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# Campaign to eliminate polio among Afghan kids; Health officials, volunteers join forces to fight disease with vaccine

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Health officials launched a different sort of Afghan offensive yesterday as a brigade of volunteer soldiers armed with clipboards, chalk and tiny bottles of vaccine fanned out across the city, hunting an invisible enemy that preys on the poor and the young. The World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Canadian International Development Agency are among the partners in an ongoing effort to push polio out of Afghanistan, one of only four countries in the world where conflict and poverty have conspired to allow its resurgence. Two recently confirmed cases in the southern part of the country prompted Sunday's start of a special round of vaccinations. Volunteers braved the perils of Kandahar city by going door-to-door and administering two drops of oral vaccine to every child under the age of five, said Arshad Quddus of the WHO's Kabul office. "The objective is to interrupt the transmission of this virus, which is only now confined to the two provinces in this country," Quddus said in an interview at Kandahar city's dilapidated Mirwais Hospital. "If we can interrupt the transmission in these remaining two provinces, there is a very bright chance for Afghanistan to become polio-free." Over a rickety table at the hospital's main entrance, a steady stream of parents surrendered wailing children to a friendly, wizened old man, who gently squeezed open the mouths of the less co-operative youngsters, dispensing his vaccine with a toothy grin. He then used a black felt-tip pen to crudely mark a tiny fingernail to identify a vaccinated child. Beyond the relative safety of the hospital gate, burka-clad volunteers banged on rusty tin doors and asked family members to round up youngsters, using chalk to make Pashto markings on the wall to indicate an immunized household. Others in the entourage cast edgy glances up and down the dusty, mud-walled alley, well aware that Kandahar remains in the grips of a security alert in the wake of last week's deadly Taliban bombings, which targeted police and government officials. "It's very challenging work, particularly considering the security situation," Quddus said. "One of the biggest challenges is inaccessibility in some of the seriously security-compromised areas." Polio is a highly contagious, incurable viral infection of the nervous system, which can cause crippling paralysis or even death within hours of infection. At its peak, polio paralyzed and killed up to half a million people every year, before Jonas Salk discovered a vaccine in 1954. Afghanistan is home to an estimated 7.3 million children aged five and under. The current campaign aims to vaccinate 1.2 million of them in the provinces of Kandahar and neighbouring Helmand, including 350,000 children in Kandahar city alone. Many of those in the city are orphans or living on the street, which poses its own challenges, Quddus added. "We try to make sure to catch all these children, who are probably at a high risk of being missed," he said. "We have teams at the bus station, we have teams in the markets and in the streets, to vaccinate those children, and we have special teams for the nomads."

# Bomber kills 14 in Afghan market

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GARDEZ, Afghanistan – A suicide bomber on foot blew himself up in a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday just after a U.S. convoy drove by, killing 14 people and wounding 31, officials and witnesses said.

The attack in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattering windows and destroying the stores closest to the explosion. Three vehicles were damaged, including a taxi blasted by dozens of pieces of shrapnel.

Witnesses said a U.S. convoy appeared to be the target, and Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, said there were initial reports of injuries to ISAF soldiers, though he didn't have further details.

Six people died at the scene of the blast, police said. Another eight later died at a hospital, said Ghulam Hazrat Majedi, the doctor in charge of the Gardez hospital. He said two of the 31 people injured were in a critical condition.

Afghan soldiers donated blood for the wounded.

Nasar Ahmad, a 30-year-old shopkeeper whose three cousins were seriously injured in the blast, said he saw a U.S. convoy driving through the city just before the explosion.

"I heard a strong blast and then saw a fireball go up," Ahmad said from Gardez' hospital. "For 10 minutes I couldn't hear and I didn't know where I was. I saw a lot of people injured lying in the street."

Shah Mohammad, 19, said all those killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians.

"The convoy had already passed when the attack happened," he said.

The blast in Gardez comes one day after a suicide bomber in northern Afghanistan killed three German soldiers and seven civilians.

Violence in Afghanistan has increased sharply in the last several weeks. More than 1,600 people, have been killed in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an AP count based on U.S., NATO and Afghan officials. The dead have mostly been militants, but about 300 civilians have also died in the violence.

# Suicide bomber kills 14; Attack occurs in Afghan market just after U.S. convoy passes

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**SOURCE:** The Associated Press

**ILLUSTRATION:** Afghan men stand near a damaged vehicle after a suicide attack at a market in Gardez, Afghanistan on Sunday. Fourteen people were killed and 31 wounded.(AP)

**WORD COUNT:** 220

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GARDEZ, Afghanistan – A suicide bomber on foot blew himself up in a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday just after a U.S. convoy drove by, killing 14 people and wounding 31, officials and witnesses said.

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# Horrors beyond detainee abuse

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WHILE travelling through Afghanistan the past couple of weeks and interviewing Afghan officials from various factions, it became apparent that the brewing scandal over detainee abuse is virtually a non–issue outside of Canada.

Even former Taliban spokesman Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef said he regarded the whole matter as insignificant. Instead of playing the propaganda card and bemoaning the fate of his fellow Taliban, Zaeef shrugged his shoulders and said, "Punishment is common in Afghan prisons, and perhaps it is a better fate for the detainees to be beaten rather than killed."

Zaeef summed up the entire affair with one phrase: "This is more about Canadian politics than human rights."

With another of my interview subjects, I discreetly chose not to bring up the matter of prisoner abuse at all. Former warlord Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum earned a reputation among his enemies as a big killer during violent conflicts over the past three decades. Dostum's troops were among those warring factions who employed what became known as death by container. This procedure involved cramming as many captured enemy as possible into a metal freight container and bolting the door. The lucky ones died quickly of suffocation while the remainder became so maddened by thirst and hunger they literally devoured one another.

Another method of dealing with prisoners was to throw them into the village wells and throw grenades down after them. The fortunate ones were instantly killed by the 18– or 20–metre fall onto the rocks, while others drowned as the weight of the victims above forced them below the water surface or were blasted apart by the grenades. The unfortunate would slowly succumb to their wounds or starvation.

Although they fought the warlords under the banner of liberating Afghans from such violent abuses, Taliban fighters exhibited the same sort of brutality toward their prisoners.

One of the few agencies in Afghanistan to react to the allegations of detainee abuse was the National Directorate of Security (NDS or Afghan intelligence). Former prisoners described the NDS detention centre in Kandahar as being a torture chamber and portrayed the NDS agents as evil.

Recognizing the need to maintain solid relations with the Canadian Forces, the NDS took the unprecedented step of allowing two Canadian journalists and an Australian photographer unrestricted access to their prison facility. As one of those who toured every inch of the Kandahar detention centre, I can state that I observed no outward signs of injury on any of the prisoners and did not see anything resembling the torture instruments and cages as detailed in previous Canadian media reports.

That being said, I certainly would not want to spend any time in there as a shackled inmate. One senior NDS officer pointed out the obvious when he said, "It's not a nice place – it's not supposed to be."

Those being held in the detention centre include would–be suicide bombers apprehended in the act, Taliban fighters captured by NATO soldiers on the battlefield, and suspects in the kidnapping and killing of

westerners.

While insisting that his personnel do not resort to violence when conducting interrogations, deputy director Noor Mohammed Balak Karzai pointed out that his enemies do not apply the same rules.

"If the Taliban capture me, they will start by removing my eyes, breaking my bones and removing my skin. It would not be a quick death."

There is no question that detainees captured by Canadian troops must be treated in a manner of which the Canadian public approves. However, it is imperative that Canadians first understand the true depths of horror that exist in this conflict in which we have become an active participant.

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# Soldier shot during training at CFB Shilo in Manitoba was reservist

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**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE

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BRANDON, Man. (CP) \_ A soldier who suffered at least two gunshot wounds during a live-fire training exercise at CFB Shilo is a reservist with the Winnipeg-based Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, a military spokeswoman said Sunday.

The man remained in stable condition at Brandon Regional Health Centre, said Lieut. Amber Bineau. His initial condition was serious but stable.

He was injured Thursday during small arms practice with members of the Shilo-based 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, said Bineau, a spokeswoman for the battle group.

The incident happened on the base's training grounds.

A comrade administered first aid after the unidentified soldier was hit.

``The first priority when the injury occurred was to make sure the soldier received immediate first aid and was recovered to the hospital," Lt.-Col. David Corbould, commanding officer at the base, told Global TV.

``Then we initiate an investigation, and that's ongoing, where we collect statements from everybody that was there, look at the range setup and make sure all the established training safety procedures were being followed."

Military officials have not yet said if the soldier was hit with fire from his own weapon or one fired by another soldier.

He is among a wave of soldiers preparing to be deployed to Afghanistan in January and February of 2008, Bineau said.

Following an incident of this kind, she said, the military normally doesn't release the person's name, age or other personal details.

A number of bodies are participating in the ongoing investigation as a matter of protocol, Bineau said, citing military police, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, and the soldier's unit as examples.

``The investigation will look into what happened and then, from there, we determine a course of action based upon the results," she said. ``The primary concern at this time is the member and the member's next of kin."

CFB Shilo is 35 km southeast of Brandon.

(Winnipeg Sun)

# Suicide bomb kills 14, wounds 35 in eastern Afghanistan, after U.S. convoy rolls by

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GARDEZ, Afghanistan (AP) \_ A suicide bomber on foot blew himself up in a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday just after a U.S. convoy drove by, killing 14 people and wounding 31, officials and witnesses said.

The attack in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattering windows and destroying the stores closest to the explosion. Three vehicles were damaged, including a taxi blasted by dozens of pieces of shrapnel.

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Shah Mohammad, 19, said all those killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians.

“The convoy had already passed when the attack happened,” he said.

The blast in Gardez comes one day after a suicide bomber in northern Afghanistan killed three German soldiers and seven civilians.

Violence in Afghanistan has increased sharply in the last several weeks. More than 1,600 people, have been killed in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an AP count based on U.S., NATO and Afghan officials. The dead have mostly been militants, but about 300 civilians have also died in the violence.

# US–NATO Chief

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WASHINGTON — NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer is meeting with U–S President George W. Bush at his Texas ranch.

Their discussions follow a weekend of violence in Afghanistan that left at least two dozen dead, including three German soldiers.

Besides Afghanistan, the two leaders are expected to talk about a wide range of issues on NATO's agenda.

They include Kosovo, the enlargement of the 26–nation alliance and American plans for a missile defense system in Europe.

As insurgents in Afghanistan have increased attacks, NATO's mission has become a more urgent topic for the visit, which has been planned for weeks.

More than 16–hundred people, including about 300 civilians, have been killed in insurgency–related violence this year.

Canada and other countries with troops in the most dangerous part of Afghanistan have been annoyed by the reluctance of some European allies to commit extra soldiers to the NATO force and by restrictions on how and where the soldiers can fight insurgents.

(AP)

pwg

# Wounded vets have a friend on Jays; McDonald to host special BP outing

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Low to the ground and armed to the teeth, a stealthy Vernon Wells launched himself headlong across the floor into the manager's office, rolling over and spraying an unsuspecting John Gibbons with foam darts from a plastic machine gun, interrupting his pre-game briefing. Clearly, this is not a tightly wound group of athletes.

As Wells and his co-conspirators, A.J. Burnett and Josh Towers laughed and carefully plucked the spent ammo from Gibbons' neck, lap, chair and desk, sitting quietly at the opposite end of the clubhouse from the mock mayhem was utility infielder John McDonald, who tomorrow will be hosting some real-life wounded warriors at pre-game batting practice in Baltimore.

McDonald's guests will include seven or eight Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, currently in rehab at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. One of them, Gunnery Sgt. Angel Barcenas, a double amputee, will be in uniform, to take batting practice and shag fly balls in the outfield. The rest of the wounded vets will offer moral support.

The 30-year-old Barcenas, a Paramount, Calif., native, was wounded during foot patrol on July 21, 2006, losing both legs below the knee. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal, among other honours.

"You meet some guys that are just out of Iraq and Afghanistan, they were just having surgery and this guy (Barcenas) was well beyond that," McDonald said. "He already had prosthetic legs. He's been through a lot of the rehab process. He's already walking. He's already jogging. When we saw him he was running on the treadmill.

"He was one of the guys who (in April) expressed an interest in coming out to a game. They were more than welcome. They came out and he was having a good time watching the end of our BP when he asked if he could hit. That led to this. "

On their last visit to Camden Yards, in mid-April, McDonald had recruited some of his teammates to go with him to visit the military hospital in Washington, D.C.

The visit was coordinated by a charitable group called the Wounded Warrior Project. One of the project's executives, R.J. Meade, is a cousin of McDonald's father.

"It was a different experience for everybody," McDonald recalled. "Listening to these guys talk about their experiences and how passionate they were about what they did and how much they would like to go back. It teaches you a little bit of perspective about what you think about, not necessarily the war, but about the guys fighting in it. It's more important to think about them than your actual beliefs in the fighting."

And what are those beliefs in the fighting? McDonald thought about it and still had difficulty expressing his views on Iraq and Afghanistan, similar to many Americans.

"I'm pro whatever's best for the world getting along," he finally said. "Somebody has to help these countries. Sooner or later if you drive by someone on the side of the road that needs help, if it happens often enough, someone has to stop and help."

But, clearly, the experience of seeing the veterans at various stages of their recovery has had a big impact on the Jays' soft-spoken shortstop.

"Those guys are living in the moment," McDonald recalled. "It's really difficult for them right now. We happened to see some guys that were just at the beginning of their rehab, before we went up and saw the guys that just came back from Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the guys asked us, 'Where are you going next?' We said we were going up to the next floor for some of the guys that just came back. You could just see in his eyes as he said, 'It means a lot. It means a lot to the guys, especially the guys that you're going to see right now, because of how banged up they are.'"

To McDonald, the thing that mattered most was that it didn't even matter whether the men they were seeing were baseball fans or not. It's that somebody cared.

"Some were (fans), some weren't, but I really don't think it mattered," McDonald said. "To a man, it seemed they all cared. They really appreciated not just us because we were ballplayers, but anybody, somebody off the street coming in and saying thank you."

Today, the Jays are playing in the Hall of Fame Game, but tomorrow – for Gunnery Sgt. Barcenas and friends – batting practice will be their own Cooperstown moment.

# Something's wrong with this picture

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Ontario rescues camp for autistic children; Canada's Afghan war costs jump sharply

May 18.

On the front page of Friday's Toronto Star, I learned that the Harper government did not have enough money this year to fund summer help for community programs. On page A21, I learned that the government has \$4.3 billion to fund the war in Afghanistan to 2009.

Kevin Hodges, St. Catharines, Ont.

# Shadowy group linked to Al Qaeda

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**BYLINE:** ZEINA KARAM  
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**WORD COUNT:** 174

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The shadowy militant group Fatah Islam, whose leader has been linked to Al Qaeda in Iraq, has quickly emerged as the latest security threat to Lebanon.

Though it only surfaced last fall, its has already proved it can wreak havoc on the country.

Yesterday, its members engaged in fierce battles with Lebanese troops that killed more than 40 people and wounded dozens.

The group's leader has been identified as fugitive Shaker al-Absi, a Palestinian in his early 50s who has vilified the United States in media interviews and admitted he supports the ideology of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

He is believed to have fought in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Al-Absi was sentenced to death in absentia in 2004 by a Jordanian military court for his involvement in a plot that led to the assassination of a U.S. diplomat there, officials have said.

Al Qaeda in Iraq and its former leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi were blamed for the killing.

Around the time of the diplomat's death in Jordan, al-Absi was jailed in Syria on charges of planning terrorist attacks inside that country, according to Lebanese officials.

Al-Absi was released in the fall.

Reportedly, he headed to Lebanon, where he set up base in the Palestinian refugee camp Nahr el-Bared in the north, one of the scenes of yesterday's clashes.

Associated Press

# Kabul money men dedicate their lives to change; Fistfuls of dollars fly at raucous roadside currency bazaar

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**ILLUSTRATION:** rosie dimanno toronto star Ajmal Najibi, 23, changes money for aStar reporter. Despite the cash spilling from his pockets, he says he's never been robbed. ;

**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation

**WORD COUNT:** 778

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In this raucous capital, following the money inevitably leads to the currency bazaar.

It is the Bay St. of Afghanistan, hard by a throbbing traffic circle, the cacophony of Pul-e-Omomi.

Off in the near distance, there's even a gleaming building housing the country's central bank branch. Perhaps the Taliban keeps its money there. Or maybe the international community's billions in donations pass through its computerized accounts, stacked neatly in highly secure underground vaults.

But ordinary Afghans don't use the place. Handing over one's hard-earned cash to unfamiliar tellers in neckties is a radical concept, completely foreign to the atavistic instinct to stash and secrete, keep on one's persons, in one's house, under the bed, squeezed beneath a floor plank, buried in the garden.

But even Afghans occasionally need financial services that would normally fall to monetary institutions – most often the necessity to exchange foreign funds, U.S. dollars (the country is awash in those) and rupees and dinars for the national currency. So they come here, to the currency market, and avail themselves of the services offered by money changers.

A strange breed, they are rather like carny men or casino pit bosses, congregating in clots atop scrap heaps or sitting at tables heaped with cash, noisily and with flourish tending to the world-all-over business of cash on the dollar. Fifty-two Afghans to the U.S. dollar is the standard rate and, surprisingly – tellingly – that rate hasn't changed for many months.

Two Afghans on that dollar is the standard money-changer's fee, a slim profit, acceptable even in a society where Islamic religious proscriptions render interest and usury sinful.

Double-fisted, the money changers wave scrip in the air, fingers rapidly and dexterously riffling banknotes greasy and dog-eared from circulation.

"No bank lineups!" laughs Naj Muddin, one of the pavement entrepreneurs.

An old lady reaches deep into the mysterious nether regions of her burqa, pulling out a tightly rolled wad of green, carefully counting aloud the colourful Afghans she receives in return. Endlessly, those Afghans who deal most often in foreign funds – fixers for journalists, tradesmen employed by Westerners – dash into this

Kabul money men dedicate their lives to change; Fistfuls of dollars fly at raucous roadside currency bazaar



brokerage arena to make their transactions.

Taxis stop regularly, drivers thrusting bills through the front window and jerking back into traffic, the seamless exchange conducted in moments. Contrary to custom in this part of the globe, there is never any bartering. Everybody knows the price is fixed and non-negotiable. That's the whole point.

Muddin, 40, has been a money changer for only two years, having arrived in Kabul from his village 165 kilometres to the north in search of employment. "I was with the Taliban, in the beginning. Really, there wasn't much choice. But then I turned in my gun to the (Provincial Reconstruction Team) and tried to find a job. There was nothing, so I started doing this."

He sounds more apologetic for being a money changer than having been a Taliban. It is not entirely a seemingly profession – even in Kabul, there is awareness that money changers were cast out of the Jerusalem temple in the Bible – yet it is vital to Afghan society. When the central bank collapsed in the civil war of the '90s, these were the men who allowed the ravaged economy to continue functioning, however haphazardly.

"If the Afghani stays stable, then Afghanistan is stable," says Muddin. "But our government can't make sure of this by itself. That's why we need the international community with us. Obviously, they can't leave. But we are getting tired of the promises about reconstruction. For five years, it's been promises, promises, promises."

Muddin, like everybody else, is well aware of the Taliban's resurgence, its promises of destabilizing the government and declarations to seize power anew by driving coalition troops out. He waves off the threat with a fistful of dollars. "I think this is mostly propaganda."

Another money changer, Ajmal Najibi, 23, relates how he was in a Kabul restaurant recently, watching TV, when a man sat next to him. "He told me to close my eyes, not to watch the TV. Then he told me to stop cutting my beard because that was forbidden."

"He was Taliban. He said that there were more than 6,000 suicide bombers who had come to Afghanistan this spring, ready to die. I looked around for a policeman, I wanted to tell someone. But there was nobody there and then the man disappeared."

Najibi shrugs his shoulders. "They are trying to scare us."

Having spent his adolescence in Kabul, when it was under siege by battling militias, Najibi says he doesn't scare easily anymore. Life is so much calmer now and he no longer exists in a state of dread.

Yet even in those days, the money changers endured as a fixture in the city.

"It's better than having a shop," he says. "Here, I can just work on the street and the business comes to me."

And Najibi, despite the banknotes spilling out of his pockets, has never been robbed.

Which is more than can be said for the banks.

Kabul money men dedicate their lives to change; Fistfuls of dollars fly at raucous roadside currency bazaar

# Explosion in crowded market kills 14; Suicide bomber targeted U.S. convoy that had driven by shortly before blast

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210041  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A07  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Musadeq Sadeq ap Afghans pass a damaged truck yesterday at the site of a suicide bombing in Gardez, the provincial capital of Afghanistan's Paktia province. All of the 14 killed and 31 wounded were Afghan civilians, although officials believe the intended target was a U.S. convoy. ;  
**BYLINE:** Rahim Faeiz  
**SOURCE:** Associated Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 244

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A suicide bomber apparently targeting a U.S. convoy killed 14 people and wounded 31 in a crowded eastern Afghan market yesterday, witnesses and officials said.

The powerful explosion in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattering windows and destroying the closest stores.

Witnesses said a U.S. convoy appeared to be the target. Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesperson for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, said there were reports of injuries to ISAF soldiers, though he didn't have further details.

Nasar Ahmad, a 30-year-old shopkeeper whose three cousins were seriously wounded in the blast, said he saw a U.S. convoy driving through the city just before the explosion.

"I heard a strong blast and then saw a fireball go up," Ahmad said from his hospital bed. "For 10 minutes I couldn't hear and I didn't know where I was. I saw a lot of people injured lying in the street."

Shah Mohammad, 19, said all those killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians.

"The convoy had already passed when the attack happened," he said.

The blast came a day after a suicide bomber in northern Afghanistan killed three German soldiers and seven civilians.

Ghulam Hazrat Majedi, the doctor in charge of the Gardez hospital, said two of the 31 wounded were in critical condition.

In the eastern province of Ghazni, 30 Taliban fighters were killed during a battle with ISAF and Afghan forces on Saturday, said Mohammad Qazam Allayar, the deputy provincial governor. He said 18 Taliban were injured and 11 arrested.

Explosion in crowded market kills 14; Suicide bomber targeted U.S. convoy that had driven by shortly before

Violence in Afghanistan has increased sharply in the last few weeks. More than 1,600 people have been killed in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an AP count. The dead have mostly been militants, but about 300 civilians have also been killed.

# Legacy of love

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210037  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** Entertainment  
**PAGE:** E02  
**ILLUSTRATION:** TysonGoreYoungTrudeau;  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 265

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Groovy happenings

Bloor–Yorkville will be transported 40 years back in time for Summer of Love, a celebration tied to the Luminato Festival. Beginning at 1: 30 p.m. on June 2, the family–friendly event boasts a "flower power" costume competition, a "go– go dance" and a concert, which includes The Majestics and Sylvia Tyson. For more information, see [bloor–yorkville.com](http://bloor–yorkville.com)

Rolling Stone magazine, which marks 40 years, is publishing a Summer of Love double issue next month.

Hippiefest, featuring the Turtles, The Rascals, The Zombies, Mountain and Mitch Ryder among others, takes place at Molson Amphitheatre on July 25.

What remains

of '67 in '07?

Protests against an unpopular war; Vietnam then, Iraq and Afghanistan now.

Ecological/environmental awareness: hippies spread the word in '67, Al Gore in '07.

Mammoth rock music festivals: 1967's Monterrey Pop Music Festival, the first major rock festival, attracted more than 200,000. The tradition carries on in the form of Lollapalooza, the Virgin Music Festival, Coachella and more.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band: The album was named Most Definitive Rock and Roll Album in 2007; its influence can still be heard in the bands re– recording the album for its 40th anniversary.

Marijuana

Neil Young is still making politically charged music: For What It's Worth with Buffalo Springfield in '67; Young's album Living With War was nominated for three Grammys in '07.

Jane Fonda is still making movies: Barefoot in the Park in 1967; Georgia Rule in '07.

Hints of Trudeaumania: Pierre Trudeau began his inspired campaign for the Liberal leadership in 1967; his son Justin enters Canadian politics in 2007.

San Francisco is still a popular destination: thousands of young people flocked to the Haight–Ashbury district in 1967; it still remains a hot spot for the young and old. San Francisco sees over 15 million visitors annually.

Compiled by Astrid Lange / Toronto Star Library

# Poppy nation sees spike in heroin addictions; Explosion in numbers includes Afghan children working in fields

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210108  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**KEYWORDS:** DRUGS; DRUG SEIZURE; ADDICTIONS; DRUG ABUSE; REHABILITATION; THERAPY  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 503

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KABUL, Afghanistan – As brothers Abdul Jabar and Abdul Sitar crouch on the floor of their spartan Kabul living room, each light up a small heroin cigarette and draw deeply on the powerful drug.

Nearby, several of their 11 small children watch impassively. For the kids, this is nothing unusual. Their fathers have been addicted to heroin, and largely incapacitated by it, since long before they were born.

Two of the older boys, who look about eight or nine, generate the family's only income by selling products off a cart after school.

"Because of this thing, I can't work, I can't talk sometimes. I eat stones," says Abdul Jabar, who later illustrates his odd compulsion by swallowing three small rocks. He says he usually passes them without incident.

"If I knew I would be in this condition, I wouldn't have used this drug. If they paid me \$10 million, I wouldn't have used this drug."

Yet the two brothers, and a third who successfully went through rehabilitation recently, are far from being alone in their plight.

Despite being a strict Muslim country, Afghanistan is suffering from a boom in heroin addiction.

The international community has sought to crackdown on the war-weary nation's record poppy crops, now serving 90 per cent of the world's demand, but the abundant supply of heroin's main raw ingredient has taken a terrible toll at home.

An influx of Afghan refugees who became addicted in Iran and in Pakistan, the trauma and physical ravages of nearly 30 years of war, and grinding poverty are also blamed for the rising number of heroin addicts.

"It is not only the rest of the world that is suffering. We are suffering; it is a big problem for us as well," says Dr. Tariq Suliman, who heads the Nejat Centre, a local rehab clinic.

Poppy nation sees spike in heroin addictions; Explosion in numbers includes Afghan children working in fields

"Now on each and every street we have people who suffer from drug addiction ... It is spreading fast and it is difficult to control."

And it is not always intentional.

In one case, a father became perplexed by the sickness that afflicted his three children — aged seven, nine and 15 — whom he had sent into the poppy fields to work. He eventually brought them to Nejat, where Suliman diagnosed classic withdrawal symptoms, a result of their contact with the poppies.

"When we told him 'Your kids are addicted,' he was very sad, and he said 'If I was given a million Afghanis to cultivate poppies, I wouldn't do it now.'"

A United Nations study in 2005 estimated there are a million Afghan drug addicts: 50,000 using heroin, 150,000 opium, 500,000 hashish and about 400,000 using other illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals. The number of heroin addicts doubled in Kabul between 2003 and 2005.

And their ranks have undoubtedly swollen since then, says Suliman.

In Helmand province, a heroin factory worker would wear a blanket around his shoulders, then shake it out at home close to his children. They would be crying —until the blanket dispersed its opiate dust, said Dr. Mohammad Zafar, director of demand reduction in the Ministry of Counter Narcotics.

He laments that the international community, so focused on curbing poppy production, has paid little heed to Afghanistan's domestic drug epidemic.

Although a number of treatment programs have cropped up since the fall of the Taliban, waiting lists are still months long.

The Abdul brothers have been trying for six months to get into Nejat, and worry their brother, who was treated successfully there and lives with them, could fall off the wagon.

"If we were treated together, this problem would have been solved very soon," says Abdul Jabar.

# Al-Qaida supporter sent to Aussie prison

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**COLUMN:** World Digest  
**KEYWORDS:** TERRORISM; WAR  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**SOURCE:** The Edmonton Journal  
**WORD COUNT:** 75

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SYDNEY, Australia – David Hicks, the first inmate at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre to face a U.S. military tribunal, was flown back to his hometown in Australia on Sunday to serve out the remainder of his sentence.

The former cowboy and kangaroo skinner pleaded guilty in March to providing material support to al-Qaida and attending terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

A plea deal allowed him to serve nine months in prison and return to Australia to serve out his term.



# U.S.'s Colombian drug experiment a disaster; And if they import their same tactics to Afghanistan, Canadian troops will be at risk

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Opinion  
**PAGE:** A18  
**COLUMN:** Looking Ahead  
**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; PRESIDENTS; UNITED STATES  
**BYLINE:** Dan Gardner  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 1107

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If the Americans are teaching Afghans the tricks of the trade based on what has "worked" in South American drug wars, look out.

On Wednesday, a feature story in the New York Times began with an unusual scene. In a compound outside Kabul, a group of raw Afghan recruits was being instructed in the basics of enforcing drug laws. "It's Narcotics 101," one of the instructors, a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent, told the reporter. "We are at a stage now of telling these recruits, 'this is a handgun, this is a bullet.' "

That's not the unusual part. The DEA operates all over the world. There is nothing more common than American drug cops instructing locals in the ideology and tactics that have made the American war on drugs such a smashing success.

What was unusual were the companions the DEA had brought along to help teach "Narcotics 101" to the Afghans. Holding mock AK-47s were two officers of the counter-narcotics police of Colombia. "I wanted the Colombians to come here to give the Afghans something to aspire to," the DEA man said.

"To instil the fact that they have been doing this for years, and it has worked."

I relate this anecdote not to mock the DEA's delusions -- so easy as to be unsporting -- but to warn Canadian soldiers that if the Times' report is accurate, the bad situation in which they find themselves is going to get worse.

According to the Times, the Americans have had a shift in thinking about Afghanistan. "Administration officials say they had believed they could eliminate the insurgency first, then tackle the drug trade," the Times reported. But no more. Now the Americans feel the weakening grip of the central government is largely the result of the flourishing drug trade, and so opium has to be a primary target in the fight for control of country. And that means doing in Afghanistan what is being done in Colombia.

Ask that DEA man in Kabul what's happening in Colombia and he'll rattle off the good news of the past couple of years. Leftist guerrillas have weakened, right-wing paramilitaries have decommissioned and central government control has strengthened. There have been huge seizures of drugs. The number of acres planted with coca bushes -- the source of cocaine -- has declined modestly, while there has been a major drop in the

U.S.'s Colombian drug experiment a disaster; And if they import their same tactics to Afghanistan, Canadian

opium poppy crops that are the source of heroin.

And this, the DEA man would say, is all thanks to the tactics American officials want to take to Afghanistan.

There are basically three components: First, interdict drug shipments outside the country. Second, ramp up militarized policing within the country. Third, deploy an air force of crop dusters to spray immense quantities of herbicides on drug crops.

It takes billions and billions of dollars to pay for all this, of course, and in Colombia the Americans have covered only part of that bill. Most of the rest is shouldered by Colombians — who are too poor to provide basic education and health care to much of the population.

Leaving aside the question of whether those billions could have done more good spent on something other than trying to stop Americans from getting high, there are more obvious reasons to question whether the Colombian war on drugs should be seen as anything but a humanitarian disaster.

There's history, for one. The tactics said to be doing such good in Colombia today weren't introduced recently. They've been standard operating procedure ever since the first President George Bush launched what was called "the Andean Initiative" almost two decades ago. That program featured gobs of money for interdiction, militarized policing and

aerial eradication.

President Bill Clinton spent more money on a program with a different name and the same tactics. Then the second President George Bush launched what was imaginatively called "the Andean Counterdrug Initiative." It featured — wait for it — gobs of money for interdiction, militarized policing and aerial eradication.

Throughout almost this entire time, drug production and trafficking soared. Guerrillas and paramilitaries flourished. Colombia's refugee camps swelled. Only in the past couple of years have there been some very modest reversals of these trends.

Does this prove the American tactics work? Imagine a doctor who gives a sick patient untested medicine and the patient got sicker. So he gives the patient a bigger dose of the same medicine and the patient gets sicker. And the doctor keeps this up for years until, one day, the patient got marginally less sick and the doctor exults that he's found the cure. Would this experience prove the medicine works? Or that the doctor is an

irresponsible quack?

America's drug warriors have remarkably poor memories, so I will note for their benefit that we have been here before. In the early 1980s, Colombia

wasn't a major producer of cocaine, and opium poppy was scarcely grown. Bolivia and Peru were the big source countries. So the Americans squeezed using the usual tactics. Production plummeted. And the gringos declared it a resounding success.

It wasn't a success of any kind. It was, in fact, a tragedy. Production rose even more rapidly in Colombia than it fell in Peru and Bolivia. As any economist could have predicted — and some did — the American-led effort only succeeded in pushing the plague over the border into a country too weak to defend itself.

It is really quite dazzling to now hear American officials boasting about modest improvements in Colombia's hellish conditions when those conditions are largely the product of American policies.

U.S.'s Colombian drug experiment a disaster; And if they import their same tactics to Afghanistan, Canadian

Efforts to cut smuggling routes have been even more inconsequential. As quickly as routes are severed, new routes are created. All this succeeds in doing is spreading corruption and violence around whole regions.

Thus, the recent "successes" in Colombia have turned Venezuela into a major new trans-shipment point. Lucky Venezuela. Guatemala and Haiti are also increasingly popular stepping stones for smugglers. And pressure in the Caribbean has prompted Colombian traffickers to construct a pipeline to Europe through Ghana, Africa's fragile success story.

And then there's the biggest trans-

shipment country, Mexico. A major crackdown a couple of years ago left all the major drug lords dead or in prison. The DEA called that a great victory, too. But that victory unleashed virtual civil war as traffickers battled for control.

This week, Mexico's chief drug intelligence officer was shot dead; he had been on the job for one month.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai knows that if the tactics used in Colombia were deployed in Afghanistan, small farmers who rely on opium poppy to feed their children would throw their support to the Taliban and his government would be in grave danger. This is why he has

resisted "Colombianization" from the moment he entered office.

But if the Americans were to insist, Afghanistan's government would have no more choice in the matter than Colombia's.

And Canadian soldiers would discover that tough as things are now, they can get a hell of a lot worse.

Dan Gardner writes for the Ottawa Citizen

# Canada, NATO want to beef up Afghan army; May offer older tanks

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**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B9  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 320

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KABUL, Afghanistan — Canada is in discussions with NATO to provide Afghanistan's fledgling army with Leopard tanks so it can better fight insurgents.

Military officials say future plans call for the Afghan National Army (ANA) to switch from its Soviet-designed equipment to gear that is more compatible with the NATO nations fighting in this south Asia country. Defence sources here confirm that Canada is interested in supplying some of its older Leopard tanks to the Afghans and initial discussions have begun on that potential deal.

NATO nations would be expected to donate equipment to the ANA.

U.S. Army Maj.-Gen. Robert Durbin, who heads the effort to help develop Afghanistan's army and police forces, said any move to supply the tanks would be handled through NATO. "So we've had some interesting discussions," said Durbin. "Canada is one nation. You've got Germany. Even New Zealand has Leopards."

Asked whether plans could involve the Canadian Forces turning over the Leopard tanks it already uses in Kandahar to the Afghan army, Durbin responded, "that might be one option that could make sense."

The general added, however, that he would not be involved in such a decision.

The Canadian Forces shipped 17 Leopard tanks to Kandahar in the fall of 2006 after troops requested more firepower to use against insurgents. The Conservative government recently announced it would lease more modern Leopards from Germany for the Afghanistan mission. It will also buy 100 Leopard 2s at a cost of \$1.3 billion. That price tag includes a 20-year maintenance and upgrade deal.

Some Canadian soldiers who have worked with the Afghan army in operations against insurgents said the plan to provide the ANA with more modern NATO-type equipment makes sense.

Warrant Officer Chuck Graham said such a move would make it easier for coalition forces to resupply Afghan troops, as everyone would be using the same equipment.

Graham predicted it might be some time before the ANA was ready to switch from Russian-designed to NATO tanks. "As far as going from the (Russian) T62 to the Leopard, I think that's a ways down the road," he said.

# Suicide bomber kills 14

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210488  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 12  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GARDEZ, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 197

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A suicide bomber detonated himself in a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan yesterday just after a U.S. convoy drove by, killing at least 14 people and wounding 31, officials and witnesses said.

The attack in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattered windows and destroyed the stores closest to the explosion.

Witnesses said a U.S. convoy appeared to be the target, and Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, said there were initial reports of injuries to ISAF soldiers, though he didn't have further details.

## 31 INJURED

Six people died at the scene of the blast, police said. Another eight died later at a hospital, said Ghulam Hazrat Majedi, the doctor in charge of the Gardez hospital. He said two of the 31 people injured were in a critical condition.

Nasar Ahmad, 30, a shopkeeper whose three cousins were seriously injured in the blast, said he saw a U.S. convoy driving through the city just before the explosion.

"I heard a strong blast and then saw a fireball go up," Ahmad said from Gardez' hospital. "For 10 minutes I couldn't hear and I didn't know where I was. I saw a lot of people injured lying in the street."

Shah Mohammad, 19, said everyone killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians. "The convoy had already passed when the attack happened," he said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Majority fools Harper may ruin his chances in the next election by chasing polls

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210484  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of STEPHEN HARPER "Do what's right  
**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON  
**WORD COUNT:** 529

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Even his admirers (and he has some) are uneasy that Stephen Harper may be jeopardizing his chances of winning a majority in the next federal election.

As a congenital optimist (every year I half expect the Leafs to win the Stanley Cup), I still think the Tories should win a majority whenever Harper decides to call an election. But he isn't helping his chances with acts he thinks will make him popular.

## PANDERING

Despite evidence to the contrary, politicians think a secret to success is pandering to opinion polls, though they don't call it that. Chasing opinion polls, or trying to anticipate what the people will vote for, is a mug's game. Right now, in Canada, polls show a majority of people have doubts about keeping our troops in Afghanistan, so politicians are piling on.

When the last Liberal government began to realize that generations of abusing and cutting the military had been a mistake, Harper grabbed the issue, ran with it, and won support from most Canadians outside Quebec.

The wheel has turned somewhat (thanks to seemingly insoluble problems in Iraq that don't involve us).

Today, Harper's support of the Afghan mission and things military is deemed to be a minus, and may prevent his dream of a majority.

One thing is certain. If Harper were to reverse his previous pledge to keep our military in Afghanistan until that country is secure and fight its own battles, he'd kiss his future goodbye.

I don't know if Harper adopted the military as a cause because he spotted that most Canadians support their soldiers and joined the bandwagon, or if he truly believes in it. I hope the latter.

Politicians who stick to their philosophy and aren't panicked by opinion polls or the musings of media gurus, do better than the cynically ambitious.

Ronald Reagan stuck to what he was, and didn't pander.

He was secure in his beliefs made tough decisions, was respected and popular — a difficult combination.

Remember the air controllers strike when he first took office?

Majority fools Harper may ruin his chances in the next election by chasing polls

Margaret Thatcher never wavered, never lost public support, but did lose support of her party which lost its nerve. Even Charles de Gaulle prevailed with unpopular stands — witness Algerian independence.

When the Reform Party was first launched by Preston Manning, it took stands the media disliked. But against all predictions it prevailed in Alberta and didn't pander. But when the party came east, it started chasing polls, sacrificing principle for popularity — and flopped.

#### SOFTENED

If you're going to fail, why not fail by doing what's right and what you believe? Harper has softened on issues he supposedly once believed in. I suspect he (and other Tories) would be more trusted if they stopped trying to appeal to everyone.

If Harper doesn't believe in same-sex marriages, why pretend he does? If he believes medicare needs reforming and that private clinics would ease the burden on hospitals, do it. If he believes in one official language for Canada, go for it and persuade country. If he doesn't truly believe Quebec is a "nation," don't pretend he's changed his mind.

On the issue of global warming, if Harper listened to the Friends of Science Society from the University of Calgary he'd realize it's a fraud he now pretends to support.

Some hope his stands are a ploy to be elected with a majority, after which he'll revert to what he believes. I hope so, too, though I'm disappointed in transparent cynicism.

All we know for sure is that the Liberals' Stephane Dion is a pathetic excuse for a leader. But Liberals are smart enough to know this (they're smarter than Reform dumbos who assassinate leaders who disappoint them, like Stockwell Day). Right now Bob Rae is set to be the next Liberal leader when Dion self-destructs.

Wait and see.

# Chilling the French whine

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210483  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 488

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As new French President Nicolas Sarkozy took office, Islamic terrorists reportedly threatened a "fierce battle at the heart of Sarkozy's capital." Finally, a sign that France is on the right track.

Sarkozy says he won't tolerate Muslims "killing sheep in their bathtubs" and having a bunch of wives — a ballsy position when your country hosts Europe's largest Muslim population.

For all the criticism leveled at France, 53% of the country had enough sense to vote for this guy. Being part French, that makes me damn proud.

Still, when I was a panelist on an American TV show this week, it became another anti-French gang bang.

Yes, I'm aware that they lasted less time against the Germans than Rosie O'Donnell does between breakfast and lunch, but the Second World War was 50 years ago.

France finally has the leader that it desperately needs — and this conservative revolutionary deserves our support.

Sarkozy made Socialist Bernard Kouchner the new foreign minister. Smart move, since he was one of about three people in the whole country in favour of ousting arms-for-oil buddy, Saddam Hussein, by military force—and therefore one of the few qualified for the job.

As Canada's socialist Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau proved during Quebec's FLQ crisis, when a select few of these comrades decide to go gung-ho on terrorists, they can really do damage. Almost as much as they're capable of doing to the treasury. Hide the credit cards and Kouchner will be fine.

The knee-jerk attacks on France remind me of what I still hear about Canada.

## USELESS CANADA

As a Canadian-born TV personality working in America, I'm often told on-air how "useless" Canada is. Canada now has a pro-American Conservative government, and soldiers fighting and dying in Afghanistan. Why would you chew out your friends when they bring dessert to your dinner party?

To help with your new talking points, here are a few good things about France:

– President Sarkozy d'Hotness is tougher on legal immigrants than Bush is on illegal ones. He realizes what a bang-up job those former French colonies in Africa did of running things when Mother France gave them the keys to the Citroen and took off. Now they want to move back in with mom, and bring their five wives with them. Fortunately, that's not how Sarko rolls. And before anyone calls him anti-immigrant or racist,



remember that this son of immigrants also won an anti-racism award. Why would anyone object to him "pressure washing" their neighbourhood of "rabble" -- or doing any other chores typically modeled shirtless in a firefighter's calendar?

– President Sarkosexxxxy is a man so charismatic and eloquent that he makes oral expert Bill Clinton look like Dennis Kucinich. Sarko won the election while campaigning for tougher drinking and driving laws. Cracking down on drinking -- in FRANCE.

#### TAX-FREE OVERTIME

– Sarko le Beau wants tax-free overtime. Even Ronald Reagan didn't come up with that one.

– France's Les Guignols De L'Info is one of the funniest shows on television, anywhere in the world. Comedy Central's Jon Stewart isn't even fit to carry the "jacques" straps of the French puppets on this show.

– You won't hear discussions about sex toys and boobs on French television. I'm pretty sure they know that these things exist, but they just don't have a pathological compulsion to talk about them. Although if Sarko did, I likely wouldn't object.

How about giving him a break and putting the anti-French whine on ice?

# Winnipeg reservist confirmed wounded

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**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 7  
**BYLINE:** SUN MEDIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 178

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A soldier who suffered multiple gunshot wounds during a live-fire training exercise at CFB Shilo is a reservist with the Winnipeg-based Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, a military spokeswoman said yesterday.

The man was in stable condition at Brandon Regional Health Centre, Lt. Amber Bineau said. His initial condition was serious but stable.

## SMALL-ARMS PRACTICE

He was injured Thursday during small-arms practice with members of Shilo-based 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, said Bineau, a spokeswoman for the battle group.

A comrade administered first aid after the unidentified soldier suffered at least two gunshot wounds. He is among soldiers preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in January and February 2008, Bineau said.

Following an incident of this kind, she said, the military normally doesn't release the person's name, age or other personal details.

A number of bodies are participating in the investigation as a matter of protocol, Bineau said, citing military police, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service, and the soldier's unit as examples.

"The investigation will look into what happened and then, from there, we determine a course of action based upon the results," she said. "The primary concern at this time is the member and the member's next of kin."

CFB Shilo is 35 km east of Brandon. KEYWORDS=MANITOBA

# Majority fools Harper may ruin his chances in the next election by chasing polls

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**ILLUSTRATION:** HARPER "Do what's right  
**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON  
**WORD COUNT:** 529

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## PANDERING

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One thing is certain. If Harper were to reverse his previous pledge to keep our military in Afghanistan until that country is secure and fight its own battles, he'd kiss his future goodbye.

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He was secure in his beliefs made tough decisions, was respected and popular — a difficult combination.

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# Chilling the French whine

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210416  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
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**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** 16  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 488

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# Suicide bomber kills 14

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210407  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GARDEZ, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 197

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The attack in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattered windows and destroyed the stores closest to the explosion.

Witnesses said a U.S. convoy appeared to be the target, and Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, said there were initial reports of injuries to ISAF soldiers, though he didn't have further details.

## 31 INJURED

Six people died at the scene of the blast, police said. Another eight died later at a hospital, said Ghulam Hazrat Majedi, the doctor in charge of the Gardez hospital. He said two of the 31 people injured were in a critical condition.

Nasar Ahmad, 30, a shopkeeper whose three cousins were seriously injured in the blast, said he saw a U.S. convoy driving through the city just before the explosion.

"I heard a strong blast and then saw a fireball go up," Ahmad said from Gardez' hospital. "For 10 minutes I couldn't hear and I didn't know where I was. I saw a lot of people injured lying in the street."

Shah Mohammad, 19, said everyone killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians. "The convoy had already passed when the attack happened," he said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210264  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 13  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of STEPHEN HARPER "Do what's right  
**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON  
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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 13  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 488

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210255  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 8  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GARDEZ, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 197

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210184  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** A6  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 493

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**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** A6  
**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON  
**WORD COUNT:** 520

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210335  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 36  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GARDEZ, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 197

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# Fighting Afghan polio In harm's way to help

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210313  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 12  
**ILLUSTRATION:** sun file photo A polio immunization drive is underway in Afghanistan, one of only four countries in the world where the disease is showing a resurgence.  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 911

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Health officials launched a different sort of Afghan offensive yesterday as a brigade of volunteer soldiers armed with clipboards, chalk and tiny bottles of vaccine fanned out across the city, hunting an invisible enemy that preys on the poor and the young.

The World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Canadian International Development Agency are among the partners in an ongoing effort to push polio out of Afghanistan, one of only four countries in the world where conflict and poverty have conspired to allow its resurgence.

Two recently confirmed cases in the southern part of the country prompted yesterday's start of a special round of vaccinations.

Volunteers braved the perils of Kandahar city by going door-to-door and administering two drops of oral vaccine to every child under the age of five, said Arshad Quddus of the WHO's Kabul office.

"The objective is to interrupt the transmission of this virus, which is only now confined to the two provinces in this country," Quddus said in an interview at Kandahar city's dilapidated Mirwais Hospital.

"If we can interrupt the transmission in these remaining two provinces, there is a very bright chance for Afghanistan to become polio-free."

Over a rickety table at the hospital's main entrance, a steady stream of parents surrendered wailing children to a friendly, wizened old man, who gently squeezed open the mouths of the less co-operative youngsters, dispensing his vaccine with a toothy grin.

He then used a black felt-tip pen to crudely mark a tiny fingernail to identify a vaccinated child.

## BURKA-CLAD VOLUNTEERS

Beyond the relative safety of the hospital gate, burka-clad volunteers banged on rusty tin doors and asked family members to round up youngsters, using chalk to make Pashto markings on the wall to indicate an immunized household.

Others in the entourage cast edgy glances up and down the dusty, mud-walled alley, well aware that Kandahar remains in the grips of a security alert in the wake of last week's deadly Taliban bombings, which targeted police and government officials.

"It's very challenging work, particularly considering the security situation," Quddus said. "One of the biggest challenges is inaccessibility in some of the seriously security-compromised areas."

Polio is a highly contagious, incurable viral infection of the nervous system, which can cause crippling paralysis or even death within hours of infection.

At its peak, polio paralyzed and killed up to half a million people every year, before Jonas Salk discovered a vaccine in 1954.

Afghanistan is home to an estimated 7.3 million children aged five and under. The current campaign aims to vaccinate 1.2 million of them in the provinces of Kandahar and neighbouring Helmand, including 350,000 children in Kandahar city alone.

Many of those in the city are orphans or living on the street, which poses its own challenges, Quddus added.

"We try to make sure to catch all these children, who are probably at a high risk of being missed," he said. "We have teams at the bus station, we have teams in the markets and in the streets, to vaccinate those children, and we have special teams for the nomads."

Indeed, even a country as racked by war as Afghanistan seems at times overrun with children.

They chase barefoot after coalition convoys or tug on sleeves at the weekly bazaar, trying to lure off-duty soldiers to their trinket-laden tables.

In the villages, they lurk warily behind the billowy folds of an elder's shalwar pants, emerging only to accept an offer of candy or a toy.

They're the lucky ones.

"A great many of them are just in the streets, and they scrounge, or they starve," said John Manley, a former deputy prime minister in Jean Chretien's Liberal government and now a member of CARE Canada's board of directors.

"It's just another of the countless problems this country faces ... It's a problem that doesn't have a lot of people working on it, as far as I can tell."

## CARE CANADA

Manley spent much of last week in Kabul, grounded by sandstorms that thwarted plans to look for potential projects for CARE Canada to support in and around Kandahar, a part of the country where it has relatively little activity.

During his visit, he consulted a focus group comprised of local women about what they considered the most pressing aid priorities.

"One of the top items was classes in literacy," Manley said. While only two or three out of the group of 25 had literacy skills, all of them had children in school, "including all of the girls," Manley added.

"This is pretty good progress, considering where we were five years ago, when no girls were in school."

Orphans were also high on the group's list, he said. "That was one of the other concerns – what about the children with no parents?"

Just down the road from the rusty MiG fighter that guards the gate to Kandahar Airfield, a 30-year-old man named Hekmatullah – like many Afghans, he uses only one name – operates the Shaheed A. Ahad Karzai Orphanage, which runs largely on determination and coalition generosity.

In the last five years, the facility, which operates as an elementary school during the day and an orphanage by night, has swelled to about 360 day students and 40 dirt-poor children who are permanent residents. There are 32 staff members, including 12 teachers.

Three years ago, the U.S. provincial reconstruction team began rebuilding the facility with the help of the Afghan National Army.

Last year, Canada's PRT provided chairs, tables, freezers and school supplies, and recently delivered a shipment of blankets and shoes, said Canadian Forces spokesman Lieut. (Navy) Desmond James.

"In orphanage, they can make their future, they can get a good education, and they could be saved from drugs and other bad activities," said Haji Ghani, a local Kandahar resident who supports Hekmatullah's work.

"The orphanage should be supported by the Afghan government and Canadians as well. It is a very important place and it needs very much attention from Canadians."

For Manley, it's one more reason why Canada shouldn't be in a hurry to pull its troops out of Afghanistan. CIDA has already invested more than \$1 billion here, including \$5 million for the polio campaign, and the investment demands continued nurturing, he said.

Manley said he's been frustrated with the character of the political discourse surrounding Canada's mission in Afghanistan, and called on all sides to abandon the partisan bickering and give the issue the careful consideration it deserves.

"It's not something for passionate debate, but something to be carefully reasoned out and discussed with our allies in terms of what we should do," he said.

"We spend a lot of time trying to determine Canada's place in the world. When we find one, we shouldn't be too quick to abandon it." KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Chilling the French whine

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210312  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 488

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As new French President Nicolas Sarkozy took office, Islamic terrorists reportedly threatened a "fierce battle at the heart of Sarkozy's capital." Finally, a sign that France is on the right track.

Sarkozy says he won't tolerate Muslims "killing sheep in their bathtubs" and having a bunch of wives — a ballsy position when your country hosts Europe's largest Muslim population.

For all the criticism leveled at France, 53% of the country had enough sense to vote for this guy. Being part French, that makes me damn proud.

Still, when I was a panelist on an American TV show this week, it became another anti-French gang bang.

Yes, I'm aware that they lasted less time against the Germans than Rosie O'Donnell does between breakfast and lunch, but the Second World War was 50 years ago.

France finally has the leader that it desperately needs — and this conservative revolutionary deserves our support.

Sarkozy made Socialist Bernard Kouchner the new foreign minister. Smart move, since he was one of about three people in the whole country in favour of ousting arms-for-oil buddy, Saddam Hussein, by military force—and therefore one of the few qualified for the job.

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The knee-jerk attacks on France remind me of what I still hear about Canada.

## USELESS CANADA

As a Canadian-born TV personality working in America, I'm often told on-air how "useless" Canada is. Canada now has a pro-American Conservative government, and soldiers fighting and dying in Afghanistan. Why would you chew out your friends when they bring dessert to your dinner party?

To help with your new talking points, here are a few good things about France:

– President Sarkozy d'Hotness is tougher on legal immigrants than Bush is on illegal ones. He realizes what a bang-up job those former French colonies in Africa did of running things when Mother France gave them the keys to the Citroen and took off. Now they want to move back in with mom, and bring their five wives with them. Fortunately, that's not how Sarko rolls. And before anyone calls him anti-immigrant or racist,

remember that this son of immigrants also won an anti-racism award. Why would anyone object to him "pressure washing" their neighbourhood of "rabble" -- or doing any other chores typically modeled shirtless in a firefighter's calendar?

– President Sarkosexxxxy is a man so charismatic and eloquent that he makes oral expert Bill Clinton look like Dennis Kucinich. Sarko won the election while campaigning for tougher drinking and driving laws. Cracking down on drinking -- in FRANCE.

#### TAX-FREE OVERTIME

– Sarko le Beau wants tax-free overtime. Even Ronald Reagan didn't come up with that one.

– France's Les Guignols De L'Info is one of the funniest shows on television, anywhere in the world. Comedy Central's Jon Stewart isn't even fit to carry the "jacques" straps of the French puppets on this show.

– You won't hear discussions about sex toys and boobs on French television. I'm pretty sure they know that these things exist, but they just don't have a pathological compulsion to talk about them. Although if Sarko did, I likely wouldn't object.

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# Majority fools Harper may ruin his chances in the next election by chasing polls

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210311  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of STEPHEN HARPER "Do what's right  
**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON  
**WORD COUNT:** 529

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Even his admirers (and he has some) are uneasy that Stephen Harper may be jeopardizing his chances of winning a majority in the next federal election.

As a congenital optimist (every year I half expect the Leafs to win the Stanley Cup), I still think the Tories should win a majority whenever Harper decides to call an election. But he isn't helping his chances with acts he thinks will make him popular.

## PANDERING

Despite evidence to the contrary, politicians think a secret to success is pandering to opinion polls, though they don't call it that. Chasing opinion polls, or trying to anticipate what the people will vote for, is a mug's game. Right now, in Canada, polls show a majority of people have doubts about keeping our troops in Afghanistan, so politicians are piling on.

When the last Liberal government began to realize that generations of abusing and cutting the military had been a mistake, Harper grabbed the issue, ran with it, and won support from most Canadians outside Quebec.

The wheel has turned somewhat (thanks to seemingly insoluble problems in Iraq that don't involve us).

Today, Harper's support of the Afghan mission and things military is deemed to be a minus, and may prevent his dream of a majority.

One thing is certain. If Harper were to reverse his previous pledge to keep our military in Afghanistan until that country is secure and fight its own battles, he'd kiss his future goodbye.

I don't know if Harper adopted the military as a cause because he spotted that most Canadians support their soldiers and joined the bandwagon, or if he truly believes in it. I hope the latter.

Politicians who stick to their philosophy and aren't panicked by opinion polls or the musings of media gurus, do better than the cynically ambitious.

Ronald Reagan stuck to what he was, and didn't pander.

He was secure in his beliefs made tough decisions, was respected and popular — a difficult combination.

Remember the air controllers strike when he first took office?

Margaret Thatcher never wavered, never lost public support, but did lose support of her party which lost its nerve. Even Charles de Gaulle prevailed with unpopular stands — witness Algerian independence.

When the Reform Party was first launched by Preston Manning, it took stands the media disliked. But against all predictions it prevailed in Alberta and didn't pander. But when the party came east, it started chasing polls, sacrificing principle for popularity — and flopped.

#### SOFTENED

If you're going to fail, why not fail by doing what's right and what you believe? Harper has softened on issues he supposedly once believed in. I suspect he (and other Tories) would be more trusted if they stopped trying to appeal to everyone.

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On the issue of global warming, if Harper listened to the Friends of Science Society from the University of Calgary he'd realize it's a fraud he now pretends to support.

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All we know for sure is that the Liberals' Stephane Dion is a pathetic excuse for a leader. But Liberals are smart enough to know this (they're smarter than Reform dumbos who assassinate leaders who disappoint them, like Stockwell Day). Right now Bob Rae is set to be the next Liberal leader when Dion self-destructs.

Wait and see.



# Soldiers target polio Afghan volunteers vaccinate kids with aim to eradicate disease

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210564

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.21

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 16

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR

**WORD COUNT:** 160

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Health officials launched a different sort of Afghan offensive yesterday as a brigade of volunteer soldiers armed with clipboards, chalk and tiny bottles of vaccine fanned out across the city.

They were hunting an invisible enemy that preys on the poor and the young.

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"The objective is to interrupt the transmission of this virus, which is only now confined to the two provinces in this country," Quddus said.

"If we can interrupt the transmission in these remaining two provinces, there is a very bright chance for Afghanistan to become polio-free."

Afghanistan is home to an estimated 7.3-million children aged five and under. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Aussie inmate leaves Gitmo

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210563

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.21

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 16

**BYLINE:** AP

**DATELINE:** SYDNEY

**WORD COUNT:** 96

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David Hicks, the first inmate at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre to face a U.S. military tribunal, was flown back to his hometown in Australia yesterday to serve out the remainder of his sentence in a maximum security prison cell.

The former Outback cowboy and kangaroo skinner pleaded guilty in March to providing material support to al-Qaida, including attending terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

Under a plea deal, he was sentenced to nine months in prison, a fraction of the life term he could have received, and was allowed to return to Australia to serve out his term. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Suicide bomber kills 14

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210554  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 10  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** GARDEZ, Afghanistan  
**COLUMN:** World Watch  
**WORD COUNT:** 197

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A suicide bomber detonated himself in a crowded market in eastern Afghanistan yesterday just after a U.S. convoy drove by, killing at least 14 people and wounding 31, officials and witnesses said.

The attack in the city of Gardez damaged around 30 shops, shattered windows and destroyed the stores closest to the explosion.

Witnesses said a U.S. convoy appeared to be the target, and Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, said there were initial reports of injuries to ISAF soldiers, though he didn't have further details.

## 31 INJURED

Six people died at the scene of the blast, police said. Another eight died later at a hospital, said Ghulam Hazrat Majedi, the doctor in charge of the Gardez hospital. He said two of the 31 people injured were in a critical condition.

Nasar Ahmad, 30, a shopkeeper whose three cousins were seriously injured in the blast, said he saw a U.S. convoy driving through the city just before the explosion.

"I heard a strong blast and then saw a fireball go up," Ahmad said from Gardez' hospital. "For 10 minutes I couldn't hear and I didn't know where I was. I saw a lot of people injured lying in the street."

Shah Mohammad, 19, said everyone killed or wounded by the blast were Afghan civilians. "The convoy had already passed when the attack happened," he said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210552

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.05.21

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 8

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of STEPHEN HARPER "Do what's right

**BYLINE:** PETER WORTHINGTON

**WORD COUNT:** 534

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**SOURCETAG** 0705210549  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 8  
**BYLINE:** RACHEL MARSDEN  
**WORD COUNT:** 493

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## Online Extras

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210127  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Early  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A2  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Hank Aaron;  
**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 119

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Online Extras are stories, documents and photos that are available exclusively on the web. Visit our Online Extras section to get unique content that goes beyond the day's headlines at [calgaryherald.com](http://calgaryherald.com):  
[CalgaryHerald.com](http://CalgaryHerald.com)

News: Canada May Supply Afghan Army

– Canada is in discussions with NATO to provide Afghanistan's fledgling army with Leopard tanks so it can better fight insurgents in the south Asia country.

News: Drug Kingpin Out on Day Parole

– One of three brothers who headed a major international drug–trafficking ring with Mafia ties is expected to return to Montreal from a medium–security institution in Kingston, Ont., after being granted day parole.

Sports: No Joy in Aaron's Hometown

– Residents of Mobile, Ala., are watching with a touch of sadness as Barry Bonds moves toward bettering the home–run record of hometown hero Hank Aaron.



# Heroin addiction booms; Afghanistan faces spiralling drug problem

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210100  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**COLUMN:** Asia Report: News From the Region  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Paula Bronstein, Getty Images / Afghan workers are paid \$4 US a day to scrape out opium sap from poppy bulbs, and many become addicted to opiate dust. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** DRUGS; ADDICTIONS; DRUG ABUSE; REHABILITATION; DRUG SEIZURE; THERAPY  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Tom Blackwell  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 434

---

Brothers Abdul Jabar and Abdul Sitar crouch on the floor of their spartan Kabul living room as each light up a small heroin cigarette and draw deeply.

Nearby, several of their 11 small children watch impassively. For the kids, this is nothing unusual. Their fathers have been addicted to heroin, and largely incapacitated by it, since long before they were born. Two of the older boys, who look about eight or nine, generate the family's only income by selling products off a cart after school.

"Because of this thing, I can't work, I can't talk sometimes. I eat stones," says Abdul Jabar, who later illustrates his odd compulsion by swallowing three small rocks. He says he usually passes them without incident. "If I knew I would be in this condition, I wouldn't have used this drug."

Yet the two brothers, and a third who successfully went through rehabilitation recently, are far from alone in their plight. Although it is a strict Muslim country, held in the grip of a fundamentalist regime for five years until 2001, Afghanistan is suffering from a boom in heroin addiction. The international community has sought to crack down on the war-weary nation's record poppy crops, now serving 90 per cent of the world's demand, but the abundant supply of heroin's main raw ingredient has taken a terrible toll at home.

An influx of Afghan refugees who became addicted in Iran and in Pakistan, the ravages of nearly 30 years of war and grinding poverty are also blamed.

"It is not only the rest of the world that is suffering. We are suffering; it is a big problem for us as well," says Dr. Tariq Suliman, who heads the Nejat Centre, a local rehab clinic.

"Now on each and every street we have people who suffer from drug addiction . . . It is spreading fast and it is difficult to control."

Injection of heroin — and sharing of needles — is becoming increasingly more common, helping fuel an HIV problem that threatens to spiral out of control.

Authorities have confirmed 71 HIV cases in Afghanistan, but estimate there are really 1,500 to 2,000. A United Nations study in 2005 estimated there are a million Afghan drug addicts: 50,000 using heroin, 150,000 opium, 500,000 hashish and about 400,000 using other illicit drugs.

The number of heroin addicts doubled in Kabul between 2003 and 2005, and their ranks have undoubtedly swollen since then, says Suliman.

Although a number of treatment programs have cropped up since the fall of the Taliban, waiting lists are still months long.

The Abdul brothers have been trying for six months to get into Nejat, and worry their brother, who was successfully treated there, could fall off the wagon.

"If we were treated together, this problem would have been solved very soon," says Abdul Jabar.

# Volunteers launch offensive against polio; Kandahar vaccine drive a risky job

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210099  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**COLUMN:** Asia Report: News From the Region  
**KEYWORDS:** DISEASES; VACCINES; MEDICAL RESEARCH  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** James McCarten  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**WORD COUNT:** 356

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Health officials launched a different sort of Afghan offensive Sunday as a brigade of volunteer soldiers armed with clipboards, chalk and tiny bottles of vaccine fanned out across the city, hunting an invisible enemy that preys on the poor and the young.

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"The objective is to interrupt the transmission of this virus, which is only now confined to the two provinces in this country," Quddus said in an interview at Kandahar city's dilapidated Mirwais Hospital.

"If we can interrupt the transmission in these remaining two provinces, there is a very bright chance for Afghanistan to become polio-free."

Over a rickety table at the hospital's main entrance, a steady stream of parents surrendered wailing children to a friendly, wizened old man, who gently squeezed open the mouths of the less co-operative youngsters, dispensing his vaccine with a toothy grin.

He then used a black felt-tip pen to crudely mark a tiny fingernail to identify a vaccinated child.

Beyond the relative safety of the hospital gate, burka-clad volunteers banged on rusty tin doors and asked family members to round up youngsters, using chalk to make Pashto markings on the wall to indicate an immunized household.

Others in the entourage cast edgy glances up and down the dusty, mud-walled alley, well aware that Kandahar remains in the grips of a security alert in the wake of last week's deadly Taliban bombings, which

targeted police and government officials.

"It's very challenging work, particularly considering the security situation," Quddus said.

"One of the biggest challenges is inaccessibility in some of the seriously security-compromised areas."

Polio is a highly contagious, incurable viral infection of the nervous system, which can cause crippling paralysis or even death within hours of infection.

At its peak, polio paralyzed and killed up to half a million people every year, before Jonas Salk discovered a vaccine in 1954.

# To bee or not to bee: honey of a problem

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210096  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** The Editorial Page  
**PAGE:** A12  
**COLUMN:** Will Verboven  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Cartoon: (See hard copy for illustration).;  
**KEYWORDS:** INSECTS; PESTS  
**BYLINE:** Will Verboven  
**SOURCE:** Calgary Herald  
**WORD COUNT:** 632

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Is worrying about global warming keeping you up at night? Is food contamination terrifying your every awake minute? Is the war in Afghanistan exasperating your very soul?

Well, those issues are of little consequence if a calamity that is sweeping through parts of Europe and the U.S. reaches Canada or lasts for a few years.

It all has to do with the sudden disappearance of domestic honeybees. That may not seem of consequence to most consumers who see bees as flying pests to be squashed. What most folks don't know is that the domestic honeybee is responsible for pollinating 30 per cent of the world's food crops. If those crops are not pollinated, it will sooner or later trigger a serious food shortage.

How real is that concern? No less a person than Albert Einstein is alleged to have stated, "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."

There is a dispute as to whether Einstein really made that statement. And people could still eat grains and root crops which don't need bee pollination. Thankfully, there will be crops around to brew beer and distill whiskey to wash down all the unsavoury turnips and beans we may have to eat every day.

But it is serious. In California, a state that produces much of Canada's winter food supply, more than 90 crops are dependent on bee pollination. In Canada, apples, blueberries, pears, cherries and a host of other crops would be decimated. By June, we should know how this will affect Canadian crops.

Beekeepers in 24 U.S. states have reported that 30 to 90 per cent of their bee hives — colonies — have been lost. Bees simply leave, never come back and are never found again.

The problem has even been given a name — colony collapse disorder. This is no trivial economic matter, either. In the U.S., it affects \$15 billion of crop production with \$6 billion in California alone.

At this point, beekeepers and scientists are baffled as to the cause of the disappearance. There is a lot of speculation — the usual suspects are viruses, parasites, fungus, weather, even stress. The real problem is that few victims are found and those that remain seem to have multiple afflictions

That situation has caused the environmental doomsayers to claim everything from pesticides to cellphones are to blame for the disappearance. Pesticides may be an issue, but they have been around for more than 50 years and bee disappearance has only become a big issue over the last year.

Governments on both sides of the border seem slow to respond to this impending food production calamity. That may be because politicians are more interested in sexy vote-rich issues such as climate change.

Since lowly bees don't vote and food is still plentiful, our leaders and bureaucrats probably don't see a real problem. That may radically change if California crop production is significantly reduced. If that happens, guess who will get cut off first — Canadians or Americans?

If there is any awareness at all, it is probably being ignored in the hope the bees will suddenly all return home or reproduce frantically to replenish their numbers.

Time will tell if that happens. Governments may also let the market fill any shortfall in fruit and vegetable production in North America by importing similar products from other parts of the world where honeybee pollination continues.

That would be ironic, as all the extra emissions spewed out by vast fleets of jet freighters flying food from distant locales would help cancel out any reductions in greenhouse gases that so politically fascinate our leaders.

Consumers can be forgiven for being blase about this possible food crisis; after all, over the past months, they have been inundated with dubious reports about one food calamity after another. That sort of takes the sting out of bees no longer being busy.

Will Verboven writes on agricultural issues.

# Canada in talks to give Afghans old tanks; Leopards would help army fight insurgents

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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1 / FRONT  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 619

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KABUL, Afghanistan – Canada is in discussions with NATO to provide Afghanistan's fledgling army with Leopard tanks so they can better fight insurgents.

Military officials say plans call for the Afghan National Army (ANA) to switch from its Soviet–designed equipment to gear that is more compatible with that of the NATO nations fighting in this south Asia country. Defence sources here confirm that Canada is interested in supplying some of its older Leopard tanks to the Afghans and discussions have begun on a potential deal.

NATO nations would be expected to donate equipment to the ANA.

U.S. army Maj.–Gen. Robert Durbin, who heads the effort to help develop Afghanistan's army and police forces, said any move to supply the tanks would be handled through NATO.

"So we've had some interesting discussions," said Maj.–Gen. Durbin. "Canada is one nation. You've got Germany. Even New Zealand has Leopards."

Asked whether plans could involve the Canadian Forces turning over the Leopard tanks it already uses in Kandahar to the Afghan army, Maj.–Gen. Durbin responded, "that might be one option that could make sense."

The general added, however, that he would not be involved in such a decision.

The Canadian Forces shipped 17 Leopard tanks to Kandahar last fall after troops requested more firepower to use against insurgents. The Conservative government recently announced it would lease newer Leopards for the Afghanistan mission from Germany. It will also buy 100 Leopard 2s at a cost of \$1.3 billion. That price tag includes a 20–year maintenance and upgrade deal.

Some Canadian soldiers who have worked with the Afghan army in operations against insurgents said the plan to provide the ANA with more modern NATO–type equipment makes sense.

Warrant Officer Chuck Graham said such a move would make it easier for coalition forces to resupply Afghan troops, as everyone would be using the same equipment. He said although the Afghans are natural warriors, one of the main challenges is shaping them into a professional army.

Warrant Officer Graham also predicted that it might be some time before the ANA was ready to switch from Russian-designed to NATO tanks. "As far as going from the (Russian) T62 to the Leopard, I think that's a ways down the road," he said.

Afghanistan is in the process of beefing up its army and police force. The Afghan army is expected to have around 70,000 personnel and 82,000 police by 2008.

Afghanistan's defence ministry is also working on fielding an air corps made up of 150 to 200 helicopters and planes. Plans call for the Afghans to play a greater role in leading the fight against the Taliban and other insurgents.

"The Afghans want to do this," explained Maj.-Gen. Durbin. "They want to stand up on their own two feet. They want to take the lead."

The Afghan army is also creating six new commando battalions of about 650 soldiers each. The battalions would be given the best equipment and most advanced training. The men, most of them combat veterans, have been specially recruited for the units.

Maj.-Gen. Durbin said the Afghan army would decide where the commandos would be used, but he suggested it is most likely they would be sent to southern Afghanistan, where insurgents are the most active. All six battalions would be in place by the end of 2008.

That could provide some relief for Canadian and other NATO troops, he suggested.

"So maybe (in the) spring 2009 you're going to see an even more significant ability of the Afghan national security forces to stand on their own two feet and take on this fight," Maj.-Gen. Durbin said.

"That would be a timeframe where maybe we can have the flexibility to make some strategic decisions about how much of a footprint NATO would be comfortable having in Afghanistan."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said that the Canadian mission in Afghanistan ends in 2009. But military officers here doubt the Conservative government will walk away completely from Afghanistan, since Canada has sacrificed too many soldiers and spent billions of dollars on the mission.

They expect the government to extend the mission, but it is not clear how many troops that would involve.



# Bush greets NATO chief at Texas ranch; Surging violence, civilian deaths to top agenda

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**DATE:** 2007.05.21  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**DATELINE:** CRAWFORD, Texas  
**BYLINE:** Laurent Lozano  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse, with files from bloomberg news and the associated press  
**WORD COUNT:** 616

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CRAWFORD, Texas – U.S. President George W. Bush welcomed NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to his Texas ranch yesterday for talks focused largely on fighting a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan.

Mr. Bush drove a pickup truck to meet Mr. de Hoop Scheffer's helicopter as it landed at the president's sprawling ranch here, where discussions are expected to cover the recent strong showing by Taliban insurgents and civilian deaths in Afghanistan, which threaten to erode support for U.S. troops and the NATO–led International Security Assistance Force backing the Kabul government.

Mr. Bush and his wife, Laura Bush, greeted the secretary general and his wife, Jeannine, in the late afternoon sunshine. "A little slice of heaven," Mr. Bush said of his 1,600–acre getaway from Washington.

The president, in blue jeans and cowboy boots, then climbed into his extended–cab pickup and drove the couples down the road — men in the front seat, women in the back seat.

The invitation for an overnight stay at the ranch is considered a coup, a way for the White House to underscore its commitment to NATO and its leader, Mr. de Hoop Scheffer.

Mr. Bush is expected to seek reinforced allied commitments to participating in the U.S. "war on terror" campaign in Afghanistan. if not Iraq.

Also likely to be on the agenda are Kosovo, the expansion of NATO, and the U.S. effort to position a strategic anti–missile defence system in Europe — the cause of heightened tensions, due to Russia's objection to the expansion.

"I wouldn't be surprised if those issues came up," said White House spokesman Tony Fratto.

Mr. Bush and the NATO leader were to have a working dinner with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defence Secretary Robert Gates late yesterday, and further meetings early today.

Afghanistan could dominate the discussions, due to the recent surge in attacks by Taliban forces and a spike in civilian deaths in the fighting.

About 37,000 NATO–led troops are in Afghanistan, including 15,000 U.S. soldiers and 2,500 Canadians. Another 12,000 U.S. soldiers operate there separately under their own command.

Mr. Bush wants allies to provide more manpower and equipment in Afghanistan, and to lift the restrictions some impose on their troops engaging in battle as the Taliban pursue their spring offensive.

Violence linked to the insurgency has claimed the lives of roughly 1,500 people this year, most of them rebels, but including scores of civilians and nearly 60 foreign soldiers, according to an AFP estimate based on reports.

The NATO chief, recently returned from Pakistan, has said he's concerned that patience among Afghan civilians is wearing thin and that military force alone won't defeat the Taliban.

"It is crystal clear that NATO's strategy is about reconstruction, nation building and development" as a more durable way toward peace, Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said May 8 in Islamabad, according to The Associated Press of Pakistan, the official government news agency.

Increased use of air power by U.S. and NATO troops has driven civilian casualties sharply higher in recent months, drawing criticism from Afghan President Hamid Karzai and concerns among NATO members.

"We must ensure that operations do not develop this way. It would not be a victory to set the (Afghan) people against us," German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung said last week, after EU defence ministers met in Brussels.

"It's tragic that in the effort to provide peace and security in a country that non-combatants, children, become killed or injured in these activities, and so it's a very high priority for us," said Mr. Fratto yesterday.

"We don't want to see any erosion of support in the civilian population in Afghanistan."

But he pinned the blame for the civilian deaths on the Taliban: "I think it's important for everyone to understand that this is a clear express tactic of the enemy in Afghanistan to put civilians in harm's way."

Another subject likely to come up is the future of Kosovo, where NATO peacekeeping troops have been based since 1999, and which is generating more tensions between the U.S. and Russia. Mr. Fratto said that Ms. Rice will probably talk about her recent Moscow visit during dinner.

# International strength of Taliban, al-Qaeda threatens allied efforts; Canada and Britain must put pressure on Pakistan's president to clear country of insurgents, experts warn

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
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**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Mian Khursheed, Reuters / Five years after thousands of Taliban fighters fled Afghanistan to escape a U.S.-led invasion, Pakistan is still unable to shake off suspicions that it is allowing them to operate from its soil. ; Photo: Ahmad Kamgar, Reuters / While Canadian and British troops try to quell anti-Western insurgency in Afghanistan, Pakistan's largely ungovernable tribal areas -- which line the country's permeable western border with Afghanistan -- are now a haven for militant Arab and Islamist jihadist fighters from around the world, uniting under the banner of a new, reconstituted al-Qaeda, say international observers. ;

**BYLINE:** Mike Blanchfield  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 1091

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It was a fierce battle last September between the Pakistani army and al-Qaeda insurgents. When the dust settled and the bodies were counted, 20 terrorist fighters lay dead in the lawless tribal area of North Waziristan.

The corpses told a story with chilling implications for Canadian soldiers and their allies across the border in Afghanistan.

"When they identified the bodies, they found that the military leader was Chechen, the armourer and fixer were Uzbek, and the money bags was Saudi. The foot soldiers were Pashtuns," British Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells said in a recent interview as he recalled the briefing he received from top-ranking Pakistani military officials when he visited Pakistan last fall.

That high-level briefing for a visiting British minister was a telling illustration of what many analysts cite as the greatest threat to Canadian and British troops, as they and their NATO allies try to quell the anti-western insurgency in neighbouring south Afghanistan. Pakistan's largely ungovernable tribal areas -- which line the country's permeable western border with Afghanistan -- are now a haven for militant Arab and Islamist jihadist fighters from around the world, uniting under the banner of a new, reconstituted al-Qaeda.

Mr. Howells and others say this means that NATO countries such as Britain and Canada, who are fighting this influx of new insurgents in southern Afghanistan, must turn up the pressure on Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to move against what many are calling the "Talibanization" of his country.

"You can't not tell him about what your fears are," said Mr. Howells. "The British and the Canadians especially have to be candid about it, because it's our troops who are being killed."

Ideally, Mr. Howells would like to see Mr. Musharraf launch a major offensive on the insurgents in Quetta, but he realizes that's not easy.

"We know it's a very difficult thing to do, because Quetta is a very densely populated city," he said. "It's not easy to move around in ... It could turn into a very bloody battle indeed. The Taliban know that, and they've picked Quetta for that reason."

Bruce Riedel, a retired senior CIA Asia expert and former U.S. presidential adviser on the National Security Council, argues that al-Qaeda is now as big a threat to the West as it was prior to 9/11 because "the organization now has a solid base of operations in the badlands of Pakistan and an effective franchise in western Iraq. Its reach has spread throughout the Muslim world, where it has developed a large cadre of operatives, and in Europe, where it can claim the support of some disenfranchised Muslim locals and members of Arab and Asian diasporas."

Mr. Riedel is now a senior fellow with the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think-tank. Writing in the most recent edition of the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Mr. Riedel outlines how Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers — the former hosts of al-Qaeda who plotted the 9/11 attacks from their safe haven in Afghanistan — were able to regroup in early-2002 in the badlands of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar and others built a new base of operations around the southwestern desert city of Quetta, in Pakistan's Baluchistan province, says Mr. Riedel.

The continuing resilience of the Taliban was reinforced this week when, in the immediate aftermath of the death of Mullah Dadullah, the group named a replacement and was able to launch a wave of bombings in Afghanistan.

If you drive west from Quetta for five hours, across Pakistan's mountainous border with Afghanistan, you arrive at the front gate of Kandahar Air Field — where Canada's 2,500 soldiers and another 8,000 western allies are based.

Together, 37,000 NATO and western troops are battling a reconstituted Taliban based in Pakistan, says Mr. Riedel.

"Al-Qaeda today is a global operation, with a well-oiled propaganda machine based in Pakistan, a secondary, but independent, base in Iraq, and an expanding reach in Europe," he writes.

While Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan have tried to clamp down on al-Qaeda operations and their sympathizers, the terrorist organization still receives financial backing from Saudi sources.

The Saudi connection was illustrated by the incident that Mr. Howells was told of in Pakistan last fall, and also highlighted the fact that al-Qaeda draws military leadership from among hardened jihadists who have waged war against Russian forces in Chechnya or sown terror with al-Qaeda's sister groups in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan's northern neighbour. That leaves the indigenous ethnic Pashtuns, who straddle the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, to be "foot soldiers" — the paid guns-for-hire that the insurgency is able to court with anti-western propaganda.

Last fall, Mr. Musharraf attempted a controversial intervention to curb the growing Taliban influence and influx of foreigners in North Waziristan, the Pakistani border area north of Baluchistan province, and the area where bin Laden is believed to be hiding.

Mr. Musharraf negotiated a peace deal with Islamist leaders in the region — one that sparked fierce criticism. Many critics said the so-called truce would give the Taliban, al-Qaeda and its mix of foreign elements a safe haven in the region.

Mr. Howells and Mr. Riedel acknowledge that Mr. Musharraf has to walk a tightrope between corralling Islamist elements within Pakistan and being a good ally to the West, particularly Washington, which has given the country \$10 billion in aid in the past six years.

Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, effectively created the Taliban in the mid-1990s in order to bring stability to Afghanistan.

William Maley, a senior lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy, says the ISI knows exactly where al-Qaeda's Pakistan camps are. He says Pakistan's spy agency is playing both sides of the fence — protecting its historic Taliban allies, while showing some willingness to turn over al-Qaeda's foreign fighters to the U.S.

Mr. Musharraf's five-year term as president expires by year's end, so he is under pressure to go to the polls if he ever wants to silence critics who say he is not really a politician but a soldier who is hiding his uniform under a business suit.

Mr. Howells said he believes a huge majority of Pakistanis are fed up with the Islamist influence in their country. Recent polls, he said, suggest that fewer than one in six Pakistanis identifies with extremism, and most are eager to move their country forward economically so it can catch up with the prosperity of its rival, India.

"The Americans, as well as us and the Canadians, have been urging (Mr. Musharraf) to take action," said Mr. Howells. "It will be interesting to see what he does as they run up towards an election."

# Health officials, volunteers target children in effort to eradicate polio

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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** James McCarten  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**WORD COUNT:** 268

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KANDAHAR – Health officials launched a different sort of Afghan offensive yesterday as a brigade of volunteer soldiers armed with clipboards, chalk and tiny bottles of vaccine fanned out across the city, hunting an invisible enemy that preys on the poor and the young.

The World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Canadian International Development Agency are among the partners in an ongoing effort to push polio out of Afghanistan, one of only four countries in the world where conflict and poverty have conspired to allow its resurgence.

Two recently confirmed cases in the southern part of the country prompted the vaccinations. Volunteers braved the perils of Kandahar by going door-to-door and administering two drops of oral vaccine to every child under the age of five, said Arshad Quddus of the WHO's Kabul office.

"The objective is to interrupt the transmission of this virus, which is only now confined to the two provinces in this country," Mr. Quddus said in an interview at Kandahar's dilapidated Mirwais Hospital.

"If we can interrupt the transmission in these remaining two provinces, there is a very bright chance for Afghanistan to become polio-free."

Over a rickety table at the hospital's main entrance, a steady stream of parents surrendered wailing children to a friendly, wizened old man, who gently squeezed open the mouths of the less-co-operative youngsters, dispensing his vaccine with a toothy grin.

He then used a black felt-tipped pen to crudely mark a tiny fingernail to identify a vaccinated child.

"It's very challenging work, particularly considering the security situation," Mr. Quddus said. "One of the biggest challenges is inaccessibility in some of the seriously security-compromised areas."

# Airstrike kills Taliban leaders: NATO; Suicide bomber kills 10 in market, dozens injured

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**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY  
**BYLINE:** Ed Johnson  
**SOURCE:** Bloomberg News, with files from Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 418

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SYDNEY – A NATO airstrike in southern Afghanistan killed a "significant number" of Taliban leaders, the alliance said in a statement.

Meanwhile, a man strapped with explosives blew himself up in a town in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, killing at least 10 people in the second major suicide bombing claimed by the Taliban in two days.

The NATO attack Saturday night comes a week after U.S. forces killed the Taliban's top military commander, Mullah Dadullah, in the southern province of Helmand.

The strikes will "in the short term, push the enemy into confusion and disarray," NATO spokesman Maj. John Thomas said in a statement yesterday.

The Taliban leaders were killed by "precision weapons" in a remote area of southern Afghanistan, NATO said in the statement.

U.S. and Afghan forces clashed with Taliban fighters yesterday in Helmand's Sangin district, the U.S. military said in a statement e-mailed from Bagram Airfield, near the Afghan capital, Kabul.

Coalition war planes dropped bombs that destroyed seven Taliban compounds and three weapons caches, the U.S. military said. "There were several confirmed enemy deaths during the 14-hour battle and no reports of any Afghan civilian injuries," the military said in the statement.

The suicide attack in a crowded market place in the town of Gardez, 100 kilometres south of Kabul, follows one in the northern city of Kunduz on Saturday that killed six Afghans and three German soldiers.

"I was in my classroom when it happened. I heard a huge explosion. It shook our school," said 18-year-old student Delawar Khan, who was among streams of people who hurried to the scene of the Gardez blast to witness the destruction.

Blood stained the ground, which was littered with shards of glass and other debris. The force of the blast tore up parts of the tar road and shattered the windscreens of nearby vehicles.

"Ten of our civilian countrymen were martyred and 30 others were wounded," the interior ministry said in a statement.

The U.S.-led coalition said it had soldiers in the area at the time of the blast, but suffered no casualties.

Most of the 30 wounded civilians who filled the main hospital in Gardez were in a bad condition, Dr. Niaz Mohammad said. Several were rushed to the capital, nearly three hours' drive away.

The attacker's target was unclear, although a witness said he had seen a foreign military vehicle pass by minutes before the blast. Most of the suicide bombings in the country are aimed at Afghan and foreign military forces.

The Taliban vowed last week a new wave of violence to avenge the killing of its famously brutal top military commander Mullah Dadullah.

It said it was behind the Gardez attack and the one in Kunduz, which was the deadliest strike against the German deployment to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force since 2003.

A suicide car bomb aimed at the governor of the southern province of Kandahar on Thursday was also part of this campaign, a purported Taliban commander said at the time.



# Drug problem 'spreading fast'

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**IDNUMBER** 200705210093

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**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Tom Blackwell, National Post / Brothers AbdulJabar, left, and Abdul Sitar, crouch on the floor of their small Kabul apartment and smoke heroin as some of their 11 children look on. ;

**SOURCE:** National Post

**WORD COUNT:** 612

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A 2005 UN study estimated there were a million Afghan addicts, writes Tom Blackwell in Kabul. The number of heroin addicts in the city doubled between 2003 and 2005.

Brothers Abdul Jabar and Abdul Sitar crouch on the floor of their spartan Kabul living room, each light up a small heroin cigarette and draw deeply on the powerful drug.

Nearby, several of their 11 small children watch impassively. For the youngsters, this is nothing unusual. Their fathers have been addicted to heroin, and largely incapacitated by it, since long before they were born.

Two of the older boys, who look about eight or nine, generate the family's only income by selling products off a cart after school.

"Because of this thing, I can't work, I can't talk sometimes. I eat stones," says Abdul Jabar, who later illustrates his odd compulsion by swallowing three small rocks. He says he usually passes them without incident.

"If I knew I would be in this condition, I wouldn't have used this drug. If they paid me \$10 million, I wouldn't have used this drug."

Yet the two brothers, and a third who successfully went through rehabilitation recently, are far from being alone in their plight.

Although it is a strict Muslim country, held in the grip of a fundamentalist regime for five years until 2001, Afghanistan is suffering from a boom in heroin addiction.

The international community has sought to crack down on the war-weary nation's record poppy crops, now serving 90 per cent of the world's demand, but the abundant supply of heroin's main raw ingredient has taken a terrible toll at home.

An influx of Afghan refugees who became addicted in Iran and in Pakistan, the trauma and physical ravages of nearly 30 years of war, and grinding poverty are also blamed.

"It is not only the rest of the world that is suffering. We are suffering; it is a big problem for us as well," says Dr. Tariq Suliman, who heads the Nejat Centre, a rehab clinic.

"Now on each and every street we have people who suffer from drug addiction. ... It is spreading fast and it is difficult to control."

A United Nations study in 2005 estimated there are a million Afghan drug addicts: 50,000 using heroin, 150,000 opium, 500,000 hashish and about 400,000 using other illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals. The number of heroin addicts doubled in Kabul between 2003 and 2005.

And their ranks have undoubtedly swollen since then, says Dr. Suliman.

Among them is Matiulah, who, like many Afghans, goes by just one name. He said he became hooked in 1993, when mujahedeen factions were battling over Kabul, and his wife, caught in the crossfire, was killed.

Two addicts for whom he played his flute introduced him to heroin smoking. He had told them how sad he felt.

"When I used the drug, it really reduced my pain," he says. "The drug was the only thing that stopped me (from) thinking about my wife."

He later moved north of Kabul, but would come back to the city to buy heroin, even during the years of the Taliban, who took the Koran's ban on intoxicants so seriously, they made a public display of riding their tanks over beer cans.

His dealer eventually gave it to him for free in exchange for his rounding up new customers. Finally, last year, he was discovered by the newly set-up Medecins du Monde program, has now cut back to three heroin cigarettes a day and is convinced he will stop for good.

Then there are those who get hooked just because of their part in the industry, like the three young poppy workers. In Helmand province, a heroin factory worker would wear a blanket around his shoulders, then shake it out at home close to his children. They would be crying —until the blanket dispersed its opiate dust, said Dr. Mohammad Zafar, director of demand reduction in the ministry of counter narcotics.

He laments that the international community, so focused on curbing poppy production, has paid little heed to Afghanistan's domestic drug epidemic.

Although a number of treatment programs have cropped up since the fall of the Taliban, waiting lists are still months long.

The Abdul brothers have been trying for six months to get into Nejat, and worry their brother, who was treated successfully there and lives with them, could fall off the wagon.

"If we were treated together, this problem would have been solved very soon," says Abdul Jabar.

# Australian detainee arrives home

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Hicks;  
**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON  
**SOURCE:** The Washington Post  
**WORD COUNT:** 162

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WASHINGTON – David Hicks, the first of hundreds of Guantanamo Bay detainees convicted under the U.S. Congress's new rules for enemy-combatant terrorism trials, arrived home in Australia yesterday to finish his prison sentence after more than five years in U.S. custody, the Pentagon and the Australian government announced.

Mr. Hicks, 31, will serve nine months in isolation at a maximum-security prison near Adelaide, his home town.

The Muslim convert and al-Qaeda recruit fought for two hours alongside the Taliban before he sold his rifle for taxi fare and was captured trying to flee Afghanistan in December 2001. He will be eligible for release Dec. 29.

As part of the March 30 plea deal, the government released Mr. Hicks on several conditions, including that he not speak with reporters for one year and that he recant accusations of illegal treatment while in U.S. captivity.

Canadian Omar Khadr, 20, has been charged with murder in a firefight at an alleged al-Qaeda compound and might be the first to face trial.

# The grip of heroin; the abundant supply of poppies in Afghanistan has taken a terrible toll at home

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**SECTION:** News

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: TOM BLACKWELL, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE / BrothersAbdul Jabar, about 38, left, and Abdul Sitar, about 52, smoke heroin as some of their 11 children look on. ;

**KEYWORDS:** DRUGS; ADDICTIONS; DRUG ABUSE; REHABILITATION; THERAPY; DRUGSEIZURE

**DATELINE:** KABUL

**BYLINE:** TOM BLACKWELL

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 786

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Brothers Abdul Jabar and Abdul Sitar crouch on the floor of their spartan Kabul living room, each light up a small heroin cigarette and draw deeply on the powerful drug.

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Although it is a strict Muslim country, held in the grip of a fundamentalist regime for five years until 2001, Afghanistan is suffering from a boom in heroin addiction.

The international community has sought to crack down on the war-weary nation's record poppy crops, now serving 90 per cent of the world's demand, but the abundant supply of heroin's main raw ingredient has taken a terrible toll at home.

An influx of Afghan refugees who became addicted in Iran and in Pakistan, the trauma and physical ravages of nearly 30 years of war, and grinding poverty are also blamed.

"It is not only the rest of the world that is suffering. We are suffering; it is a big problem for us as well," said Tariq Suliman, the doctor who heads the Nejat Centre, a local rehab clinic.

"Now on each and every street we have people who suffer from drug addiction. ... It is spreading fast and it is difficult to control."

Meanwhile, injection of heroin – and sharing of needles – is becoming increasingly more common, helping fuel an HIV problem that threatens to spiral out of control.

Surprisingly, a smaller part of the HIV outbreak is related to prostitution, an even more subterranean culture in the Muslim nation.

There are foreign prostitutes working out of Chinese restaurants in Kabul, catering mainly to ex-pats, as well as home-grown sex workers, including young boys known as bachabozi, or playing boys, experts say.

Authorities have confirmed 71 HIV cases in Afghanistan, but estimate there are really 1,500 to 2,000, said Miodrag Atanasijevic of the aid group Medecins du monde, which runs a street outreach program for Kabul addicts.

A study by Catherine Todd, an epidemiologist from the University of California at San Diego who is working in the capital, found that high percentages of intravenous drug users shared needles and had Hepatitis C, seen as a precursor of HIV spread.

The incidence of HIV among such addicts now sits at about three per cent, but if current trends continue it will reach concentrated epidemic status – five per cent of users – in at least one location within a year, with potentially devastating consequences. Once it hits 20 per cent, "we've lost the battle," Todd said. "The window of opportunity is open but it's in the process of closing. You can spend millions now, or billions later."

A United Nations study in 2005 estimated there are a million Afghan drug addicts: 50,000 using heroin, 150,000 opium, 500,000 hashish and about 400,000 using other illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals. The number of heroin addicts doubled in Kabul between 2003 and 2005.

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His dealer eventually gave it to him for free in exchange for his rounding up new customers. Finally, last year, he was discovered by the newly set-up Medecins du monde program, has now cut back to three heroin cigarettes a day and is convinced he will stop for good.

The grip of heroin; the abundant supply of poppies in Afghanistan has taken a terrible toll at home<sup>82</sup>

Although a number of treatment programs have cropped up since the fall of the Taliban, waiting lists are still months long.

The Abdul brothers have been trying for six months to get into Nejat, and worry their brother, who was treated successfully there and lives with them, could fall off the wagon.

"If we were treated together, this problem would have been solved very soon," Abdul Jabar said.

They developed their habit in Iran, where they went to get away from the war between the Soviets and mujahedin in the 1980s.

They were frequenting prostitutes in the Islamic republic, and a friend told Abdul Jabar he could improve his stamina after smoking heroin.

"I went for sex; I was doing it for two hours," he recalls. "But I wasn't aware that from the inside, I was dying."

# Blast kills 10 in market; Taliban step up attacks with suicide bombers

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A suicide bomber killed 10 civilians and wounded at least 30 other people in a crowded market in the southeastern Afghan province of Paktia yesterday, officials said.

Taliban militants claimed responsibility for the attack.

In Ghazni province, NATO and Afghan forces battled Taliban fighters in the Qara Bagh district late on Saturday. The provincial governor said 30 Taliban were killed, 18 were wounded and 12 were arrested, while three police officers were missing and one was wounded.

Taliban insurgents have stepped up attacks in Afghanistan after a traditional winter lull in fighting. The Taliban has said it has trained hundreds of suicide bombers.

The Paktia bomber's apparent target was a convoy of U.S.-led coalition soldiers passing through the market in the city of Gardez, about 100 kilometres south of the capital Kabul.

Television video from the scene showed body parts scattered in the street amid wrecked cars and debris. A local official said the bomber did not appear to be an Afghan.

A spokesman for U.S.-led coalition forces said some foreign troops were hurt at the scene but it was not certain whether the injuries were caused by the bomb.

A British soldier died in Afghanistan yesterday from injuries suffered in an accident at a base in Sangin, in the southern province of Helmand, the defence ministry said in Kabul.

# New graves, fresh grief; Arlington National Cemetery is known for its orderliness and precision. But in Section 60, reserved for the U.S. dead of the Iraq and Afghan wars, the messiness of life disrupts the order

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Colour Photo: MICHEL DU CILLE, WASHINGTON POST / XiomaraMena Anderson visits the grave of her son, Andy, at Arlington National Cemetery. When the phone rings, she said, "I always think it's him." Anderson's eldest son died in Iraq a year ago in June.

**ILLUSTRATION:** She said she misses him so completely that the words of his tombstone are repeated across the back left window of her SUV. ; Colour Photo: Miami Beach police officer Oldy Ochoa wipes away tears as he leaves the grave of Orlando Eric Gonzalez in Section 60. ;

**KEYWORDS:** CEMETERIES

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In Section 60, death remains too fresh to be separated from life.

You see it in the 17 cigars pushed into the grass near one headstone, signs that a combat unit stopped by.

And in the mother who spent winter afternoons wrapped in a sleeping bag, stretched across her son's grave.

And in the older man who reads Robert Frost to the dead, knowing that their families live thousands of miles away.

Here in Section 60 are the graves of 336 men and women killed in Iraq and Afghanistan – almost one in 10 of the dead. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have produced the highest percentage of burials at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. from any war. For the duration of this war, there have been few photographs of coffins returning home. Section 60 is the one place to get a sense of the immensity of the U.S. loss.

The great expanse of the cemetery is known for its orderliness, its precision. Each Memorial Day, the government places a U.S. flag exactly one foot in front of every headstone. Only flowers are allowed on graves.

But in "60," the messiness of life disrupts the order. Picnics are laid and incense burned. Red glass hearts are left atop the headstones. Origami-style sheets of notebook paper are tucked away, safe from lawn mower blades.

New graves, fresh grief; Arlington National Cemetery is known for its orderliness and precision. But in Section 60, reserved for the U.S. dead of the Iraq and Afghan wars, the messiness of life disrupts the order



Mothers and widows, friends and regretful exes write intimate notes, some as casual as a message stuck on a refrigerator door.

"I called your old cellphone the other day. Someone named Brian has it now, and I couldn't help but wonder if he knew anything about you."

"It was so wonderful having lunch with you. Now that I know how easy it is to get here by Metro, I'll come by way more often."

Here, the deaths haven't been fully absorbed. People talk to their dead. They still see their dead. "Somebody drives by," said Linda Bishop, a few feet from the grave site of her son Jeff, "and you think it's him." The phone rings, said Xiomara Mena Anderson, standing over the grave of her son Andy, and "I always think it's him."

Other parts of Arlington wear the dignified repose of old age and bygone eras. Section 60 reverberates with youth and immediacy. Visitors wear long sideburns and spiky hair, flip flops and eyelet skirts.

Even the names on the headstones sound youthful and vibrant: Megan, Jesse, Heath, Blake. They are names that seem better suited to text messaging – LOL, BFF – than to the abbreviated code of the graveyard – CPL, BSM.

"I find a need to be there," said Teresa Arciola, who drives from New York's Westchester County every other month to place iPod earbuds on her son's grave and play for him the Temptations and Eminem. She brings him Black Forest gummy bears and, on his birthday, beer that she pours into the ground. At every visit, she sits on his grave and reads aloud from his favourite baby book, Corduroy. He had just turned 20.

"I feel good while I'm there," Arciola said. "But I don't think there's comfort."

The graves come quickly.

One mother visits the grave of her casualty officer, the man who was there for her when she first learned that her son had died in 2005.

The funerals require an extra level of choreography.

Two were held last Wednesday, back to back. Overhead, thunderstorms threatened, the sky was the colour of dark cement and the wind blew flower arrangements to the ground.

By the time the first man was buried – Major Douglas Zembiec, a 34-year-old marine known as the Lion of Fallujah – the backhoe beside his grave had begun to dig for the next funeral. More than 50 mourners remained near Zembiec's grave site.

Some wandered, visiting other graves. A man in a dark suit sought out two other headstones. A marine officer spent 20 minutes crisscrossing the section, stopping regularly.

And the backhoe continued to dig. Every mound of dirt scooped from the newest grave was used to finish burying the officer whose funeral had just ended. Rites for army Specialist Matthew Bolar were to begin in an hour.

To stand at the edge of where the graves begin is to see exactly what the war has meant – what has been lost, what has been sacrificed. The headstones' dark, black lettering seems to endlessly repeat the vague circumstances of each death: Operation Iraqi Freedom ... Operation Iraqi Freedom ... Operation Enduring

New graves, fresh grief; Arlington National Cemetery is known for its orderliness and precision. **Bu86n** Section

Freedom ... Iraqi Freedom ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Enduring ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Iraqi ... Enduring ...

"Freedom is not free," say the hats and bracelets worn by some visitors to Section 60. And the rows of headstones – from the just-dug graves back to those of the Second World War, Korea and Vietnam veterans who died of old age – are stark, white reminders of how much that freedom has cost.

The graves spread in every direction, as orderly as crops in early June, lines and diagonals as reassuring as they are mesmerizing.

Although more than 300,000 veterans from every U.S. war since the Revolution are buried at Arlington, the cemetery gained worldwide prominence after President John F. Kennedy was laid to rest there in 1963. It is celebrated as sacred ground for military heroes.

Arciola said she remembers first going to visit her son Michael after he died in Iraq in 2005. Seeing another mother in a chair nearby, Arciola approached and asked, "Does it get any better?"

Answered the woman, whose son had died about two years earlier, "No."

This is the place where all of the grief, anger and pride at what's going on in Iraq and Afghanistan come together. Children chase each other through the headstones and try to pry rocks from the dirt of freshly dug graves. Their parents stand nearby, introducing themselves and exchanging emails and phone numbers.

"They tell me they don't want to go to any more grief counsellors or priests. They want to be with people who are going through hell themselves," said Carol Thomas, who stops by regularly and has befriended many of the regulars. Her husband is buried elsewhere in Arlington, and she sees the Iraq and Afghanistan war dead as "all my boys." She sees their mothers and fathers, widows, uncles, best friends and others as "my great friends."

"Has the Muslim family come today?" asks regular visitor Joyce Ward on the afternoon of Mother's Day.

"No. I haven't seen them," answered Anderson, whose eldest son died in Iraq a year ago in June. She said she misses him so completely that the words of his tombstone are repeated across the back left window of her sport-utility vehicle and on a bracelet she wears daily: "In loving memory of My Beloved Son Cpl. Andy D. Anderson." She has spent all day here, filling vases by his gravestone with mums and daisies.

"But I see flowers," Anderson added, thinking this is a good sign.

"No," Ward told her, worriedly. "I brought those."

A man with thick, gray hair was reading to the fallen. Mid-afternoon, Tom Gugliuzza-Smith took a break, picked up a large, brown watering can and small brush and visited every gravestone on the section's northern end, scrubbing off bird droppings. He has been visiting Section 60 since late 2004, when he stopped by a funeral and watched a gangly adolescent collapse over his father's casket. He has since become, in effect, a stand-in for those who can't be there. He reads books such as *The Da Vinci Code* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, sent by far-away families for their sons.

And now, down York Drive, the shady road that leads straight to Section 60, a tall, slender guy was walking fast. He had shaggy blond hair and Euro-fashionable clothes: dark shirt, skinny jeans, backpack. His stride was long, almost buoyant.

He turned right and threaded his way through the gravestones, slowing, then stopping at one that, 21/2 weeks

New graves, fresh grief; Arlington National Cemetery is known for its orderliness and precision. Bu87n Section

ago, lay in the final row. That distinction had since disappeared. A new row of freshly dug graves held seven headstones.

Sinking to his heels, this young man who, only moments before, looked purposeful and almost brisk seemed to crumble. He reached toward the name etched into the gravestone. He was sobbing.