr. Karzai, and it's hoped the President will pick up on its lead this time. In the past, Mr. Karzai has made some unsuccessful attempts to reach out to the Taliban.

But diplomacy rarely works with the first tries. In Afghanistan, many feel that the local attempts must be replaced by a comprehensive negotiation under United Nations leadership that goes beyond the internal political process and encompasses neighbouring countries.

A push from Canada wouldn't hurt. But we've been too caught up in our new tough-guy role. Asked about Afghanistan in the House of Commons yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said for roughly the 200th time that the opposition, which supports our troops, should support our troops. His party, with its vision of Canada more as a warrior than a peace broker, could hardly have been expected to push the diplomacy channels.

But how are we to understand the party of Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chretien not shouting from the rooftops, not angling for diplomatic solutions, not trying to build the basis for them – not even when presented with openings? In turning away from statecraft, they forget their own history, as well as the history of war.

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ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; foreign policy; political; war; peace

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# AFGHANISTAN Why no outcry from NGOs against IEDs?

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J.L. GRANATSTEIN Improvised explosive devices have killed hundreds of NATO soldiers – including Canadians – in Afghanistan. They have also been used with devastating effect against American and coalition forces in Iraq. As IEDs are, for all practical purposes, anti–personnel land mines, banned by most countries since the Ottawa Convention of 1997, how is it that there has been no outcry from the non–governmental organizations that spearheaded the 1997 convention against their recent use? Land mines are a traditional military weapon designed to deny the use of ground to the enemy or to harass soldiers by forcing them to engage in mine–clearance exercises that are, by definition, dangerous, slow and labour–intensive. In Western armies, land mines traditionally were mapped and removed once the battle had passed them by and their usefulness had ended; but non–Western armies have not been so careful.

In Afghanistan, for example, after the decade–long war against the Soviet Union, an estimated 10 million mines remained in the ground, almost all laid by Soviet forces.

IEDs can be fashioned from virtually any explosive, ranging from old (or new) anti–tank and anti–personnel mines to artillery shells.

They are usually buried on or alongside a road or path and they can be "victim–activated" by an individual or a vehicle putting pressure on the IED's detonator. At a minimum, the resulting explosion will blow off a foot or a leg. They can also be "command–activated," exploded by an electric charge, a radio signal or some other means by someone hidden nearby. Frequently, such command–activated IEDs are supplemented by small arms fire and rocket–propelled grenades.

But IEDs, particularly victim–activated ones, can be exploded by anyone – a child, a pregnant women, a donkey or a soldier. They do not discriminate, and many of the 25,000 civilians killed worldwide each year by mine strikes are, in fact, killed by IEDs.

So where are the NGOs? It was the NGOs, notably the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, that mobilized public support for the Ottawa Convention. It was politicians such as Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's foreign affairs minister under Jean Chretien, who used the pressure created by a very large coalition of NGOs to secure the ban on anti–personnel mines. This was a major achievement, one that has bound 155 nations not to employ, stockpile, produce or transfer land mines and, indeed, to destroy their stockpiles. When Pakistan suggested earlier this year that it might mine its border with Afghanistan to prevent (or slow) infiltration of Taliban insurgents into Afghanistan, there were quick protests from NGOs and from nations such as Canada. That these border measures could have taken some pressure off Canadian troops in Kandahar did not appear



to matter – to the Department of Foreign Affairs, mines are worse than dead Canadians, or so it seemed. No one, however, is speaking out against the use of IEDs by terrorists in Afghanistan or Iraq.

That's not wholly correct. In 1999, a coalition of NGOs did call for non–state actors – insurgent groups such as today's Taliban or Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers – to stop using land mines. There was scant response for obvious reasons, not least that rebel or guerrilla organizations are hard to contact, not easy to control, and very difficult to regulate. They will usually use what they have at hand against their enemies, and most guerrilla groups have easy access to mines and explosives, and can readily build IEDs.

But it is worth noting that, in 1998, the Taliban, then in power in Afghanistan, denounced the use of anti–personnel land mines and, in fact, pronounced their use to be against the precepts of Islam.

There is a very large opening there, should NGOs choose to use it against IEDs.

And they should do so. IEDs are so similar to land mines in their use and effects that only those who split hairs can argue they ought not to be banned. The Taliban insurgents who have wreaked havoc in Kandahar province might not be embarrassed into stopping their use of IEDs if the NGOs took the field against them, but at least the NGOs could claim they were being consistent. The widespread sense that anti–American or anti–capitalist sentiments, rather than humanitarian motives, drive them today might be dispelled. That would be useful. And if, by chance, the Taliban felt obliged to follow their 1998 statements that land–mine use was against Islam, the effects might be profound in Afghanistan.

Will the NGOs at last speak out against IEDs? J.L. GRANATSTEIN Writes on behalf of the Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; armaments; land mines; human rights

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

# AFGHANISTAN Liberals press for answers on troop pullout

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GLORIA GALLOWAY OTTAWA Amid a cross-Commons volley of barbs, insults and accusations, the Liberals cited unnamed sources yesterday as saying the government is secretly negotiating a pullout from Afghanistan in two years.

Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor and Prime Minister Stephen Harper both stood in response to questions about the veracity of the reports, but neither gave direct answers.

Canada's current commitment in Afghanistan ends in February, 2009, and will not continue without parliamentary support.

Mr. Harper has said Canada should stay in Afghanistan until the job is done, but Liberal Defence critic Denis Coderre cited unspecified sources as saying the government is quietly talking with NATO about a pullout when the commitment is over.

"The information that we have . . . is that there's already negotiations with Canada and NATO," he said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; foreign policy; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Denis Coderre

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party