

# Table of Contents

<u>Local soldiers share their stories of time in Afghanistan.....</u>	1
<u>Canadian soldiers, journalist escape bomb blast without serious injury.....</u>	5
<u>Most Afghan suicide attackers trained in Pakistan: UN report.....</u>	6
<u>No rush for Afghanistan vote: PM.....</u>	8
<u>Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection.....</u>	10
<u>Canuck soldiers injured by blast on road.....</u>	12
<u>Harper sets vote terms PM seeks consensus on troops.....</u>	13
<u>Harper cites APEC progress on climate, sets terms for Afghan mission vote; PM says no vote on Afghan mission unless there's enough support to 'finish the job'.....</u>	15
<u>Journalist, soldiers unhurt by blast; On the road with Van Doos in dusty, remote Afghan outpost.....</u>	17
<u>PM says he wants to finish mission.....</u>	19
<u>World coming together on climate, Harper says; Prime minister sets terms for Afghan mission vote;; takes issue with Elections Canada ruling.....</u>	21
<u>Show Canadians how the mission is succeeding.....</u>	24
<u>An Afghan turnaround?; The politicians are doing a cut-and-run.....</u>	26
<u>Canadians clear the road; Latest offensive secures access to Ghundy Ghar base.....</u>	28
<u>Tub-thumpers at DND stop drumming for now.....</u>	30
<u>Polluters sign deal at APEC summit; Harper sets terms for Afghan vote, slams Muslim veil ruling.....</u>	32
<u>Canada must finish the job in Afghanistan, says prime minister; Vote on mission won't be soon: Harper.....</u>	34
<u>Roadside blast injures two soldiers; Two military vehicles patrolling in Afghanistan on Sunday run over explosive devices.....</u>	36
<u>Harper wants troops to 'finish job' in Afghanistan.....</u>	37
<u>Troops move in to secure hostile 'Taliban country'.....</u>	39
<u>Harper cites APEC progress on climate, sets terms for Afghan mission vote.....</u>	41

# Table of Contents

<u>Canadian troops move in to secure hostile `Taliban country' in Afghanistan.....</u>	43
<u>Al-Qaida commander criticizes Hamas for abandoning jihad in new videotape.....</u>	45
<u>Harper says no quick vote on Afghanistan without support for new mandate.....</u>	46
<u>Canadian soldiers, journalist unhurt, but shaken by IED blast in Afghanistan.....</u>	48
<u>INDEX:International, Defence.....</u>	50
<u>TOR OUT YYY.....</u>	51
<u>Afghan-Karzai.....</u>	53
<u>Soldier-Funeral.....</u>	54
<u>Toronto 9/11 widow says Canada should mark day.....</u>	55
<u>Troops clear path to remote outpost in Afghan province; Two soldiers hurt after tank rolls over mine; reporter escapes injury in roadside bombing.....</u>	57
<u>PM wants Afghan mission to last until we 'finish the job'.....</u>	59
<u>Six years after 9/11, Canadians still share American values; Differences over Iraq war notwithstanding, U.S. 'goals' appeal to most of us, poll finds.....</u>	60
<u>NATO wants Canada to stay in Afghanistan; Troops will be 'missed sorely' if they're withdrawn in 2009, Britain's top military officer says in Victoria.....</u>	62
<u>Harper says there will be no immediate vote on ending mission in 2009, a decision that rankles opposition.....</u>	64
<u>Protesters accuse generals of war crimes.....</u>	66
<u>Two Canadians hurt on operation.....</u>	68
<u>Harper wants Canadian troops 'to finish the job'.....</u>	70
<u>The remorseful thief.....</u>	72
<u>A real debate on Afghanistan.....</u>	73
<u>Warring expectations.....</u>	75
<u>It's not political.....</u>	77

# Table of Contents

<u>Missing reference.....</u>	78
<u>Money better spent.....</u>	79
<u>Troops clear path to remote outpost.....</u>	80
<u>NATO officers praise Canada's contribution; Afghanistan role called effective, valued; would be sorely missed.....</u>	81
<u>Harper in no hurry for Afghanistan vote; PM wants certainty that Commons will agree to 'finish the job'.....</u>	83
<u>Stranded soldiers receive supplies; Canadians at remote Afghan outpost were cut off for almost three weeks.....</u>	85
<u>Military manoeuvres.....</u>	86
<u>Afghan president calls for talks with Taliban; Country's security in serious trouble, admits Hamid Karzai.....</u>	87
<u>Canadian forces would be sorely missed: British commander; NATO officials voice hope mission will continue beyond February 2009.....</u>	89
<u>Harper wants troops to stay to 'finish job'; Opposition vows to force Commons vote this fall on combat mission.....</u>	92
<u>Prime minister sets terms for vote on Afghan mission.....</u>	94
<u>Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection.....</u>	95
<u>PM stacks the deck Says there won't be any vote to extend Afghan mission unless he's sure to win it...97</u>	97
<u>Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection.....</u>	98
<u>Afghan mission a tough sell Exit will leave 'a hell of a vacuum'.....</u>	100
<u>Harper cites APEC progress on climate The PM also sets what may be called winning terms for a vote on the mission in Afghanistan.....</u>	102
<u>Afghan mission called tough sell.....</u>	104
<u>Canucks clear path to outpost Treacherous winding road littered with bombs.....</u>	106
<u>Karzai speech was a blast Afghan police fire warning shots during president's remarks.....</u>	108
<u>Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection.....</u>	109

# Table of Contents

<b><u>THE AFGHAN MISSION Canadians sweep through volatile region Forces meet with little resistance as they retake farmland in Zhari district.....</u></b>	<b>111</b>
<b><u>TERRORISM Prosecuting Khadr at home would be 'quite difficult,' experts say.....</u></b>	<b>113</b>
<b><u>THE AFGHAN MISSION Harper to delay troop vote until assured of result.....</u></b>	<b>115</b>
<b><u>Commons won't vote on mission yet: Harper; 'No need to rush'. Canadians reclaim volatile Afghan district.....</u></b>	<b>117</b>
<b><u>Canadians approve U.S. goals: poll; Identify with southern neighbours more than other nations.....</u></b>	<b>119</b>
<b><u>Islamic extremism, Taliban, are a real threat.....</u></b>	<b>121</b>
<b><u>'He will be missed beyond words!.....</u></b>	<b>122</b>
<b><u>No vote until I can win: PM; Harper wants Canadian troops to stay in Afghanistan until they 'finish the job'.....</u></b>	<b>124</b>
<b><u>Bomb rattles Canadian convoy.....</u></b>	<b>125</b>
<b><u>Quick vote on mission very iffy PM says it'll wait till he has support.....</u></b>	<b>126</b>
<b><u>Afghan territory seesaws.....</u></b>	<b>128</b>
<b><u>No rush to vote.....</u></b>	<b>130</b>
<b><u>Canada's 9/11 victims deserve annual remembrance, widow says; 'New York Or Nothing,' For Families.....</u></b>	<b>131</b>
<b><u>Canadian troops re-establish Zhari presence; No Serious Casualties; Recover Terrain Seized In Heavy Fighting Last Fall.....</u></b>	<b>133</b>
<b><u>TROOPS MUST 'FINISH JOB': PM; Dion Vows To Force Vote On Afghan Mission.....</u></b>	<b>135</b>
<b><u>Canadian troops rescue stranded comrades; Reconnaissance group was unable to receive supplies...138</u></b>	<b>138</b>
<b><u>Toronto 9/11 widow urges Canada to mark dark day; 'This wasn't an exclusively American event!...140</u></b>	<b>140</b>
<b><u>PM won't rush vote on Afghan role.....</u></b>	<b>141</b>

# Local soldiers share their stories of time in Afghanistan

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When a mortar falls, the ground shakes. The sound is shocking. A cloud of dirt swirls into the air. War is loud, Warrant Officer Tim Cooke says.

The Guelph-based reservist returned Aug. 30 from a seven-month tour in Afghanistan.

In the northern part of Kandahar province, his artillery unit was mortared and rocketed daily during what could be called a particularly difficult week.

They shot back as best they could.

In an armoured vehicle with the antenna up, Cooke calculated the co-ordinates of the mortar-source far off in the desert. He had to move quickly. His cohorts in D Battery, 2nd Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, stood at their guns, easy targets for the "bad guys," while they awaited Cooke's radio call to fire.

First, Cooke had to figure out what ammunition was best to fire, and with what trajectory. The job takes little time but to Cooke, each calculation amid mortar rain felt like hours.

"I worked at my command post as fast as I could to get them the data so that they could shoot back," Cooke says.

He finished and put in the call. The soldiers fired. Then, nothing: their targets had apparently been hit.

Putting calculations together, knowing that their purpose is often to kill someone, is something Cooke says he can't think about until it's all over and he has the time to fill his head with questions.

"The only justification I can ever give myself is that these people are trying to hurt me first," he says. "These are people, just like you and me, and they have beliefs, just like you and me. I have my beliefs politically and other people have different beliefs politically. Does that mean they're wrong?"

"It's not for me to judge. I cannot judge them, nor will I will try and judge them, but I will not let them take my life."

He says being responsible for a person's death is a "very personal thing."

It has been a week since he and Sgt. Dan Lamouroux returned from their tour, the sole members of Guelph's 11th Field Artillery Regiment among many in uniform culled from eastern Canadian bases and sent to Afghanistan in the spring to join the 2,500 Canadian troops rotating through the war-torn country.

A 37-year-old reservist, Cooke works in a welding shop at the Toyota plant in Cambridge.

He has been in the reserves for more than half his life.

Cooke says he went to Afghanistan because he wanted to honour his commitment to his country and his fellow troops, both reservist and regular.

"It's kind of corny, but it's true," he says. "I see my friends doing it and I want to do my part."

It was Cooke's second tour overseas. The first was to Bosnia in 2003.

Afghanistan was likely Lamouroux's last tour. He has been to Bosnia, Croatia, Africa and Germany, among other places; after seven or eight extended trips overseas, he's lost count and at 44, he's talking about retiring.

The rare regular service members stationed at the Guelph Armoury's reserve unit, Lamouroux manages supplies. It is his responsibility to see that Guelph reservists like Cooke have the proper gear for their training and parades.

"My job, his hobby," Lamouroux jokes.

"A lot of people still don't know that there's a reserve unit in Guelph," he says.

During his seven months in Afghanistan, the sergeant was part of a team that kept every soldier, interpreter and diplomat in Kandahar outfitted for the desert "outside the wire."

"The guys can't run around Afghanistan naked and get sunburned," he says.

Cooke says Lamouroux has a tendency to understate the importance of his work.

"It seems like a small thing, but Lamouroux's job is really important," Cooke says. "The morale boost that troops can get from having clean T-shirts, from having body armour that doesn't fall off because the Velcro has worn out. . ."

There were days when soldiers came in with bloodied uniforms in garbage bags.

"I've had many guys come into my clothing stores and burst into tears," Lamouroux says.

So far this year, 26 members of the Canadian Forces have died in Afghanistan. Lamouroux outfitted many of them in some capacity.

"Of the 2,500 troops that are over there, every one of them came through the clothing stores at least once," he says.

"Some of them only once," Cooke says quietly.

"To put faces to names? Impossible," Lamouroux says.

Their jobs kept the two men in different camps most of the time. But one evening, Cooke recalls spotting his

armoury cohort in a fog, no less.

At night, it's best to draw as little attention to yourself as possible. With nothing else visible, there was Lamouroux, "covered" in glowsticks, directing trucks bringing supplies.

"I remember it was like 3 o'clock in the morning, hearing a faint voice from across the parking lot: 'Dan!' "

Cooke laughs.

The danger varied from very little to nearly making the six o'clock news, Cooke says.

"We were mortared and rocketed many times. We drove over an (improvised explosive device) that didn't go off. I was personally witness to other vehicles blown up by suicide bombers."

At her home in Halton Hills, Cooke's girlfriend, Susan Tarshis, thought of him all the time.

"For me, I think it was easier," Cooke says. "Being in an area, an environment, that was new and different and challenging: you have a tendency to focus on that."

"Something was missing," Tarshis says. "I think that the primary coping thought for me was knowing that he was going to do something that was very important for him. Being a soldier is really who he is, and I accepted that. That kept me going, because I wouldn't want him to be anybody but who he is."

She had her family and her friends for support.

"Anything that came up I could cope with. There were a lot of times I missed him terribly, but I never allowed myself to worry about him getting hurt or not coming home. It was just a matter of waiting it out, because I knew he'd come home."

Tarshis gave Cooke a silk pouch of "little pewter things" before he left on tour: a globe, a peace symbol, a piece of amber, an acorn and a little man.

He kept them with him constantly. They brought him comfort.

Tarshis is a psychotherapist. Most people she works with find the military lifestyle foreign, she says. Their only real contact with it is in the media.

She has a yellow ribbon on her car. And when Cooke was overseas, she tied ribbons to her purse and her backpack.

"Sometimes people would ask me: 'What's that?' They don't really expect me to be the partner of a soldier," she says. "To be in a real commitment with a real live soldier really over in Afghanistan, they were like: 'Whoa.' "

Her training in psychotherapy has little to do with the type of support she gives him, she says.

"And I can't afford to pay for her services," Cooke says.

He was able to call home as often as he wished.

Cooke is a forward operating officer.

"Fortunately, most of the time we weren't (on the front lines). Being artillery, we had the luxury to engage targets in the distance."

But there were times when the targets were at their door.

It is not a simple conflict, he says. There are so many sides.

Their opposition is ambiguous.

"I call them 'bad guys' because there's no name that you can put to them that's accurate," Cooke says.

"They're bad people because they want control of money and they want control of people. And you can call them what you want. You can call them al-Qaida. You can call them Taliban. You can call them warlords. They'll fit into whatever they can fit into, but they're just bad people.

"If Canada was to walk out now, the warlords would simply take over," Cooke adds.

"It becomes a breeding ground for subversive activities throughout the world. It doesn't matter whether you are Muslim or Christian or Jewish or otherwise. These people don't care about religion, creed or race. They only care about having power and money."

Cooke lost a friend to the conflict: Capt. Jeff Francis. They met during training in Petawawa.

In Afghanistan, it was Francis' job to watch for would-be attackers from the top of a mountain, Cooke says.

He came down for a vacation around the same time Cooke had his time off. They hung out, travelled and shopped.

"He was just a fun guy to be with."

Francis was killed when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Cooke was in Kandahar when it happened. He began hearing rumours of his friend's death; they were soon confirmed by command.

Two days later it broke in the media.

"Fear of the media is something that gets instilled in the soldier because they're told the media can turn against them," Cooke says. "But it's a venue for every soldier to express him or herself."



# Canadian soldiers, journalist escape bomb blast without serious injury

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Several Canadian soldiers and a reporter with the Canadian Press are shaken up, but all right, after their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

It happened during Day 2 of Operation Keeping Goodwill, a combat offensive launched by Canadian troops in Zhari district, west of Kandahar City.

Dene Moore of the Canadian Press says the convoy was on a road to a remote forward operating base known as Ghundy Ghar when the vehicle she was in drove over a device left by the Taliban.

Everyone is fine, although one soldier got banged up a little when the impact threw him forward. Moore says they were really lucky because the charge was not big enough to penetrate the vehicle.

Earlier, two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard tank that pushes a roller to clear roads of bombs rolled over an improvised explosive device.

The two soldiers, who were on foot at the time, were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base and have since been released.

Operation Keeping Goodwill is aimed at reasserting control over an area that was previously won, but in recent months lost to the Taliban. The joint operation involves most of the Canadian battle group in Kandahar, with tanks, light armoured vehicles and hundreds of soldiers.

# Most Afghan suicide attackers trained in Pakistan: UN report

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More than 80 per cent of suicide bombers in Afghanistan are recruited and trained in neighbouring Pakistan, the United Nations said in a report yesterday that showed attacks running at record levels.

Most of the suicide bombers carrying out attacks are poor, young and uneducated, and many are Afghan nationals, according to the report, based on interviews with failed attackers, other militants and security officials.

But the report also stressed the role of refugee camps and Islamic schools in the tribal areas of northwestern Pakistan in the recruitment and training of the bombers.

"The phenomenon of suicide attacks in Afghanistan is inherently linked to a variety of structures and institutions across the border in Pakistan," it said, noting that "over 80 per cent" of bombers passed through training facilities in the Waziristan region of the country.

Pakistan, which has also experienced a recent surge in suicide attacks, admits that Taliban fighters have sought refuge on its side of the border and the government has deployed tens of thousands of troops there to try to uproot them.

Last month, Afghan President Hamid Karzai told Afghan and Pakistani tribal leaders they must co-operate to find a solution to the region's growing violence.

"Afghanistan is not under fire alone now," Karzai told the leaders. "Unfortunately, our Pakistani brothers are also under fire, and this fire, day by day, is getting hotter."

Suicide attacks — either from militants wearing bombs on their bodies or driving cars packed with explosives — have emerged as a key tactic in an increasingly bloody insurgency by Taliban militants against foreign troops and Karzai's U.S.-backed government.

In 2006, there were 123 recorded suicide attacks in Afghanistan, up from just 17 the year before, the report said. There were 103 attacks as of the end of August this year, putting 2007 on course to set a new benchmark, the UN said.

While the targets of such attacks have been exclusively military or government in nature, 80 per cent of the 183 victims until June this year were civilian, the report said.

The report's authors interviewed 23 jailed people who had been convicted or were awaiting trial in connection with attempted or failed suicide attacks. Twenty-one were Afghan nationals, although most had spent time as refugees in Pakistan.

Many of the interview subjects said they had been angered by the behaviour of U.S. and other NATO forces, who they perceive as being occupying forces, and by Karzai, who they said was a western puppet.

The report urged western forces to prevent civilian casualties, avoid humiliating property searches and, if possible, deploy troops from Muslim countries as ways to blunt support for the Taliban.

"The first line of defence consists of understanding and removing 'root causes' that create demand for terrorism," the report said.

# No rush for Afghanistan vote: PM

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper will not hold a vote in Parliament anytime soon on Canada's future role in Afghanistan unless the government is assured it would win the vote to "finish the job."

"I don't see any necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful, where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and that would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of the Asia-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney, Australia.

In June, Harper announced that the current combat mission in Afghanistan, which is set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority government could get a consensus in Parliament.

The opposition is lined up against extending that combat mission.

But yesterday, Harper indicated his preference is for Canada's military to continue in its current role -- a combat support role within the NATO-led international security force in Kandahar -- which he said has "an increased focus on training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems."

"I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that. My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leaves."

Opposition leaders were quick to react.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion accused Harper of trying to extend the combat mission, while Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said his party would vote against the government if the 2009 troop withdrawal is not spelled out in the Oct. 16 speech from the throne.

With his comments yesterday, Harper was attempting to shift the burden of proposing an alternative to what happens next in Afghanistan to his political rivals.

This may be an attempt by the prime minister to exploit division within Liberal ranks on the issue by forcing Dion to give a firm answer on what he sees as Canada's role when the current mandate expires.

The Liberals and Bloc have both said they want the military to withdraw from the combat role in Kandahar in 2009, and have demanded that the government inform NATO of that position.

The NDP is demanding an immediate pullback.

The Liberals vowed during their summer caucus in St. John's, N.L., to use their first opposition–day motion to call for the pullout.

NDP Leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm that Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now.

"Mr. Harper knows there will be a vote on the speech from the throne and that speech must address the war in Afghanistan," Layton said in Montreal. "The speech from the throne will be an opportunity for a full debate about the war and we're holding to our position that the withdrawal of our troops should take place now, safely and securely. A whole new approach for Canada in Afghanistan is what is required."

Harper said yesterday that the Conservatives will "continue to listen to what the opposition parties say and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus, which would fill the government's objectives and I think also fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave, I hope . . .when we actually finish the job we committed to do."

None of the opposition parties has ruled out another more traditional role for Canadian troops, whether that is continued training of Afghan national army and police, deployment to the safer northern part of Afghanistan, or in supporting the delivery of humanitarian aid — which Canada has pledged to continue until 2011.

The political problems for Harper, however, are multiple: Canadian casualty rates in Afghanistan are very high. NATO allies like France and Germany, who are not fighting in the south, are desperate for Canada to stay, as are non–NATO partners in Afghanistan such as Australia.

Harper could get some much–needed political help on that front if some American troops are diverted back into Afghanistan from Iraq next year, or even if Australia's Opposition leader Kevin Rudd succeeds in replacing Harper's ideological soulmate, Prime Minister John Howard.

Rudd wants to pull back Australian troops from Iraq mid–next year, but he fully supports their presence in Afghanistan, and has said he would deploy more Australian forces there.

Harper, who is now in Canberra, will meet with Rudd tomorrow.

# Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection

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**ILLUSTRATION:** file photo by Mark O'Neill, Sun Media Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie (with wife Dora) says it's time for Canada to ask NATO alliance for help in Afghanistan.  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 561

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The link between the scourge of terrorism and the bloody war in Afghanistan is fading fast from public memory, making the military mission a tough sell with Canada and its allies six years after 9/11, experts say.

As Canada appears set to pull troops from combat in February 2009, most predict other nations won't be waiting in line with replacements to the volatile southern region. Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie said Canada's exit would leave a "hell of a vacuum," yet he doesn't expect other countries will pick up the slack without forceful persuasion.

He said it's time for Canada to publicly vent its frustration to convince other NATO countries to help shoulder the burden.

"We've got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy, and if you guys don't start showing up with adequate boots on the ground to try and win this thing, then quite frankly then after five years of sacrifice, we're getting pretty upset with the alliance," he said.

MacKenzie urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other federal party leaders to deliver a blunt and robust message on the world stage: That a failure to answer the call for support could signal that NATO is doomed.

Within weeks, the Dutch government is expected to say if it will extend its mission — a decision that could sway other countries like Canada considering whether to deploy, maintain or withdraw troops.

Phil Lagasse, a professor in the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said a break from heavy combat for Canada — even a rotation into Afghanistan's less-turbulent north — would bring political peace at home while giving the army a chance to train and grow.

"Canada can legitimately make the claim that it's done quite a bit in combat for a number of years and if NATO is serious about this operation then some of the other players should be playing their part," he said.

As soldier and civilian death tolls mount, Lagasse said federal leaders around the world find the mission a tough public sell as the original justification becomes hazy.

"The initial effort to sell the mission as an anti-terror mission made sense because it came right after the 9/11 attacks. But as we gravitated more towards this idea of nation-building and creating a new society in

Afghanistan, you've blurred the lines as to why you're there," he said. "And as much as we like to think we're doing good, ultimately that's not why we're there."

Steve Staples, director of the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, said while plenty of nations want to help bolster world security, few are eager to rush into combat. He notes there is "great sensitivity" in European countries like Germany and France around the specific operations their soldiers are tasked for in Afghanistan.

The collective recoil from combat, coupled with setbacks in Taliban stronghold territories, underscores the need to put greater emphasis on a diplomatic process for long-term security. Most successes in counter-terrorism have been the result of police actions, not military ones, he said.

"They will have to seriously shift their strategy in Afghanistan to avoid losing the whole thing," he said.

Mario Canseco, director of Global Studies for Angus Reid Strategies, said the outpouring of emotion and support for the U.S. after 9/11 has subsided. Most now view the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as failures because they lack clear objectives and boast few success stories.

"Opium cultivation is up, the Taliban is still in charge in many areas ... and the new government has been deemed as weak," he said. "And on the six-year anniversary of Sept. 11, Osama bin Laden is nowhere to be found." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Canuck soldiers injured by blast on road

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**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Allauddin Khan, AP Canadian soldiers, part of the International Security Assistance Force, give a sack of food to a man during a food distribution at the Canadian's base in Kandahar province, south of Kabul, yesterday. The Canadian soldiers distributed food for around 300 families in the province.

**BYLINE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR

**WORD COUNT:** 199

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A Leopard 1 tank pushing a roller to clear a path set off a roadside bomb that injured two Canadian soldiers walking alongside yesterday.

It was the second day of a new offensive to regain control of a district where insurgents have been active.

Capt. Josee Bilodeau, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Forces at Kandahar Airfield, said the soldiers were on foot on each side of the tank when the explosion happened.

"Two of them were injured by some shrapnel," Bilodeau said.

The two were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base for treatment.

"They're out of the hospital. They're good to go. They will be at work tomorrow," said Bilodeau.

Bilodeau said it's "normal procedure" to use the rollers to clear roads of explosive devices — "and it worked."

Another military vehicle was rocked by a blast when it rolled over an improvised explosive device, or IED, but the charge was not big enough to cause serious harm to those inside.

Roadside bombs have been the curse of coalition forces in Afghanistan, accounting for a significant portion of their casualties.

The latest incidents happened as Operation Keeping Goodwill, launched by Canadian troops in the troubled Zhari district west of Kandahar City, was drawing to a close.

The joint operation with the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police began Saturday, involving most of the Canadian battle group in Kandahar, with tanks, light armoured vehicles and hundreds of soldiers taking part.

The operation was aimed at reasserting control over an area that was won almost a year ago, when the Canadian military carried out Operation Medusa in Zhari and Panjwaii districts. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**



# Harper sets vote terms PM seeks consensus on troops

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**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said yesterday there'll be no vote in Parliament any time soon, unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful -- where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of an Asia-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said yesterday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

Harper said that job entails getting Afghan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

The Liberals said at their summer caucus they plan to bring the matter to a head when the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Dion accused the prime minister of flip-flopping on the issue yesterday.

"Canadians must understand that what the prime minister is trying to do is to be ensure that this combat mission will continue after February 2009," Dion said in Vancouver.

NDP leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm that Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now instead of February 2009.

Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe said his party will vote against the Conservatives if the troop pullout in 2009 isn't mentioned in the speech. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Harper cites APEC progress on climate, sets terms for Afghan mission vote; PM says no vote on Afghan mission unless there's enough support to 'finish the job'

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**IDNUMBER:** 200709100065  
**PUBLICATION:** Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B1  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**WORD COUNT:** 369

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday a divided world on the issue of climate change is starting to come together with major polluting countries signing on to a goal set by Asia-Pacific leaders to slow and reverse greenhouse emissions.

In a wide-ranging briefing at the end of the APEC summit, Harper also set what might be called winning conditions on a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, saying there'll be no vote unless there is enough support for his wish to "finish the job."

And Harper took issue with Elections Canada, which he said was subverting the will of Parliament by permitting Muslim women to wear veils and burkas while voting. He said Parliament will do something about it if the elections agency doesn't change course.

With the Sydney summit over, Harper is travelling on to Canberra where he will address the Australian Parliament on Tuesday.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum, which includes the world's fastest-growing economies, stayed true to its roots at its weekend summit. Its closing statement yesterday called for the resumption of international trade talks this fall at the World Trade Organization.

In an uncharacteristic focus on global warming, APEC leaders agreed Saturday to a so-called "aspirational goal" of slowing, stopping and eventually reversing greenhouse gas emissions.

Without specific targets or timelines, however, the Sydney Declaration was immediately panned by environmentalists as a political stunt.

Both Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard stressed that the real significance of the APEC statement is who signed on: China, Russia and the United States, the world's biggest emitters, who found common ground.

But Harper maintained that even six months ago, it was "unthinkable" the world's biggest emitters would agree to such principles. As Howard put it at the closing news conference: "Take that, bank it, and then move on to something further in the future. That is what I think this meeting achieved."

On Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Harper told reporters: "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful -- where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces."

# Journalist, soldiers unhurt by blast; On the road with Van Doos in dusty, remote Afghan outpost

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100063  
**PUBLICATION:** Times & Transcript (Moncton)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B1  
**BYLINE:** DENE MOORE The Canadian Press  
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**WORD COUNT:** 523

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After choking on the dust in the relentless Afghan heat for the better part of two days, everyone was happy to say goodbye to Ghundy Ghar.

The remote Canadian outpost in the Zhari district of Afghanistan is the reason soldiers have to be tough. A few tarp-covered shelters and three inches of fine dust everywhere, life at Ghundy Ghar is not easy.

The day before, the Van Doo's 3rd Battalion battle group had pushed through on two roads leading to the base, on a mission to help secure an area considered Taliban country.

I spent the night on a cot under the stars, not far from the back of an armoured LAV, my flak jacket and helmet ready to go at the first sound of rocket fire.

The night before, in Masum Ghar, another Canadian forward operating base, a rocket rang in shortly after we pulled in for the night.

Luckily, the rocket wasn't loaded with explosives and the biggest bang was the sound of metal crashing into the rocks behind me.

Some of the soldiers who've grown used to this kind of attack laughed. I chose to cower in the back of an armoured vehicle for a while.

Operation Keeping Goodwill began early Saturday morning and it seemed to speed right along. By the afternoon, we were on our way to Ghundy Ghar, where they seemed pretty happy to have some company.

The next morning a great boom rang out and a cloud of smoke rose in the distance where B company has settled in to secure the road.

"IED," comes a yell from camp and soldiers begin to gather around the radio.

Ten or 15 excruciating minutes pass before word comes that there were two minor injuries.

Relief sweeps over the camp until two helicopters are spotted heading to the area just after 9 a.m. The injuries have been upgraded to serious and the two soldiers are airlifted to hospital.

A few hours later I'm in the back of another LAV, bumping along the same road we bumped along the day before -- the road that's been cleared by the 3rd Battalion.

The thing about an improvised explosive device is that it can be anywhere, and as soldiers tell you, it's the luck of the draw.

I hear a crash over my left shoulder and at the same time feel myself launched across the tight quarters of the back of an LAV.

"IED," comes the answer before I can ask the question.

The captain pops his head down before I really realize what's going on.

"Everyone OK?" he asks, giving the thumbs up to each person in turn.

I have a quick look to see if my legs are where they should be and then turn my thumbs up, too.

As I sit stunned, the soldiers are in full action. They jump out through the roof hatches and they're gone.

After a couple of minutes I'm told to climb out through the hatch and offered a helping hand. I walk across the top and realize I'm terrified to jump off. Where there's one hidden bomb there could be more.

"It's okay. Jump there where there's tracks."

I force myself off.

The captain walks ahead of me, urging me to follow in his tracks, which take me to another armoured vehicle in our convoy.

When the vehicle is cleared, the company spreads out to look for more IEDs as we wait for help. They walk for kilometres in each direction, making sure there are no more dangers ahead.

As we sit in the blistering mid-day heat waiting for backup, a report comes in from a nearby operating base. A truckload of people was spotted heading in our direction and they may be coming to ambush us.

The soldiers are ordered to man their guns but help arrives first.

A special team recovers the remains of the IED and the injured vehicle is loaded up. The soldiers are already joking about the day.

"Baptism by fire," they tell me.

"Welcome to Afghanistan."

Thirty-eight Canadian soldiers and thousand of Afghans have died in IED blasts but many more have survived. There is, on average, about one IED hit a week for Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The fact is, this threat is the daily reality for soldiers and civilians in this war-torn land.

# PM says he wants to finish mission

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100041  
**PUBLICATION:** The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A7  
**BYLINE:** The Canadian Press  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 The Daily Gleaner  
(Fredericton)  
**WORD COUNT:** 458

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said Sunday there'll be no vote in Parliament anytime soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful — where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of an Asia-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave — I hope would leave — when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do."

He said that job entails getting Afghan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

The Liberals said at their summer caucus they plan to bring the matter to a head when the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Dion accused the prime minister of flip-flopping on the issue Sunday.

"Canadians must understand that what the prime minister is trying to do is to be ensure that this combat mission will continue after February 2009," Dion said in Vancouver.

"And he's trying to go there with a lack of transparency, a lack of coherence. And in doing so he's not helping our troops, he's not helping our allies, he's not helping the people of Afghanistan."

NDP leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm that Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now instead of February 2009.

"Mr. Harper knows there will be a vote on the speech from the throne and that speech must address the war in Afghanistan," Layton said in Montreal.

"The speech from the throne will be an opportunity for a full debate about the war and we're holding to our position that the withdrawal of our troops should take place now, safely and securely. A whole new approach for Canada in Afghanistan is what is required."

Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe said his party will vote against the Conservatives if the troop pullout in 2009 isn't mentioned in the speech.

"In the speech from the throne we have said that we want it made clear that the mission will end in 2009," Duceppe said.



# World coming together on climate, Harper says; Prime minister sets terms for Afghan mission vote;; takes issue with Elections Canada ruling

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**PUBLICATION:** Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**SECTION:** National/World  
**PAGE:** B2  
**COLUMN:** The green file  
**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press  
**BYLINE:** Bruce Cheadle  
**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Pacific Rim leaders at the APEC summit in Sydney, Australia have agreed to adopt a joint position on global warming. Prime Minister Stephen Harper was among the 21 world leaders meeting at the annual summit.  
**WORD COUNT:** 744

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday a divided world on the issue of climate change is starting to come together with major polluting countries signing on to a goal set by Asia–Pacific leaders to slow and reverse greenhouse emissions.

In a wide–ranging briefing at the end of the APEC summit, Harper also set what might be called winning conditions on a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, saying there'll be no vote unless there is enough support for his wish to "finish the job."

And Harper took issue with Elections Canada, which he said was subverting the will of Parliament by permitting Muslim women to wear veils and burkas while voting. He said Parliament will do something about it if the elections agency doesn't change course.

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Without specific targets or timelines, however, the Sydney Declaration was immediately panned by environmentalists as a political stunt.

Both Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard stressed that the real significance of the APEC statement is who signed on: China, Russia and the United States, the world's biggest emitters, who found common ground.

"You effectively now have a framework declaration on which all large emitters have committed," Harper said. "That still leaves a long way to go. We're not kidding anybody."

But Harper maintained that even six months ago, it was "unthinkable" the world's biggest emitters would agree to such principles.

Or, as Howard put it at the closing APEC news conference: "Take that, bank it, and then move on to something further in the future. That is what I think this meeting achieved."

On Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Harper told reporters: "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful – where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces."

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With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said yesterday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament." The Liberals said they plan to bring the matter to a head as soon as the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Harper has indicated a willingness to alter the existing military mandate, but not to pulling the troops out of Afghanistan altogether. Without directly citing the Liberal intentions, he said the mission should not be treated as "a political football in this Parliament."

"And I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football," said Harper. "So we're not going to put people in that place again." Harper said he's still seeking a consensus, but a government official later said that consensus has to be in line with the government's wishes.

Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave – I hope would leave – when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do."

He said that job entails training Afghan government forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

On allowing women to wear veils and burkas while voting, Harper said he "profoundly disagrees" with Elections Canada's recent ruling, prompted by three byelections in Quebec on Sept. 17.

He noted that all four parties in the Commons have voted to bring in a new law requiring visual identification of voters.

"That was a law adopted virtually unanimously by Parliament. I think this decision goes in an entirely different direction."

Harper said the veil decision concerns him "because the role of Elections Canada is not to make its own laws,

World coming together on climate, Harper says; Prime minister sets terms for Afghan mission vote, 22 takes is

it's to put into place the laws that Parliament has passed."

Elections Canada has scheduled a news conference today to address the controversy.

You can read more stories about the environment on our website. Go to [www.thewhig.com](http://www.thewhig.com) and look for the "Green File" icon on the left side.

# Show Canadians how the mission is succeeding

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

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** Forum

**PAGE:** 5

**SOURCE:** Belleville Intelligencer

**WORD COUNT:** 563

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From an editorial in the Sept. 7 Belleville Intelligencer:

Peter MacKay, Canada's new defence minister, is right about one thing: Canadians need a better explanation of the Afghanistan mission from their federal government.

Since Canadian soldiers moved to the front lines and began getting killed in combat, there has been little explanation as to why Canada had taken a more aggressive role while some NATO countries remained on the sidelines. There were mumbled words from the federal government about having to go on the offensive, but they were vague and unconvincing. While there is a clear show of public support for the troops themselves, polls show opposition to the combat stance is growing.

MacKay said the deaths of 70 Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan "have paid enormous dividends" and helped bring "landmark changes" to that country. But even in his explanation of those changes, MacKay failed to report much that hadn't been heard repeatedly in the past. He said six million children, especially girls, who weren't in school previously are now studying there. He added that women are now allowed to work and join the government, and there have been new wells, roads, schools and medical buildings built.

Yet, it's the same dry message Canadians have been hearing, and it's getting stale.

Girls returning to school is unquestionably a noble cause, but it isn't the only one – and when it is the first thing out of the mouths of politicians and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier, even that begins to sound a little hollow.

What we have seen are news reports of infrastructure development projects being held up by persistent enemy offensives and sabotage. For example, as Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team tries to build a major road through Afghanistan, the Taliban litters it with mines, risking the lives of those doing the work and causing damage to what's been built.

A police chief in the area west of Kandahar, the Panjwai–Zhari region, told CTV News that all the officers he trusts have been killed, leaving him with a ragtag bunch of corrupt cops with questionable loyalty. Many, he said, have even switched sides and now fight for the Taliban, and if these trends continued, the chief said, Kandahar province could fall.

The report noted that Canadians have been forced to fight continually to take and retake parts of the region because the local police have been unable to keep the enemy at bay.

So if there is good to be seen in the mess that is Afghanistan, Canadians need to see it. The government needs to trumpet its successes and get reporters into those areas to show just what is being done.

It's doubtful many people inside or outside the government expect the Afghanistan mission to be extended beyond its 2009 ending. Canadians have done at least their share of the fighting, dying, rebuilding and more,

while other countries have kept their troops in less dangerous areas and out of combat altogether.

So perhaps it's time for MacKay to travel to those other countries to talk both publicly and privately with their leaders. They have their reasons for their own approaches, and could provide some important insight as Canadians consider this country's role in Afghanistan.

But in the meantime, MacKay's explaining should begin at home. Our troops – living and dead – deserve the recognition and understanding, and the voting public deserves all the facts to help it make its own decisions.

# An Afghan turnaround?; The politicians are doing a cut-and-run

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

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** Forum

**PAGE:** 5

**BYLINE:** Michael Den Tandt

**PHOTO:** The Canadian Press

**ILLUSTRATION:** Pallbearers carry the casket of the late Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier following a funeral service in Quebec City. Mercier died in Afghanistan recently when a roadside bomb exploded, killing three people and injuring a CBC cameraman.

**WORD COUNT:** 944

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Canadian soldiers are doing an exceptional job in Afghanistan – the job they were asked to do. But this country's political leadership, across the spectrum, is failing them.

Last weekend, using Defence Minister Peter MacKay as his proxy, Prime Minister Stephen Harper bugled the retreat. Canada, MacKay told CTV, has told its NATO allies that our deployment in Kandahar will end in February of 2009.

There will still be a Canadian presence, MacKay was careful to say, but the mission will change. Decoded, that means we can expect a dramatic troop reduction. And our soldiers will be moved to a far safer part of the country than Kandahar. We couldn't convince the Italians or the Germans to join us in the volatile south, so perhaps we'll join them in the relatively quiet north and west.

It has all the hallmarks of one of Harper's signature tactical retreats. This has become a pattern with him.

He takes a stand on a given issue, one he claims is based on principle. It might be media access to repatriation ceremonies of fallen Canadian soldiers. It might be our detainee-transfer agreement with the Afghans. It might be the question of whether we should be in Kandahar at all. Or it might be the very basic issue of whether Canada is one nation in which everyone is equal, regardless of race or ethnic origin.

In each case, Harper stakes out an early position – firmly. He is the anti-Paul Martin, after all. He makes his case forcefully and without fuss, then disappears back into the Langevin Block, there to tug on the invisible but unbreakable strings that keep his ministers' limbs in motion. A strong leader.

But then something uncanny happens. Harper begins to take heat. Family members of fallen soldiers demand openness and a public acknowledgment of their sacrifice. A national newspaper finds that Afghan detainees are being tortured after they leave Canadian custody. A Liberal leadership candidate makes waves in Quebec with a plea that the province be recognized as a "nation" within Canada.

Harper stubbornly resists any and all calls for a course correction for exactly as long as he thinks he can win the day. But the moment events pass that point, the tactical brain overrides all other considerations. Repatriation ceremonies are suddenly open to all. The detainee agreement is rewritten. Quebec is declared a nation.

There's no fanfare and no hand-wringing and, if you blink, you may miss the reversal altogether. But from one day to the next, Canada changes from a country that doesn't cut and run to one carefully folding its tents.

The Taliban, whose laser-like focus on a return to power has never wavered, must be chortling in their caves.

On Afghanistan, at least, Harper is not alone in fumbling the ball. He's had ample help from the folks across the aisle.

New Democratic Leader Jack Layton advocates peace talks with people who would as soon chop off his head as look at him. Layton's core left-wing values – protection of the innocent and of women, the right to freedom of association, conscience and thought, the right to vote – are the very ideals at stake in Afghanistan. But Layton would prefer to simply have these values, while never fighting for them. Nice.

The Liberals? They conceived, planned and launched this mission under former prime minister Paul Martin. They warned us that it would be dangerous, and that there would be casualties. Many among them, most notably Michael Ignatieff and Bill Graham, were strong and vocal early supporters. Others, such as Ujjal Dosanjh, were always critics. But the Martin-inspired notion of the "responsibility to protect" held sway.

All that changed when the party fell from power. Senior Liberals began purveying the notion that under Harper, the mission had become more "warlike" and less focused on development. Anyone familiar with the deployment and its planning knows this is nonsense. Senior Liberals know it's nonsense. No matter: It's just politics, right?

Wrong. It isn't just politics. More than 2,300 young Canadian men and women are risking life and limb in Kandahar even now. Thousands more have already gone and returned. Seventy soldiers and one diplomat have gone and not returned. Between now and February, 2009, thousands more will go. Some of them will not return. Surely they deserve to have the country, and its leadership, united behind them. It's unreasonable to suggest that Canada must keep more than 2,000 troops in Kandahar in perpetuity. There should be a rotation of the most onerous aspects of the Afghan reconstruction across the various countries in NATO. If the Europeans refuse to help, then the Americans will have to. All indications are that they will be out of Iraq by early 2009, with troops to redeploy elsewhere. A drawdown by Canada in Kandahar, therefore, will not necessarily mean the end or the failure of the Afghan effort.

But surely there's a better way to go about arranging a troop rotation than telling the world, and your enemies, that you're pulling out in a year. And surely there's a better way for politicians to behave, once the troops are in harm's way, than to make a public spectacle of their divisions.

Canadian soldiers did not ask to go to Kandahar. They were put there and kept there by the will of Parliament. All 308 MPs, from all parties, are, therefore, collectively responsible for their welfare. It's a shame that so many of them, most notably the prime minister, seem to have forgotten that.

– Michael Den Tandt is managing editor of the Sun Times in Owen Sound and a national affairs columnist for Osprey Media. Contact [mdentandt@thesuntimes.ca](mailto:mdentandt@thesuntimes.ca).

# Canadians clear the road; Latest offensive secures access to Ghundy Ghar base

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A4

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Dene Moore

**ILLUSTRATION:** A Canadian soldier gives a sack of food stuffs to a man in a wheelchair during food distribution at the Canadian base in Kandahar province, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Sunday. Canadian soldiers distributed food for about 300 families in the province. (Allauddin Khan / AP)

**WORD COUNT:** 575

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GHUNDY GHAR, Afghanistan – The roads to Canada's forward operating base at Ghundy Ghar are winding dirt paths through the spiritual heartland of the Taliban.

A dusty outpost deep in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Ghundy Ghar is a vital base for Canadian troops.

It is also one that they had not been able to reach by road since retaking the base from insurgents three weeks ago – even though it is just about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city.

"Here is Taliban country," said Lt.–Col. Alain Gauthier, commander of the Quebec–based Van Doos' 3rd Battalion battle group.

"The biggest challenge is IEDs," he said, referring to improvised explosive devices – commonly known as roadside bombs. "I think our biggest challenge was to really clear the road so we can allow the free movement of the vehicles."

Two companies from Gauthier's battle group eventually cleared the road and the Canadians drove through to the base in their latest offensive.

Until a few weeks ago, Ghundy Ghar was in the hands of insurgents, wrested from Afghan national security forces left on their own during the rotation of Canadian troops this summer.

A military operation that took back control last month wasn't so much a battle as an eviction, but it cost the lives of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter who were killed by a mine left behind by fleeing Taliban.

While the rocks and dust and few sparse buildings have been in Canadian hands since then, those winding dirt roads have been a different story.

Convoys trying to resupply Ghundy Ghar have come under fierce attack from insurgents who could easily hide within the maze–like fields that divide the area. Only helicopters had been able to reach the base with supplies.



"It was a little lonely but we have a really good group," said Capt. Blair McNaught, who is in charge of the Recce squadron who will spend their tours of duty on this dusty hillside. "There was a good esprit de corps."

But the base has been under heavy pressure from insurgents, with regular attacks on the base and off.

The squadron's Coyote patrols have been able to move with ease to the west of the base but haven't been able to move very far to the east.

"Once you go about 800 metres east of Ghundy Ghar, every time we've gone there we either come under direct contact or indirect contact from mortar fire," McNaught said.

Operation Khair Khowhai, or Keeping Goodwill, got underway in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

The goal was to increase the presence of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in the area and secure two roads joining Ghundy Ghar with Highway 1, the main thoroughfare out of Kandahar city and through the province. Checkpoints will be put in for Afghan national security forces.

"We've been heliporting all the resupply down here and we want to use the road," said Capt. Bryan Ouellet.

"Because they're not paved roads they're always a threat for IEDs." The sun has barely broken over the horizon when the first shots were fired Saturday. On the road to the west, Company C started off with a firefight as they head south toward Ghundy Ghar.

"We took our time," Gauthier said. "There were still children, families around so engagement becomes very complex in those conditions."

To the east, Company B found two IEDs and had to dismount from the security of their armoured vehicles and cover much of the road on foot, searching for further explosives.

"We also found many arms – AK-47s, mines and plastic, which can be used to make IEDs," Gauthier said.

Still, the operation went swiftly and successfully.

But as a testament to the challenge Canadians face in this fight, the very next morning two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard 1 tank, which pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs, rolled over an improvised explosive device on the road cleared the day before.

The two soldiers, who were on foot at the time of the blast, were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base and were later released.

# Tub-thumpers at DND stop drumming for now

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**PUBLICATION:** The  
Chronicle-Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**BYLINE:** Scott Taylor  
**WORD COUNT:** 827

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FOR THE PAST 18 months, ever since our battle group in Afghanistan moved south from a relatively stable Kabul to an increasingly volatile Kandahar, the media has concentrated almost solely on the military component of the overall mission.

The steady stream of casualties and occasional major offensives mounted by the NATO alliance have been dutifully chronicled by the journalists embedded with our troops. Without regular updates on the big picture, the Canadian public has been left to judge the merits of our participation in this mission based on a worm's eye view of a tiny corner of the vast and varied ethnic tribal mosaic that is collectively called Afghanistan.

Even if we focus solely on events in Kandahar, western journalists have no safe access to the local population, never mind insurgents. As a result, Canadians must base all of their assessments on the official statements issued by our military and political leaders.

As public support for the mission dissipates with each new casualty, politicians and generals have stepped up their efforts to convince us that the sacrifice of our soldiers is justified by the progress made in our reconstruction efforts. We've been told repeatedly that great accomplishments have been made, albeit unseen by media or fact-finding parliamentary committees because the region remains insecure as a result of insurgent attacks.

Dollar figures are cited, pie charts are shuffled and PowerPoint presentations are used to create the illusion that major developments are underway in southern Afghanistan. Unfortunately for those selling the war based on these vague yardsticks, there is still one independent international non-governmental organization operating outside the wire in Kandahar. Just last month, the Senlis Council breezed into Ottawa to once again debunk the mythical aid and development progress claimed by Canadian officials.

Backed up by video and photographic evidence, Senlis more than convincingly made its point to the national media corps – promised projects remain undelivered. Unable to counter the Senlis claims, the choir of military cheerleaders picked up their well-worn tubs and began drumming out a different tune.

The new line was more or less a sudden abandonment of the reconstruction fable that became a hasty retreat to the bastion of our military successes. After all, it's not the military's primary role to rebuild failed states – that's a job for the Birkenstock-wearing hippies over at the Canadian International Development Agency, along with the bead-wearing utopian idealists that operate under any number of private NGOs. The army's job is to secure the territory, fight the Taliban and train the fledgling national army up to a level where it can sustain Afghanistan's security on its own.

To get this message out, the tub-thumpers steeled their fraying nerves with the fact that the Department of National Defence would start conducting weekly briefings to better inform the media of operational progress. From the tone of the e-mail being circulated, one could almost imagine an old imperial British sergeant-major ordering his troops to dress the ranks and steady up in the face of legions of Zulu warriors:

"One good volley, lads, and we'll see these savages off!"

Unfortunately for the DND strategists, before their first volley could be fired, the New York Times dropped a bomb of its own. In a detailed account of an incident that occurred on Aug. 7, the Times alleges that Canadian forces failed to support an Afghan police unit engaged in a firefight with insurgents. As a result of that abandonment, 16 policemen were killed, and the incident led to some animosity towards the Canadians. It was also reported that checkpoints established during NATO offensives last year and recently handed over to Afghan security forces have been attacked and captured by the Taliban. In other words, even the military progress we've been making is being reversed by a resilient Taliban. As a result of these revelations, the DND briefing turned into an exercise in damage control. Lt.-Col. Jamie Robertson told the journalists assembled that the police chief quoted in the Times account had presented himself to the Canadian commander to express his dismay at the way in which he was portrayed. We were told by Robertson to believe that Chief Sahib "feels horribly" about the report.

Before journalists could ask how exactly an Afghan police chief had obtained a copy of the New York Times (and learned to read English), the public affairs officers shut down the news conference and beat their own hasty retreat.

The tub-thumpers remain on the field perplexed and leaderless, but for now their drumming has mercifully ceased. Let's hope that some serious discussion about Canada's objectives in Afghanistan can now be heard.( )

# Polluters sign deal at APEC summit; Harper sets terms for Afghan vote, slams Muslim veil ruling

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**PUBLICATION:** The Chronicle–Herald

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A3

**BYLINE:** Bruce Cheadle

**ILLUSTRATION:** Prime Minister Stephen Harper answers questions at a newsconference overlooking Sydney Harbour after the APEC summit in Sydney, Australia, on Sunday. (TOM HANSON / CP)

**WORD COUNT:** 509

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SYDNEY, Australia – Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Sunday a divided world on the issue of climate change is starting to come together with major polluting countries signing on to a goal set by Asia–Pacific leaders to slow and reverse greenhouse emissions.

In a wide–ranging briefing at the end of the APEC summit, Harper also set what might be called winning conditions on a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, saying there'll be no vote unless there is enough support for his wish to "finish the job."

And Harper took issue with Elections Canada, which he said was subverting the will of Parliament by permitting Muslim women to wear veils and burkas while voting. He said Parliament will do something about it if the elections agency doesn't change course.

With the Sydney summit over, Harper is travelling on to Canberra where he will address the Australian Parliament on Tuesday.

The Asia–Pacific Economic Co–operation forum, which includes the world's fastest–growing economies, stayed true to its roots at its weekend summit. Its closing statement Sunday called for the resumption of international trade talks this fall at the World Trade Organization.

In an uncharacteristic focus on global warming, APEC leaders agreed Saturday to a so–called "aspirational goal" of slowing, stopping and eventually reversing greenhouse gas emissions.

Without specific targets or timelines, however, the Sydney Declaration was immediately panned by environmentalists as a political stunt.

Both Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard stressed that the real significance of the APEC statement is who signed on: China, Russia and the United States, the world's biggest emitters, who found common ground.

"You effectively now have a framework declaration on which all large emitters have committed," Harper said. "That still leaves a long way to go. We're not kidding anybody."

On Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Harper told reporters: "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful – where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces."

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would only continue if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament." On allowing women to wear veils and burkas while voting, Harper said he "profoundly disagrees" with Elections Canada's recent ruling, prompted by three byelections in Quebec on Sept. 17.

He noted that all four parties in the Commons have voted to bring in a new law requiring visual identification of voters.

Harper said the veil decision concerns him "because the role of Elections Canada is not to make its own laws, it's to put into place the laws that Parliament has passed."

Elections Canada has scheduled a news conference for today to address the controversy.

# Canada must finish the job in Afghanistan, says prime minister; Vote on mission won't be soon: Harper

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia

**WORD COUNT:** 401

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said Sunday there'll be no vote in Parliament anytime soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful – where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of an Asia–Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament." Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave – I hope would leave – when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do."

He said that job entails getting Afghan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country. The Liberals said at their summer caucus they plan to bring the matter to a head when the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Dion accused the prime minister of flip–flopping on the issue Sunday.

"Canadians must understand that what the prime minister is trying to do is to be ensure that this combat mission will continue after February 2009," Dion said in Vancouver.

"And he's trying to go there with a lack of transparency, a lack of coherence. And in doing so he's not helping

our troops, he's not helping our allies, he's not helping the people of Afghanistan."

NDP leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm that Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now instead of February 2009.

"Mr. Harper knows there will be a vote on the speech from the throne and that speech must address the war in Afghanistan," Layton said.

# Roadside blast injures two soldiers; Two military vehicles patrolling in Afghanistan on Sunday run over explosive devices

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**PUBLICATION:** The Guardian (Charlottetown)

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** CP

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 281

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A Leopard 1 tank pushing a roller to clear a path set off a roadside bomb that injured two Canadian soldiers walking alongside on Sunday, the second day of a new offensive to regain control of a district where insurgents have been active.

Capt. Josee Bilodeau, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Forces at Kandahar Airfield, said the soldiers were on foot on each side of the tank when the explosion happened.

"Two of them were injured by some shrapnel," Bilodeau said. They were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base for treatment.

"They're out of the hospital. They're good to go. They will be at work tomorrow," said Bilodeau.

Bilodeau said it's "normal procedure" to use the rollers to clear roads of explosive devices – "and it worked."

Another military vehicle was rocked by a blast when it rolled over an improvised explosive device, or IED.

"In fact we were really lucky," said Dene Moore, a reporter with The Canadian Press who was in the vehicle at the time.

"The charge was not big enough to penetrate . . . Everyone in the vehicle that I was travelling in was all right."

"One soldier was injured a bit with the impact – I think it threw him forward and he got banged up a little bit. But we were very fortunate and everyone walked away."

The convoy was on a road to a forward operating base at Ghundy Ghar, a remote outpost deep in an area where insurgents have been operating. Two Canadian soldiers were killed and a cameraman injured by a powerful mine explosion last month in the vicinity.

Roadside bombs have been the curse of coalition forces in Afghanistan, accounting for a significant portion of their casualties.

The latest incidents happened as Operation Keeping Goodwill, launched by Canadian troops in the troubled Zhari district west of Kandahar City, was drawing to a close.

The joint operation with the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police began Saturday, involving most of the Canadian battle group in Kandahar, with tanks, light armoured vehicles and hundreds of soldiers.

Roadside blast injures two soldiers; Two military vehicles patrolling in Afghanistan on Sunday run over explosive



# Harper wants troops to 'finish job' in Afghanistan

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

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** International

**PAGE:** B4

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Bruce Cheadle

**DATELINE:** Sydney, Australia

**ILLUSTRATION:** Prime Minister Stephen Harper answers reporters' questions at a news conference overlooking Sydney Harbour following the APEC summit in Sydney, Australia, Sunday.  
– Photo by The Canadian Press

**WORD COUNT:** 489

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

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Harper announced in June the military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

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"And he's trying to go there with a lack of transparency, a lack of coherence. And in doing so he's not helping our troops, he's not helping our allies, he's not helping the people of Afghanistan."

NDP leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now instead of February 2009.

"Mr. Harper knows there will be a vote on the speech from the throne and that speech must address the war in Afghanistan," Layton said in Montreal. "The speech from the throne will be an opportunity for a full debate about the war and we're holding to our position that the withdrawal of our troops should take place now, safely and securely. A whole new approach for Canada in Afghanistan is what is required." Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe said his party will vote against the Conservatives if the troop pullout in 2009 isn't mentioned in the speech.

"In the speech from the throne we have said we want it made clear the mission will end in 2009," Duceppe said. "There will be a vote on the speech and if it's not spelled out there, we will vote against it."

# Troops move in to secure hostile 'Taliban country'

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

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**SECTION:** National/World

**PAGE:** A5

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Dene Moore

**DATELINE:** Ghundy Ghar, Afghanistan

**ILLUSTRATION:** Members of the 3rd Battalion battle group look out at GhundyGhar in Afghanistan Sunday, where they can see in the distance a cloud of smoke risen from an IED that injured two Canadian soldiers. – Photo by The Canadian Press

**WORD COUNT:** 549

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The roads to Canada's forward operating base at Ghundy Ghar are winding dirt paths through the spiritual heartland of the Taliban.

A dusty outpost deep in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Ghundy Ghar is a vital base for Canadian troops.

It is also one that they had not been able to reach by road since retaking the base from insurgents three weeks ago – even though it is just about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City.

"Here is Taliban country," said Lt.-Col. Alain Gauthier, commander of the Quebec-based Van Doos' 3rd Battalion battle group.

"The biggest challenge is IEDs," he said, referring to improvised explosive devices – commonly known as roadside bombs. "I think our biggest challenge was to really clear the road so we can allow the free movement of the vehicles."

Two companies from Gauthier's battle group eventually cleared the road and the Canadians drove through to the base in their latest offensive.

Until a few weeks ago, Ghundy Ghar was in the hands of insurgents, wrested from Afghan national security forces left on their own during the rotation of Canadian troops this summer.

A military operation that took back control last month wasn't so much a battle as an eviction, but it cost the lives of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter who were killed by a mine left behind by fleeing Taliban.

While the rocks and dust and few sparse buildings have been in Canadian hands since then, those winding dirt roads have been a different story.

Convoys trying to resupply Ghundy Ghar have come under fierce attack from insurgents who could easily hide within the maze-like fields that divide the area.

Only helicopters had been able to reach the base with supplies.

"It was a little lonely but we have a really good group," said Capt. Blair McNaught, who is in charge of the

Recce squadron who will spend their tours of duty on this dusty hillside. "There was a good esprit de corps."

But the base has been under heavy pressure from insurgents, with regular attacks on the base and off.

The squadron's Coyote patrols have been able to move with ease to the west of the base but haven't been able to move very far to the east.

Operation Khair Khowhai, or Keeping Goodwill, got underway in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

The goal was to increase the presence of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in the area and secure two roads joining Ghundy Ghar with Highway 1, the main thoroughfare out of Kandahar city and through the province. Checkpoints will be put in for Afghan national security forces.

"We've been heliporting all the resupply down here and we want to use the road," said Capt. Bryan Ouellet.

The sun has barely broken over the horizon when the first shots were fired Saturday.

On the road to the west, Company C started off with a firefight as they head south toward Ghundy Ghar.

"We took our time," Gauthier said. "There were still children, families around so engagement becomes very complex in those conditions."

To the east, Company B found two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and had to dismount from the security of their armoured vehicles and cover much of the road on foot, searching for further explosives.

"We also found many arms – AK-47s, mines and plastic, which can be used to make IEDs," Gauthier said.

Still, the operation went swiftly and successfully.

But as a testament to the challenge Canadians face in this fight, the very next morning two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard 1 tank, which pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs, rolled over an improvised explosive device on the road cleared the day before.

The two soldiers, who were on foot at the time of the blast, were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base and were later released. "They're out of the hospital," said Capt. Josee Bilodeau, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Forces at Kandahar Airfield.

Later Sunday, another company hit an IED on the other road targetted by Operation Khair Khowhai. There were no injuries.

# Harper cites APEC progress on climate, sets terms for Afghan mission vote

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**KEYWORDS:** ENVIRONMENT DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 725

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SYDNEY, Australia (CP) \_ Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Sunday a divided world on the issue of climate change is starting to come together with major polluting countries signing on to a goal set by Asia-Pacific leaders to slow and reverse greenhouse emissions.

In a wide-ranging briefing at the end of the APEC summit, Harper also set what might be called winning conditions on a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, saying there'll be no vote unless there is enough support for his wish to "finish the job."

And Harper took issue with Elections Canada, which he said was subverting the will of Parliament by permitting Muslim women to wear veils and burkas while voting. He said Parliament will do something about it if the elections agency doesn't change course.

With the Sydney summit over, Harper is travelling on to Canberra where he will address the Australian Parliament on Tuesday.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum, which includes the world's fastest-growing economies, stayed true to its roots at its weekend summit. Its closing statement Sunday called for the resumption of international trade talks this fall at the World Trade Organization.

In an uncharacteristic focus on global warming, APEC leaders agreed Saturday to a so-called "aspirational goal" of slowing, stopping and eventually reversing greenhouse gas emissions.

Without specific targets or timelines, however, the Sydney Declaration was immediately panned by environmentalists as a political stunt.

Both Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard stressed that the real significance of the APEC statement is who signed on: China, Russia and the United States, the world's biggest emitters, who found common ground.

"You effectively now have a framework declaration on which all large emitters have committed," Harper said. "That still leaves a long way to go. We're not kidding anybody."

But Harper maintained that even six months ago, it was "unthinkable" the world's biggest emitters would agree to such principles.

Or, as Howard put it at the closing APEC news conference: "Take that, bank it, and then move on to something further in the future. That is what I think this meeting achieved."

On Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Harper told reporters: "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful \_ where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces."

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would only continue if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

The Liberals said they plan to bring the matter to a head as soon as the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Harper has indicated a willingness to alter the existing military mandate, but not to pulling the troops out of Afghanistan altogether. Without directly citing the Liberal intentions, he said the mission should not be treated as "a political football in this Parliament."

"And I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football," said Harper. "So we're not going to put people in that place again."

Harper said he's still seeking a consensus, but a government official later said that consensus has to be in line with the government's wishes.

Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave \_ I hope would leave \_ when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do."

He said that job entails training Afghan government forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

On allowing women to wear veils and burkas while voting, Harper said he "profoundly disagrees" with Elections Canada's recent ruling, prompted by three byelections in Quebec on Sept. 17.

He noted that all four parties in the Commons have voted to bring in a new law requiring visual identification of voters.

"That was a law adopted virtually unanimously by Parliament. I think this decision goes in an entirely different direction."

Harper said the veil decision concerns him "because the role of Elections Canada is not to make its own laws, it's to put into place the laws that Parliament has passed."

Elections Canada has scheduled a news conference Monday to address the controversy.

# Canadian troops move in to secure hostile `Taliban country' in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 741

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GHUNDY GHAR, Afghanistan (CP) \_ The roads to Canada's forward operating base at Ghundy Ghar are winding dirt paths through the spiritual heartland of the Taliban.

A dusty outpost deep in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Ghundy Ghar is a vital base for Canadian troops.

It is also one that they had not been able to reach by road since retaking the base from insurgents three weeks ago \_ even though it is just about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city.

``Here is Taliban country," said Lt.-Col. Alain Gauthier, commander of the Quebec-based Van Doos' 3rd Battalion battle group.

``The biggest challenge is IEDs," he said, referring to improvised explosive devices \_ commonly known as roadside bombs. ``I think our biggest challenge was to really clear the road so we can allow the free movement of the vehicles."

Two companies from Gauthier's battle group eventually cleared the road and the Canadians drove through to the base in their latest offensive.

Until a few weeks ago, Ghundy Ghar was in the hands of insurgents, wrested from Afghan national security forces left on their own during the rotation of Canadian troops this summer.

A military operation that took back control last month wasn't so much a battle as an eviction, but it cost the lives of two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter who were killed by a mine left behind by fleeing Taliban.

While the rocks and dust and few sparse buildings have been in Canadian hands since then, those winding dirt roads have been a different story.

Convoys trying to resupply Ghundy Ghar have come under fierce attack from insurgents who could easily hide within the maze-like fields that divide the area. Only helicopters had been able to reach the base with supplies.

``It was a little lonely but we have a really good group," said Capt. Blair McNaught, who is in charge of the Recce squadron who will spend their tours of duty on this dusty hillside. ``There was a good esprit de corps."

But the base has been under heavy pressure from insurgents, with regular attacks on the base and off.

The squadron's Coyote patrols have been able to move with ease to the west of the base but haven't been able to move very far to the east.

``Once you go about 800 metres east of Ghundy Ghar, every time we've gone there we either come under direct contact or indirect contact from mortar fire," McNaught said.

Operation Khair Khowhai, or Keeping Goodwill, got underway in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

The goal was to increase the presence of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in the area and secure two roads joining Ghundy Ghar with Highway 1, the main thoroughfare out of Kandahar city and through the province. Checkpoints will be put in for Afghan national security forces.

“We've been heliporting all the resupply down here and we want to use the road,” said Capt. Bryan Ouellet.

“Because they're not paved roads they're always a threat for IEDs.”

The sun has barely broken over the horizon when the first shots were fired Saturday. On the road to the west, Company C started off with a firefight as they head south toward Ghundy Ghar.

“We took our time,” Gauthier said. “There were still children, families around so engagement becomes very complex in those conditions.”

To the east, Company B found two IEDs and had to dismount from the security of their armoured vehicles and cover much of the road on foot, searching for further explosives.

“We also found many arms \_ AK-47s, mines and plastic, which can be used to make IEDs,” Gauthier said.

Still, the operation went swiftly and successfully.

But as a testament to the challenge Canadians face in this fight, the very next morning two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard 1 tank, which pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs, rolled over an improvised explosive device on the road cleared the day before.

The two soldiers, who were on foot at the time of the blast, were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base and were later released.

“They're out of the hospital,” said Capt. Josee Bilodeau, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Forces at Kandahar Airfield. “They're good to go. They will be at work tomorrow.”

Later Sunday, another company hit an IED on the other road targeted by Operation Khair Khowhai. There were no injuries.

“That was put there in the past 24 hours,” said Gauthier, as soldiers on foot swept the area for further roadside bombs.

The reality is that for Canadian soldiers, IEDs are a daily threat.

On average, one vehicle a week is hit with a roadside bomb. Fortunately, most of the time there are no serious injuries but 38 Canadian soldiers have died in IED blasts, along with thousands of Afghans.

Checkpoints are being built for Afghan security forces on the roads and outreach patrols have already begun to visit the local population “to see what their needs are,” Gauthier said.

“We're in basically the homeland of the Taliban so it's a key element for us to clear those (areas) of command and control of the Taliban and allow freedom of movement.”

“Those roads ... have been IED'd or blocked for several months now, so it's going to within a few days the population will be able to move freely to go wherever they want to go.”



# Al-Qaida commander criticizes Hamas for abandoning jihad in new videotape

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE MEDIA

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 457

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CAIRO, Egypt (AP) \_ An al-Qaida commander who escaped from a U.S. prison in Afghanistan appeared in a new videotape Sunday criticizing Hamas and other Islamic groups that he said prioritized nationalism and electoral politics over jihad, or holy war.

Hamas is focused on the creation of an independent Palestinian state rather than al-Qaida's vision of a worldwide Muslim community ruled by Islamic law. Like al-Qaida, the Palestinian movement advocates violence to achieve its goal, but has also participated in elections alongside the moderate Palestinian Fatah group.

“We caution some of the Islamic groups, among them Hamas, which are risking the bloods of their sons ... to cleanse and purify their jihad of contemporary jihadi pollutants,” said Abu Yahia al-Libi in the 90-minute videotape.

“Patriotism, nationalism, shared unity, the supreme interest and other slogans ... none of these have any space in the religion of Allah the Glorious and the Great,” he said, criticizing groups such as Hamas for “abandoning jihad and jumping into the ballot boxes.”

The authenticity of the videotape could not be verified, but it was released on a website commonly used by Islamic militants and carried the logo of Al-Sahab, al-Qaida's media arm.

Sunday's release came only days after Osama bin Laden released his first new video in almost three years, lecturing Americans on the failure of their leaders to stop the war in Iraq.

Al-Libi, wearing a white traditional Arab robe and a black turban, also ridiculed the U.S. for its troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan, claiming the country's power and prestige was in decline.

“America, which is one of the major evil spirits of the age, was only a few years ago bragging about its power and boasting of its army and materiel, at a time when everyone was subordinate to it and submissive to its resolutions,” said al-Libi, whose nom de guerre means “the Libyan” in Arabic.

“But today, where is America? Where is the vanity and arrogance of the American army and its policymakers?” he added. “And moreover, where is the value of the American soldier whose killing used to make headlines in all the media but who today is dragged in the streets of Baghdad, hung on the bridges of Fallujah, rolled on the rocks of Afghanistan and burned to coals in the middle of its capital, Kabul.”

Al-Libi praised the resurgence of Taliban militants in Afghanistan, who have made a comeback following a U.S.-led invasion in 2001 that ousted them from power.

Since his escape in 2005, al-Libi is believed by western and Afghan intelligence to have run training camps for suicide bombers and fighters in eastern Afghanistan along the border with Pakistan. Afghan police said at the time of his escape that his real name is Abulbakar Mohammed Hassan and that he is a Libyan.

# Harper says no quick vote on Afghanistan without support for new mandate

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09  
**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 480

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SYDNEY, Australia (CP) \_ Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said Sunday there'll be no vote in Parliament anytime soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful \_ where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of a pan-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, which is set to expire in February 2009, would only continue if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

The Liberals said at their summer caucus they plan to bring the matter to a head as soon as the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

While the official end of the mandate is more than a year off, NATO will be seeking as much lead time as possible in knowing whether the 2,000-plus Canadian military contingent in the troubled Kandahar region is pulling out.

Harper has indicated a willingness to alter the existing military mandate, but not to pulling the troops out of Afghanistan altogether.

Without directly citing the Liberal intentions, he said the mission should not be treated as "a political football in this Parliament."

"And I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football," said Harper. "So we're not going to put people in that place again."

Harper said he's still seeking a consensus, but a government official later said that consensus has to be in line with the government's wishes.

The official also said that "consensus" means 50-per-cent plus one MP in a parliamentary vote.

By that definition, some might argue there is already a consensus in the Commons to end the mission in 2009.

But the Conservatives point out there is division within Liberal ranks on the matter. They're hoping to flush those divisions into the open and get a firm answer from Liberal Leader Stephane Dion about what he sees as Canada's role after the current military mandate expires.

Harper said he's seeking ``some kind of consensus to fulfill the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfill everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave \_ I hope would leave \_ when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do."

He said that job entails getting Afghan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

# Canadian soldiers, journalist unhurt, but shaken by IED blast in Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 540

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ZHARI DISTRICT, Afghanistan (CP) \_ After choking on the dust in the relentless Afghan heat for the better part of two days, everyone was happy to say goodbye to Ghundy Ghar.

The remote Canadian outpost in the Zhari district of Afghanistan is the reason soldiers have to be tough. A few tarp-covered shelters and three inches of fine dust everywhere, life at Ghundy Ghar is not easy.

The day before, the Van Doo's 3rd Battalion battle group had pushed through on two roads leading to the base, on a mission to help secure an area considered Taliban country.

I spent the night on a cot under the stars, not far from the back of an armoured LAV, my flak jacket and helmet ready to go at the first sound of rocket fire.

The night before, in Masum Ghar, another Canadian forward operating base, a rocket rang in shortly after we pulled in for the night.

Luckily, the rocket wasn't loaded with explosives and the biggest bang was the sound of metal crashing into the rocks behind me.

Some of the soldiers who've grown used to this kind of attack laughed. I chose to cower in the back of an armoured vehicle for a while.

Operation Keeping Goodwill began early Saturday morning and it seemed to speed right along. By the afternoon, we were on our way to Ghundy Ghar, where they seemed pretty happy to have some company.

The next morning a great boom rang out and a cloud of smoke rose in the distance where B company has settled in to secure the road.

``IED," comes a yell from camp and soldiers begin to gather around the radio.

Ten or 15 excruciating minutes pass before word comes that there were two minor injuries.

Relief sweeps over the camp until two helicopters are spotted heading to the area just after 9 a.m. The injuries have been upgraded to serious and the two soldiers are airlifted to hospital.

A few hours later I'm in the back of another LAV, bumping along the same road we bumped along the day before \_ the road that's been cleared by the 3rd Battalion.

The thing about an improvised explosive device is that it can be anywhere, and as soldiers tell you, it's the luck of the draw.

I hear a crash over my left shoulder and at the same time feel myself launched across the tight quarters of the back of an LAV.

“IED,” comes the answer before I can ask the question.

The captain pops his head down before I really realize what's going on.

“Everyone OK?” he asks, giving the thumbs up to each person in turn.

I have a quick look to see if my legs are where they should be and then turn my thumbs up, too.

As I sit stunned, the soldiers are in full action. They jump out through the roof hatches and they're gone.

After a couple of minutes I'm told to climb out through the hatch and offered a helping hand. I walk across the top and realize I'm terrified to jump off. Where there's one hidden bomb there could be more.

“It's okay. Jump there where there's tracks.”

I force myself off.

The captain walks ahead of me, urging me to follow in his tracks, which take me to another armoured vehicle in our convoy.

When the vehicle is cleared, the company spreads out to look for more IEDs as we wait for help. They walk for kilometres in each direction, making sure there are no more dangers ahead.

As we sit in the blistering mid-day heat waiting for backup, a report comes in from a nearby operating base. A truckload of people was spotted heading in our direction and they may be coming to ambush us.

The soldiers are ordered to man their guns but help arrives first.

A special team recovers the remains of the IED and the injured vehicle is loaded up. The soldiers are already joking about the day.

“Baptism by fire,” they tell me.

“Welcome to Afghanistan.”

Thirty-eight Canadian soldiers and thousand of Afghans have died in IED blasts but many more have survived. There is, on average, about one IED hit a week for Canada's troops in Afghanistan.

The fact is, this threat is the daily reality for soldiers and civilians in this war-torn land.

# INDEX:International, Defence

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 158

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Two Canadian soldiers received minor injuries today after their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

The incident happened during day two of Operation Keeping Goodwill, a new combat offensive launched by Canadian troops in the Zhari district, west of Kandahar City.

Capt. Josee Bilodeau says a Leopard 1 tank that pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs struck the device and was slightly damaged.

She says the two wounded soldiers, who were on foot on each side of the vehicle, suffered light shrapnel injuries. They were taken to hospital at the Kandahar base and have since been released.

Bilodeau says Operation Keeping Goodwill, a 36-hour operation, is now over and was a success, with no major casualties for Canadian and Afghan troops and Afghan police.

Aimed at reasserting control over an area that was previously won, but in recent months lost to the Taliban, the joint operation involved most of the Canadian battle group in Kandahar, with tanks, light armoured vehicles and hundreds of soldiers.

# TOR OUT YYY

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09  
**KEYWORDS:** ADVISORIES  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 254

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Two Canadian soldiers have been slightly wounded in a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan.

The incident happened during day two of ``Operation Keeping Goodwill."

It's a new combat offensive launched by Canadian troops in the volatile Zhari district.

The two soldiers were hit by shrapnel.

Both were treated at the hospital at the base in Kandahar and released.

The military says the 36-hour offensive was a success. (4)

(Soldier Funeral)

The 70th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan has been honoured in his hometown of Hamilton.

Hundreds of people attended the funeral for Major Ray Ruckpaul yesterday.

Ruckpaul was remembered as a fine officer who had a particular compassion for the children in Afghanistan and in Croatia, where he also had two tours of duty.

The 42-year-old Ruckpaul was found shot in his barracks in Kabul August 29th. (4)

(Portugal Missing Girl)

Kate and Gerry McCann are back home in the U-K.

The couple left Portugal today to return to Britain.

The family says the McCanns are returning home to get on with their lives and in order to give their two-year-old twins a more normal life.

Portuguese police have named the McCanns as suspects in the disappearance of their four-year-old daughter Madeleine May 3rd.

But the authorities but did not block their departure. (4)

(Quebec Missing Girl)

Fredericton police have scoured the New Brunswick capital after a tip that a missing girl from Quebec may have been seen in the city.

A woman told local police she saw a girl resembling 10-year-old Cedrika Provencher getting out of a

light-grey minivan with a Quebec licence plate.

The little girl disappeared July 31st in Trois-Rivieres.

Investigators say they're looking for a red Acura and a French-speaking man between 30 and 40, with light brown hair and a medium build. (4)

(York University Attacks)

There's unease on the campus of Toronto's York University.

Two 19-year-old students were sexually assaulted in their dormitory beds Friday.

Two men in their early 20s got into six unlocked dorm rooms on different floors of the university's Vanier College.

One student says the thought of being attacked in what you expect to be the safety of your own bed is beyond frightening.

The university is now beefing up security. (4)

(Tropical Weather)

Tropical Storm Gabrielle's top winds have increased slightly, to more than 70-kilometres-per-hour, as it approaches North Carolina's coast.

Forecasters don't expect it to reach hurricane strength before coming ashore later today. (4)

(NewsWatch by Geri Smith)



# Afghan–Karzai

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 133

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KABUL — Afghanistan's president abruptly cut short a speech today at a packed stadium as police fired shots into the air in an attempt to restrain a crowd trying to enter.

Shortly after being rushed off the podium, President Hamid Karzai said security in Afghanistan was deteriorating and renewed a call for negotiations with Taliban militants.

The sound of gunfire rang out as Karzai abruptly ended his speech at Kabul's central sports stadium, prompting some in the audience to start to flee.

Officials told the crowd to remain calm, and said someone had thrown stones against a metal door.

But a Defence Ministry spokesman said police fired into the air to prevent a restless crowd outside the stadium from entering.

No injuries were reported.

Karzai had been speaking at a memorial ceremony for an anti–Taliban commander who was killed in an al–Qaida suicide bombing two days before the 9–11 attacks in the U–S.

(AP)

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# Soldier–Funeral

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**DATE:** 2007.09.09

**KEYWORDS:** DEFENCE

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 117

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HAMILTON -- Military, family and bystanders honoured Canadian Forces Major Ray Ruckpaul at a funeral in his Hamilton hometown.

The 42-year-old Ruckpaul was found shot in his barracks in Kabul, Afghanistan on August 29th.

Brigadier-General Jim Ferron said Ruckpaul was a fine officer who had a particular compassion for the children in Afghanistan and in Croatia, where he also had two tours of duty.

Bystanders outside the Church of the Ascension watched silently yesterday as a rifle salute sounded and Ruckpaul's casket passed through a military honour guard, followed by his wife and children and his parents.

Ruckpaul, the 70th soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002, lived in Germany with his wife and two children.

At the time of his death, Ruckpaul was serving at the headquarters of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

(CP)

RvA

# Toronto 9/11 widow says Canada should mark day

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100079  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Capital Region & Vancouver Island  
**PAGE:** C10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: David Handschuh, AFP, Agence France–Presse / Mournersweep before the reflecting pool at Ground Zero last Sept. 11 in New York City during ceremonies marking the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. ;  
**DATELINE:** NEW YORK  
**BYLINE:** Steven Edwards  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 715

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NEW YORK — With extensive services and other official events planned tomorrow in New York and across the United States to mark the sixth anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the widow of one of Canada's victims says it's time Ottawa began officially marking the watershed event.

"This wasn't an exclusively American event, but an attack on democracy and freedom and all the values that we hold dear as Canadians," Maureen Basnicki said from her Toronto home. "Other countries have taken the time to mark that very historical event, and I am still waiting for Canada to do the same."

A mother of two whose husband, Ken, died in the collapse of the World Trade Center's North Tower, Basnicki was one of two Canadian 9/11 widows who last year participated in reading the names at Ground Zero of the 2,750 people killed there.

She said the absence of an official ceremony in Canada means it's "New York or nothing" for the families of Canadian victims who want to attend one. Beyond that, she adds, the day has come to define our time.

"We now often refer to the world as pre- and post-9/11 because it marked a turning point, a time when this war that we have to win was begun," she said. "Our soldiers are dying in Afghanistan because of what happened on 9/11, and while I don't have specific ideas about what [the official recognition] should be, it should be more than nothing."

The Canadian Consulate in New York is hosting families of Canadian victims at a reception today, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper will pay Canada's respects tomorrow in a statement from Australia, where he was attending the Asia–Pacific summit.

Also tomorrow, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day will deliver a tribute at a privately organized memorial service at the National Club in Toronto.

But the Canadian government has organized no major commemorative event in Canada to mark any 9/11 anniversary, and there is no national memorial to the 24 Canadians lost — in contrast to recently unveiled memorials in Toronto and Vancouver to victims of the 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182.

The Toronto service is organized by Alana Walker Carpenter, who, through her consultancy Intriciti, helps Christian business leaders integrate faith and their work.

Two others she organized in earlier years aimed at giving business people a chance to pay their respects to victims they may have known, but she has worked closely with the prime minister's office this year to extend extensive invitations to the country's political class.

Committed to giving an "Expression of Gratitude" at the service, Basnicki also praised the Toronto Blue Jays, who will precede their game against the New York Yankees tomorrow with what may be the biggest remembrance ceremony in the country. After field presentations involving colour guards and emergency services personnel from New York and Toronto, two young boys who lost their father, a Toronto native, will make the first pitch.

While there appears to be little groundswell for more intense official government recognition, Toronto police Sgt. Jose Camacho, who led a \$200,000 fund-raising effort in the aftermath of the attacks to benefit families of New York City police officers killed, says he favours the idea.

"We would back her 100 per cent," said the officer, who has been in New York for several days accompanied by about 100 other Canadian officers participating in various parades and attending services. "If Maureen takes a lead role in that, we would help her."

No Canadians are among the lottery-picked first responders who'll be reading the victims' names this year at Ground Zero, though Camacho and others had volunteered.

Access to the site is limited this year because of advancing construction of Freedom Tower and other structures that will replace the fallen Twin Towers.

Controversy has surrounded some of the service plans in New York, as some victims' families opposed plans by Rudy Giuliani, city mayor at the time of the attacks, to give a speech.

The families said that since Giuliani is now seeking the Republican nomination for the presidency, his presence would be tantamount to using the service as a campaign prop.

Many of the same families — as well as the New York firefighters union hierarchy — also blame Giuliani for not making the city better prepared. They say the response fell short because he had failed to improve emergency radios or move the mayor's emergency command bunker to a safer site outside the area.

# Troops clear path to remote outpost in Afghan province; Two soldiers hurt after tank rolls over mine; reporter escapes injury in roadside bombing

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100024  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A8  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 318

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Canadian Forces completed a major push into the west of Zhari district yesterday that brought relief to a group of Canadian soldiers who had been cut off from supplies at a remote outpost for close to three weeks.

The group of mostly snipers and reconnaissance soldiers were posted at Gundy Ghar, a hill about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City that was reclaimed by Canadian troops on Aug. 22.

But the group had been unable to receive supplies because of ambushes by the Taliban and improvised explosive devices planted along the roads leading to the outpost.

During a major combat operation this weekend, Canadian Forces cleared those roads of IEDs and secured a section of the district more than 20 square kilometres in area.

Two Canadian soldiers were slightly injured when a Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were patrolling on foot nearby and were hit by shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

They were evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment but were expected to be released soon.

Meanwhile, a LAV-III armoured vehicle carrying Canadian Press reporter Dene Moore was struck by an IED around midday yesterday while returning from Gundy Ghar. No one was injured in the blast.

Military officials did not inform reporters that the soldiers had been stranded at Gundy Ghar until Moore returned from the convoy with which she was travelling.

It is the second time in less than a month that a vehicle carrying Canadian journalists has been hit by an IED.

A LAV-III carrying Radio-Canada journalists Patrice Roy and Charles Dubois struck an IED during the operation that retook Gundy Ghar, killing two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan interpreter.

Dubois lost his leg below the knee, and another Canadian soldier was injured.

Canadian Forces have spent the last few weeks trying to reclaim territory they seized in heavy fighting last fall and handed over to the Afghan forces, who were unable to hold off the Taliban.

Troops clear path to remote outpost in Afghan province; Two soldiers hurt after tank rolls over mine; reporter escapes injury in roadside bombing 57

The Canadians had an outpost at Gundy Ghar as recently as the spring, but it slipped back into Taliban control.

Meanwhile, a number of checkpoints along Highway 1, the main thoroughfare that leads into Kandahar City, have been recently lost or abandoned by the Afghan National Police (ANP).

# PM wants Afghan mission to last until we 'finish the job'

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100022  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A8  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 223

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SYDNEY, Australia -- Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said yesterday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders.

"My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism tomorrow -- the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. -- in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leave," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field, (and) in a dangerous position that they have the support of their Parliament."

# Six years after 9/11, Canadians still share American values; Differences over Iraq war notwithstanding, U.S. 'goals' appeal to most of us, poll finds

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100013  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**BYLINE:** Randy Boswell  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 518

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Six years after the 9/11 terror attacks, and despite sharp differences between Canada and the U.S. over the resulting war in Iraq, a new survey shows that Canadians still identify more with the "values and goals" of their American neighbour than other countries.

The poll of 1,500 Canadians, conducted in late August for the Montreal-based policy research organization Association for Canadian Studies, asked respondents to consider how closely the values and goals of several countries matched Canada's as we "seek out partners for collaboration on international issues."

Eight-five per cent of those surveyed said the U.S. had "very similar" or "somewhat similar" aims as Canada on the global stage.

Britain (80 per cent) and Australia and France (both 72 per cent) also registered high levels of affinity with Canadian values, while attitudes toward NAFTA partner Mexico (52 per cent), Israel (37 per cent) and Lebanon (17 per cent) illustrated the wide gulf between the interests of Canada and some of the world's other nations.

"Despite the differences we have with the United States over some political issues, we still see the U.S. as our closest ally and as our best opportunity for collaboration internationally," said ACS executive director Jack Jedwab. "We feel that our vision of the world is more compatible with the U.S. than any other country."

The poll, conducted Aug. 22-28 by Leger Marketing, is the first in a series of four studies prepared by the ACS and released to CanWest News Service to mark the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist strikes on New York City and Washington, D.C.

The survey is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Canada's pledge at the time of the 9/11 attacks to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the U.S. has been tested often in the years since amid tensions over military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, border security issues and strained relations between ethnic and religious communities within each country.

But a poll-topping 46 per cent of Canadians said this country's values and goals were "very similar" -- the strongest category of perceived closeness -- to those held by Americans, compared with 40 per cent for Britain, 29 per cent for Australia and 22 per cent for France.

Six years after 9/11, Canadians still share American values; Differences over Iraq war notwithstanding, U.S.



Significantly, however, French–Canadian respondents were most likely to name France as having very or somewhat similar values as Canadians on global issues.

Eighty–eight per cent of French speakers identified France as our best potential partner for international collaboration, ahead of the U.S. (85 per cent), Britain (74 per cent) and Mexico (67 per cent).

Jedwab said Quebec's historic links to France and the province's special status within La Francophonie, the global forum of French–speaking states, help explain those results.

"The rest of Canada doesn't have that relationship with France," he says.

Likewise, English Canadians expressed relatively stronger levels of closeness to Commonwealth partners Britain (85 per cent) and Australia (79 per cent) than the national average.

Jedwab notes that because Canada's relationship with the U.S. dominates political discourse in this country, differences in foreign policy, social policy and other areas tend to be magnified.

But when it comes to seeing the "big picture" of Canada's position in the world, he says, "when the dust settles we go back to seeing the U.S. as our greatest ally and best potential collaborator on the international stage."

# NATO wants Canada to stay in Afghanistan; Troops will be 'missed sorely' if they're withdrawn in 2009, Britain's top military officer says in Victoria

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100006

**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: John McKay, Times Colonist / While chiefs of defence from 26 member nations met on Saturday at the Hotel Grand Pacific before departing yesterday, about 200 protesters staged a demonstration outside to denounce alliance policies. ;

**BYLINE:** David Pugliese

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 566

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Britain's top military officer says Canada's contribution to Afghanistan is enormously valuable to the ongoing efforts in that central Asian country and would be sorely missed if its troops were to leave.

Britain's chief of the defence staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, said that the international community has to stick with the Afghanistan mission or that country will fall back into the hands of terrorists and extremists.

"As far as military contributions are concerned, it is entirely up to Canada what it wants to do," Stirrup said in an interview yesterday. "All I would say, from our perspective, is that the contribution that Canada makes is so effective and so highly valued that we would miss it sorely if it were to go."

NATO officers meeting in Victoria on the weekend for long-range military planning sessions consistently emphasized it will be up to the Harper government to determine if it wants to stay involved in the Afghan mission. But behind the scenes, NATO nations are quietly making overtures to Canada not to withdraw its soldiers.

Several days ago, German officials added their voice to concerns about the possibility Canada would end its Afghanistan mission in 2009.

The Harper government has said Canada's troops won't continue combat operations in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 unless there is a consensus in Parliament to extend the mission. Canada has about 2,500 military personnel in the volatile Kandahar region.

But NATO officials at the meeting here privately acknowledge they were taken aback by recent comments by Defence Minister Peter MacKay about the combat portion of the Afghan mission ending in 2009. Last weekend, MacKay said Canada's allies have been informed about the stance on Afghanistan and "the signal that has been sent already is that our current configuration will end in February 2009."

Aid and diplomatic work would continue, he noted in a television interview, but the way the mission is currently set up in Kandahar will come to an end.

NATO wants Canada to stay in Afghanistan; Troops will be 'missed sorely' if they're withdrawn in 2009, Brita

A spokesman for MacKay said yesterday that the defence minister has stated the same view as Prime Minister Stephen Harper. "Parliament voted to extend the mission through Feb. 2009 and the way ahead will be decided before that time," Dan Dugas noted in an e-mail.

But NATO officials said that MacKay's statements indicate to them that Canada's combat mission is all but finished.

The Netherlands is also looking at whether to pull out its troops from Afghanistan, although military officers here believe that nation will ultimately stay the course.

Canadian Gen. Ray Henault, the chairman of NATO's military committee, said the alliance is hopeful Canada will find a way to continue operating in Afghanistan.

Stirrup said although it might be difficult to measure, there has been progress in the southern part of Afghanistan where much of the fighting has taken place. "Canada's contribution has been critical to getting to where we have got over the last 15 months in south," he added.

He said the public has to realize Afghanistan is an extremely long-term venture, not necessarily in the military sense, but in terms of the international commitment to that country. Stirrup acknowledged dealing with Afghanistan is a massive challenge but that nations involved should have "the strategic patience to see it through."

"If you've got to eat an elephant, you shouldn't be surprised if after the first few mouthfuls you're not down to the bones," he said. "That's the situation we're in."

Stirrup said that the non-military response — improving infrastructure, the economy and governance — will be the factors that ultimately lead to success in Afghanistan.

# Harper says there will be no immediate vote on ending mission in 2009, a decision that rankles opposition

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100110  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Met  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A17  
**BYLINE:** Tonda MacCharles  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 734

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he will not hold a vote any time soon in Parliament on Canada's future role in Afghanistan unless the government is assured it would win the vote to "finish the job."

"I don't see any necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful, where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and that would give a mandate to our armed forces," Harper told reporters following the end of the Asia-Pacific leaders' summit here. In June, Harper announced that the current combat mission in Kandahar province, which is set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority government could get a consensus in Parliament. The opposition is lined up against extending that combat mission.

But yesterday, Harper indicated his preference is for Canada's military to continue in its current role – a combat support role within the NATO-led international security force in Kandahar – which he said has "an increased focus on training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems."

"I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that. My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leaves."

Opposition leaders were quick to react. Liberal Leader Stephane Dion accused Harper of trying to extend the combat mission, while Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said his party would vote against the government if the 2009 troop withdrawal is not spelled out in the Oct. 16 Speech from the Throne.

With his comments yesterday, Harper was attempting to shift the burden of proposing an alternative to what happens next in Afghanistan to his political rivals.

This may have been an attempt by Harper to exploit division within Liberal ranks on the issue by forcing Dion to give a firm answer on what he sees as Canada's role when the current mandate expires.

The Liberals and Bloc have both said they want the military to withdraw from the combat role in Kandahar in 2009, and have demanded that the government inform NATO of that position. The NDP is demanding an immediate pullback.

The Liberals vowed during their summer caucus in St. John's to use their first opportunity to call for the pullout.

"Canadians must understand that what the Prime Minister is trying to do is to ensure that this combat mission will continue after February 2009," Dion said in Vancouver yesterday, Canadian Press reports.

"And he's trying to go there with a lack of transparency, a lack of coherence," Dion said.

Meanwhile, Duceppe said that, "we have said that we want it made clear (in the throne speech) that the mission will end in 2009. There will be a vote on the speech and if it's not spelled out there, we will vote against it."

NDP Leader Jack Layton, who said his party remains firm that Canada should pull out now, mirrored demands that the issue be dealt with in the throne speech.

"The Speech from the Throne will be an opportunity for a full debate about the war, ..." Layton said in Montreal. "A whole new approach for Canada in Afghanistan is what is required."

Harper said yesterday that the Conservatives will "continue to listen to what the opposition parties say and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus, which would fill the government's objectives and I think also fulfill everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave, I hope ... when we actually finish the job we committed to do."

None of the opposition parties has ruled out another more traditional role for Canadian troops, whether that is continued training of Afghan national army and police, deployment to the safer northern part of Afghanistan, or in supporting the delivery of humanitarian aid – which Canada has pledged to continue until 2011.

A government official would not comment when asked if the government would consider any Opposition motion the "consensus" vote to decide on the mission, saying it is "hypothetical."

The Afghan file has proved politically risky for Harper, with Canadian casualty rates very high.

There is also pressure from NATO allies like France and Germany, who are keen for Canada to stay in the dangerous Kandahar region, as are non-NATO partners, such as Australia.

Harper could get some much-needed political help on that front if some American troops are diverted back into Afghanistan from Iraq next year, or even if Australia's Opposition leader Kevin Rudd succeeds in replacing Prime Minister John Howard.

Rudd wants to pull back Australian troops from Iraq year, but he supports their presence in Afghanistan, and has said he would deploy more Australian forces there.

Harper will meet Rudd tomorrow in Canberra.

With files from Canadian Press

Harper says there will be no immediate vote on ending mission in 2009, a decision that rankles opposition

# Protesters accuse generals of war crimes

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**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** D10  
**DATELINE:** VICTORIA  
**BYLINE:** Louise Dickson  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 383

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VICTORIA — Noisy but peaceful protesters denounced NATO's role in world affairs Saturday — accusing the military alliance of war crimes — as top generals met at a downtown Victoria hotel.

About 200 demonstrators gathered but only one person was picked up by police — a man riding his bike naked, towing two Scottish terriers in a yellow trailer.

Inside the Hotel Grand Pacific, where the high-level meetings were being held, chiefs of defence from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 26 member nations had "frank and open" discussions on the role of the military alliance and its upcoming missions, said Gen. Ray Henault, a Canadian general and chairman of NATO's Military Committee.

"NATO has a lot of work to do," Henault said. "The demand is there."

Henault said the discussions largely focused on the future, although the topic of the mission in Afghanistan inevitably arose.

"This is a very new NATO," he said. "It used to be a static NATO and one that was designed really to counter the Soviet threat that is no longer there."

"We are now in a NATO that knows it must have an expeditionary capability and that expeditionary capability is very much embedded in the Afghanistan mission."

Meanwhile, the protesters delivered a symbolic summons to NATO generals, "charging" the military committee with 36 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Lt.-Col. Tony White, public information officer for NATO's military committee, said he had received and read the summons and will pass it to NATO's legal team in Brussels, when he returns in a few days.

"It will be not ignored," said White. "I read it was alleging war crimes in Yugoslavia. It would take a legal expert to give an opinion on it."

The coalition of local peace groups chanted "NATO killers" as they marched from the legislature to the Grand Pacific Hotel. Then, there were calls to "bring down the generals."

Although a few military men looked on from their waterfront balconies, no one came down to address the crowd.

Jodi Wood joined the rally to protest Canada's involvement in NATO.

"We're a democratic nation and I think we should have a right as a civilian society to make the decision to pull Canada out of what is basically world terrorism," said Wood.

In the past five years, the demands on NATO have been increasing, said White.

"The international community sees NATO as a very responsible and professional force that is highly successful," said White.

"You have to go to Afghanistan to see the progress. The (gross domestic product ) is up 14 per cent. Young girls are in school. Afghanistan is much better off than it was two years ago. If they listen to our soldiers, they'll know we're doing a lot more good than bad."

Victoria Times Colonist

# Two Canadians hurt on operation

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**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B7  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 355

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Canadian Forces have emerged virtually unscathed from a major combat operation this weekend that reclaimed the western part of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province, military officials said Sunday.

But the military conceded that the operation, which mobilized most of Canada's fighting forces, has merely re-established a presence in territory that the Canadians occupied at the same time last year.

Two Canadian soldiers were lightly injured when a nearby Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were walking close to the tank and were hurt by the shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

They were evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment, but are expected to be released soon, said Major Eric Laforest, director of operations for Canada's battle group.

Roughly 600 Canadian soldiers — the bulk of Canada's battle group — as well as 100 Afghan soldiers and police were deployed in support of Operation Khar Khowhai — Keeping Goodwill. Canadian tanks, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery units rolled out before dawn on Saturday morning to launch the operation.

Canadian Forces were hoping to recover terrain they seized in heavy fighting last fall and subsequently handed over to the Afghan National Police (ANP), which was unable to hold off the Taliban.

Laforest said the operation reclaimed a roughly 20-square-kilometre "box" of territory in the west of the district. The goal was to create "elbow room" for the ANP and Afghan National Army to provide ongoing security, he added.

But Laforest also hinted that Canadian troops could be required to stay in the area for some time.

"We were there about a year ago, we're there now, and we'll be there as long as the Afghan government wants us to operate ... You know what, that is modern warfare. There's no straight line, right?"

As part of the operation, Afghan soldiers led house-to-house searches of villages in the area.

"We did find some indicators that there had been some fighting in the past and that the insurgents were taking advantage of the civilian population to hide," said Laforest.



Around this time last year, Canadian troops were in the thick of Operation Medusa, the biggest and bloodiest operation that Canada has fought in Afghanistan. That operation and a series of smaller ones that followed were supposed to have secured Panjwai and parts of neighbouring Zhari to the north.

# Harper wants Canadian troops 'to finish the job'

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**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B7  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**BYLINE:** Mike De Souza  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 502

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SYDNEY, Australia — Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said on Sunday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders. "My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism on Tuesday — the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on America — in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leave," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field, (and) in a dangerous position that they have the support of their Parliament. I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament, and I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football. So we're not going to put people in that place again."

But he stressed that he would try to negotiate with the other parties about how to proceed on the issue.

The New Democrats are insisting on an immediate withdrawal of Canada's troops from their combat mission in southern Afghanistan's deadly Kandahar region. The Liberals and the Bloc Quebecois have called for the troops to end their combat mission at the end of Canada's current commitment period in 2009. But the governing Conservatives say the Liberals, in particular, have not been clear on what type of role for the military should follow.

"We're obviously listening to what the opposition parties are saying, (and) trying to get some sense of what it means, because quite frankly, (for) a couple of those parties, there's quite a change in message from month to month, and even week to week," Harper said.

"We'll continue to train the Afghan forces and we'll continue to listen to what the opposition parties say, and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus which would fill the government's objectives and I think also fulfil everybody's objective of seeing Canadian troops leave, I hope we leave, when we've actually finished the job we were committed to do."

Seventy Canadians have died in Afghanistan since the mission began to remove the Taliban regime that was sheltering terrorists who planned the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on America.

# The remorseful thief

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100090  
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**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** City  
**PAGE:** C4  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 437

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The theft of a soldier's portrait from an Ottawa gallery was a fundamentally anti-social act. So it's heartening to see that society's revulsion had an effect on the thief.

The painting was of Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, who was killed in Afghanistan in June. It was stolen in August and mailed back to the Beechwood Avenue gallery last week, with

"Je m'excuse" scrawled on the package. We might never know what prompted the original theft. It might well have been an unthinking act of desperation or compulsion.

We might also never know what motivated the thief to return the portrait. Was there someone else, a parent, a partner, helping to prick his or her conscience?

Whatever happened, the process of redemption was almost certainly begun when the Citizen carried a large photograph of the portrait on its front page on Aug. 29. There it was, staring out at the thief. The message was clear: this theft mattered deeply, not only to the artist Heidi Conrod, and not only to the person who had bought the portrait and was hoping to deliver it to the fallen soldier's girlfriend.

No, this theft mattered to the whole city, because it was an image that we couldn't forget. A fallen soldier, portrayed with the spirit of the child he once was. The value of that portrait had little to do with money.

Public shame can be a destructive force. It can turn people who are merely different into outcasts. It can stop people who have made mistakes from healing and getting on with their lives. But shame can also be constructive. It can remind wayward souls that they are, whether they like it or not, parts of a community. Their actions do affect others.

Every so often, it happens that a thief finds himself or herself the target of public outrage. Steal Sidney Crosby's hockey jersey or Amanda Forsyth's cello and it's not going to go unnoticed. The cynical interpretation of the portrait return might be that the thief realized there was no way to hide or sell the painting of the soldier. It was instantly recognizable.

But it would have been safer and easier, in that case, to just burn it or throw it away. No, somebody put that portrait in the mail out of empathy for the victims of the crime and, probably, out of remorse. As Edgar Allan Poe demonstrated so memorably in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, remorse can be a powerful thing.

Remorse, shame, repentance — they're old-fashioned words, and old-fashioned and problematic ideas. They do have their place, though. It looks like they caused at least one person in the Ottawa area to become, if only for a moment, a better human being.

# A real debate on Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100048  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**BYLINE:** Scott Gilmore  
**SOURCE:** Citizen Special  
**WORD COUNT:** 658

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The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is our largest military enterprise since the Korean War; Canada's largest aid program in history; and Ottawa's most pressing foreign policy issue in decades. And yet, belying this significance, the debate swirling around the subject barely rises to the quality of a sandbox spat.

Instead of Macdonald and Laurier crossing swords with wit and wisdom, we have Bart and Lisa throwing sand.

Friday's op-ed by Tom Quiggin on this page ("Aid can do more harm than good") is an excellent example of what is wrong with this national debate, and it is unfortunately not the only example.

Those both for and against the mission are exceptionally gifted at avoiding the central questions: Is Afghanistan important to Canada? Are we doing any good? Is this good worth the price?

Instead, the commentators and politicians rush right past these critical signposts and dive into the brambles of minutiae. In Mr. Quiggin's case, he is wondering about the Afghan labour markets, proclaiming that the aid projects are distorting wages.

The oft-quoted Senlis Council is scurrying around in the opium fields, demanding legalization. Jack Layton marches off in another direction, resolutely arm in arm with conspiracy theorists, anarchists, and old time nationalists, shouting down American imperialism and claiming Canadian troops are just doing President George W. Bush's dirty work.

Everyone with even the most tenuous claim to being informed is weighing in. Cosseted academics who have never been to Central Asia are labelled "Afghan experts."

MPs who were once flown to Afghanistan, but never left the Kandahar airfield, proudly display their flak-jacketed photos on their websites. Former diplomats who spent their distinguished careers in Europe hold forth on network news with strong telegenic opinions regarding Pashtun and Dari dynamics.

Very few of them have actually spent any real time in Afghanistan, almost none of them have any scrutable data to back their positions.

Returning to Mr. Quiggin, for example, he offers that "well informed sources" suggest that only 20 per cent of the aid money is being used effectively. Is there a quantitative study on aid effectiveness by a reputable organization that shows 80 cents on every dollar is being wasted? Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Quiggin confidently claims that the aid is doing more harm than good. In other words, Afghanistan would

be in better shape now if we had not helped Afghans remove landmines, build schools, re-open hospitals, or distribute medicine.

It seems highly unlikely, but he may be right. The parents of the 40,000 Afghan babies that did not die this year due to the recent drop in the infant mortality rate may choose to disagree with Mr. Quiggin. The additional five million Afghan children who are now going to school may also raise a skeptical eyebrow.

But I am a more cautious sort. I would like some actual data before I am willing to hold forth with Mr. Quiggin's conviction.

And where is the government in the midst of this dysfunctional debate? That is not a rhetorical question. I honestly do not know.

On CBC radio, ministers can never be found to respond to opposition attacks. The very people who are on the ground and can provide some of the badly needed answers are also nowhere to be seen. The Prime Minister's Office has strictly forbidden aid workers and diplomats from speaking to the press. The Conservative contribution to the question of whether Canada should or should not be in Afghanistan is limited largely to the few anodyne press releases that trickle out when no one is looking.

Whether you believe we should be there or not, we all seem to agree that Afghanistan is a critical issue for Canada. The price in Canadian lives and money is already a steep one. Therefore we need a genuine informed debate. Canadian citizens, and our leaders, need real answers.

Is Afghanistan important to Canada? Are we doing good? Is it worth it? Three simple questions. I invite Stéphane Dion, Stephen Harper, and even Mr. Quiggin to try answering them.

Scott Gilmore has spent time in Afghanistan and several other conflict zones, both as a diplomat and a development worker. He is currently the executive director of Peace Dividend Trust, a non-profit

foundation dedicated to make peace operations more efficient, effective, and equitable.

# Warring expectations

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100043  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 540

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Modern warfare has evolved, and so have the expectations of the people watching from home. We expect our side to win every battle, and to do it with few, if any, casualties.

And most of the time, that expectation is met, and we at home forget just how astonishing that is. How different from wars past when Canada put uniforms on civilians and sent them across the ocean to be killed. We sometimes forget that during the First World War our boys — and they were boys — were slaughtered en masse fighting for an inch or two of mud.

An article in the recent edition of Legion Magazine has sparked an animated discussion about a battle that happened in Afghanistan a year ago in the Taliban heartland.

It was the beginning of Operation Medusa. Coalition forces had the enemy surrounded. The Canadian general in charge could have waited a few days, ordering air strikes to "soften" the Taliban so that the final Canadian assault would be easier. Instead, he sensed an opportunity and chose to attack. Four Canadian soldiers died and 10 were wounded.

Soldiers and civilians have the prerogative to study and question battlefield decisions, to glean what lessons we can. But we must also maintain some perspective.

The writer of the Legion Magazine piece describes the battle as "an old-fashioned WWI-style assault into the guns, albeit on a smaller scale. It was the charge of Charles Company." The allusion to the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War seems hyperbolic, as does the comparison to the First World War. It's a bit like saying the difference between a summer thunderstorm and a hurricane is only one of scale. The Canadian losses in Afghanistan do not compare with the bloodbaths — scores and scores of soldiers dead in a day — at the Somme, Ypres, Passchendaele.

Soldiers have always had reason to grumble and be skeptical, even in those days. The men who fought at Ypres had to put up with the eccentricities of the defence minister, Sir Sam Hughes, who defended the problematic Ross Rifle and patented a shield-shovel that was useless at either function. The worth of Dieppe, in the Second World War, will probably always be debated. The recent controversy over a display at the Canadian War Museum, about the bombing of German cities in the Second World War, shows how long these debates can last. Even hindsight cannot always discern wisdom or error in war.

The general who made the critical decision in Afghanistan has argued that Operation Medusa was a blow to the Taliban, in which Canadians showed remarkable bravery. Obviously we all would have preferred that it be won without a single Canadian casualty. Pte. William Cushley, Warrant Officer Frank Mellish, Warrant Officer Richard Nolan and Sgt. Shane Stachnik are missed.

But it's also fair to question the expectation, unspoken though it usually is, that Canadian soldiers will only die if commanders make mistakes. War is dangerous, and always has been. We are lucky to live in an age that mourns every soldier as he or she deserves to be mourned, that counts every death and remembers every face.



# It's not political

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100038  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**BYLINE:** Les Peate  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 220

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I respect Janice Kennedy as a columnist and usually agree with her sentiments. However, I feel that her refusal to support the Canadian Forces, and not to wear red on Fridays, is a sad move.

First, the forces we support are not only those in Afghanistan (with whose mission she may disagree) but those many men and women in uniform deployed in other trouble spots and at home in Canada. Supporting our troops does not necessarily equate with supporting a politically-motivated decision.

Fifty-five years ago I served in a far-off land, opposing a foe who posed no direct threat to Canada, and in response to a call for help from the UN. We knew that our people at home supported their troops, despite a few negative bleatings from a distinguished churchman and a few Communist fellow-travellers. This was evident in a flood of mail and parcels from well-wishers, welcome gifts and visits from entertainment and sports personalities. The positive effect on our morale cannot be over-emphasized.

Perhaps Ms. Kennedy would like to meet with a wounded Afghanistan veteran and explain why he no longer has her support.

I wear red on Fridays to show my support for our forces everywhere. They may not see my shirt, but their families here in Canada will and know that someone cares for their loved ones.

Les Peate,

Ottawa

# Missing reference

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100037  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**BYLINE:** Naseem A. Reta  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 150

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Re: 'Why I won't wear red,' Sept. 2.

I congratulate Janice Kennedy for her well-written column giving her views on the Afghan war.

Recently, I visited the Canadian War Museum and strolled through the section on the Afghanistan war. I read all the articles on the fallen soldiers (some of them very young) and my heart went out to the families and loved ones of these soldiers. My deepest condolences to these families. Wars are extremely ugly.

I was equally saddened to note that there was no mention of the thousands of Afghan civilians (men, women, children, babies) who have also died in this war. Visitors to this section of the museum are encouraged to write any comments that they may have on the pieces of paper provided. One comment that I read that was very thought-provoking simply read, "Has anyone asked the Afghan people what they want?"

Naseem A. Reta,

Gloucester

# Money better spent

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100036  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**BYLINE:** Gerry Beauvais  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 175

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Re: Mother's unique idea keeps Boomer's legacy alive, Sept. 2.

After reading still another letter in the Citizen about "Support Our Troops" decals and pins, I'm amazed that more people aren't following Maureen Eykelenboom's method of supporting our troops. She has launched Boomer's Legacy, a charitable foundation to raise money for Afghans living in the valleys and villages where Canadian troops operate.

Every time we buy a decal or pin, that our troops in Afghanistan can't see, some one is making a profit. I'm sure that the manufacturer isn't giving these items free of charge. Did we not read an item in the Citizen that some troops at Camp Borden were living near or below the poverty level? Do the stores that sell the pins and decals not make a profit? Our troops might be better served if we showed a monetary form of support rather than a bumper sticker or lapel pin that our troops are too far away to see.

Gerry Beauvais,

Cornwall

# Troops clear path to remote outpost

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**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 205

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian Forces yesterday completed a major push into the west of Zhari district that brought relief to a group of Canadian soldiers who had been cut off from supplies at a remote outpost for close to three weeks.

The group of mostly snipers and reconnaissance soldiers were posted at Gundy Ghar, a hill about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City that was reclaimed by Canadian troops on Aug. 22.

But the group had been unable to receive supplies because of ambushes by the Taliban and improvised explosive devices planted along the roads leading to the outpost. Military officials did not inform reporters that the soldiers had been stranded at Gundy Ghar until a convoy returned from there yesterday.

During a major combat operation this weekend, Canadian soldiers cleared those roads of IEDs and secured a section of the district more than 20 square kilometres in area.

Two Canadian soldiers were slightly injured when a Leopard C2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were patrolling on foot nearby and were hit by shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

Canadian Forces have spent the last few weeks trying to reclaim territory they seized in heavy fighting last fall and handed over to the Afghan forces, who were unable to hold off the Taliban.

# NATO officers praise Canada's contribution; Afghanistan role called effective, valued; would be sorely missed

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100016  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Debra Brash, The Victoria Times Colonist /Gen. Ray Henault, a Canadian who is chairman of NATO's military committee, says several countries, in addition to Canada, are struggling to juggle their military commitments in Afghanistan with other ongoing missions. ;

**DATELINE:** VICTORIA  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 717

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VICTORIA – Britain's top military officer says Canada's contribution to Afghanistan is enormously valuable to the ongoing efforts in that south Asian country and would be sorely missed if its troops were to leave.

Britain's chief of defence staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, said that the international community has to stick with the Afghanistan mission or that country will fall back into the hands of terrorists and extremists.

"As far as military contributions are concerned, it is entirely up to Canada what it wants to do," Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said in an interview with the Citizen. "All I would say from our perspective is that the contribution that Canada makes is so effective and so highly valued that we would miss it sorely if it were to go."

NATO officers who met in Victoria on the weekend for long-range military planning sessions consistently emphasize that it will be up to the Harper government to determine if it wants to stay involved in the Afghan mission. But behind the scenes, NATO nations are quietly making overtures to Canada not to withdraw its soldiers.

Several days ago, German government officials added their voice to concerns about the possibility that Canada would end its Afghanistan mission in 2009.

The Harper government has said Canada's troops won't continue combat operations in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 unless there is a consensus in Parliament to extend the mission. Canada has about 2,500 military personnel assigned to conducting or supporting operations in the volatile Kandahar region.

But NATO officials at the meeting privately acknowledge they were taken aback by recent comments by Defence Minister Peter MacKay about the combat portion of the Afghan mission ending in 2009. Last weekend, Mr. MacKay said Canada's allies have been informed about the stance on Afghanistan and "the signal that has been sent already is that our current configuration will end in February 2009."

NATO officers praise Canada's contribution; Afghanistan role called effective, valued; would be sorely missed

Aid and diplomatic work would continue, he said in a television interview, but the way the mission is currently set up in Kandahar will come to an end.

A spokesman for Mr. MacKay said yesterday that the defence minister has stated the same view as Prime Minister Stephen Harper. "Parliament voted to extend the mission through February 2009 and the way ahead will not be decided before that time," Dan Dugas wrote in an e-mail.

But NATO officials said that Mr. MacKay's statements indicate to them that Canada's combat mission is all but finished. The Netherlands is also looking at whether to pull out its troops from Afghanistan, although military officers here believe that nation will ultimately stay the course.

Canadian Gen. Ray Henault, the chairman of NATO's military committee, said the alliance is hopeful Canada will find a way to continue operating in Afghanistan.

Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said although it might be difficult to measure, there has been progress in the southern part of Afghanistan where much of the fighting has taken place. "Canada's contribution has been critical to getting to where we have got over the last 15 months in south," he added.

He said the public has to realize that Afghanistan is an extremely long-term venture, not necessarily in the military sense, but in terms of the international commitment to that country.

"If you've got to eat an elephant, you shouldn't be surprised if after the first few mouthfuls you're not down to the bones," he said. "That's the situation we're in."

Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said that the non-military response — improving infrastructure, the economy and governance — will be the factors that ultimately lead to success in Afghanistan.

Poland's chief of the general staff, Gen. Franciszek Gągor, also praised the efforts of Canadian troops, noting the two countries have had a long relationship of working together in military operations, including in Africa, the Sinai, the Golan Heights and Cambodia. Polish special forces are operating in southern Afghanistan and its regular forces are in the eastern portion of the country.

"The Polish military appreciates and has great respect for the Canadian military and appreciates what the Canadian military is doing in Afghanistan," said Gen. Gągor. "It's a very important, valued job."

Gen. Henault said the future of Canada's contribution to Afghanistan post-2009 was discussed at the alliance's conference in Victoria. But he also said other nations are trying to juggle their military commitments in Afghanistan with ongoing missions in places such as Lebanon and the Congo.

# Harper in no hurry for Afghanistan vote; PM wants certainty that Commons will agree to 'finish the job'

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100015  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**BYLINE:** Mike De Souza, with files from Norma Greenaway  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 559

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SYDNEY, Australia – Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Mr. Harper said yesterday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders. "My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Mr. Harper scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leave," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field, (and) in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament. I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament, and I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football. So we're not going to put people in that place again."

But he stressed that he would try to negotiate with the other parties about how to proceed on the issue.

The New Democrats are insisting on an immediate withdrawal of Canada's troops from their combat mission in southern Afghanistan's deadly Kandahar region.

The Liberals and the Bloc Québécois have called for the troops to end their combat mission at the end of Canada's current commitment period in 2009. But the governing Conservatives say the Liberals, in particular, have not been clear on what type of role for the military should follow.

"We're obviously listening to what the opposition parties are saying, (and) trying to get some sense of what it means, because quite frankly, (for) a couple of those parties, there's quite a change in message from month to month, and even week to week," Mr. Harper said.

In Ottawa, there was no sign yesterday that the opposition parties are in a mood to buy into Mr. Harper's schedule regarding a possible vote on the future of the Afghan mission.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion and NDP leader Jack Layton predicted that Mr. Harper would be unable to avoid a vote on the issue in the Commons as early as this fall.

"We will force a vote," Mr. Dion said in an interview from Vancouver where he held a series of political events.

Mr. Dion said his party is committed to using its first opposition day after Parliament resumes Oct. 16 to introduce a motion requiring the government to officially notify NATO of the withdrawal of the more than 2,000 Canadian troops from the Kandahar region by February 2009.

"The moment of truth will come with this vote," he added.

Mr. Dion said the Liberals have not ruled out Canada's playing a future role in helping Afghanistan get on its feet, but they are adamant that the combat role must end by February 2009.

Mr. Layton reiterated his party's call for an immediate end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan.

"Most Canadians, we believe, want to change the course (of the mission) and change it now. They don't want to — to use Mr. Harper's words — to 'get the job done.' This is a job done as defined by George Bush foreign policy, not by Canadians."



# Stranded soldiers receive supplies; Canadians at remote Afghan outpost were cut off for almost three weeks

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**PUBLICATION:** Vancouver Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 223

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Canadian Forces on Sunday completed a major push into the west of Zhari district that brought relief to a group of Canadian soldiers who had been cut off from supplies at a remote outpost for close to three weeks.

The group of mostly snipers and reconnaissance soldiers were posted at Gundy Ghar, a hill about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City that was reclaimed by Canadian troops on Aug. 22.

But the group had been unable to receive supplies because of ambushes by the Taliban and improvised explosive devices planted along the roads leading to the outpost.

During a major combat operation this weekend, Canadian Forces cleared those roads of IEDs and secured a section of the district more than 20 square kilometres in area.

Two Canadian soldiers were slightly injured when a Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were patrolling on foot nearby and were hit by shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

They were evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment but were expected to be released soon.

Meanwhile, a LAV-III armoured vehicle carrying Canadian Press reporter Dene Moore was struck by an IED around midday Sunday while returning from Gundy Ghar. No one was injured in the blast.

Military officials did not inform reporters that the soldiers had been stranded at Gundy Ghar until Moore returned from the convoy with which she was travelling.

It is the second time in less than a month that a vehicle carrying Canadian journalists has been hit by an IED.

# Military manoeuvres

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**PUBLICATION:** The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** A6  
**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 211

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Following is an Ottawa Citizen editorial.

Most Canadians realize that the military mission in Kandahar is a demanding and dangerous test for the soldiers on the ground, but they probably did not realize it would prove such a difficult challenge for the entire military establishment, including National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa.

Two recent reports requested by the Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier paint a disturbing picture of the Canadian Forces' ability to cope with this mission, and with other important demands

The first report documents how an attempt to modernize the military command structure has been sideswiped by the competing demands of Afghanistan and issues such as recruitment and the purchase of new military equipment. The other report says the military's ability to process information from the battlefield in Afghanistan is hampered because mission command isn't capable.

It is a dismaying situation. A modern military ought to be able to execute many complex tasks at once — it should be able to make a difference in Afghanistan while simultaneously hiring new soldiers and acquiring new trucks and helicopters.

But there is a reason why this is not happening. The Canadian military has only just begun to rebuild itself after more than a decade of neglect. Shedding the accumulated rust is not an easy task, but it can't be postponed any longer.

# Afghan president calls for talks with Taliban; Country's security in serious trouble, admits Hamid Karzai

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** World  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; BOMBINGS; AFGHANISTAN  
**DATELINE:** KABUL, afghanistan  
**SOURCE:** Agence France–Presse  
**WORD COUNT:** 356

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Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai said Sunday he was ready to talk with Taliban militants in an effort to end their bloody insurgency against his U.S.–backed administration.

Karzai, however, denied his government was in "formal negotiations" with the Islamic militants, who were driven from power six years ago in a U.S.–led invasion.

"Peace can't be achieved without negotiations. Any Afghan wanting to come to his country and help Afghanistan in peace, stability and development is welcomed," Karzai told reporters.

"If I could get an address for the Taliban, if I had somewhere to send somebody to and an authority that says publicly they are the Taliban, I would do it," he said at a press conference with Latvia's President Valdis Zatlers.

Karzai said he hoped "someone will eventually come up with a telephone number, with an address and with a leadership structure that we can go and talk to."

The president said his administration had asked neighbouring Pakistan to find out how to contact the Taliban leadership to make an offer.

Karzai and most of his government have alleged that Taliban leaders, including their elusive supreme commander Mullah Mohammad Omar, are hiding out in Pakistan, but Islamabad strongly denies this.

The Afghan leader did not say whether Omar, who carries a multimillion–dollar U.S. bounty, was included in the offer of talks.

Karzai has suggested negotiations before, but not with the leaders of the uprising.

He said Sunday the radical Hizbi–i–

Islami faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was welcome to join the peace process. He did not mention the former prime minister by name.

The president set up a reconciliation commission in 2005 in the hope of persuading rebels to put down their weapons. Several hundred low-level Taliban and other militants have signed up, according to officials.

The Taliban, as a movement, has repeatedly rejected Karzai's calls for reconciliation and instead redoubled its attacks, using increasingly sophisticated tactics, including Iraq-style suicide bombings.

Karzai admitted at the media briefing that security had deteriorated, but said Afghanistan was "an entirely different issue than Iraq."

"In Afghanistan the reason extremism was thrown away in less than a month in 2001 is because the Afghan people wanted to be freed.

"We were actually occupied as a country, as a nation, by extremism and by their foreign backers," he said, referring to the Taliban and their al-Qaida allies, who were removed in 2001.

"The security situation has become seriously troubled, yes, but it doesn't mean the people don't want progress, don't want the presence of international community," he said.

# Canadian forces would be sorely missed: British commander; NATO officials voice hope mission will continue beyond February 2009

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A3  
**KEYWORDS:** ORGANIZATIONS; FOREIGN RELATIONS; DEFENCE; WAR; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA; BRITISH COLUMBIA  
**DATELINE:** VICTORIA, B.C.  
**BYLINE:** David Pugliese  
**SOURCE:** Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Services  
**WORD COUNT:** 692

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Britain's top military officer says Canada's contribution to Afghanistan is enormously valuable to ongoing efforts in the central Asian country and would be sorely missed if its troops were to leave.

Britain's chief of the defence staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, said the international community has to stick with the Afghanistan mission or the country will fall back into the hands of terrorists and extremists.

"As far as military contributions are concerned it is entirely up to Canada what it wants to do," Stirrup said in an interview Sunday.

"All I would say from our perspective

is that the contribution that Canada makes is so effective and so highly valued that we would miss it sorely if it were to go."

NATO officers meeting in Victoria on the weekend for long-range military planning sessions consistently emphasized it will be up to the Harper government to determine whether it wants to stay in Afghanistan. But behind the scenes, NATO nations are quietly making overtures to Canada not to withdraw its soldiers.

Several days ago, German officials added their voice to concerns about the possibility Canada would end its Afghanistan mission in 2009.

The Harper government has said Canada's troops won't continue combat

operations in Afghanistan beyond February 2009 unless there is a consensus in Parliament to extend the mission. Canada has about 2,500 military personnel in the volatile Kandahar region.

But NATO officials at the Victoria meeting privately acknowledge they were taken aback by recent comments by Defence Minister Peter MacKay about the combat portion of the Afghan mission ending in 2009. Earlier this month, MacKay said Canada's allies have been informed about the stance on Afghanistan and "the signal that has been sent already is that our current configuration will end in February 2009."

Aid and diplomatic work would continue, he noted in a television interview, but the way the mission is set up in Kandahar will come to an end.

A spokesman for MacKay said Sunday the defence minister has stated the same view as Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

"Parliament voted to extend the mission through February 2009 and the way ahead will be decided before that time," Dan Dugas noted in an e-mail.

But NATO officials said MacKay's statements indicate that Canada's combat mission is all but finished.

The Netherlands also is considering pulling out its troops from Afghanistan, although military officers at the Victoria meeting believe the Dutch will stay the course.

Canadian Gen. Ray Henault, the chairman of NATO's military committee, said the alliance is hopeful Canada will find a way to continue operating in Afghanistan.

Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said although it might be difficult to measure, there has been progress in the southern part of Afghanistan where much of the fighting has taken place.

"Canada's contribution has been critical to getting to where we have got over the last 15 months in the south," he added.

Stirrup said the public has to realize Afghanistan is an extremely long-term venture, not necessarily in the military sense, but in terms of the international commitment to that country. He acknowledged dealing with Afghanistan is a massive challenge but that nations involved should have "the strategic patience to see it through."

"If you've got to eat an elephant you shouldn't be surprised if after the first few mouthfuls you're not down to the bones," he said. "That's the situation we're in."

Stirrup said that the non-military response — improving infrastructure, the economy and governance — will be the factors that ultimately lead to success in Afghanistan.

Poland's chief of the general staff,

Gen. Franciszek Gągor, also praised the efforts of Canadian troops, noting the two countries have had a long relationship of working together in military operations, including in Africa, the Sinai, the Golan Heights and Cambodia.

Polish special forces are operating in southern Afghanistan and its regular forces are in the eastern portion of the country.

"The Polish military appreciates and has great respect for the Canadian military and appreciates what the Canadian military is doing in Afghanistan," said Gągor. "It's a very important, valued job."

"It is clear that NATO cannot fail in Afghanistan, that NATO has to succeed," he added. "It is not easy, it's not time-limited."

But Gągor emphasized it is up to each country to decide the contribution to NATO.

Canadian forces would be sorely missed: British commander; NATO officials voice hope mission will continue

"Of course, it would be good to have such NATO capabilities in Afghanistan that could more speedily carry out the mission set by the political decisions of NATO," he added.

Henault said the future of Canada's contribution to Afghanistan post-2009 was discussed at the alliance's conference in Victoria. But he also noted other nations are trying to juggle their military commitments in Afghanistan with ongoing missions in places like Lebanon and the Congo.

"There's quite a few pressures on nations out there," Henault explained. "So Canada wasn't the only focus of problems in that respect."

# Harper wants troops to stay to 'finish job'; Opposition vows to force Commons vote this fall on combat mission

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A3

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Getty Images / Australia's Prime Minister John Howard bids farewell to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the conclusion of a meeting of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders in Sydney, Australia, on Sunday. Harper is to address the Australian Parliament this week about Canada's role in Afghanistan. ;

**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

**BYLINE:** Mike De Souza, With files from Norma Greenaway, Ottawa Citizen

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 693

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain the Commons will approve a plan to allow the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the wartorn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said Sunday, after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders in Sydney, Australia.

"My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism Tuesday — the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America — in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leaves," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field and in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

"I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament and I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football."

But he stressed he would negotiate with the other parties about how to proceed on the issue.

The New Democrats are insisting on an immediate withdrawal of Canada's troops from their combat mission in southern Afghanistan's deadly Kandahar region. The Liberals and the Bloc Quebecois have called for the troops to end their combat mission at the end of Canada's commitment period in 2009.

Harper wants troops to stay to 'finish job'; Opposition vows to force Commons vote this fall on combat mission



But the governing Conservatives say the Liberals, in particular, have not been clear on what type of role the military should follow.

"We're obviously listening to what the opposition parties are saying, and trying to get some sense of what it means, because quite frankly, for a couple of those parties, there's quite a change in message from month to month, and even week to week," Harper said.

In Ottawa, there was no sign Sunday that the opposition parties are in a mood to buy into Harper's schedule regarding a possible vote on the future of the Afghan mission.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and NDP Leader Jack Layton predict Harper would be unable to avoid a Commons vote on the issue as early as this fall.

"We will force a vote," Dion said in

an interview from Vancouver, where

he was holding a series of political events.

Dion said his party is committed to using its first opposition day after Parliament resumes Oct. 16 to introduce a motion requiring the government to officially notify NATO of the withdrawal of the more than 2,000 Canadian troops from the Kandahar region by February 2009.

If Harper votes against the motion, Canadians will know he is not serious about ending the combat mission, Dion said. "The moment of truth will come with this vote," he added.

Dion said the Liberals have not ruled out Canada playing a future role in helping Afghanistan get on its feet, but they are adamant the combat role must end by February 2009.

Layton reiterated his party's call for an immediate end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan and said he expects the government to lay out its plans for the Afghan mission in next month's throne speech.

"If it doesn't, it would be an unacceptable speech," he said, indicating the NDP would vote against it.

"We believe Harper will have to face the music because there will be a vote," Layton said in an interview from Montreal where he was campaigning for the Sept. 17 byelections.

"Most Canadians, we believe, want to change the course of the mission and change it now. They don't want to — to use Mr. Harper's words — to 'get the job done.' This is a job done as defined by George Bush foreign policy, not by Canadians."

Harper has said Canada will continue to take a leadership role in Afghanistan.

"We'll continue to train the Afghan forces and we'll continue to listen to what the opposition parties say, and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus which would fill the government's objectives and I think also fulfil everybody's objective of seeing Canadian troops leave ... when we've actually finished the job we were committed to do."

Seventy Canadians have died in Afghanistan since Ottawa sent troops in 2002.

# Prime minister sets terms for vote on Afghan mission

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**SOURCETAG** 0709100378  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
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**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**WORD COUNT:** 194

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said yesterday there'll be no vote in Parliament anytime soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful -- where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of an Asia-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

'CUT AND RUN'

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said yesterday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection

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**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 6

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. file photo by Mark O'Neill, Sun Media Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie (with wife Dora) says it's time for Canada to ask NATO alliance for help in Afghanistan. 2. graphic

**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 561

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The link between the scourge of terrorism and the bloody war in Afghanistan is fading fast from public memory, making the military mission a tough sell with Canada and its allies six years after 9/11, experts say.

As Canada appears set to pull troops from combat in February 2009, most predict other nations won't be waiting in line with replacements to the volatile southern region. Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie said Canada's exit would leave a "hell of a vacuum," yet he doesn't expect other countries will pick up the slack without forceful persuasion.

He said it's time for Canada to publicly vent its frustration to convince other NATO countries to help shoulder the burden.

"We've got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy, and if you guys don't start showing up with adequate boots on the ground to try and win this thing, then quite frankly then after five years of sacrifice, we're getting pretty upset with the alliance," he said.

MacKenzie urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other federal party leaders to deliver a blunt and robust message on the world stage: That a failure to answer the call for support could signal that NATO is doomed.

Within weeks, the Dutch government is expected to say if it will extend its mission — a decision that could sway other countries like Canada considering whether to deploy, maintain or withdraw troops.

Phil Lagasse, a professor in the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said a break from heavy combat for Canada — even a rotation into Afghanistan's less-turbulent north — would bring political peace at home while giving the army a chance to train and grow.

"Canada can legitimately make the claim that it's done quite a bit in combat for a number of years and if NATO is serious about this operation then some of the other players should be playing their part," he said.

As soldier and civilian death tolls mount, Lagasse said federal leaders around the world find the mission a tough public sell as the original justification becomes hazy.

"The initial effort to sell the mission as an anti-terror mission made sense because it came right after the 9/11

attacks. But as we gravitated more towards this idea of nation-building and creating a new society in Afghanistan, you've blurred the lines as to why you're there," he said. "And as much as we like to think we're doing good, ultimately that's not why we're there."

Steve Staples, director of the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, said while plenty of nations want to help bolster world security, few are eager to rush into combat. He notes there is "great sensitivity" in European countries like Germany and France around the specific operations their soldiers are tasked for in Afghanistan.

The collective recoil from combat, coupled with setbacks in Taliban stronghold territories, underscores the need to put greater emphasis on a diplomatic process for long-term security. Most successes in counter-terrorism have been the result of police actions, not military ones, he said.

"They will have to seriously shift their strategy in Afghanistan to avoid losing the whole thing," he said.

Mario Canseco, director of Global Studies for Angus Reid Strategies, said the outpouring of emotion and support for the U.S. after 9/11 has subsided. Most now view the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as failures because they lack clear objectives and boast few success stories.

"Opium cultivation is up, the Taliban is still in charge in many areas ... and the new government has been deemed as weak," he said. "And on the six-year anniversary of Sept. 11, Osama bin Laden is nowhere to be found." KEYWORDS=CANADA

# PM stacks the deck Says there won't be any vote to extend Afghan mission unless he's sure to win it

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**SOURCETAG** 0709100284  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
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**PAGE:** 9  
**BYLINE:** BRUCE CHEADLE, CP  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY  
**WORD COUNT:** 290

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said yesterday there won't be a vote in Parliament anytime soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job."

"I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful -- where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces," Harper told reporters.

## SOILDERS INJURED

On the battlefield yesterday, two Canadian soldiers were slightly injured when the Leopard 1 tank they were walking alongside set off a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan, Capt. Josee Bilodeau said.

"Two of them were injured by some shrapnel," Bilodeau said. They were treated in the hospital at the Kandahar base. "They're out of the hospital. They're good to go. They will be at work tomorrow," she said.

Bilodeau said the Leopard 1 tank was pushing a roller to clear the road of explosive devices.

In June, Harper announced the military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

## AGAINST EXTENSION

With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run."

Not so, Harper said yesterday. "I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament."

Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave -- I hope would leave -- when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do." **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection

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**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 8

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. file photo by Mark O'Neill, Sun Media Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie (with wife Dora) says it's time for Canada to ask NATO alliance for help in Afghanistan. 2. graphics

**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 563

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The link between the scourge of terrorism and the bloody war in Afghanistan is fading fast from public memory, making the military mission a tough sell with Canada and its allies six years after 9/11, experts say.

As Canada appears set to pull troops from combat in February 2009, most predict other nations won't be waiting in line with replacements to the volatile southern region. Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie said Canada's exit would leave a "hell of a vacuum," yet he doesn't expect other countries will pick up the slack without forceful persuasion.

He said it's time for Canada to publicly vent its frustration to convince other NATO countries to help shoulder the burden.

"We've got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy, and if you guys don't start showing up with adequate boots on the ground to try and win this thing, then quite frankly then after five years of sacrifice, we're getting pretty upset with the alliance," he said.

MacKenzie urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other federal party leaders to deliver a blunt and robust message on the world stage: That a failure to answer the call for support could signal that NATO is doomed.

Within weeks, the Dutch government is expected to say if it will extend its mission — a decision that could sway other countries like Canada considering whether to deploy, maintain or withdraw troops.

Phil Lagasse, a professor in the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said a break from heavy combat for Canada — even a rotation into Afghanistan's less-turbulent north — would bring political peace at home while giving the army a chance to train and grow.

"Canada can legitimately make the claim that it's done quite a bit in combat for a number of years and if NATO is serious about this operation then some of the other players should be playing their part," he said.

As soldier and civilian death tolls mount, Lagasse said federal leaders around the world find the mission a tough public sell as the original justification becomes hazy.

"The initial effort to sell the mission as an anti-terror mission made sense because it came right after the 9/11

attacks. But as we gravitated more towards this idea of nation-building and creating a new society in Afghanistan, you've blurred the lines as to why you're there," he said. "And as much as we like to think we're doing good, ultimately that's not why we're there."

Steve Staples, director of the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, said while plenty of nations want to help bolster world security, few are eager to rush into combat. He notes there is "great sensitivity" in European countries like Germany and France around the specific operations their soldiers are tasked for in Afghanistan.

The collective recoil from combat, coupled with setbacks in Taliban stronghold territories, underscores the need to put greater emphasis on a diplomatic process for long-term security. Most successes in counter-terrorism have been the result of police actions, not military ones, he said.

"They will have to seriously shift their strategy in Afghanistan to avoid losing the whole thing," he said.

Mario Canseco, director of Global Studies for Angus Reid Strategies, said the outpouring of emotion and support for the U.S. after 9/11 has subsided. Most now view the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as failures because they lack clear objectives and boast few success stories.

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NATO alliance for help in Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=CANADA

# Afghan mission a tough sell Exit will leave 'a hell of a vacuum'

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**SOURCETAG** 0709100212  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** graphic  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**WORD COUNT:** 526

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## 'BLURRED THE LINES'

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# Harper cites APEC progress on climate The PM also sets what may be called winning terms for a vote on the mission in Afghanistan.

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**SOURCETAG** 0709100439  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
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**PAGE:** A4

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Tom Hanson, CP PRIME MINISTER RESPONDS: Prime Minister Stephen Harper answers reporters questions at a news conference overlooking Sydney Harbour after the APEC summit in Sydney, Australia, yesterday. He defended progress on global warming and climate change.

**BYLINE:** BRUCE CHEADLE, CP  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 321

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper said yesterday a divided world on the issue of climate change is starting to come together with major polluting countries signing on to a goal set by Asia–Pacific leaders to slow and reverse greenhouse emissions.

In a briefing at the end of the APEC summit, Harper also set what might be called winning conditions on a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan, saying there'll be no vote unless there is enough support for his wish to "finish the job."

And Harper took issue with Elections Canada, which he said was subverting the will of Parliament by permitting Muslim women to wear veils and burkas while voting. He said Parliament will do something about it if the elections agency doesn't change course.

With the Sydney summit over, Harper is travelling to Canberra where he will address the Australian parliament tomorrow.

The Asia–Pacific Economic Co–operation forum, which includes the world's fastest–growing economies, stayed true to its roots at its weekend summit. Its closing statement yesterday called for the resumption of international trade talks this fall at the World Trade Organization.

In an uncharacteristic focus on global warming, APEC leaders agreed Saturday to a so–called "aspirational goal" of slowing, stopping and eventually reversing greenhouse gas emissions.

Without specific targets or timelines, however, the Sydney Declaration was panned by environmentalists as a political stunt.

Both Harper and Australian Prime Minister John Howard stressed the real significance of the APEC statement is who signed on: China, Russia and the United States, the world's biggest emitters, who found common ground.

"You effectively now have a framework declaration on which all large emitters have committed," Harper said. "That still leaves a long way to go. We're not kidding anybody."

But Harper maintained even six months ago, it was "unthinkable" the world's biggest emitters would agree to such principles.

Or, as Howard put it at the closing APEC news conference: "Take that, bank it, and then move on to something further in the future. That is what I think this meeting achieved."

On Canada's mission in Afghanistan, Harper said: "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful." **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Afghan mission called tough sell

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**SOURCETAG** 0709100436  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of LEWIS MACKENZIE "Got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy."  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 493

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The link between the scourge of terrorism and the bloody war in Afghanistan is fading fast from public memory, making the military mission a tough sell with Canada and its allies six years after 9/11, experts say.

As Canada appears set to pull troops from combat in February 2009, most predict other nations won't be waiting in line with replacements to the volatile southern region.

Retired major-general Lewis MacKenzie said Canada's exit would leave a "hell of a vacuum," yet he doesn't expect other countries will pick up the slack without forceful persuasion.

He said it's time for Canada to publicly vent its frustration to convince other NATO countries to help shoulder the burden.

"We've got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy, and if you guys don't start showing up with adequate boots on the ground to try and win this thing, then quite frankly then after five years of sacrifice, we're getting pretty upset with the alliance," he said.

MacKenzie urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other federal party leaders to deliver a blunt and robust message on the world stage: That a failure to answer the call for support could signal that NATO is doomed.

Within weeks, the Dutch government is expected to say if it will extend its current mission — a decision that could sway other countries like Canada considering whether to deploy, maintain or withdraw troops.

Phil Lagasse, a professor at the University of Ottawa, said a break from heavy combat for Canada — even a rotation into Afghanistan's less-turbulent north — would bring political peace at home while giving the army a chance to grow.

"Canada can legitimately make the claim that it's done quite a bit in combat for a number of years and if NATO is serious about this operation then some of the other players should be playing their part," he said.

As soldier and civilian death tolls mount, Lagasse said federal leaders around the world find the mission a tough public sell as the original justification for the war becomes hazy. "The initial effort to sell the mission as an anti-terror mission made sense because it came right after the 9/11 attacks."

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## SUNDAY SUMMARY

– Afghan police trying to keep a restless crowd from entering a full stadium fired guns in the air yesterday, while President Hamid Karzai quickly finished a speech inside, a military official said. There were no immediate reports of injuries, and a government official said Karzai was not harmed. The sound of gunfire rang out as Karzai abruptly ended his speech, sending a murmur through the crowd inside and prompting some in the audience to start to flee. – A Leopard 1 tank pushing a roller to clear a path set off a roadside bomb that injured two Canadian soldiers walking alongside yesterday, the second day of a new offensive to regain control of a district where insurgents have been active. Capt. Josee Bilodeau, a spokesperson for the Canadian Forces at Kandahar Airfield, said the soldiers were on foot on each side of the tank when the explosion happened. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Canucks clear path to outpost Treacherous winding road littered with bombs

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**SOURCETAG:** 0709100552

**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 38

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Dene Moore, CP Lt-Col. Alain Gauthier, right, and Capt. Bryan Ouellet, third from right, brief the troops during Operation Keeping Goodwill in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Afghanistan, yesterday.

**BYLINE:** DENE MOORE, CANADIAN PRESS

**DATELINE:** GHUNDY GHAR, Afghanistan

**WORD COUNT:** 463

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Canadian Press reporter Dene Moore was on the latest mission with Canadian troops. Here is her report from the scene. She was in a vehicle that hit a roadside bomb.

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The roads to Canada's forward operating base at Ghundy Ghar are winding dirt paths through the spiritual heartland of the Taliban.

A dusty outpost deep in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Ghundy Ghar is a vital base for Canadian troops.

It is also one that they had not been able to reach by road since retaking the base from insurgents three weeks ago – even though it is just about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city.

"Here is Taliban country," said Lt.-Col. Alain Gauthier, commander of the Quebec-based Van Doos' 3rd Battalion battle group.

"The biggest challenge is IEDs," he said, referring to improvised explosive devices – commonly known as roadside bombs. "I think our biggest challenge was to really clear the road so we can allow the free movement of the vehicles."

Two companies from Gauthier's battle group eventually cleared the road and the Canadians drove through to the base in their latest offensive.

Until a few weeks ago, Ghundy Ghar was in the hands of insurgents, wrested from Afghan national security forces left on their own during the rotation of Canadian troops this summer.

A military operation that took back control last month wasn't so much a battle as an eviction, but it cost the lives of two Canadian soldiers.

While the rocks and dust and few sparse buildings have been in Canadian hands since then, those winding dirt roads have been a different story.

Convoys trying to resupply Ghundy Ghar have come under fierce attack from insurgents. Only helicopters had been able to reach the base with supplies. The base itself has been under heavy pressure from insurgents, with regular attacks on and off.

Operation Khair Khowhai, or Keeping Goodwill, got underway in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

The goal was to increase the presence of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in the area and secure two roads joining Ghundy Ghar with Highway 1, the main thoroughfare out of Kandahar city and through the province. Checkpoints will be put in for Afghan national security forces.

"We've been heliporting all the resupply down here and we want to use the road," said Capt. Bryan Ouellet.

"Because they're not paved roads they're always a threat for IEDs."

The sun has barely broken over the horizon when the first shots were fired Saturday. On the road to the west, Company C started off with a firefight as they head south toward Ghundy Ghar.

To the east, Company B found two IEDs and had to dismount from the security of their armoured vehicles and cover much of the road on foot, searching for further explosives.

Still, the operation went swiftly and successfully.

But as a testament to the challenge Canadians face in this fight, the very next morning two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard 1 tank, which pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs, rolled over an improvised explosive device on the road cleared the day before.

Later yesterday, another company hit an IED on the other road targeted by Operation Khair Khowhai. There were no injuries.

"That was put there in the past 24 hours," said Gauthier.

On average, one vehicle a week is hit with a roadside bomb. Thirty eight Canadian soldiers have died in IED blasts, along with thousands of Afghans.

"Those roads ... have been IED'd or blocked for several months now, so it's going to within a few days the population will be able to move freely to go wherever they want to go," said Gauthier.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Karzai speech was a blast Afghan police fire warning shots during president's remarks

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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
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**PAGE:** 34  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**WORD COUNT:** 230

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Sensing unrest outside a packed stadium, Afghanistan's president abruptly cut short a speech yesterday as police fired shots into the air in an attempt to restrain a crowd trying to enter, officials said.

Shortly after being rushed off the podium, President Hamid Karzai said security in Afghanistan was deteriorating and renewed a call for negotiations with Taliban militants. The sound of gunfire rang out as Karzai abruptly ended his speech at Kabul's central sports stadium, sending a murmur through the crowd inside and prompting some in the audience to start to flee.

Officials told the crowd to remain calm, and said someone had thrown stones against a metal door.

But Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, a Defence Ministry spokesman, said police fired into the air to prevent a restless crowd outside the stadium from entering. Azimi said the 15,000-person stadium was already full. No injuries were reported.

Karzai had been speaking at a memorial ceremony for anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massood, who was killed in an al-Qaida suicide bombing two days before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States.

In his speech, Karzai told the stadium crowd that countries around the world were trying to help Afghanistan govern itself.

"We should use this to complete our desire. What is that desire? Afghanistan standing on its own feet, to feed itself and to secure itself," he said, as shouts and skirmishes could be heard in the background.

The president then abruptly closed, saying, "Dear sisters and brothers, respect for all of you. We're ending the session, goodbye." **KEYWORDS=WORLD**



# Terror link tough to sell Afghanistan losing 9/11 connection

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**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 12

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. file photo by Mark O'Neill, Sun Media Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie (with wife Dora) says it's time for Canada to ask NATO alliance for help in Afghanistan. 2. graphic

**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 561

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The link between the scourge of terrorism and the bloody war in Afghanistan is fading fast from public memory, making the military mission a tough sell with Canada and its allies six years after 9/11, experts say.

As Canada appears set to pull troops from combat in February 2009, most predict other nations won't be waiting in line with replacements to the volatile southern region. Retired Maj.-Gen. Lewis MacKenzie said Canada's exit would leave a "hell of a vacuum," yet he doesn't expect other countries will pick up the slack without forceful persuasion.

He said it's time for Canada to publicly vent its frustration to convince other NATO countries to help shoulder the burden.

"We've got to stop being nice and start saying this alliance is in serious jeopardy, and if you guys don't start showing up with adequate boots on the ground to try and win this thing, then quite frankly then after five years of sacrifice, we're getting pretty upset with the alliance," he said.

MacKenzie urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other federal party leaders to deliver a blunt and robust message on the world stage: That a failure to answer the call for support could signal that NATO is doomed.

Within weeks, the Dutch government is expected to say if it will extend its mission — a decision that could sway other countries like Canada considering whether to deploy, maintain or withdraw troops.

Phil Lagasse, a professor in the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, said a break from heavy combat for Canada — even a rotation into Afghanistan's less-turbulent north — would bring political peace at home while giving the army a chance to train and grow.

"Canada can legitimately make the claim that it's done quite a bit in combat for a number of years and if NATO is serious about this operation then some of the other players should be playing their part," he said.

As soldier and civilian death tolls mount, Lagasse said federal leaders around the world find the mission a tough public sell as the original justification becomes hazy.

"The initial effort to sell the mission as an anti-terror mission made sense because it came right after the 9/11

attacks. But as we gravitated more towards this idea of nation-building and creating a new society in Afghanistan, you've blurred the lines as to why you're there," he said. "And as much as we like to think we're doing good, ultimately that's not why we're there."

Steve Staples, director of the Rideau Institute on International Affairs, said while plenty of nations want to help bolster world security, few are eager to rush into combat. He notes there is "great sensitivity" in European countries like Germany and France around the specific operations their soldiers are tasked for in Afghanistan.

The collective recoil from combat, coupled with setbacks in Taliban stronghold territories, underscores the need to put greater emphasis on a diplomatic process for long-term security. Most successes in counter-terrorism have been the result of police actions, not military ones, he said.

"They will have to seriously shift their strategy in Afghanistan to avoid losing the whole thing," he said.

Mario Canseco, director of Global Studies for Angus Reid Strategies, said the outpouring of emotion and support for the U.S. after 9/11 has subsided. Most now view the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as failures because they lack clear objectives and boast few success stories.

"Opium cultivation is up, the Taliban is still in charge in many areas ... and the new government has been deemed as weak," he said. "And on the six-year anniversary of Sept. 11, Osama bin Laden is nowhere to be found." KEYWORDS=CANADA

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Canadians sweep through volatile region Forces meet with little resistance as they retake farmland in Zhari district

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**IDN:** 072530158  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**PAGE:** A11 (MAP)  
**BYLINE:** GRAEME SMITH  
**SECTION:** International News  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN  
**WORDS:** 640  
**WORD COUNT:** 587

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GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN The flash of tracer bullets and the thudding of explosives sent hundreds of villagers fleeing along darkened roads this weekend, as Canada mustered nearly all its fighting troops to chase insurgents away from a stubbornly volatile district.

About 700 Canadian soldiers, with at least 100 Afghan troops and police, swept through Zhari district over the past two days, searching homes and clearing mines from dirt tracks.

They suffered no serious casualties and met only scattered resistance from the Taliban, who had been mounting daily attacks on police outposts and Canadian bases in recent weeks.

The insurgency had grown so fierce in Zhari district, in fact, that Canadian snipers and a reconnaissance squadron found themselves isolated on a steep hill known as Ghundy Ghar, about 40 kilometres west of the city, without a reliable way of getting supplies except by helicopter.

"The Taliban were very strong, attacking us every day," said Colonel Gulam Rasool Aka, the district police chief.

Reopening the roads to Ghundy Ghar was one of the mission's objectives, a military spokeswoman said, adding that the broader aim was to re-establish the presence of Afghan police and soldiers.

The latest operation had a new name – Operation Khar Khowhai, or Keeping Goodwill – but the pattern was sickeningly familiar for the people in the district. Canadian troops have seized control of their farmland several times in the past year, only to hand over responsibility to Afghan forces that can't keep the peace.

Haji Rahmatullah, 47, has now fled his home for the third time in the past year. Over the past 12 months, he says, he spent only three months living on his two-hectare plot of wheat and grapes in Pashmul, a cluster of villages about 15 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city.

The rest of the time, he lived like a refugee.

As dusk fell Saturday night, Mr. Rahmatullah heard the deep thud of artillery or bombings just west of his home, and decided once again to run away.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Canadians sweep through volatile region Forces meet with little resistance as they

"I saw the fighting," he said. "I saw the bullets in the night and dust from bombs. It was impossible to stay." The farmer joined a procession of local people trying to escape.

A few had vehicles, he said, but many trekked for four hours to reach the city, carrying everything they could save from looters.

Mr. Rahmatullah said he hasn't received any of the aid given to people displaced by fighting, and does not expect to get any help during this latest round of conflict because he belongs to the Kakar tribe, a group not favoured by the government. His farm yielded only about 10 per cent of its usual output because of the fighting over the past year, he said, and parts of his house were destroyed.

One of his cousins died after a stray bullet hit him in the abdomen, and he lost three more relatives in an air strike last year.

Despite his hardships, Mr. Rahmatullah didn't ask for food or money when questioned about what he wants from the Canadians.

"They need to get rid of the Taliban, 100 per cent," said the leathery farmer, sipping tea in a Kandahar guesthouse. "Coming, going, coming, going, it's not good for us." During a briefing at Kandahar Air Field, reporters asked a commander why the Canadians have taken and retaken the same terrain since arriving in Kandahar 18 months ago.

"You know what? That's modern warfare," said Major Eric LaForest, the Canadian tactical operations director. "There's no straight line." The commander continued: "We'll go back out there as often as the Afghan population wants us to go back there, and as long as the conditions are not right for them to be free. And we'll go there as long as the Canadian government allows us to stay here."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

# TERRORISM Prosecuting Khadr at home would be 'quite difficult,' experts say

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**IDN:** 072530101

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**PAGE:** A9

**BYLINE:** COLIN FREEZE

**SECTION:** National News

**EDITION:** National

**DATELINE:**

**WORDS:** 736

**WORD COUNT:** 650

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COLIN FREEZE If Omar Khadr were to be freed from Guantanamo Bay to face Canadian justice, Crown prosecutors would struggle to make any sort of case against him stick, experts say.

"Even if there was a charge that could be laid, the trial would be quite difficult for us to conduct," said Kent Roach, a University of Toronto law professor. In interviews, Prof. Roach and other Canadian legal experts agreed that any attempted prosecution here would be deeply problematic.

This amounts to a reality check. Canadian lawyers are urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to wrest Mr. Khadr, a 20-year-old Canadian citizen, from the U.S. legal limbo where he has been held for five years on charges that he is involved in terrorism and murdered an American soldier in combat.

The Canadian Bar Association last month urged Mr. Harper to bring the former teenaged combatant out of Guantanamo to "face due process under Canadian law" without spelling out what that would mean, exactly.

Advocates for the Canadian citizen, including his U.S. military lawyer, are to speak further to his case from an Ontario Bar Association facility in Toronto on Sept. 19.

The notion of any Canadian prosecution of Mr. Khadr remains hypothetical, as the Pentagon still seems intent on prosecuting Mr. Khadr for actions that took place when he was a 15-year-old militant in Afghanistan.

The Harper government has been reluctant speak out on behalf of the second-youngest member of the Khadr family, who are notorious in Canada for their admitted links to al-Qaeda figures.

Yet the long-running Canadian investigations into the Khadr have never resulted in Criminal Code charges against any family member.

The Mounties are apparently mulling the idea of laying charges of supporting terrorism against Omar Khadr, should they ever get custody of him, according to legal documents filed in the U.S. extradition case against his brother Abdullah.

But it's unclear what evidence against him could be produced in Canadian courts and what judges here would accept as untainted.

(Two years ago, a Federal Court of Canada judge ruled Guantanamo Bay prison conditions "do not meet

Charter standards" as he ordered Canada's spies to stop travelling to Cuba to question Mr. Khadr.) Compared with U.S. military commissions, Canadian judges would be much more accepting of arguments that Mr. Khadr was a child soldier acting in self-defence during wartime.

"You're talking about what happened in a hellish war situation in Afghanistan," said Don Stuart, a legal scholar at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. And any case would also "present many difficulties in terms of presenting evidence at trial," said Wesley Wark, a University of Toronto security specialist.

For a start, the Americans would have to agree to hand over their evidence, and courts would have to be satisfied neither the Canadian nor U.S. government was claiming too much secrecy. Also, while Mr.

Khadr made a series of seemingly incriminating statements to U.S.

soldiers after his capture, his lawyers say these would be inadmissible as he was physically abused and denied medical treatment.

The Khadr parents, Egyptian-Canadians, emigrated from Toronto to Afghanistan in the 1980s to join Arab fundamentalists fighting the Soviets. Omar Khadr was raised in that country as the second-youngest of four brothers, and lived for a time in an al-Qaeda compound with his family.

Aged 15 when captured, he survived U.S. aerial bombings and three bullet wounds, as the rest of his small faction was wiped out during a 2002 battle. He is alleged to have thrown a grenade that killed a soldier.

During most of the past five years, Mr. Khadr has faced charges of murder, attempted murder, conspiracy, material support for terrorism and espionage, although the case was thrown out earlier this summer.

It's anticipated that, within the next two weeks, an appeal body will say whether there remains any U.S. military case against him.

Regardless of the outcome, there are other levels of appeal and U.S. officials have asserted they could hold Mr. Khadr indefinitely.

Dennis Edney, a Canadian lawyer who has long acted for Mr. Khadr, said that U.S. allegations are more akin to war crimes charges than actual terrorism charges. He said Canada could try to pursue a case under its Crimes Against Humanity Act, but didn't expect it would go very far.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: United States; Canada; Guantanamo Bay

SUBJECT TERM:terrorism; suspects; human rights; prisoners

PERSONAL NAME: Omar Khadr

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Harper to delay troop vote until assured of result

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**PUBLICATION:** GLOBE AND MAIL  
**IDN:** 072530064  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**PAGE:** A6 (ILLUS)  
**BYLINE:** GLORIA GALLOWAY  
**SECTION:** National News  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
**WORDS:** 594  
**WORD COUNT:** 571

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GLORIA GALLOWAY With a report from Ian Freeman in Ottawa SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he will delay a vote on extending the Afghanistan mission until he is sure that Parliament will agree to keep Canadian troops in the war-torn country past February, 2009.

The three opposition parties have all insisted that the military operation must end with the current mandate. And the government has said Parliament must approve any extension of the deployment.

But Mr. Harper made it clear yesterday that he is not prepared to allow politicians an early opportunity to confirm a pullout.

"My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is an increased focus on training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems," he said at a late afternoon press conference in this Australian city where he is attending the forum for Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation.

"But I don't see a necessity of rushing into a vote, unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful, where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our armed forces," Mr. Harper said.

A government spokesman said the Prime Minister, through his statements yesterday, was attempting to get Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion to explain what sort of mission he would be willing to support in Afghanistan after February, 2009.

Mr. Dion, reached by telephone in Vancouver, accused Mr. Harper of "flip-flopping" on his true intentions for Canada's troops in Afghanistan, which Mr. Dion called "inexcusable" because the lives of Canadian soldiers are at stake.

"He is saying one thing and the day after saying another thing," Mr. Dion said in an interview.

He contrasted Mr. Harper's statement in June – that he would accept no artificial deadline on withdrawal of Canadian troops – with last week's statement from Defence Minister Peter MacKay, which indicated that Canada's NATO partners had already been informed of the February, 2009, departure from Kandahar.

Mr. Dion reiterated his party's intention of tabling a motion in the House of Commons that will call upon the

government to notify NATO and the Afghan government of Canada's intention to end the combat mission in February of 2009.

Mr. Harper said yesterday that when Canadian troops have been sent to dangerous places like Afghanistan they need the support of their Parliament. "I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament.

"And I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football." He accused the opposition parties of changing their position on Afghanistan "from month to month, and even week to week." "We'll continue to train the Afghan forces and we'll continue to listen to what the opposition parties say, and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus which would fulfill the government's objectives and I think also fulfill everybody's objective of seeing Canadian troops leave." However, they should leave only when they have finished the job they were sent there to do, he added.

Mr. Dion yesterday repeated his party's position that after three years in the volatile southern region of Afghanistan, Canada's combat role should end and a replacement needs to be found from the other 35 nations participating in the NATO-led mission.

But he said he would support a mission for Canadian troops in which they continue to provide training to the Afghan forces.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; government; political; foreign policy

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces



# Commons won't vote on mission yet: Harper; 'No need to rush'. Canadians reclaim volatile Afghan district

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A18  
**KEYWORDS:** RIOTS; VIOLENCE; YOUTH; ETHNIC GROUPS; FRANCE  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**BYLINE:** MIKE DE SOUZA  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 408

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said yesterday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders.

"My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism tomorrow – the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States – in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons. "It's irresponsible that it is a political football."

In Kandahar, Canadian Forces emerged virtually unscathed from a major combat operation last weekend that reclaimed the western part of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province, military officials said.

But the military conceded that the operation, which mobilized most of Canada's fighting forces, has merely re-established a presence in territory that the Canadians occupied last year.

Two Canadian soldiers were lightly injured when a Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were walking close to the tank and were hurt by the shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

Roughly 600 Canadian soldiers – the bulk of Canada's battle group – as well as 100 Afghan soldiers and police were deployed in support of Operation Khar Khowhai: Keeping Goodwill.

In Kabul, Afghan President Hamid Karzai cut short an event yesterday to mark the 2001 murder by Al-Qa'ida operatives of resistance hero Ahmad Shah Massoud after police opened fire to control a commotion outside the venue.

Karzai, who has survived two assassination attempts, abruptly wrapped up an address on the advice of his security staff as the commotion grew, with several hundred men rattling a large gate and throwing stones.

More than 40 insurgents and an international soldier were killed in Taliban-led violence in volatile southern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

The soldier from the U.S.-led coalition force was struck by an improvised bomb in Helmand province, becoming the third foreign soldier to die in anti-Taliban operations last weekend. His name and nationality were not revealed, Agence France-Press reported.

# Canadians approve U.S. goals: poll; Identify with southern neighbours more than other nations

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**PUBLICATION:** Montreal Gazette  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A11  
**KEYWORDS:** OPINION POLLS; STATISTICS  
**DATELINE:** TORONTO  
**BYLINE:** RANDY BOSWELL  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 453

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Six years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and despite sharp differences between Canada and the U.S. over the resulting war in Iraq, a new survey shows that Canadians still identify more with the "values and goals" of their U.S. neighbour than other countries.

The poll of 1,500 Canadians, conducted in late August for the Montreal-based policy research organization Association for Canadian Studies, asked respondents to consider how closely the values and goals of several countries matched Canada's as we "seek out partners for collaboration on international issues."

Eight-five per cent of those surveyed said the U.S. had "very similar" or "somewhat similar" aims as Canada on the global stage.

Britain (80 per cent) and Australia and France (both 72 per cent) also registered high levels of affinity with Canadian values, while attitudes toward NAFTA partner Mexico (52 per cent), Israel (37 per cent) and Lebanon (17 per cent) illustrated the wide gulf between the interests of Canada and some of the world's other nations.

"Despite the differences we have with the United States over some political issues, we still see the U.S. as our closest ally and as our best opportunity for collaboration internationally," said ACS executive director Jack Jedwab. "We feel that our vision of the world is more compatible with the U.S. than any other country."

The poll, conducted between Aug. 22 and 28 by Léger Marketing, is the first in a series of four studies prepared by the ACS and released to CanWest News Service to mark the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist strikes on New York and Washington.

The survey is considered accurate to within 3.1 per centage points, 19 times out of 20.

Canada's pledge at the time of the 9/11 attacks to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the U.S. has been tested often in the years since amid tensions over military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, border security issues and strained relations between ethnic and religious communities within each country.

But a poll-topping 46 per cent of Canadians said this country's values and goals were "very similar" – the strongest category of perceived closeness – to those held by Americans, compared with 40 per cent for Britain, 29 per cent for Australia and 22 per cent for France.

Jedwab notes that because Canada's relationship with the U.S. dominates political discourse in this country, differences in foreign policy, social policy and other areas tend to be magnified.

But when it comes to seeing the "big picture" of Canada's position in the world, he says, "when the dust settles we go back to seeing the U.S. as our greatest ally and best potential collaborator on the international stage."

That fellow-feeling is only reinforced, he adds, by the two countries' geographical proximity, the day-to-day interaction of cross-border trade and travel, our shared heritage as nations of immigrants and our shared tastes in popular culture.

# Islamic extremism, Taliban, are a real threat

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**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Opinion  
**PAGE:** A10  
**BYLINE:** Gary Gerofsky, Dundas  
**SOURCE:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 167

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Re: 'Hey, that's no way to say goodbye' (Letters, Sept. 4)

The conflict in Afghanistan is not merely the result of "a political agenda," as the writer asserts.

It is a war against a powerful Taliban terror organization that is much more than just a "threat to their own people" which the writer suggests could be "dealt with locally."

If they could have been dealt with locally in the past, they would have been.

One could debate whether this war is achieving its objectives; the war in Iraq is certainly not. However, one must admit that the strong growth of Islamic extremism is becoming a real threat to many countries and is an ideology that has no place in its books for other people, other countries and other beliefs.

Unlike the writer, I loathe and am repulsed by the Taliban more than I am put off by the jingoistic tendencies and national pride that the U.S. displays during this necessary war on terrorism.

The fact that the war on terrorism is a global struggle involving Canada is just a fact of life, and not something to cause us to turn our backs on the troops toiling on the front lines.

# 'He will be missed beyond words'

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100025  
**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Local  
**PAGE:** A7  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Kaz Novak, the Hamilton Spectator / Above, a three-round rifle salute followed the Last Post. ; Photo: Left, the coffin is loaded into a hearse. ;  
**BYLINE:** Carmela Fragomeni  
**SOURCE:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 497

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Major Raymond Ruckpaul, the second Hamilton soldier to die in Afghanistan, has left a legacy of contributions to making the world a better place.

Ruckpaul's funeral on Saturday was bittersweet as family, friends and military comrades recalled his humour, compassion, commitment and love of family and country.

"Ray never refused a request for assistance," said friend Lieutenant Colonel C.D. Hobbs in a letter from Heidelberg, Germany, where Ruckpaul and his family were based.

Cousin Harold Ruckpaul, in recalling their childhood together on the Mountain, said as a youngster and aspiring soldier, Ruckpaul went out of his way to help other kids getting picked on. Ruckpaul not only defended them, but also befriended them, his cousin said.

In kids' hockey, Ruckpaul rarely scored because he felt his job as a defenceman was to help set up goals. He understood teamwork. "He really was my hero when I was growing up. He loved his family. He loved his friends. He absolutely loved his country."

His Afghanistan commander, Brigadier-General Jim Ferron, called Ruckpaul a fine officer with particular compassion for the children in war-torn Afghanistan and, before that, in Croatia on two previous tours of duty where he met his wife Natasha.

On Saturday, Natasha and their two young children, Ben and Mila, and his parents, Rudy and Joan Ruckpaul of Hamilton, tearfully followed his flag-draped casket past a military honour guard into the Church of the Ascension where the first piece of music played was the Canadian national anthem.

The 42-year-old Ruckpaul was found shot in his barracks in Kabul on Aug. 29 and died shortly after. No information surrounding his death has been released.

Ferron, with Ruckpaul when he died, called him a focused and dedicated leader. When Ruckpaul commanded his own troops, there was "no doubt they were No. 1 in his mind."

His contribution to training in Afghanistan was immeasurable and Ruckpaul served both Hamilton and his country well, he said.

Sister Linda's tribute, read by Rev. Kristine Swire, said one cannot find a better person than her brother, who was a loving father and husband who always put his family first.

"You will never meet a more positive and intelligent human being. He will be missed beyond words."

Swire said Ruckpaul left a wonderful legacy of love and commitment to making a better world.

The service combined traditional military honours with family wishes. There was no military parade, but an honour guard of Royal Canadian Dragoons, Ruckpaul's regiment, lined both sides of the church entrance and gave a piercing rifle salute as onlookers silently watched from across the street.

Military personnel and army veterans lined the sidewalk and snapped to attention with one final stoic salute to Ruckpaul as the hearse carrying his body drove slowly away to the sounds of a piper playing *The Lament*.

Ruckpaul began his military career as a reservist with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. He joined the regular army in 1985 and attended McMaster University under the army's officer training program. His postings included Lahr, Germany, and Oromocto, N.B. In Heidelberg, he served on the NATO allied land component command before being deployed to Afghanistan for a second time last July.

His ashes will be scattered at a favourite spot in Petawawa.

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905-526-3392

# No vote until I can win: PM; Harper wants Canadian troops to stay in Afghanistan until they 'finish the job'

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100007  
**PUBLICATION:** The Hamilton Spectator  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Canada/World  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Tom Hanson, the Canadian Press /;  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**SOURCE:** Hamilton Spectator wire services  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 215

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper still plans a vote in Parliament on extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

But not until he's sure of winning.

Harper said yesterday that the vote won't take place until he can find enough support to "finish the job."

He said that entails getting Afghan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

On the weekend, Canadian soldiers succeeded in retaking ground reclaimed by the Taliban after it was turned over to Afghan forces last year.

The only casualties in the three-day operation were two soldiers who suffered minor wounds when struck by shrapnel from a roadside bomb, said Captain Josee Bilodeau.

The operation, which also involved the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, was aimed at reasserting control over an area won almost a year ago after Canadian forces fought some of their toughest battles since the Korean War.

The area was later turned over to the poorly equipped Afghan National Police. In recent months, the Taliban filtered back and renewed their activities.

Harper announced in June that Canada's current NATO-led military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

The Bloc Qu b cois, NDP and Liberals are all currently lined up against any extension. But Conservative sources say they hope to exploit division within Liberal ranks.

Harper had previously indicated a willingness to alter the existing military mandate, but not to pull the troops out of Afghanistan altogether.



# Bomb rattles Canadian convoy

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**PUBLICATION:** WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**PAGE:** A14

**SECTION:** World Wire

**WORD COUNT:** 154

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CP Wire KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Several Canadian soldiers and a reporter with The Canadian Press are shaken up, but all right, after their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

It happened during the second day of Operation Keeping Goodwill, a new combat offensive launched by Canadian troops in Zhari district, west of Kandahar City.

Dene Moore of The Canadian Press says the convoy was on a road to a remote forward operating base known as Ghundy Ghar when the vehicle she was in drove over a device left by the Taliban.

One soldier got banged up a little when the impact threw him forward.

Moore says they were really lucky because the charge was not big enough to penetrate the vehicle.

Earlier, two Canadian soldiers suffered shrapnel wounds when a Leopard 1 tank that pushes a roller ahead of it to clear roads of bombs rolled over an improvised explosive device.

The two soldiers were taken to hospital and have since been released.

The operation is aimed at reasserting control over an area that was previously won, but in recent months lost to the Taliban.

-- Canadian Press {Kandahar AFGHANISTAN}

# Quick vote on mission very iffy PM says it'll wait till he has support

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**PUBLICATION:** WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**PAGE:** A14

**SECTION:** World Wire

**WORD COUNT:** 493

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CP Wire Bruce Cheadle SYDNEY, Australia — Prime Minister Stephen Harper has set the benchmark for what might be called winning conditions on a vote to extend Canada's military mission in Afghanistan.

Harper said Sunday there'll be no vote in Parliament soon unless he can find enough support to ensure his wish to "finish the job." "I don't see the necessity of rushing into a vote unless we're able to have a situation where a vote would be successful — where there would be some agreement among at least some of the opposition parties that would carry the day and would give a mandate to our Armed Forces," Harper told reporters following the end of an Asia-Pacific leaders' summit in Sydney.

Harper announced in June that the current military mission, set to expire in February 2009, would continue only if his minority Conservative government could get a consensus in Parliament.

Lined up With the Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Liberals all lined up against an extension, many pundits argued Harper was throwing in the towel after publicly declaring that Canada would never "cut and run." Not so, Harper said Sunday.

"I want to finish the mission. At the same time, I want to ensure that when we have men and women in uniform in the field in a dangerous position, that they have the support of their Parliament." Harper said he's seeking "some kind of consensus to fulfil the government's objectives and also, I think, to fulfil everybody's objectives of seeing Canadian troops leave — I hope would leave — when we've actually finished the job we've committed to do." He said that job entails getting Afghanistan military and police forces to the point where they can provide security for their own country.

Liberal plans The Liberals said at their summer caucus they plan to bring the matter to a head when the Commons returns this fall by engineering an opposition day vote confirming the combat mission should end in 2009.

Dion accused the prime minister of flip-flopping on the issue Sunday.

"Canadians must understand that what the prime minister is trying to do is to ensure that this combat mission will continue after February 2009," Dion said in Vancouver.

NDP Leader Jack Layton said his party remains firm that Canada should pull its military out of Afghanistan now instead of February 2009.

"Mr. Harper knows there will be a vote on the speech from the throne and that speech must address the war in Afghanistan," Layton said in Montreal.

"The speech from the throne will be an opportunity for a full debate about the war and we're holding to our position that the withdrawal of our troops should take place now, safely and securely." Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe said his party will vote against the Conservatives if the troop pullout in 2009 isn't mentioned

in the speech.

— Canadian Press

# Afghan territory seesaws

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100077  
**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B8  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 262

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian Forces have emerged virtually unscathed from a major Afghan combat operation this weekend

They claimed to have regained the western part of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province, military officials said Sunday.

But the military conceded that the operation, which mobilized most of Canada's fighting forces, has merely re-established a presence in territory that the Canadians occupied at the same time last year.

A group of Canadian soldiers who had been cut off from supplies at a remote outpost for close to three weeks were brought back to base.

The group of mostly snipers and reconnaissance soldiers had been unable to receive supplies because of ambushes by the Taliban and improvised explosive devices planted along the roads leading to the outpost.

Canadian Forces cleared the roads of IEDs and secured a section of the district more than 20 square kilometres in area.

Two Canadian soldiers were lightly injured when a Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. Roughly 600 Canadian soldiers — the bulk of Canada's battle group — as well as 100 Afghan soldiers and police were deployed in support of Operation Khar Khowhai — Keeping Goodwill.

Canadian tanks, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery units rolled out before dawn on Saturday morning to launch the operation.

Canadian Forces were hoping to recover terrain they seized in heavy fighting last fall and subsequently handed over to the Afghan National Police which couldn't hold off the Taliban.

Laforest said the operation reclaimed a roughly 20-square-kilometre "box" of territory in the west of the district.

The goal was to create "elbow room" for the ANP and Afghan National Army to provide ongoing security, he added.

But Laforest also hinted that Canadian troops could be required to stay in the area for some time.

"We were there about a year ago, we're there now, and we'll be there as long as the Afghan government wants us to operate ...

"You know what, that is modern warfare. There's no straight line, right?"

# No rush to vote

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100076  
**PUBLICATION:** The Windsor Star  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B8  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 125

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said on Sunday after the Pacific Rim summit. "My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems."

# Canada's 9/11 victims deserve annual remembrance, widow says; 'New York Or Nothing,' For Families

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100029  
**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A13  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: Chris Wattie, Reuters / MaureenBasnicki, whose husband, Ken, died in the 9/11 attacks, says Canada should officially commemorate the tragedy. ;  
**DATELINE:** NEW YORK  
**BYLINE:** Steven Edwards  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 623

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NEW YORK – With extensive services and other official events planned tomorrow in New York and across the United States to mark the sixth anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the widow of one of Canada's victims says it's time Ottawa began officially marking the watershed event.

"This wasn't an exclusively American event, but an attack on democracy and freedom and all the values that we hold dear as Canadians," Maureen Basnicki said from her Toronto home. "Other countries have taken the time to mark that very historical event, and I am still waiting for Canada to do the same."

A mother of two whose husband, Ken, died in the collapse of the World Trade Center's North Tower, Ms. Basnicki was one of two Canadian 9/11 widows who last year participated in reading the names at Ground Zero of the 2,750 people killed there.

She said the absence of an official ceremony in Canada means it's "New York or nothing" for the families of Canadian victims who want to attend one. Beyond that, she adds, the day has come to define our time.

"We now often refer to the world as pre and post-9/11 because it marked a turning point, a time when this war that we have to win was begun," she said.

"Our soldiers are dying in Afghanistan because of what happened on 9/11, and while I don't have specific ideas about what [the official recognition] should be, it should be more than nothing."

The Canadian Consulate in New York is hosting families of Canadian victims at a reception today, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper will pay Canada's respects tomorrow in a statement from Australia, where he was attending the Asia-Pacific summit.

Also tomorrow, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day will deliver a tribute at a privately organized memorial service at the National Club in Toronto.

"Certainly the day does not go unmarked," said Jamie Tomlinson, spokesman for Public Safety Canada. "We pause to remember all the lives that were tragically lost that day."

But the Canadian government has organized no major commemorative event in Canada to mark any 9/11 anniversary, and there is no national memorial to the 24 Canadians lost -- in contrast to recently unveiled memorials in Toronto and Vancouver to victims of the 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182.

The Toronto service is organized by Alana Walker Carpenter, who, through her consultancy Intriciti, helps Christian business leaders integrate faith and their work.

Two others she organized in earlier years aimed at giving business people a chance to pay their respects to victims they may have known, but she's worked closely with the prime minister's office this year to extend extensive invitations to the country's political class.

Committed to giving an "Expression of Gratitude" at the service, Ms. Basnicki also praised the Toronto Blue Jays, who will precede their game against the New York Yankees tomorrow with what may be the biggest remembrance ceremony in the country. After field presentations involving colour guards and emergency services personnel from New York and Toronto, two young boys who lost their father, a Toronto native, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

While there appears to be little groundswell for more intense official government recognition, Toronto Police Sergeant Jose Camacho, who led a \$200,000 fundraising effort in the aftermath of the attacks to benefit families of New York City police officers killed, says he favours the idea.

"We would back her one hundred per cent," said the officer, who's been in New York for several days accompanied by about 100 other Canadian officers participating in various parades and attending services.

"If Maureen takes a lead role in that, we would help her."

No Canadians are among the lottery-picked first responders who'll be reading the victims' names this year at Ground Zero, though Sgt. Camacho and others had volunteered.

Access to the site is limited this year because of advancing construction of Freedom Tower and other structures that will replace the fallen Twin Towers.



# Canadian troops re-establish Zhari presence; No Serious Casualties; Recover Terrain Seized In Heavy Fighting Last Fall

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100012

**PUBLICATION:** National Post

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** National

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A5RT

**ILLUSTRATION:** Black & White Photo: Reuters File Photo / About 600 Canadian soldiers took part in the weekend operation. ; Ranking Table: International Security Assistance Force, Steve Murray, National Post / Afghanistan Troop Numbers. ;

**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 412

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian Forces have emerged virtually unscathed from a major combat operation this weekend that reclaimed the western part of the volatile Zhari district of Kandahar province, military officials said yesterday.

But the military conceded that the operation, which mobilized most of Canada's fighting forces, has merely re-established a presence in territory that the Canadians occupied at the same time last year.

Two Canadian soldiers were lightly injured when a nearby Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were walking close to the tank and were hurt by the shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

They were evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment, but are expected to be released soon, said Major Eric Laforest, director of operations for Canada's battle group.

Roughly 600 Canadian soldiers — the bulk of Canada's battle group — as well as 100 Afghan soldiers and police were deployed in support of Operation Khar Khowhai—Keeping Goodwill.

Canadian tanks, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery units rolled out before dawn on Saturday morning to launch the operation.

Canadian Forces were hoping to recover terrain they seized in heavy fighting last fall and subsequently handed over to the Afghan National Police (ANP), which was unable to hold off the Taliban.

Maj. Laforest said the operation reclaimed a roughly 20-square-kilometre "box" of territory in the west of the district.

The goal was to create "elbow room" for the ANP and Afghan National Army to provide ongoing security, he added. But Maj. Laforest also hinted that Canadian troops could be required to stay in the area for some time.

"We were there about a year ago, we're there now, and we'll be there as long as the Afghan government wants us to operate ... You know what, that is modern warfare. There's no straight line, right?"

As part of the operation, Afghan soldiers led house-to-house searches of villages in the area.

"We did find some indicators that there had been some fighting in the past and that the insurgents were taking advantage of the civilian population to hide," said Maj. Laforest.

Around this time last year, Canadian troops were in the thick of Operation Medusa, the biggest and bloodiest operation that Canada has fought in Afghanistan.

Canadian Forces fought with hundreds of Taliban insurgents who had massed about 20 kilo-metres southwest of Kandahar City in Panjwai District. Five Canadian soldiers were killed and dozens wounded in the offensive.

The operation and a series of smaller ones that followed were supposed to have secured Panjwai and parts of neighbouring Zhari to the north.

This time, however, it appears that many of the Taliban militants decided to melt back into the civilian population rather than fight.

"Our operation was well designed in the sense that we actually flooded the area and most of them just basically dropped their weapons and ran away," said Maj. Laforest.

Canada has about 2,500 troops stationed in Afghanistan in support of the NATO-led coalition.

**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS

# TROOPS MUST 'FINISH JOB': PM; Dion Vows To Force Vote On Afghan Mission

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**PUBLICATION:** National Post  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** National  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A1  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY  
**BYLINE:** Mike De Souza  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**NOTE:** Canadian troops recover terrain, Page A5.  
**WORD COUNT:** 963

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SYDNEY – Stephen Harper said yesterday he does not want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he is certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February, 2009, unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," the Prime Minister said yesterday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders.

"My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that," Mr. Harper said.

NATO leaders have said as recently as last week that member nations other than the United States, Britain and Canada must do more to help secure Afghanistan. While countries such as Germany, Italy, France and Spain have contributed troops to the NATO force, they have largely avoided the regions of the country that still have heavy fighting.

Britain's chief of the defence staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, said yesterday at a meeting of NATO officials in Victoria, B.C., that the international community has to stick with the Afghanistan mission or that country will fall back into the hands of terrorists and extremists.

"As far as military contributions are concerned it is entirely up to Canada what it wants to do," Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said in an interview yesterday. "All I would say from our perspective is that the contribution that Canada makes is so effective and so highly valued that we would miss it sorely if it were to go."

Canadian General Ray Henault, the chairman of NATO's military committee, said the alliance is hopeful Canada will find a way to continue operating in Afghanistan.

Air Chief Marshal Stirrup said although it might be difficult to measure, there has been progress in the southern part of Afghanistan where much of the fighting has taken place.

"Canada's contribution has been critical to getting to where we have got over the last 15 months in the south," Air Chief Marshal Stirrup added.

He said the public has to realize Afghanistan is a long-term venture, not necessarily in the military sense, but in terms of the international commitment to that country. The British officer acknowledged dealing with Afghanistan is a massive challenge but that nations involved should have "the strategic patience to see it through."

"If you've got to eat an elephant, you shouldn't be surprised if after the first few mouthfuls you're not down to the bones," he said. "That's the situation we're in."

Mr. Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism tomorrow — the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States — in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leave," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field, [and] in a dangerous position that they have the support of their Parliament. I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament, and I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football. So we're not going to put people in that place again."

But he stressed that he would try to negotiate with the other parties about how to proceed on the issue.

"We'll continue to train the Afghan forces and we'll continue to listen to what the opposition parties say, and see if there is any possibility of arriving at some kind of consensus which would fill the government's objectives and I think also fulfill everybody's objective of seeing Canadian troops leave, I hope we leave, when we've actually finished the job we were committed to do," Mr. Harper said.

The New Democrats are insisting on an immediate withdrawal of Canada's troops from their combat mission in southern Afghanistan's deadly Kandahar region. The Liberals and the Bloc Quebecois have called for the troops to end their combat mission at the end of Canada's current commitment period in 2009. But the governing Conservatives say the Liberals, in particular, have not been clear on what type of role the military should follow.

In Ottawa, there was no sign yesterday the opposition parties are in a mood to buy into Mr. Harper's schedule regarding a possible vote on the future of the Afghan mission.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion and NDP leader Jack Layton predicted the Prime Minister would be unable to avoid a vote in the Commons as early as this fall on the issue.

"We will force a vote," Mr. Dion said in an interview from Vancouver where he held a series of political events.

Mr. Dion said his party is committed to using its first opposition day after Parliament resumes on Oct. 16 to introduce a motion requiring the government to officially notify NATO of the withdrawal of the more than 2,000 Canadian troops from the Kandahar region by February, 2009.

If Mr. Harper votes against the motion, Canadians will know he is not serious about ending the combat mission, Mr. Dion said.

"The moment of truth will come with this vote," he added.

Mr. Dion said the Liberals have not ruled out Canada playing a future role in helping Afghanistan get on its feet, but they are adamant the combat role must end by February, 2009.

Mr. Layton reiterated his party's call for an immediate end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan, and said he expects the government to lay out its plans for the Afghan mission in next month's Throne Speech.

"If it doesn't, it would be an unacceptable speech," he said from Montreal, indicating the NDP would vote against it.

Seventy Canadians have died in Afghanistan since the mission began to remove the Taliban regime that was sheltering terrorists who planned the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

# Canadian troops rescue stranded comrades; Reconnaissance group was unable to receive supplies

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100029  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**COLUMN:** Asia Report: News From the Region  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR, Afghanistan  
**BYLINE:** Andrew Mayeda  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 303

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Canadian Forces on Sunday completed a major push into the west of the Zhari district that brought relief to a group of Canadian soldiers who had been cut off from supplies at a remote outpost for close to three weeks.

The group of mostly snipers and reconnaissance soldiers were posted at Gundy Ghar, a hill about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City that was reclaimed by Canadian troops on Aug. 22.

But the group had been unable to receive supplies because of ambushes by the Taliban and improvised explosive devices planted along the roads leading to the outpost.

During a major combat operation this weekend, Canadian Forces cleared those roads of IEDs and secured a more than 20 square kilometre section of the district.

Two Canadian soldiers were slightly injured when a Leopard C-2 tank rolled over a mine. The soldiers were patrolling on foot nearby and were hit by shrapnel and debris from the explosion.

They were evacuated to Kandahar Airfield for treatment but were expected to be released soon.

Meanwhile, a LAV-III armoured vehicle carrying Canadian Press reporter Dene Moore was struck by an IED around midday Sunday while returning from Gundy Ghar. No one was injured in the blast.

Military officials did not inform reporters the soldiers had been stranded at Gundy Ghar until Moore returned from the convoy with which she was travelling.

It is the second time in less than a month that a vehicle carrying Canadian journalists has been hit by an IED.

Canadian Forces have spent the past few weeks trying to reclaim territory they seized in heavy fighting last fall and handed over to the Afghan forces, who were unable to hold off the Taliban.

Canadian commanders declared the Aug. 22 operation to reclaim Gundy Ghar a success, but it is now clear the hill remained under serious threat.

Canadian troops rescue stranded comrades; Reconnaissance group was unable to receive supplies

Maj. Eric Laforest, director of operations for Canada's battle group, said Canadian troops could be required to stay in the area for some time.

"We were there about a year ago, we're there now, and we'll be there as long as the Afghan government wants us to operate."

# Toronto 9/11 widow urges Canada to mark dark day; 'This wasn't an exclusively American event'

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100025

**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald

**DATE:** 2007.09.10

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A5

**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Peter Redman, CanWest News Service / Maureen Basnicki, whose husband, Ken, was killed Sept. 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center, is pushing Ottawa to officially recognize the infamous day of al-Qaeda's attack on the U.S. ;

**KEYWORDS:** DIPLOMATIC SERVICE; CANADA; UNITED STATES

**DATELINE:** NEW YORK

**BYLINE:** Steven Edwards

**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service

**WORD COUNT:** 298

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With extensive services and other official events planned Tuesday in New York and across the United States to mark the sixth anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the widow of one of Canada's victims says it's time Ottawa began officially marking the watershed event.

"This wasn't an exclusively American event, but an attack on democracy and freedom and all the values that we hold dear as Canadians," Maureen Basnicki said from her Toronto home. "Other countries have taken the time to mark that very historical event, and I am still waiting for Canada to do the same."

A mother of two whose husband, Ken, died in the collapse of the World Trade Center's North Tower, Basnicki was one of two Canadian 9/11 widows who last year participated in reading the names at Ground Zero of the 2,750 people killed there.

She said the absence of an official ceremony in Canada means it's "New York or nothing" for the families of Canadian victims who want to attend one. Beyond that, she adds, the day has come to define our time.

"We now often refer to the world as pre and post-9/11 because it marked a turning point, a time when this war that we have to win was begun," she said. "Our soldiers are dying in Afghanistan because of what happened on 9/11, and while I don't have specific ideas about what (the official recognition) should be, it should be more than nothing."

The Canadian Consulate in New York is hosting families of Canadian victims at a reception today, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper will pay Canada's respects Tuesday in a statement from Australia, where he was attending the Asia-Pacific summit.

Also Tuesday, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day will deliver a tribute at a privately organized memorial service at the National Club in Toronto.



# PM won't rush vote on Afghan role

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**IDNUMBER** 200709100017  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.09.10  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** CANDIDATES; OPPOSITION; POLITICAL PARTIES; POLITICIANS; POLITICS  
**DATELINE:** SYDNEY, Australia  
**BYLINE:** Mike De Souza  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
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Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he doesn't want Parliament to vote on keeping Canada's military troops in Afghanistan until he's certain that the Commons will approve a plan allowing the armed forces to stay until they "finish the job" of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

"This mission ends in February 2009 unless Parliament decides otherwise, so there's no necessity to rush into a vote," Harper said on Sunday after concluding a weekend summit of Pacific Rim leaders. "My view is that we should continue with what we are working on now, which is a focus on increased training of Afghan security forces so they can take care of their country's own security problems. I don't know how quickly we'll be able to finish that."

Harper, who is expected to talk about Canada's military mission and the war against terrorism tomorrow -- the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on America -- in a special address to the Australian Parliament, scolded opposition parties for exploiting the issue for political reasons.

"My obvious preference would be that Canada finish the job before it leave," he said. "At the same time, I want to make sure that when we have men and women in uniform, in the field, (and) in a dangerous position that they have the support of their Parliament. I don't think their mission should be a political football in this Parliament, and I think it's irresponsible that it is a political football. So we're not going to put people in that place again."

But he stressed that he would try to negotiate with the other parties about how to proceed on the issue.

The New Democrats are insisting on an immediate withdrawal of Canada's troops from their combat mission in southern Afghanistan's deadly Kandahar region.

The Liberals and the Bloc Quebecois have called for the troops to end their combat mission at the end of Canada's current commitment period in 2009.