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Americans putting 9/11 behind them

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Something happened between Sept. 11 of last year and this year's anniversary. Last year, we marvelled that five years had passed since that dark day; this year, there seems for the first time a national feeling that 9/11 is, finally and irrevocably, a part of the past.

Mourning proceeds at its own pace, and for those who lost friends, co-workers and family on that day six years ago, no amount of time — not five years, six or 10 — may be sufficient to dull the hurt. That these loved ones perished in the course of a public tragedy only exacerbates the pain, as survivors are forced to endure endless replays and invocations of the day that fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters were taken from them forever.

Yet even the character of the public mourning for 9/11's victims will be changed this year, as the ceremonies that have been held every year at New York's Ground Zero will be held, instead, at a nearby park. The "footprint" where the twin towers of the World Trade Center once stood is now an active construction zone and so deemed unusable for the annual reading of the names of 9/11's dead.

In the country at large, life goes on, largely oblivious of the day. It no longer seems jarring to encounter Sept. 11 as a day on which concerts, plays, even parties are scheduled. And, in Washington, Sept. 11 is marked on the Senate calendar as the day for hearings "to examine Iraq, focusing on the Crocker-Petraeus report" — in a reference to the long-awaited report on the Bush administration's so-called surge strategy by U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker and Gen. David Petraeus.

If this is coincidence, it is a heady one. If it is not, then one wonders why the Democratic-controlled Senate would assist in the administration's long-running efforts to tie Iraq to 9/11; perhaps Senate Democrats, with four of their number running for president, also seek the cover of that day in order to do what they feel they must do, politically.

Lest we forget, Sept. 12 also marks an anniversary — five years since President George W. Bush spoke at the United Nations, a day after the first commemorations of 9/11, and unveiled his case for war with Iraq. "We cannot stand by and do nothing," the president told the General Assembly on that day, "while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security, and for the permanent rights and the hopes of mankind."

And so the administration will make the case, on this anniversary, to continue the war it rolled out on the heels of another anniversary, five years ago.

Though the 9/11 hijackers and plotters were mostly Saudis, though they were based in Afghanistan, and though Saddam Hussein regarded al-Qaida as a threat to his rule — it is, ironically, in the context of the Iraq

war that we are now most likely to encounter remembrances of that terrible day.

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States stood as united as it has ever been, and very nearly the whole world stood with us. There was a once-in-a-generation chance to achieve common good through shared sacrifice at home, and effect real change with alliances abroad.

In the time between that first, seismic shock and the present, so many opportunities have been lost.

What persists is a war we seem to know neither how to win nor end — and the dull, heavy ache, echoing more faintly each year, from the day when our assumptions about the world came crashing down at our feet.

Dan Rather is a broadcaster and the former anchor with CBS News.

NATO must succeed in Afghanistan or risk 9/11 repeat, MacKay warns

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On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned yesterday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," MacKay said after a private address to ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaida," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?"

MacKay said Canada's military mission to Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009.

But he said Canada's role in Afghanistan is diverse and he predicted its involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of the war-torn country will continue for a "very long time.

"When the Afghanistan government can take care of its own interests, then we can come home. That doesn't happen quickly, but we have made enormous progress in a relatively short time."

MacKay has said a vote will be taken in Parliament if there is to be any extension of the military mission and he expects this discussion will take place in the House of Commons this fall.

Canada, Australia 'bookends' for positive change, PM says

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Canada and Australia are uniquely positioned to help a troubled world, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the Australian Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

"We have neither the capacity nor the will to conquer or dominate," Harper said in a draft of the speech. Yet both countries have the capability to help make a difference in the world.

As the first Canadian prime minister — and just the sixth foreign leader — to be so honoured, Harper delivered a wide-ranging address yesterday to Australia's joint houses of Parliament.

He excoriated Canada's appointed Senate, tipped his hat to the "Quebecois nation," praised the middle class and tax cuts and even managed to shoehorn in a reference to hockey.

But his main message was a ringing call for Canada and Australia to keep doing the tough military work that has marked the nations' long shared history.

The globe's "bookends," as Harper called them, have fought the same battles against terrorism, imperialism, fascism and communism.

"For all these reasons, Canada and Australia are uniquely able to serve as a force for positive change in the world. And we should commit ourselves to the service of that cause."

Harper's minority Tories face a tough fight in the Commons to renew Canada's military mission in Afghanistan after the Forces' mandate ends in 2009.

Australian public opinion, meanwhile, wants their country's forces out of Iraq — if not Afghanistan — and Australian Prime Minister John Howard is fighting for his political life with a fall election call imminent.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan. Seventy Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Australia has lost one soldier in Afghanistan and one in Iraq.

And he linked the military efforts overseas to security at home.

"Because as 9/11 showed," said Harper, "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

The speech wraps up a six-day Australian stay for Harper, including a weekend summit of pan-Pacific leaders in Sydney.

Afghan mission must succeed, minister says; Peter MacKay says world risks a repeat of 9/11 if NATO mission fails

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On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned yesterday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," MacKay said following a private address in this resort town to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaida," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?"

MacKay said Canada's military mission to Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009.

But he said Canada's role in Afghanistan is diverse and he predicted its involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of the war-torn country will continue for a "very long time."

"That's the exit strategy," MacKay said.

"When the Afghanistan government can take care of its own interests, then we can come home. That doesn't happen quickly, but we have made enormous progress in a relatively short time."

MacKay has said a vote will be taken in Parliament if there is to be any extension of the military mission and he expects this discussion will take place in the House of Commons this fall.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion has said he will introduce a motion in the Commons setting February 2009 as a firm end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan.

Afghan mission must succeed, minister says; Peter MacKay says world risks a repeat of 9/11 if NATO missi

However, the Liberals also have indicated a vote would not be needed if the Conservative government would now tell NATO and the government of Afghanistan that the combat mission in Kandahar will end on that date.

MacKay said there are mixed signals coming from the opposition when it comes to the Afghanistan debate, adding there is a "clear split" in the Liberal party on the issue.

Cdn. troops push into Taliban heartland; Operation Keeping Goodwill 'inflicts heavy losses' on Afghan insurgents

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A Canadian military official says an unspecified number of Taliban insurgents were killed but no Canadians were injured yesterday, the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

The mission is to increase the international presence in the heart of Taliban country, in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Maj. Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

Canadian soldiers, working alongside the Afghan national security forces, also seized arms and explosives as they pushed across a 20-square-kilometre stretch of the district west of Kandahar City.

"We found some equipment that could have been used against us in the future, rockets and some explosives which, of course, we got rid off," Laforest said.

Insurgents fired back on Canadian troops with mortars and rockets.

"As expected, insurgents tried to come back on us and with the combined effects of indirect fire and direct fire, we were able to inflict some damage and push them back," he said.

A total of about 700 Canadian soldiers and Afghan security forces were involved in the operation.

Laforest emphasized that the operation was very precise. International forces have come under heavy criticism for the numbers of civilian deaths in the Afghan conflict.

"We're confident there were no civilian deaths and no damage to civilian (infrastructure) in the region," he said.

Ultimately, responsibility for securing the area will be turned over to Afghan national forces, first under Canadian guidance and later, on their own. That has been a problem in the past, when under-paid, poorly trained and ill-equipped Afghan army officers or police have quickly ceded areas won by Canadian troops.

Globe's 'bookends' can help troubled world: PM; In speech to Australian parliament, Stephen Harper says Canada, Australia share unique position as force for positive change

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Canada and Australia are uniquely positioned to help a troubled world, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the Australian Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"We have neither the capacity nor the will to conquer or dominate," Harper said in a draft of the speech. Yet both countries have the capability to help make a difference in the world when required.

As the first Canadian prime minister — and just the sixth foreign leader — to be so honoured, Harper delivered a wide-ranging address today to Australia's joint houses of Parliament.

He excoriated Canada's appointed Senate, tipped his hat to the "Quebecois nation," praised the middle class and tax cuts and even managed to shoe-horn in a reference to hockey.

But his main message was a ringing call for Canada and Australia to keep doing the kind of tough military work that has marked the two countries' long shared history.

The globe's "bookends," as Harper called them, have fought the same battles against terrorism, imperialism, fascism and communism.

"We are fast friends of — but fiercely proud of our differences with — our other strategic cousin, the United States," added Harper.

"For all these reasons, Canada and Australia are uniquely able to serve as a force for positive change in the world. And we should commit ourselves to the service of that cause."

Harper's minority Conservatives face a tough fight in the Commons to renew Canada's military mission in Afghanistan after the Canadian Forces' mandate ends in 2009.

Australian public opinion, meanwhile, wants their country's forces out of Iraq — if not Afghanistan — and Australian Prime Minister John Howard is fighting for his political life with a fall election call imminent.

Harper's speech came 48 hours after Australia's military released unprecedented video and still pictures of a firefight in Afghanistan involving Australian troops.

A military official was quoted saying the release of such footage is not normal, but the government wanted the Australian public to understand conditions in the "Middle East," according to a press report.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan. Seventy Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Australia has lost one soldier in Afghanistan and one in Iraq.

Harper made a point of citing the Canadian sacrifice but did not mention the Australian casualties.

He said that it is "a great comfort to our troops in Kandahar to know that a thousand Aussie soldiers are next door in the province of Uruzgan."

And he linked the military efforts overseas to security at home.

"Because as 9-11 showed," said Harper, "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

Harper covered a number of other bases in his address, referring to the "presence of both francophones and the Quebecois nation" within a united Canada.

He told Howard that he'd like to show him a "top level ice-hockey game" so he'd never again be asked to watch cricket.

And he praised Australia's elected upper house as a democratic model that Canada should aspire to match.

The speech wraps up a six-day Australian stay for the prime minister, including a weekend summit of pan-Pacific leaders in Sydney.

Harper returns to Ottawa early tomorrow morning.

28 killed in Afghan attack; Another 60 wounded as suicide bomber detonates explosive in crowded marketplace

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A suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw detonated explosives yesterday in a marketplace in southern Afghanistan, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban.

Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

The attacker was apparently targeting a police commander when he detonated his bomb near a taxi stand around 6:30 p.m. in the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy-growing region and site of the country's worst violence this year.

Gereshk district chief Abdul Manaf Khan said 28 people were killed, including 13 police officers and 15 civilians. The provincial chief of public health, Enayatullah Ghafari, said the hospital recorded 26 deaths and 60 wounded, though he said some of the dead probably weren't brought to the hospital and the death toll was likely higher.

NATO said 13 people were taken to a NATO-Afghan base for treatment and 45 people to the Gereshk hospital.

Taliban militants have set off a record number of suicide blasts this year -- more than 100 through the end of August -- but few are as deadly as the Helmand attack. The Taliban typically aim their attacks at international and Afghan military and police forces.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force said the attacker was driving a motorized rickshaw -- a small engine-powered cart commonly used as a taxi in southern Afghanistan.

Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, the Defence Ministry spokesman, said a local police commander who survived the attack appeared to have been the target. A Taliban spokesman couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

A shopkeeper, Abibullah Khan, whose 16-year-old son was wounded, said young children who walk the market selling cigarettes and chewing gum were among the blast's victims. He said more than a dozen shops were damaged.

"I saw a lot of people wounded and killed on the ground," Khan said by telephone from the hospital in the nearby town of Lashkar Gah.

"It's a very crowded area. At this time of night many villagers are in Gereshk's big market."

28 killed in Afghan attack; Another 60 wounded as suicide bomber detonates explosive in crowded market

Parents hope rally will help heal their wounds

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Things will never be the same for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, but they're hoping that after the Red Rally on Sept. 28, they'll be able to go through a number of boxes that contain the belongings of their son David.

The young private, along with five other soldiers, was killed while serving in Afghanistan on Easter Sunday.

"I would really like to unpack David's stuff -- I haven't done one thing -- and maybe write some thank-you notes," said Laurie.

At the Greenslade home, Donnie holds a list of his son's belongings that were returned from Afghanistan and his quarters at Canadian Forces base Gagetown

Twenty years of memories and belongings summed up in five pages -- a hockey helmet, a Bible, a Spiderman poster, clothes, DVDs and the player to watch them.

"It's going to be hard," said Donnie standing by the ceiling-high pile of boxes near the bed in David's room.

"I started going through it and I had to stop."

It was too much, too hard, he said. Even Colby, David's beloved dog, can barely get to the closet in David's room where he spends his evenings.

A Titleist golf bag -- David was a five handicap -- leans up against a wall and his fluffy dog-head slippers sit on a stool.

"He never was without them in Gagetown," said his mom about the big fluffy slippers.

In the living room, a portable table sits with red and yellow ribbons and Canadian flag pins.

"We cleaned it up before you arrived," said Laurie.

Normally, she said, the table, which is at the centre of production for the red-ribbon campaign, is a lot more chaotic and a lot less tidy.

Not long after that terrible Easter Sunday, Laurie and Donnie embarked on a campaign to recognize and support what the Canadian Armed Forces troops are doing in Afghanistan.

Their efforts will culminate with the Red Friday Support Rally on Sept. 28. Students from local schools, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, firefighters, police and the general public will meet at 11:30 a.m. at both HMCS Brunswick and the Market Square boardwalk to parade by colour guard to Long Wharf for

what's being called a "thank-you ceremony."

Steve Murphy from CTV News will host the event with a videotaped message from Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier and a performance by Julian Austin.

A red oak tree will be planted and a red-ribbon garden will eventually bloom along Harbour Passage. Some 15,000 people are expected to attend.

Laurie and Donnie hope business owners will allow employees an extended lunch hour so they can take in all of the rally, which is expected to be 90- minutes long.

Organizers are also asking local businesses to donate to the rally to help defer costs. Some companies have come on side: the city, Moosehead Breweries and J.D. Irving Ltd. among them.

"My No. 1 thing is to support the troops and the family," said Laurie.

Any proceeds left over from the cost of the rally will be put toward a bursary in David's name. People can also donate directly to the bursary that will benefit any young cadet or military personnel who plan to further their education beyond high school.

"We're trying to keep the expenses really low so the bulk of it will go to the bursary," Laurie said. "It's nice to see David's name on this, but it's never been about this for me."

The bursary was the idea of other committee members working with the Greenslades to organize the rally. Those interested in donating can contact Ivan Court at 650-3402 or Jackie Henneberry at 632-6107.

"I'm tickled pink that they're doing it," Laurie said, "but it's really, for me in my heart, for the troops and especially their families."

For Laurie and Donnie, it's about the troops in Afghanistan and the families left behind -- cringing at the evening news, trembling each time the phone rings late at night and timidly looking out the window each time a strange car pulls up outside their home.

Pte. Pat LeBlanc and Pte. Chris Roy went through reserves together and enlisted in the regular forces at the same time. They spoke at David's funeral. Both are now home.

LeBlanc will be one of the speakers at the rally.

"Me, I'll probably pass out. I'm not good speaking in a crowd of people," he said half in jest.

"For them, red Fridays will be a part of their lives for the rest of their lives."

LeBlanc said he hopes the rally will be heard by the families and the CFB Valcartier troops from Quebec serving in Afghanistan. Public support in Quebec is the lowest in the country and anti-war groups are planning a national day of action to force the government to withdraw the troops.

"If you don't support the mission, support the troops," LeBlanc said.

LeBlanc is already trying to get back to the theatre of war that took the life of one of his best friends.

"People don't understand why I want to go back, but that's my job."

MackKay says NATO must win or risk a repeat of 9/11 attacks

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On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned Monday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," MacKay said following a private address in this New Brunswick resort town to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaida," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?"

MacKay said Canada's military mission to Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009.

But MacKay said Canada's role in Afghanistan is diverse and he predicted its involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of the war-torn country will continue for a "very long time."

"That's the exit strategy," he said.

"When the Afghanistan government can take care of its own interests, then we can come home. That doesn't happen quickly, but we have made enormous progress in a relatively short time."

MacKay has said a vote will be taken in Parliament if there is to be any extension of the military mission and he expects this discussion will take place in the House of Commons this fall.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will introduce a motion in the Commons setting February 2009 as a firm end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan.

However, the Liberals also have indicated a vote would not be needed if the Conservative government would now tell NATO and the government of Afghanistan that the combat mission in Kandahar will end on that date.

MacKay said there are mixed signals coming from the opposition when it comes to the Afghanistan debate, adding there is a "clear split" in the Liberal party on the issue.

What 9/11 means to Canada; America's war against Islamic terror and religious fanaticism is our war too

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.09.11

SECTION: Forum

PAGE: 5

COLUMN: International affairs

BYLINE: geoffrey P. johnston

PHOTO: AP

ILLUSTRATION: Damaged mullions, the vertical struts that once faced the soaring outer walls of the World Trade Center towers, were the only things left standing after al–Qaida terrorists flew jetliners into the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001, and the towers collapsed. Geoffrey Johnston writes that the 9/11 attacks represented an attack on not just the United States but on Western democracy.

WORD COUNT: 1290

The 1990s now seem like a golden age for North Americans. The Cold War was over, and the Soviet Union had passed into history, taking with it the spectre of nuclear destruction. In a world rife with ethnic violence, North America became a calm harbour of peace, security and prosperity – or so we thought.

Even the bitter, partisan nature of U.S. politics in the 1990s reflected the continent's naivete. Instead of discussing the looming threat of religious fanaticism, Congress was consumed with President Bill Clinton's sex life, First Lady Hillary Clinton's financial dealings, and tax cuts.

As stock markets soared and the high–tech bubble expanded, North Americans became increasingly smug; it seemed that there wasn't anything we couldn't accomplish.

The hubris of that age was expressed by a newly re–elected Clinton in his 1996 inaugural address: "We will stand mighty for peace and freedom and maintain a strong defence against terror and destruction. Our children will sleep free from the threat of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons."

The events of Sept. 11, 2001 would prove Clinton wrong and shatter our delusions of invulnerability.

When 19 al–Qaida hijackers crashed four airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and an empty field in Pennsylvania, stunned Canadians tuned in to watch events unfold.

We watched in horror as the Twin Towers burned and innocent people jumped to their deaths. And then the towers collapsed, and 2,603 civilians, police officers and firefighters disappeared forever into dust. In total, approximately 2,974 innocent people were killed that day, including at least 24 Canadians, making the jihadist strikes the worst terrorist onslaught in history.

Radical Islam had landed a devastating blow against the United States.

However, it would be a mistake to conclude that the 9/11 attacks were directed solely at the United States; the terrorists' main target was the World Trade Center, a symbol of modernity and globalization.

According to the final report of the National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, created by U.S. federal law and commonly referred to as "the 9/11 commission," Osama bin Laden and his

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al-Qaida terrorist network exploit some Muslims' fear of the modern world by "seizing on symbols of Islam's past greatness to restore pride to people who consider themselves the victims of successive foreign masters."

In retrospect, there were numerous warning signs of the gathering Islamist storm. Bin Laden himself had warned in a media interview that the U.S. would be attacked if it didn't withdraw from bases in Saudi Arabia, home of Islam's holiest places.

More important, he demanded that America abandon its supposedly immoral, godless culture and convert to Islam.

Al-Qaida first attacked and killed U.S. troops during the Clinton administration's humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1993. The terrorist group struck again in 1995, using a car bomb to murder five U.S. citizens in Saudi Arabia. The following year, al-Qaida detonated a truck bomb in a U.S. Air Force housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 Americans.

Al-Qaida raised the stakes in 1998, launching simultaneous suicide bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 12 Americans and hundreds of Africans.

Make no mistake about it: al-Qaida seeks to destroy the U.S. because the Americans are the leader of the democratic world and the main obstacle to the establishment of a global Islamic state.

The so-called "War on Terror" is really a titanic struggle between radical Islam and liberal democracy.

In his book *Whose War Is It?*, historian Jack Granatstein reminds us that Canada has a stake in this war. "Al-Qaida had us on its hit list even before Canadian troops went to Afghanistan," writes the former member of the Royal Military College's board of governors. (The Canadian Forces have been in the Afghan theatre for nearly six years.)

Last year's foiled alleged terror plot in Toronto seems to demonstrate that Islamism is a clear and present danger to Canada's national security.

In an appearance before the Senate committee on national security and defence earlier this year, Margaret Bloodworth, the national security adviser to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, stated that Canada is under threat from both foreign and domestic terrorists, with municipal mass transit presenting "an attractive target for terrorist attacks."

In light of the devastating terrorist bombings of Madrid's commuter trains in 2004 and the London transit system in 2005, Bloodworth's warning is especially chilling.

Canada's oil and natural gas sector is another prime terrorist target, according to the Voice of Jihad, an al-Qaida online publication. Calling on jihadists earlier this year to destroy the energy infrastructure of America's main fuel suppliers, al-Qaida has targeted Canada, Mexico and even staunchly anti-American Venezuela. That neither Mexico nor Venezuela have any troops in Iraq or Afghanistan proves that neutrality in the War on Terror isn't a shield against Islamist terror.

It is in Canada's national interest that Afghanistan become a stable member of the community of nations. And this means that Canada should continue to participate in the NATO-led, United Nations-sanctioned combat and development mission in Afghanistan.

Opponents of the Afghan mission should remember that al-Qaida couldn't have executed the 9/11 plot without the support of the Taliban.

What 9/11 means to Canada; America's war against Islamic terror and religious fanaticism is our war too

"The alliance with the Taliban," reports the 9/11 commission, "provided al-Qaida a sanctuary in which to train and indoctrinate fighters and terrorists, import weapons, forge ties with other jihad groups and leaders and plot and staff terrorist schemes." As many as 20,000 radicals received terrorist training in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001.

The 9/11 commission warns that if the Taliban were allowed to regain control of Afghanistan, they would "once again offer refuge to al-Qaida, or its successor."

The many domestic critics of the Afghan mission, including NDP leader Jack Layton and Liberal leader Stephane Dion, complain that Canada is too focused on military operations, while ignoring the mission's development component.

"Economic development," concedes the 9/11 commission in its final report, "remains a distant hope [in Afghanistan]."

Is Canada to blame for the lack of progress?

Not according to Jack Granatstein, who blames Afghanistan's development woes on the Taliban. Their purpose, he writes in *Whose War Is It?* is "to disrupt reconstruction efforts, destroy schools and kill female students, and return fundamentalist Islam to power." The recent hostage crisis, in which 23 South Korean Christian aid workers were abducted, proved once again that the Taliban opposes humanitarian intervention in Afghanistan. (The Taliban eventually released most of the hostages, but not before murdering two of them.)

If the Harper government heeds the demands of the opposition parties to either withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan now, or when the mission's parliamentary mandate expires in February 2009, Afghanistan's future will be bleak.

Notwithstanding the importance of defeating Taliban insurgents, Canada must address the development issue head-on. For example, the Harper government ought to heed the advice of Dr. Keith Martin, a Liberal MP and a former parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence. He recommends improving Kandahar's primitive Mirwais General Hospital, which is located next to a Canadian Forces base.

That Canada allows that hospital to remain in such a pitiful condition, Martin wrote in a recent letter to the editor published by the *National Post*, is a potent symbol of Canada's flawed development strategy. He's right; we can and must do better.

The brave men and women of the Canadian Forces are not only defending Afghan civilians, they are also protecting us from religious fanatics who are determined to strike the Canadian homeland.

We are at war with a cruel enemy that must be defeated. But victory will come at a very high price: the lives of Canadian soldiers.

It is always awe-inspiring to hear a grief-stricken loved one of a fallen hero (any soldier who dies in the service of Canada ought to be considered a hero) speak about the family's continuing support for the Afghan mission.

Although Springsteen's *Into The Fire* is about the personal losses that so many New Yorkers experienced when the Twin Towers disappeared into dust, the lyrics also describe the inspirational sacrifices that Canadian soldiers and their families make for our grateful nation:

May your strength give us strength

What 9/11 means to Canada; America's war against Islamic terror and religious fanaticism is our war too

May your faith give us faith

May your hope give us hope

May your love bring us love.

– Geoffrey P. Johnston is a local writer.

[SAINT JOHN (CP)– Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David, was killed in Afghanistan in the spring....]

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A7
WORD COUNT: 373

SAINT JOHN (CP) – Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David, was killed in Afghanistan in the spring.

But the Saint John couple are hoping a rally for Canadian troops later this month in Saint John will give them the strength to go through a number of boxes that contain their son's belongings.

The young private, along with five other soldiers, was killed while serving in Afghanistan on Easter Sunday. Not long after that terrible day, the Greenslades embarked on a campaign to recognize and support the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

It will culminate on Sept. 28 with the Red Friday Support Rally in Saint John. Students, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, firefighters, police and the general public will march downtown with a colour guard.

WHITEHORSE (CP) – A convicted rapist who wanted to move to Dawson City after his release from prison in New Brunswick has decided not to move to the Yukon after all.

Dawson City Mayor John Steins said Thane Moore, who was labelled as a high risk to reoffend, changed his mind over the weekend after meeting with RCMP officers who presented Moore with a letter from Steins and other material.

It is unclear where Moore will go once he's released. RCMP in New Brunswick said police would escort him to his destination of choice. QUEBEC (CP) – Myriam Bedard's former husband said Monday he had lost hope of ever seeing his daughter again when he asked police to investigate the girl's disappearance last year.

Bedard, a former triple Olympic medallist, is charged with breaching a custody order between last Oct. 3 and Dec. 22, by taking her daughter to the United States.

Jean Paquet testified at Bedard's trial that it was the girl who called him to say she was in the United States with Bedard and Nima Mazhari, the accused's boyfriend.

But Paquet said his telephone conversations with his daughter, who was then 11, and with Bedard were short and not very fruitful.

TORONTO (CP) – A trial into what has been called the worst public health disaster in Canadian history has wrapped up in Toronto.

Dr. Roger Perrault faces charges of criminal negligence causing bodily harm for his alleged role in the country's tainted blood scandal.

[SAINT JOHN (CP)– Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David,

Closing arguments finished Monday in court and the verdict is set to be delivered Oct. 1.

Perrault, 70, is at the centre of the 1980s scandal that left thousands of Canadians infected with HIV or hepatitis C.

The former national medical director with the Canadian Red Cross stood trial with three other doctors and a New Jersey pharmaceutical company.

MacKay: Afghan mission cannot fail

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A3
WORD COUNT: 413

ST. ANDREWS, N.B. (CP) – On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9–11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned Monday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism. "Let's not forget that on 9–11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," MacKay said following a private address in this New Brunswick resort town to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

MacKay says the exit strategy for the war–torn country is simple – when Afghanistan as a government can take care of its own interests and its own people. He says Canada has committed its military to Afghanistan until 2009, but adds that in terms of development efforts and diplomatic programs, Canada's involvement will last for a "very long time."

Samad warns that if the international community ends its assistance to Afghanistan too quickly, the country will once again become a failed nation ruled by war lords, drug dealers and international terrorists.

MacKay was in New Brunswick to address the annual gathering of ambassadors to Canada.

On Monday, a Canadian military official said a number of Taliban insurgents were killed but no Canadians were injured Monday, the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

The mission is to increase the international presence in the heart of Taliban country, in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Maj. Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

Also Monday, a suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw detonated explosives in a marketplace in southern Afghanistan, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban. Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

The attacker was apparently targeting a police commander when he detonated his bomb near a taxi stand around 6:30 p.m. in the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy–growing region and site of the country's worst violence this year.

PM: Canada, Australia must stick with missions

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
SECTION: World
PAGE: A3
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 370

CANBERRA, Australia – Canada and Australia are uniquely positioned to help a troubled world, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the Australian Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"We have neither the capacity nor the will to conquer or dominate," Harper said in a draft of the speech. Yet both countries have the capability to help make a difference in the world when required.

As the first Canadian prime minister – and just the sixth foreign leader – to be so honoured, Harper delivered a wide-ranging address on Tuesday to Australia's joint houses of Parliament.

He excoriated Canada's appointed Senate, tipped his hat to the "Quebecois nation," praised the middle class and tax cuts and even managed to shoe-horn in a reference to hockey.

But his main message was a ringing call for Canada and Australia to keep doing the kind of tough military work that has marked the two countries' long shared history.

The globe's "bookends," as Harper called them, have fought the same battles against terrorism, imperialism, fascism and communism.

"We are fast friends of – but fiercely proud of our differences with – our other strategic cousin, the United States," added Harper.

"For all these reasons, Canada and Australia are uniquely able to serve as a force for positive change in the world. And we should commit ourselves to the service of that cause."

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan. Seventy Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Harper's minority Conservatives face a tough fight in the Commons to renew Canada's military mission in Afghanistan after the Canadian Forces' mandate ends in 2009.

A Canadian military official said a number of Taliban insurgents were killed but no Canadians were injured on Monday, the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

The mission is to increase the international presence in the heart of Taliban country, in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Maj. Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

Also Monday, a suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw detonated explosives in a marketplace in southern Afghanistan, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban. Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

Canadians continue push into Taliban heartland

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.11

SECTION: World

PAGE: B5

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 267

A Canadian military official says an unspecified number of Taliban insurgents were killed but no Canadians were injured Monday, the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

The mission is to increase the international presence in the heart of Taliban country, in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Maj. Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

Canadian soldiers, working alongside the Afghan national security forces, also seized arms and explosives as they pushed across a 20-square-kilometre stretch of the district west of Kandahar City.

"We found some equipment that could have been used against us in the future, rockets and some explosives which, of course, we got rid off," Laforest said.

Insurgents fired back on Canadian troops with mortars and rockets.

"As expected, insurgents tried to come back on us and with the combined effects of indirect fire and direct fire, we were able to inflict some damage and push them back," he said.

A total of about 700 Canadian soldiers and Afghan security forces were involved in the operation.

Laforest emphasized that the operation was very precise. International forces have come under heavy criticism for the numbers of civilian deaths in the Afghan conflict.

"We're confident there were no civilian deaths and no damage to civilian (infrastructure) in the region," he said.

Ultimately, responsibility for securing the area will be turned over to Afghan national forces, first under Canadian guidance and later, on their own. That has been a problem in the past, when under-paid, poorly trained and ill-equipped Afghan army officers or police have quickly ceded areas won by Canadian troops.

N.B. couple who lost a son in Afghanistan plan rally for troops

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.11

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A8

COLUMN: Across the nation

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: SAINT JOHN, N.B.

WORD COUNT: 115

Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David, was killed in Afghanistan in the spring.

But the Saint John couple are hoping rally for Canadian troops later this month in Saint John will give them the strength to go through a number of boxes containing their son's belongings.

The young private, along with five other soldiers, was killed while serving in Afghanistan on Easter Sunday.

"I would really like to unpack David's stuff," Laurie Greenslade says at the couple's home. "I haven't done one thing. And maybe write some thank you notes."

A hockey helmet. Bible. Spiderman poster. Clothes. DVDs and a DVD player. Throughout the list the word "green" appears regularly. Their son's world was a sea of army green.

"It's going to be hard," Donnie says.

An early exit wouldn't help

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.11

SECTION: Editorial

PAGE: A6

COLUMN: Letters to the editor

WORD COUNT: 187

Editor:

I would like to respond to Cory Stevenson's letter 'How long do we stay hopeless course?' (The Guardian, Sept. 4, 2007).

Although he agreed with the fact of what will happen if Afghanistan is not stable, he neglected to follow through on the possibilities of what would happen back here in Canada if we pulled out of Afghanistan. He did not take into consideration the amount of death, violence and poverty that existed in Afghanistan prior to our entrance into that country.

As we hear and/or read the news daily there are more and more terrorist plots in different parts of the world being discovered, even like the ones that were discovered in Toronto. I refuse to believe that by an early exit from Afghanistan that this situation will just rectify itself. I believe that is how Afghanistan's instability occurred in the first place.

Mr. Stevenson also highlighted one important factor, which is the democratic process. The military was deployed by the government of Canada representing the Canadian people's interest. The military did not ask to go there, but was sent by the elected Canadian government.

Eric Payne,

Warren Grove

MackKay, Afghan ambassador say world risks 9/11 repeat if Afghanistan abandoned

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.11

SECTION: The Province/Canada

PAGE: A5

SOURCE: CP

DATELINE: ST. ANDREWS, N.B.

WORD COUNT: 271

On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned Monday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism. "Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," MacKay said following a private address in this New Brunswick resort town to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaida," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?"

MacKay said Canada's military mission to Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009.

But he said Canada's role in Afghanistan is diverse and he predicted its involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of the war-torn country will continue for a "very long time."

"That's the exit strategy," MacKay said.

"When the Afghanistan government can take care of its own interests, then we can come home. That doesn't happen quickly, but we have made enormous progress in a relatively short time."

MacKay has said a vote will be taken in Parliament if there is to be any extension of the military mission and he expects this discussion will take place in the House of Commons this fall.

Troops continue push into Taliban heartland

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)
DATE: 2007.09.11
SECTION: International
PAGE: B4
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Dene Moore
DATELINE: Kandahar, Afghanistan
WORD COUNT: 306

A Canadian military official says an unspecified number of Taliban insurgents were killed, but no Canadians were injured Monday, the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

The mission is to increase the international presence in the heart of Taliban country, in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Maj. Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

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Insurgents fired back on Canadian troops with mortars and rockets.

A total of about 700 Canadian soldiers and Afghan security forces were involved in the operation.

Laforest emphasized that the operation was very precise. International forces have come under heavy criticism for the numbers of civilian deaths in the Afghan conflict.

"We're confident there were no civilian deaths and no damage to civilian (infrastructure) in the region," he said.

Ultimately, responsibility for securing the area will be turned over to Afghan national forces, first under Canadian guidance and later, on their own. That has been a problem in the past, when under-paid, poorly trained and ill-equipped Afghan army officers or police have quickly ceded areas won by Canadian troops.

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw detonated explosives Monday in a marketplace in southern Afghanistan, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban. Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

The attacker was apparently targeting a police commander when he detonated his bomb near a taxi stand around 6:30 p.m. in the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy-growing region and site of the country's worst violence this year.

Story of Afghan woman a fitting 9/11 tribute

IDNUMBER 200709110100
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Arts
PAGE: C8
COLUMN: Fine Tuning: A Close-Up Look at Tonight's TV
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Photo handout/PBS / Malalai Joya, centre, battles for the rights of women as the Afghan hierarchy tries to turn the clock back. ;
BYLINE: Alex Strachan
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 795

It's a growing debate: Six years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, as 9/11's anniversary falls for the first time on a Tuesday — the day of the week it happened — how much tribute is too much? How much is enough, and how much is not enough? In an indirect and yet profound way, tonight's season finale of PBS's Wide Angle provides the perfect answer.

The real post-9/11 conflict — as many Canadians know all too well — is in Afghanistan, and as tonight's quiet, remarkable film *A Woman Among Warlords* shows, a kind of uneasy democracy is taking hold in a place where women's rights were until recently unheard of.

A Woman Among Warlords is not about war — the war goes completely unmentioned — but the subtext is plainly obvious: The old guard is still there, waiting, hoping to turn back the clock.

As it is, Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghan women's rights advocate at the heart of this remarkable film, has had her life threatened. More than once. In the film, she has the temerity, among other things, to tell an 80-year-old warlord and opium trader that, no, he cannot shack up with the 13-year-old girl he's chosen to become one of his wives, if she's against it (she is), her family is against it (they are) and if the new Afghanistan frowns on January–December romances (it does).

Shotgun weddings — or is that AK-47 weddings? — don't fly in the new democracy, especially when the bride-to-be says things like, "He has weapons and walks with a limp; I can't find happiness with him," and her father vows, "I'd rather cut off my head than give him my child. He already has two wives."

The girl, Rahela Nakim, is a fifth-grader who can read and write, thanks to the emergence of schools — this, in no small part, due to men and women, many of them Canadian, who have, and who continue to sacrifice their lives so that girls like Nakim don't have to live a life of terror, oppression and forced marriages to 80-year-olds. Nakim is special, Joya pleads on the girl's behalf before the local militias: she could become a lawyer one day; she could become a doctor, a writer, a national leader.

Bah! the warlord counters. The opium trade is a hard business. So many numbers — oy, numbers, numbers, all these numbers — who can keep track? His soldiers — men with guns — are illiterate and can't count. He needs Nakim to keep the books. That's the real reason he wants the girl to marry him: He wants an accountant, preferably one who can read and write.

The story has neither a happy nor an unhappy ending. It ends, like life, messily and up-in-the-air. Joya herself, though diplomatic when dealing with armed men who'd like to kill her, is less diplomatic when she's finally elected to the Afghan parliament. She lectures the old men with beards about their manners and the true meaning of being a gentleman, and for her trouble she's tossed out — and told not to come back until she apologizes.

Wide Angle, PBS's summer-long documentary showcase of films from around the world, has had a strong season. Interestingly, Afghanistan and Iran have played dominant roles in this season's selections, and tonight's film seems doubly appropriate as a result.

A Woman Among Warlords is a quiet, thoughtful look at the post 9/11 Afghanistan — it could just as easily have been subtitled "Why We Fight" — and is emotionally involving and spiritually uplifting, as well as informative and eye-opening.

The film was adapted from Danish filmmaker Eva Mulvad's *Enemies of Happiness*, winner of the Sundance World Cinema Jury Prize at this year's festival.

It's easy to see why it won. If you want to acknowledge the Sept. 11 anniversary, but want something beyond the usual tributes and ceremonies, do consider this remarkable program. You won't regret it.

7 p.m. (Channel 24),

9 p.m. (Channel 19), PBS)

Three to see:

- Please don't keel over from sheer excitement: The latest Canadian Idol winner is crowned tonight. If viewers vote alphabetically, by first name, Brian will win over Jaydee. If, however, viewers vote by last name, Jaydee Bixby will beat Brian Melo. Either way, it's a coin toss. 8 p.m., CTV
- The Biggest Loser is billed as the first reality series "where everybody loses." Except those viewers who scarf munchies while watching, no doubt. The new season bows tonight, with a new host (Days of Our Lives' Alison Sweeney), the return of killer trainer Jillian Michaels and a "where are they now?" segment. 8 p.m., E!, NBC
- Jodie Foster joins Jon Stewart on The Daily Show to talk about films, politics, Stewart's acting in *Death to Smoochy*, and whether Jon has more Emmys than Jodie has Oscars.

11 p.m., Comedy Network,

Midnight, CTV

astrachan@canwest.com

NATO has outlived its usefulness

IDNUMBER 200709110060
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: A13
BYLINE: Ken Scott
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 157

It is amazing how large organizations continue to exist even after they are no longer needed.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949 as a mutual defence group to protect the countries of Europe against the expanding Russian empire.

That empire collapsed in 1989 so there was no more need for NATO. And with a population of 490 million, Europe surely does not need the extra 30 million Canadians to defend it.

But NATO provided good jobs for lots of bureaucrats, politicians and military personnel, so almost 20 years after it ceased to have a useful function, it is still in existence providing jobs for the boys.

Now, to try and show a reason for all the money we waste on this large bureaucracy, they have invaded Afghanistan, a country so far from Europe that most people hadn't even heard of it before the NATO generals decided to invade it. Instead of just wasting our money, NATO is causing our young people to die.

It is time that we withdrew from this useless organization.

Ken Scott,

Oak Bay.

Suicide attacks kill 26 in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200709110038
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 64

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — At least 26 people, many of them civilians, were killed yesterday in two simultaneous suicide attacks in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand, a provincial police official said.

Around 45 people were wounded in the twin blasts that targeted a group of police in a shopping area of Girishk district of the province, a long-time bastion of Islamist Taliban guerrillas.

PM: War on terror 'noble'

IDNUMBER 200709110035
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper greets schoolchildren in Canberra, the Australian capital, yesterday. Later, he defended NATO's mission in Afghanistan in his address to Australia's Parliament. ;
DATELINE: CANBERRA, Australia
BYLINE: Mike De Souza
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 506

CANBERRA, Australia — Canada and Australia have both been victimized by terrorism, and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Harper's remarks today said.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebecois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

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"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said. "And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it. ... The cause is noble and necessary."

Harper said that the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

But some of Harper's harshest warnings were directed at Canadian senators, as he highlighted one of the main differences between the systems of government in the two countries.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say: When we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy,'" Harper said, referring to Ted Morton, a Conservative member of the Alberta legislature who ran unsuccessfully for the party leadership. "Because, in Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as long as 45 years."

He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

"Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change or, like the old upper houses of our provinces, vanish," he said.

Harper also stressed that the two countries had overcome many similar challenges through parallel histories, developing common values and principles that made them strong.

"Australia was born in English, Canada in French, at Quebec City 400 years ago next year — reflected to this day by the presence of francophones and the 'Quebecois nation' within our united country," he said.

He said the two countries have established solid reputations, defending freedom, democracy and human rights, building multilateral institutions and establishing international law.

Let's hope soldiers risk lives for worthy cause

IDNUMBER 200709110027
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A10
BYLINE: Lindsay V. Thorimbert
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 187

Re: No soldier's death ever 'in vain' (SP, Aug. 28). Though I have some sympathy for Barry Cooper's Durkheim-like argument as to the societal role played by tragedy, I find it cold consolation.

I can't speak for the feelings of soldier Simon Longtin's family and I make no denials concerning the nobility of the sacrifice he has made. But I sure as hell hope that he died for a better reason than to teach us some existential lesson about wartime sacrifice.

We "simple-minded utilitarians" do feel for Longtin and his family, but we also feel for the countless numbers whose deaths will follow: Canadian and Afghan.

Cooper rests on 9/11 rhetoric to justify a war that by all measures seems unwinnable. Certainly, he did not bother to underline any factors that would constitute a victory for the NATO forces. To my knowledge, no one else coherently has done so either. There is considerable evidence to suggest that al-Qaida's leadership has left Afghanistan, perhaps for Pakistan.

Finally, I think we should all have a look at the 1979–80 Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan, which played an important part in the Soviet Union's ultimate dissolution.

Lindsay V. Thorimbert

Prince Albert

Documentary shows why fight is worth it

IDNUMBER 200709110060
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B10
COLUMN: Fine Tuning
BYLINE: Alex Strachan
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 652

It's a growing debate: Six years after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, as 9/11's anniversary falls for the first time on a Tuesday — the day of the week it happened — how much tribute is too much? How much is enough, and how much is not enough? In an indirect and yet profound way, tonight's season finale of PBS's Wide Angle provides the perfect answer.

The real post-9/11 conflict — as many Canadians know all too well — is in Afghanistan, and as tonight's quiet, remarkable film *A Woman Among Warlords* shows, a kind of uneasy democracy is taking hold in a place where women's rights were until recently unheard of.

A Woman Among Warlords is not about war — the war goes completely unmentioned — but the subtext is plainly obvious: The old guard is still there, waiting, hoping to turn back the clock.

As it is, Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghani women's rights advocate at the heart of this remarkable film, has had her life threatened. More than once. In the film, she has the temerity, among other things, to tell an 80-year-old warlord and opium trader that, no, he cannot shack up with the 13-year-old girl he's chosen to become one of his wives, if she's against it (she is), her family is against it (they are) and if the new Afghanistan frowns on January-December romances (it does).

Shotgun weddings — or is that AK-47 weddings? — don't fly in the new democracy, especially when the bride-to-be says things like, "He has weapons and walks with a limp; I can't find happiness with him," and her father vows, "I'd rather cut off my head than give him my child. He already has two wives."

The girl, Rahela Nakim, is a fifth-grader who can read and write, thanks to the emergence of schools — this, in no small part, due to men and women, many of them Canadian, who have, and who continue to sacrifice their lives so that girls like Nakim don't have to live a life of terror, oppression and forced marriages to 80-year-olds. Nakim is special, Joya pleads on the girl's behalf before the local militias: she could become a lawyer one day; she could become a doctor, a writer, a national leader.

Bah! the warlord counters. The opium trade is a hard business. So many numbers — oy, numbers, numbers, all these numbers — who can keep track? His soldiers — men with guns — are illiterate and can't count. He needs Nakim to keep the books. That's the real reason he wants the girl to marry him: He wants an accountant, preferably one who can read and write.

The story has neither a happy nor an unhappy ending. It ends, like life, messily and up-in-the-air. Joya herself, though diplomatic when dealing with armed men who'd like to kill her, is less diplomatic when she's finally elected to the Afghan parliament. She lectures the old men with beards about their manners and the

true meaning of being a gentleman, and for her trouble she's tossed out — and told not to come back until she apologizes.

Wide Angle, PBS's summer-long documentary showcase of films from around the world, has had a strong season. Interestingly, Afghanistan and Iran have played dominant roles in this season's selections, and tonight's film seems doubly appropriate as a result.

A Woman Among Warlords is a quiet, thoughtful look at the post 9/11 Afghanistan — it could just as easily have been subtitled "Why We Fight" — and is emotionally involving and spiritually uplifting, as well as informative and eye-opening.

The film was adapted from Danish filmmaker Eva Mulvad's *Enemies of Happiness*, winner of the Sundance World Cinema Jury Prize at this year's festival.

It's easy to see why it won. If you want to acknowledge the Sept. 11 anniversary, but want something beyond the usual tributes and ceremonies, do consider this remarkable program. You won't regret it. (PBS)

War is not 'forgotten': Official

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DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B5
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 440

OTTAWA — Despite America's focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9/11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said Monday, the day before his country prepared to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including 24 Canadians. "We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrests last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terror-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Wilkins said in an interview.

This year's 9/11 anniversary comes as key American allies — Canada and the Netherlands — are embroiled in national debates on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

In Australia during the weekend, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

Opposition parties are calling for an end to Canada's combat role in Kandahar province by then. In fact, the New Democratic Party wants the soldiers withdrawn immediately. The Dutch parliament, meanwhile, must renew its commitment to Afghanistan by next August.

Wilkins stressed that while he hopes Canada remains in Afghanistan, it is up to parliamentarians to decide.

"The United States appreciates Canada as a friend and as an ally. You're not only our largest trading partner, you're our partner in the war on terror. You've done yeoman's work in Afghanistan, so we hope that will continue."

Despite its massive military entanglement in Iraq, the U.S. still contributes the bulk of western forces to Afghanistan — about 30,000 troops.

It is also the runaway leader in casualties, said Wilkins. As of Sunday, 60 per cent of the 617 western military personnel killed in Afghanistan since 2001 were from the United States. In all, 372 American troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared with 76 British and 70 Canadians (along with one diplomat). Germany has lost 25 soldiers while the Dutch have suffered 10 fatalities.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9/11," Wilkins warned.

In Ottawa, the U.S. embassy will mark the 9/11 anniversary by allowing visitors to sign a condolence book between 9 a.m. and noon.

Ottawa Citizen

Attack was on everyone: Harper

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PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: Mike De Souza
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 404

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He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

Canadians continue push into Taliban heartland west of Kandahar city

DATE: 2007.09.10

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 85

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP) _ Canadian troops are continuing their push into the heart of Taliban country in the Zhari district of southern Afghanistan.

It's the third day of Operation Keeping Goodwill.

Maj. Eric Laforest says some insurgents were killed in a firefight Monday with Canadian and Afghan troops. No Canadians were injured.

The joint operation has also seized arms and explosives as the troops push across a 20-square-kilometre stretch of ground west of Kandahar city.

The operation began early Saturday morning, aimed at increasing the presence of Canadian and Afghan security forces in the area.

Eventually, the region will be turned over to Afghan security forces to maintain security.

Canada, Australia serve as world's `bookends' for positive change: Harper

DATE: 2007.09.10
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 424

CANBERRA, Australia (CP) _ Canada and Australia are uniquely positioned to help a troubled world, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the Australian Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

“We have neither the capacity nor the will to conquer or dominate,” Harper said in the speech.

Yet both countries have the capability to help make a difference in the world when required.

As the first Canadian prime minister _ and just the sixth foreign leader _ to be so honoured, Harper delivered a wide-ranging address on Tuesday to Australia's joint houses of Parliament.

He excoriated Canada's appointed Senate, tipped his hat to the “Quebecois nation,” praised the middle class and tax cuts and even managed to shoe-horn in a reference to hockey.

But his main message was a ringing call for Canada and Australia to keep doing the kind of tough military work that has marked the two countries' long shared history.

The globe's “bookends,” as Harper called them, have fought the same battles against terrorism, imperialism, fascism and communism.

“We are fast friends of _ but fiercely proud of our differences with _ our other strategic cousin, the United States,” added Harper.

“For all these reasons, Canada and Australia are uniquely able to serve as a force for positive change in this troubled world. And we should commit ourselves to the service of that cause.”

Harper's minority Conservatives face a tough fight in the Commons to renew Canada's military mission in Afghanistan after the Canadian Forces' mandate ends in 2009.

Australian public opinion, meanwhile, wants their country's forces out of Iraq _ if not Afghanistan _ and Australian Prime Minister John Howard is fighting for his political life with a fall election call imminent.

Harper's speech came 48 hours after Australia's military released unprecedented video and still pictures of a firefight in Afghanistan involving Australian troops.

A military official was quoted saying the release of such footage is not normal, but the government wanted the Australian public to understand conditions in the “Middle East,” according to a press report.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan. Seventy Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002.

Australia has lost one soldier in Afghanistan and one in Iraq.

Harper made a point of citing the Canadian sacrifice but did not mention the Australian casualties.

And he linked the military efforts overseas to security at home.

“Because as 9–11 showed,” said Harper, “if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today’s global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours.”

Harper covered a number of other bases in his address, referring to the “presence of both francophones and the Quebecois nation” within a united Canada.

He told Howard that he’d like to show him a “top level ice–hockey game” so he’d never again be asked to watch cricket.

And he praised Australia’s elected upper house as a democratic model that Canada should aspire to match.

The speech wraps up a six–day Australian stay for the prime minister, including a weekend summit of pan–Pacific leaders in Sydney.

Harper returns to Ottawa early Wednesday morning.

28 killed, 60 wounded in suicide attack in southern Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.09.10

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 72

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) _ A suicide bomber on a motorbike set off his explosives in a crowded area in southern Afghanistan, reportedly killing dozens of people.

The explosion went off in the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy-growing region and site of the country's worst insurgent violence this year.

Gereshk district chief Abdul Manaf Khan says about 28 people were killed _ 13 police and some 15 civilians.

A local doctor, Tahir Khan, put the toll at 23 people dead and 59 wounded.

Rumsfeld calls Afghanistan a 'big success' but not Iraq in magazine interview

DATE: 2007.09.10
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 418

NEW YORK (AP) _ In an interview billed as his first since leaving the top Pentagon post, Donald Rumsfeld calls Afghanistan "a big success," but says U.S. efforts in Iraq are hampered by the failure of Iraq's government to establish a foundation for democracy.

"In Afghanistan, 28 million people are free. They have their own president, they have their own parliament. Improved a lot on the streets," Rumsfeld says in the October issue of GQ magazine.

While "that's been a big success," he said, the Baghdad regime "has not been able to ... create an environment hospitable to whatever one wants to call their evolving way of life, a democracy or a representative system, or a freer system. And it's going to take some time and some effort."

Rumsfeld stepped down as Secretary of Defense in November, a day after congressional elections that cost Republicans control of Congress. Dissatisfaction with his handling of the Iraq war was cited by many as a major element of voter dissatisfaction.

Rumsfeld said the Department of Defense and the U.S. military are not responsible for any failures there or in Afghanistan.

"In a very real sense, the American military cannot lose a battle, they cannot lose a war," he tells the magazine. "On the other hand, they can't win the struggle themselves. It requires diplomacy, it requires economic assistance, it requires a range of things that are well beyond the purview of the Department of Defense."

In the interview, conducted at his ranch near Taos, N.M., the 75-year-old spoke at length about his career and offered guarded comments on former colleagues, policy decisions in Iraq and his own forced resignation.

When asked if he has any "regrets" about the last six years, Rumsfeld replied, "Well, sure. I mean you'd always wish things were perfect, but they never are."

He said the refusal of Turkey, a NATO ally, to allow U.S. troops to cross its border into Iraq at the outset of the war, gave would-be insurgents "free play for a good period of time. I mean, there's a dozen things like that."

As to what he might have done differently, Rumsfeld says, "If you do anything, someone's not going to like it, someone's going to be critical of it. So if you're in the business I was in, that goes with the territory."

Rumsfeld, the country's youngest U.S. defence secretary in the Ford administration and the oldest under U.S. President George W. Bush, also served four terms in Congress, and as ambassador to NATO and numerous other posts.

He also said he believes Bush "is a lot more intelligent and curious than people give him credit for."

Rumsfeld said he couldn't recall the last time he and the president spoke.

Do you miss him? ``Um, no," Rumsfeld said.

N.B. couple who lost son in Afghanistan organize rally for troops

DATE: 2007.09.10
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 330

SAINT JOHN, N.B. (CP) _ Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David, was killed in Afghanistan in the spring.

But the Saint John couple are hoping rally for Canadian troops later this month in Saint John will give them the strength to go through a number of boxes that contain their son's belongings.

The young private, along with five other soldiers, was killed while serving in Afghanistan on Easter Sunday.

``I would really like to unpack David's stuff," Laurie Greenslade says at the couple's home. ``I haven't done one thing. And maybe write some thank you notes."

Donnie Greenslade holds a listing of his son's belongings that were returned from Afghanistan and his quarters at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, N.B..

Twenty years of memories and belongings summed up in five pages.

A hockey helmet. Bible. Spiderman poster. Clothes. DVDs and a DVD player. Throughout the list the word ``green" appears regularly.

Their son's world was a sea of army green.

``It's going to be hard," Donnie says as he stands by the ceiling-high pile of boxes piled the bed in David's room. ``I started going through it and I had to stop."

It was too much, too hard.

A golf bag _ David was a five-handicap golfer _ leans up against one wall and his pair of fluffy dog-head slippers sit on a stool.

``He never was without them in Gagetown," his mom says.

Not long after that terrible day, The Greenslades embarked on a campaign to recognize and support the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

It will culminate on Sept. 28 with the Red Friday Support Rally in Saint John. Students, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, firefighters, police and the general public will march through the downtown with a colour guard.

Some 15,000 people are expected to attend.

The Greenslades hope businesses will allow employees an extended lunch hour on the day so they can attend the rally, which is expected to last 90 minutes.

“My No. 1 thing is to support the troops and the family,” says Laurie.

Any proceeds left over from the cost of the rally will be put toward a bursary in David's name. People can also donate directly to the bursary that will benefit any young cadet or military personnel who plan to further their education beyond high school.

“We're trying to keep the expenses really low so the bulk of it will go to the bursary,” Laurie says. “It's nice to see David's name on this, but it's never been about this for me.”

(New Brunswick Telegraph–Journal)

Harper–APEC

DATE: 2007.09.10

KEYWORDS: BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL POLITICS TRADE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 122

SYDNEY, Australia -- Prime Minister Stephen Harper heads to Canberra this afternoon as he continues his visit to Australia.

Harper is preparing for his speech tomorrow to the Australian Parliament in Canberra on the sixth anniversary of the September 11th terror attacks in the U–S.

He's the first Canadian prime minister to address Australia's Parliament.

In his speech, Harper is expected to talk about Canada's and Australia's place in the world and their military role in Afghanistan and Australia's military role in Iraq.

As both countries are middle powers, a lot of emphasis is expected to be placed on how countries such as Canada and Australia can help on the international scene.

The A–PEC summit wrapped up in Sydney yesterday, with the 21 leaders agreeing to an ``aspirational goal" of slowing, stopping and eventually reversing greenhouse gas emissions.

(BN)

PTH

Dion not fazed by negative ad campaign against him

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COLUMN: Barbara Yaffe
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
BYLINE: Barbara Yaffe
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 579

Relations between Stephen Harper and Stephane Dion are curt in the wake of a sustained negative ad campaign by Conservatives that has taken a toll on the Liberal leader.

That's the assessment of the Dion himself, who doesn't rule out the possibility of a fall election.

Dion, in B.C. last weekend to hold several policy discussions with Liberals, says he would never deploy a negative ad campaign against Harper because it is not his style.

Wearing an open-neck, pale blue shirt and a sleek navy pinstripe suit, the Liberal leader, surprisingly, lauds the "Dion is Not a Leader" ad campaign as effective.

The ads have given people a terrible impression of him, but he points out that those low expectations play in his favour once he meets voters — which is why he's travelling the country non-stop. "Where did we fly here from?" he asks an aide. "Oh yes, Toronto."

Dion, for his part, insists he'd never indulge in such below-the-belt advertising. Rather, he'd want to advertise the contrast between his own and Harper's character.

Dion says Liberals have criticized him for respectfully referring to Harper as "the prime minister." But he believes integrity and respect pay off in the end.

The top Liberal and Harper have never engaged in so much as a chat and have no significant personal rapport. The Liberal leader is still smarting from Harper's move to label him "pro-Taliban."

In fact, Dion explains, the Liberal stand on Afghanistan does not and never has reflected a will to leave the scene in 2009.

Rather, it's a recognition that, by that point, Canada will have done its fair share of combat in the most dangerous part of Afghanistan and that Kandahar should become a responsibility for one of the 25 other member states within NATO.

Noting that combat refers to actively seeking out and engaging the enemy, Dion says he'd like the Canadian contingent in 2009 to shift to stabilizing and rebuilding work in another region of Afghanistan. Or to diversify its military resources more broadly, perhaps to other global hotspots.

His reasoning is perfectly logical and supported by other opposition parties, forcing Harper lately to change his messaging on the mission.

Dion notes that such flip-flops have become part and parcel of the way Harper has been governing.

He is implementing policy — on everything from Afghanistan to the environment — according to (1) opposition pressure and (2) poll results, rather than partisan conviction.

This leads to confusion because his ministers are never quite sure what they should be saying at any given moment.

On Afghanistan, Dion says: "Poor [Foreign Affairs Minister Peter] MacKay has difficulty to guess what the master wants him to say because it's no more a matter of conviction, it's a matter of spin."

Former environment minister Rona Ambrose had the same problem.

Dion agrees that Liberals have work to do, too. He personally continues to learn how to go for the jugular in English (still being tutored, he has little trouble making himself understood.)

And Liberals must start publicizing their policy platform, especially on the economic side. The Liberal leader contends that Harper has merely been "surfing on a strong economy."

Worryingly for Liberals, they are well behind Conservatives in fund-raising — a dangerous situation should an election occur. As of June, the Liberal war chest held \$1.4 million, compared to the Conservatives' \$3.7 million.

And, of course, Dion is going to have to personally consolidate his leadership within the party, given that ambitious wannabe leaders such as Michael Ignatieff, Gerard Kennedy and Bob Rae surround him.

Dion says his party won't vote for Harper's Oct. 16 throne speech unless it includes four elements: Reintroduction of the Clean Air Act; a commitment to wind up the Kandahar combat mission; a plan to fight poverty; a strategy to boost Canadian competitiveness.

When I ask Dion if he can understand why many westerners are weary of national leaders from Quebec, he says: "There's nothing I can do about that."

"I am a Canadian and I have shown everywhere the sacrifices that I am ready to do for this country."

byaffe@png.canwest.com

Six years on, the root problem remains

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PAGE: A15
COLUMN: Jonathan Manthorpe
Photo: Mohammed Abed, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images ; Vancouver Sun files /
ILLUSTRATION: Surrogates in a wider conflict, Jihad militants march in the Nusseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. ;
KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; TERRORISM; OIL; FOREIGN RELATIONS; RELIGION;ASSAULT; CRIME; AFGHANISTAN
BYLINE: Jonathan Manthorpe
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 747

On the evening of Sept. 11 six years ago someone asked me where I thought the Americans would attack in retribution for the assaults on New York and Washington.

It had been a long day and I replied instinctively. "They should bomb Riyadh and Peshawa, but they won't. They'll bomb Afghanistan," I said.

Six years later I have no reason to change that judgment, though "bombing" should perhaps be read as a generic term that suggests focus of attention without, necessarily, violent intent.

A core of the problem the world faces with disenchanted, violent young Muslims is the unholy deal between the government of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh — in effect, the royal family — and the fanatical fringe Wahhabist Islamic sect.

The Saudis have bought peace at home -- well, not always -- by spewing money at the Wahhabists to go spread their venom elsewhere.

Were it not for the discovery of oil, and lots of it, in Arabia in 1938, the fundamentalist teachings of the 17th-century writer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab would have remained an insignificant and, in the eyes of many Muslims, heretical branch of Islam.

But the house of Saud, when they were still desert brigands and not yet royals, were attached to this goofy branch of Islam. When the Saudis captured Arabia in 1924 they institutionalized their patronage of the Wahhabi clerics and when the vast oil revenues started flooding in this became serious money.

Because of this patronage Wahhabism has achieved influence far beyond the credibility of its doctrines by setting up schools, universities and mosques around the Muslim world as well as funding missionary work by fanatical clerics.

For example, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, some of whose members were involved in the founding and strategic concepts of al-Qaida, is often seen as having been influenced by Wahhabist thought, especially the drive to purify and simplify Islam.

One of the places where the Wahhabists have been especially successful in perverting the minds of disoriented young people is in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, especially in Saudi-funded madrasah religious schools in and around the western city of Peshawa.

Those schools, it's worth noting in passing, have also drawn and indoctrinated students from predominantly Muslim countries in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia and Indonesia where waves of Islamic terrorism have also crashed ashore.

It is here that Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence agency marshalled these brainwashed refugee students to form the Taliban — the name means students — to go off to capture Afghanistan. The ISI and the Pakistani government of then prime minister Benazir Bhutto feared that Afghanistan would fall under the influence of its regional rival India if the warlords of the Northern Alliance were allowed to take power in Kabul.

The Taliban, as we know, were largely successful and among their many fundamentalist depredations on the people of Afghanistan was to offer sanctuary to a Saudi building contractor, also bristling with royal petro-dollars, Osama bin Laden.

In the past six years the problem of confronting the Wahhabist puritans has spun well beyond Riyadh and Peshawa. They are no longer exclusive targets in the way they were in 2001, though causing as much distress as possible for the House of Saud can always be justified for reasons of good taste if nothing else.

There are now a multitude of battle fronts from Kandahar through Chechenya and southern Thailand by way of Mindanao in the Philippines, Indonesia and inner-city immigrant enclaves in Birmingham, Hamburg, Paris and Toronto.

And the jihadist cause is no longer simply a Wahhabist mission. It has spread well beyond that narrow strand of Islam as a result of the invasion of Iraq and the resultant destabilization of the Middle East.

The gross error of fabricating reasons to invade Iraq lifted bin Laden from being the leader of a bunch of semi-outcast religious weirdos into the voice of a mainstream counterattack against humiliation.

The Wahhabist agenda has become subsumed into other conflicts between the two main Sunni and Shia Islamic sects. The issues have been further clouded and obscured by the questions of Israel, Saudi Arabia's Sunni surrogates among the Palestinian militants, and Shia Iran's backing of Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Then there's the very present matter of whether the civil war in Iraq leads to the shattering of the country into its Shia, Sunni and Kurdish components, with all the possibilities that holds for a wider regional political conflict.

Whether better considered responses to the terrorist attacks six years ago could have contained the problem to more manageable proportions is now a matter for historians.

But at least for Canadian forces and North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies in Afghanistan the issues and challenges are much the same as they were six years ago.

Sun International Affairs Columnist

jmanthorpe@png.canwest.com

War on terror necessary, Harper says; PM to urge unity in speech to both Aussie houses on 9/11 anniversary

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Greg Wood, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / Prime Minister Stephen Harper is surrounded by local schoolchildren as he leaves the Australian War Memorial in Canberra Monday. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: CANBERRA

BYLINE: Mike De Souza

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 645

CANBERRA -- Canada and Australia have both been victimized by terrorism, and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Harper's remarks today said.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebecois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Harper noted men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

"Seventy Canadian soldiers and one of our diplomats have fallen in Afghanistan, as well as a Canadian carpenter, murdered by the Taliban after he built a school for the children of a remote Afghan village," said Harper, who is only the sixth foreign leader to address Australian MPs and senators.

"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said. "And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it. . . . The cause is noble and necessary."

Harper said that the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become

ours.

But some of Harper's harshest warnings were directed at Canadian senators, as he highlighted one of the main differences between the systems of government in the two countries.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say: When we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy,' " Harper said, referring to Ted Morton, a Conservative member of the Alberta legislature who ran unsuccessfully for the party leadership. "Because, in Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as long as 45 years."

He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

"Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change or, like the old upper houses of our provinces, vanish," he said.

Harper also stressed that the two countries had overcome many similar challenges through parallel histories, developing common values and principles that made them strong.

"Australia was born in English, Canada in French, at Quebec City 400 years ago next year — reflected to this day by the presence of francophones and the 'Quebécois nation' within our united country," he said.

He said the two countries have established solid reputations, defending freedom, democracy and human rights, building multilateral institutions and establishing international law.

"Friends, we should underestimate neither our capacity to influence events nor to influence others," he said.

"Our peacekeepers and peacemakers have saved countless millions from war and devastation. Our aid programs and relief workers have helped poor countries across the globe improve the lives of their citizens. And our histories have set an expiring example."

But Harper also stressed that countries should always be vigilant and prepared for unexpected obstacles such as the threat of an economic downturn.

"I believe that one of the great dangers facing both our countries today is complacency about the economy," he said. "Complacency because many of our citizens have long forgotten, or have never experienced, economic recession."

He said both are faced with new competition from rising economic giants such as China and India that demand new international efforts to develop "freer and fairer trade for developed and developing countries alike."

Harper's visit to Australia began last week in Sydney for a summit of Pacific Rim leaders

War on terror necessary, Harper says; PM urges unity in speech to both Aussie houses on 9/11 anniversary

IDNUMBER 200709110013

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.09.11

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SECTION: News

PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Greg Wood, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / Prime Minister Stephen Harper is surrounded by local schoolchildren as he leaves the Australian War Memorial in Canberra Monday. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: CANBERRA, Australia

BYLINE: Mike De Souza

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 654

CANBERRA, Australia — Canada and Australia have both been "bloodied by terror," and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," Harper said Tuesday night in his speech.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms.

In wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebécois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Harper also praised all of the Australian political parties for standing together in support of the mission in Afghanistan. Taking an indirect shot at Canada's opposition parties who have questioned the mission, he said the solidarity of the political rivals in Australia was greatly appreciated by Canadian troops.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Harper noted men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

"Seventy Canadian soldiers and one of our diplomats have fallen in Afghanistan, as well as a Canadian carpenter, murdered by the Taliban after he built a school for the children of a remote Afghan village," said Harper, who is only the sixth foreign leader to address Australian MPs and senators.

"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said. "And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it ... The cause is noble and necessary."

Harper said that the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become our own."

But some of Harper's harshest warnings were directed at Canadian senators, as he highlighted one of the main differences between the systems of government in the two countries.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say: When we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy,'" Harper said, referring to Ted Morton, a Conservative member of the Alberta legislature who ran unsuccessfully for the party leadership. "Because, in Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as much as 45 years."

He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

But Harper's complaints about the Canadian Senate were taken as a joke by the Australian Parliament who laughed hysterically as he described the Upper Chamber in Canada.

"By the nature of the [Canadian] system, they're not accountable to voters. So it's a rare pleasure for me to be among senators who are actually elected by the people they represent."

He added that Australia's senators reflected the very essence of a responsible government since they have a mandate to govern from the people. He said this was a minimum condition of 21st century democracy, hinting that the days of Canadian senators might be numbered.

"Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change or, like the old upper houses of our provinces, vanish," he said.

Harper also stressed that the two countries had overcome many similar challenges through parallel histories, developing common values and principles that made them strong.

"Australia was born in English, Canada in French, at Quebec City 400 years ago next year -- reflected to this day by the presence of francophones and the 'Quebecois nation' within our united country," he said.

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But Harper also stressed that countries should always be vigilant and prepared for unexpected obstacles such as the threat of an economic downturn.

Put government out of its misery

IDNUMBER 200709110103
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DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Letter
PAGE: AA07
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 68

Must 'finish' Afghan job: PM

Sept. 10

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's change of heart regarding the ending of our mission in Afghanistan provides an excellent opportunity for the opposition majority to terminate his arrogant rule. All three opposition parties oppose the extension of our military mission, Harper's attitude toward Kyoto, his annulment of the Liberals' public child-care program and more.

Isn't it about time they bring Conservative minority rule to an end?

Jerry Berman, Toronto

PM praises Afghan role as 'noble, necessary'; Canada, Australia have duty to 'confront terror and defeat it,' Harper tells MPs in Canberra

IDNUMBER 200709110088
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Met
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA01
ILLUSTRATION: TIM WIMBORNE reuters Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife,Laureen, place a poppy on the eastern cloisters of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra yesterday. ;
BYLINE: Tonda MacCharles
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 514

Prime Minister Stephen Harper used the first ever speech by a Canadian leader to Australia's parliament to urge it and Canadians to stand fast in Afghanistan for a cause that is "noble and necessary."

On today's sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the United States, and with a debate back home raging over Canada's future military role in Afghanistan, Harper once again focused on terrorism as a threat that hangs over democracies like Canada.

He said Canada and Australia have a duty to "confront terror and defeat it," guided "in part" by the attacks on New York and Washington.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny."

Australian Prime Minister John Howard did not rule out the possibility that Australian troops might be able to provide some support to the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, noting Canadians have suffered "heavy" losses in proportion to the number of troops deployed.

Howard said he and Harper have not discussed any particular "joint operation or a joint way forward."

But when asked by Canadian reporters if Australia could offer help to Canadians, Howard said: "It would not surprise that if, in the course of discussing things, we looked at the sort of situation that you had in mind," but he urged reporters not to infer they had already had such discussions or agreed on anything.

Harper's government has lately tried to shift the public's attention and his government's communications efforts onto the humanitarian aid and development component of the mission in Afghanistan.

But today in the Australian capital, he made only passing reference to that, referring to Canada's and Australia's "leading roles in the security and reconstruction effort" in southern Afghanistan.

Instead, Harper focused on what spurred Canada to undertake its mission in the first place.

PM praises Afghan role as 'noble, necessary'; Canada, Australia have duty to 'confront terror and defeat it,'

"The cause is noble and necessary," said Harper.

"Because as 9/11 showed, if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

Both Canada and Australia have been "bloodied by terror," he said.

He pointed to the losses both nations have suffered: 24 Canadians died in the World Trade Center attack in New York, along with 70 soldiers and a diplomat in the ensuing conflict in Afghanistan.

Australia saw 88 citizens killed among the 202 people slain when Al Qaeda– inspired bombers targeted Bali's nightclub strip on Oct. 12, 2002.

Harper said it is a "great comfort" to the 2,500 Canadian soldiers in Kandahar to know nearly 1,000 Aussie soldiers are next door in Uruzgan province.

But there is a big difference in the two countries' experience of the war in Afghanistan, one that Harper did not refer to: Australia has suffered no combat casualties in the field in Afghanistan.

Its core military contribution is focused on reconstruction and housing, with much of the security provided by the larger Dutch force there.

Certainly, it is the loss of Canadian soldiers in disproportionate numbers in Afghanistan that is weighing on Canadians now, and the apparent reluctance by other NATO and non–NATO allies to step into the breach and offer to replace Canadian troops in Kandahar.

The military's combat role is scheduled to end in February 2009. Harper says he will put the future of Canada's role there to a vote in Parliament, but only if he is sure he can win it and that it will provide a "positive" mandate for Canadian soldiers there.

Harper's baffling Afghan agenda

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PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
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COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 479

What role, exactly, does Prime Minister Stephen Harper see Canada playing in Afghanistan after our combat tour in Kandahar ends in February 2009? Rather than provide clarity on this vital issue, the Conservatives seem intent on muddying the waters.

On June 22, Harper seemed to signal that our days in Kandahar were numbered. "This mission will end" unless Parliament votes to extend it, he said. And that is highly unlikely, given the opposition parties' views, growing public disaffection and lack of allied support.

While Harper still hopes we will not "simply abandon Afghanistan," he also acknowledged "there is some expectation that there would be a new role." Later, on Sept. 2, Defence Minister Peter MacKay echoed him. "Our current configuration will end," he said. The signal "has been sent," and "there is an expiration date that has been set."

But today, two weeks later, the "expiration date" is as fuzzy as the "new role." Harper now says he wants to "finish the job." He sees no need to have Parliament vote soon on a new role. He hopes to "continue with what we are working on now." Continue in Kandahar until the job is done? How long might that be? Another decade?

This is confusing not only to the public but also to our 2,500 troops in the field and to our American, British and Dutch allies.

Rather than leave everyone guessing at his intentions, Harper should spell them out in the Oct. 16 throne speech. If he sees Canadian troops staying in Kandahar in some role, he should say so. If he believes they should be redeployed elsewhere he should make that clear.

And since he doesn't want to "rush" Parliament into a vote unless he can obtain sufficient opposition support to arm our troops with a clear mandate, Harper should use the next five weeks to craft a coherent strategy that other parties can endorse. The throne speech should contain a road map for Canada's future involvement that Stephane Dion's Liberals and the other parties regard as credible. Otherwise, they threaten to introduce a motion demanding that the Conservatives serve notice to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that we are out of Kandahar when our tour ends.

Instead of ignoring public opinion and seeking to wrong-foot the Liberals, New Democrats and Bloc Quebecois, Harper should acknowledge his responsibility as Prime Minister to provide direction. Drawing up a forward-looking plan that appeals to more than just a narrow Conservative constituency may not be easy, but it is one of the challenges of minority government. Harper should face it head on.

Our troops, whose lives are on the line, deserve clarity. So does NATO. Where exactly does Harper stand, short of "staying the course" on a dangerous, costly mission that few allies are prepared to join? We don't know. The Prime Minister has some explaining to do.

13-year-old resists marriage to Afghan warlord on PBS's Wide Angle

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PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Arts & Life
PAGE: D8
COLUMN: Fine Tuning
KEYWORDS: 0
BYLINE: ALEX STRACHAN
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 226

A Woman Among Warlords, tonight's season finale of PBS's Wide Angle (WETK – 10 p.m.) shows how a kind of uneasy democracy is taking hold in a Afghanistan, a place where women's rights were until recently unheard of.

Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghani women's rights advocate at the heart of this remarkable film, tells an 80-year-old warlord and opium trader that, no, he cannot shack up with the 13-year-old girl he's chosen to become one of his wives, if she's against it (she is) and her family is against it (they are).

The girl, Rahela Nakim, is a fifth-grader who can read and write, thanks to the emergence of schools.

The warlord needs Nakim to keep the books. That's the real reason he wants the girl to marry him: he wants an accountant, preferably one who can read and write.

– The latest Canadian Idol (CTV – 8 p.m.) winner is crowned tonight. It's a coin toss between Jaydee Bixby and Brian Melo.

– The Biggest Loser (NBC, E! – 8 p.m.) is billed as the first reality series "where everybody loses." Except those viewers who scarf munchies while watching, no doubt.

The new season bows tonight, with a new host (Days of Our Lives' Alison Sweeney), the return of killer trainer Jillian Michael and a "where are they now?" segment.

– Jodie Foster joins Jon Stewart on The Daily Show (Comedy Network – 11 p.m., CTV– 12:05 a.m.) to talk about films, politics, Stewart's acting in Death to Smoochy, and whether Jon has more Emmys than Jodie has Oscars.

Canada a 9/11 victim, too: Harper; Australian parliament speech. Ties global poverty to terrorism

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PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette

DATE: 2007.09.11

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A17

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: SHANNON STAPLETON, REUTERS / Signs of concrete progress on the buildings that are to replace New York's World Trade Centre, destroyed in the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, can be seen around a sea of cranes in Lower Manhattan. A woman oversees construction from a room with models of the Freedom Tower complex. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

DATELINE: CANBERRA

BYLINE: MIKE DE SOUZA

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 292

Canada and Australia have both been victimized by terrorism, and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Harper's remarks today said.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Québécois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians and 12 Canadians, Harper noted men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

"Seventy Canadian soldiers and one of our diplomats have fallen in Afghanistan, as well as a Canadian carpenter, murdered by the Taliban after he built a school for the children of a remote Afghan village," said Harper, only the sixth foreign leader to address Australian MPs and senators.

"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said.

"And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it. ... The cause is noble and necessary."

Harper said that the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

Afghan war not forgotten, envoy says; Allies must wait for democracy: Wilkins

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PAGE: A15
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: MIKE BLANCHFIELD
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 277

Despite the U.S. focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9/11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said. "We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrests last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terrorism-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Wilkins said.

This year's 9/11 anniversary comes as Canada and the Netherlands debate whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

Opposition parties are calling for an end to Canada's combat role in Kandahar. The New Democratic Party wants soldiers withdrawn immediately. The Dutch parliament, meanwhile, must renew its commitment to Afghanistan by next August.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9/11," Wilkins warned.

Twin suicide bombings ripped through a market in the southern Helmand province yesterday, killing 26 people and injuring more than 50 others, local officials said. The coordinated attacks appeared to target police officers. But many civilians, including two children, were killed, a district official said.

The Washington Post Contributed to This Report

U.S. committed to war in Afghanistan: ambassador says; Canada lauded as crucial ally in war on terror

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
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EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: E10
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Getty Images, File / Canadian troops are needed in Afghanistan, says U.S. ambassador David Wilkins. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 585

OTTAWA – Despite America's focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9/11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said Monday, the day before his country prepared to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including 24 Canadians. "We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrests last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terror-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Wilkins said in an interview.

This year's 9/11 anniversary comes as key American allies — Canada and the Netherlands — are embroiled in national debates on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

In Australia during the weekend, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

Opposition parties are calling for an end to Canada's combat role in Kandahar province by then. In fact, the New Democratic Party wants the soldiers withdrawn immediately. The Dutch parliament, meanwhile, must renew its commitment to Afghanistan by next August.

Wilkins stressed that while he hopes Canada remains in Afghanistan, it is up to parliamentarians to decide.

"Americans aren't the only ones that lost their lives in 9/11 and I certainly hope that, worldwide, the freedom-loving countries remember that," Wilkins said.

"The United States appreciates Canada as a friend and as an ally. You're not only our largest trading partner, you're our partner in the war on terror. You've done yeoman's work in Afghanistan, so we hope that will continue."

Wilkins would not discuss the possible domino effect that some experts say could result if the Dutch and other countries begin to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Despite its massive military entanglement in Iraq, the U.S. still contributes the bulk of western forces to Afghanistan -- about 30,000 troops.

It is also the runaway leader in casualties, said Wilkins. As of Sunday, 60 per cent of the 617 western military personnel killed in Afghanistan since 2001 were from the United States. In all, 372 American troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared with 76 British and 70 Canadians (along with one diplomat). Germany has lost 25 soldiers while the Dutch have suffered 10 fatalities.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9/11," Wilkins warned.

"It's not just the United States. The arrests in Germany, the arrests in Canada, the arrests in London all within the last year show that no one is immune from the terrorist plots."

Canada and the Netherlands are key American allies on the front lines of fighting in the particularly dangerous southern provinces of Afghanistan, with more than 4,000 troops between them.

"The war on terror is going to continue and we hope that all countries are going to be vigilant and on guard and participate in that war. Canada has certainly done its part in Afghanistan, there's no question about that," said Wilkins. "We hope all the NATO countries will continue that mission, because the job's not yet done."

In Ottawa, the U.S. embassy will mark the 9/11 anniversary by allowing visitors to sign a condolence book between 9 a.m. and noon.

Training for the real thing; Army strives to replicate Afghanistan in Wainwright

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ryan Jackson, The Journal / WELCOME TO 'KANDAHAR,'ALBERTA: Soldiers advance on a mock Afghanistan village during training at CFB Wainwright on Monday. ; Photo: Ryan Jackson, The Journal / Soldiers train on the LAV III, one of the standard vehicles used in Afghanistan. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; FOREIGN AID
DATELINE: WAINWRIGHT
BYLINE: Trish Audette
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 726

WAINWRIGHT – Pte. Tyler Mason expected Monday night would be his first under the stars, tucked into a sleeping bag at the foot of a tank.

About 150 of his buddies — members of "Charlie" company in 2 PPCLI — joined him. One soldier was supposed to stay awake all night, ever watchful of a village just a couple hundred metres away. Was the village home to people friendly to Canadian soldiers? Or insurgents? The only way to know, Mason's bosses said, was to talk to them.

Mason, from Guelph, Ont., is five months from his first deployment to Afghanistan. On Monday afternoon he stood at the top of a hill at CFB Wainwright, an automatic rifle held across his chest. He is one of more than 1,000 soldiers from CFB Shilo to experience the Canadian army's model of Kandahar Air Field.

The rolling Canadian Prairie landscape, about 200 kilometres east of Edmonton, is home to an early version of the Little Afghanistan scheduled to be built here by next month.

"It's close to as real as possible," said Mason, 27. "This is all supposed to be new to us."

As he spoke, his comrades negotiated with "Afghan villagers" — fellow soldiers in costume — to search the makeshift town for weapons. Machine-gun fire could be heard popping in the distance, tanks were at the ready, and a handful of troops crawled on the ground, almost hidden by tall brown grass.

So far, Mason said, he has slept in a cot in one of the hundreds of heated tents lined up in the air field, set up to look like NATO's Afghan headquarters.

"You really rely on your friends, your buddies, to make it through," he said.

He has been stationed in Manitoba for 14 months and leaves for his first tour in Afghanistan in February.

Monday was the first day of training for many of the troops who will be brought in to Wainwright for the next two months, before their 2008 deployment.

Approximately 3,000 men and women are in the camp now, some to create the Afghanistan experience, most to learn from it. It cost \$2 million to upgrade the facilities for this exercise, designed to better reflect what troops face overseas, military spokesman Capt. Mark Peebles said.

Further upgrades to be finished next month will complete the Little Afghanistan makeover. Villages will be manned by real actors who play the parts of villagers, and troops can even start to blow up the models they have created.

Capt. Konrad von Finckenstein was in Kandahar in 2006 and will return next year. These days, he said, the training exercises look a lot more like what is actually happening in Afghanistan.

Before 2005, troops often re-enacted what they had learned in the former Yugoslavia or other conflict areas, he said.

Three members of the Senate Committee on National Defence made their first appearance at Wainwright Monday, armed with two key questions — whether troops are improving their training facilities as they learn more overseas, and whether they train on the same equipment they'll use when they get to Afghanistan.

"It's very impressive how large the place is and how thorough the training," said chairman Sen. Colin Kenny.

Already, the entrance to "Kandahar Air Field" is surrounded by barbed wire fences, lookout towers and soldiers with stony faces holding rifles.

There is even a pull-off entranceway for civilian vehicles to be checked, buffered on either side by concrete blocks. In Afghanistan, this would guard the airfield from suicide attacks.

"We work very hard ... to ensure that there are all aspects of the mission of Afghanistan that are practised," said Col. Jon Vance, who commands the training facility.

That includes live-action weapons seizures, command operations out of a tent that houses maps of the base, and even practice at media relations.

"It's not always 100 per cent exactly what you'd see in Afghanistan," Vance said. But "for all intents and purposes to the training (soldiers), we're in Kandahar."

The military can't replicate conditions in the desert — where Peebles said it gets very cold at night — but the emphasis is on playing out tactics and plans that will be used overseas.

"It takes a big team to deliver Kandahar in a way the Afghan people feel confident to govern themselves," Vance said. "We stay very closely apprised to anything that happens in Afghanistan. They're not going to scare us away, we're not leaving."

taudette@thejournal.canwest.com

HOME FROM THE WAR

Some 88 Edmonton-based soldiers return home tonight after a six-month tour in Afghanistan.

It will be the last flight of redeploying soldiers from the 2,400-strong Task Force 1-07 of which 280 soldiers

came from Land Force Western Area. Once in Canada, the soldiers will begin an acclimatization process where they will get a day off, followed by three half-days of work before beginning a month of post-deployment leave.

The group returns to the Edmonton International Airport at 9:15 p.m.

SEE MORE

Watch an audio slide show and video from the Desert Ram training exercises. Go to www.edmontonjournal.com

BOMBING Afghanistan suicide attack kills 28

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DATE: 2007.09.11
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BYLINE:
SECTION: International News
SOURCE: AP CP
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 291
WORD COUNT: 282

Associated Press, Canadian Press KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN A suicide bomber on a motorized rickshaw detonated explosives yesterday in a marketplace in Helmand province, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban.

In adjacent Kandahar province, an unspecified number of Taliban insurgents were killed during the third day of a major Canadian-led operation.

The suicide attacker in Helmand was apparently targeting a police commander when he detonated his bomb near a taxi stand around 6:30 p.m. in the town of Gereshk. The region is the site of the country's worst violence this year. The dead included 13 police officers and 15 civilians, Gereshk district chief Abdul Manaf Khan said. Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

Helmand shares security concerns with Kandahar, where a Canadian mission is under way to increase the international presence in Zhari district, driving insurgents out of what has been a stronghold.

"The operation that we've been conducting in the past 72 hours has inflicted heavy losses, both in terms of command and control and equipment, to the insurgents," Major Eric Laforest told reporters at the International Security Assistance Force base at Kandahar airfield.

Canadian soldiers, working alongside the Afghan National Security Forces, also seized arms and explosives as they pushed across a 20-square-kilometre stretch of the district west of Kandahar city.

Insurgents fired back on Canadian troops with mortars and rockets.

"As expected, insurgents tried to come back on us and with the combined effects of indirect fire and direct fire, we were able to inflict some damage and push them back," Major Laforest said.

A total of about 700 Canadian soldiers and Afghan security forces were involved in the operation, called Keeping Goodwill.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:strife; bombs; deaths

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

TERRORISM World risks more attacks if Afghan mission fails, MacKay says

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PAGE: A4
BYLINE: CHRIS MORRIS
SECTION: National News
SOURCE: CP
EDITION: Early
DATELINE: ST. ANDREWS, N.B.
WORDS: 373
WORD COUNT: 370

CHRIS MORRIS Canadian Press ST. ANDREWS, N.B.

On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned yesterday that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

Mr. MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for countries like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," Mr. MacKay said after a private address in this New Brunswick resort town to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

"So we have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan.

Mr. Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaeda," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?" Mr. MacKay said Canada's military mission to Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February, 2009. But he said Canada's role in Afghanistan is diverse and he predicted its involvement in the rebuilding and redevelopment of the war-torn country will continue for a "very long time." Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will introduce a motion in the Commons setting February, 2009, as a firm end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan. But the Liberals also have indicated a vote would not be needed if the Conservative government would now tell NATO and the government of Afghanistan that the combat mission in Kandahar will end on that date.

Mr. MacKay said there are mixed signals coming from the opposition when it comes to the Afghanistan debate, adding there is a "clear split" in the Liberal Party on the issue.

He would not say whether he believes Canada and North America as a whole are safer today as a result of the war on terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:terrorism; strife; foreign policy; defence; political; government; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Peter MacKay; Omar Samad

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

9/11 ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS PM launches blow at Liberal-dominated Senate

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IDN: 072540159
DATE: 2007.09.11
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BYLINE: GLORIA GALLOWAY
SECTION: International News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Canberra AUSTRALIA
WORDS: 655
WORD COUNT: 626

GLORIA GALLOWAY CANBERRA Canada's Prime Minister stood in the Parliament of Australia on the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to talk about the close ties between the two nations and the "noble and necessary" responsibility they share for making the world a safer place.

But not before he took a hard swipe at the Liberal-dominated Canadian Senate, and lobbed a veiled threat that he could move to abolish the chamber if Senators did not agree to democratic reform.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say, when we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy,' " Mr. Harper told Australian senators and members of Parliament in the opening lines of his speech this morning.

"In Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as long as 45 years. By the nature of the system, they're not accountable to voters." Australian senators, on the other hand, are elected – something Mr. Harper described as a minimum condition of 21st-century democracy.

"Australia's Senate shows how a reformed upper house can function in our parliamentary system," he said, "And Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change, or, like the old upper houses of our provinces, vanish." It is unusual for world leaders to wade into domestic squabbles when they have been given an international podium. But Mr. Harper regularly criticizes his opposition while abroad, and the Senate is one of his favourite targets.

Liberal senators, who hold a majority in the chamber, decided not to vote on a bill that calls for eight-year limits on Senate terms until its constitutionality had been tested in the courts.

But that bill and another that would create a process for electing senators were killed by Mr. Harper's decision to prorogue Parliament.

The Prime Minister's address to the Australian politicians returns an honour that the Canadians bestowed last year upon Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

The two leaders have a strong friendship and share many of the same ideals.

Mr. Howard is in trouble domestically, however, with polls suggesting that Labour Leader Kevin Rudd would

stroll to an easy victory in an election that could be called as early as this week.

For that reason, Mr. Harper also met today with Mr. Rudd, who wants to pull Australian troops out of Iraq but beef up the country's contingent in Afghanistan. That could help cement a bond between him and Mr. Harper, who wants Canadian troops to continue playing a large role in Afghanistan.

The duration of Canada's mission threatens to dominate debate in Ottawa this fall, with all three opposition parties demanding a clear signal that Canadian troops will pull out at the end of the mandate in February, 2009.

And Mr. Harper, who was substituted as guest speaker for the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe cancelled, took the opportunity of his address to stress the importance of maintaining a military presence in the region.

Although the troops of Canada and Australia have rarely fought on the same battlefield, he said, they have fought for the same ideals.

"We are fast friends of, but fiercely proud of our differences with, our other strategic cousin – the United States," he said.

But "Sept. 11, 2001, was truly a day that shook the world. Six years on, the horrific images from that morning still evoke anger, sorrow and – as intended – terror. The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us." Canadians have mourned the loss of Australian lives in subsequent terrorist attacks in places such as Bali, and have lost 70 of Canada's own soldiers in Afghanistan, he said.

"So both our countries have been bloodied by terror. And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it," Mr. Harper said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Australia

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; visits; statements

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party; Conservative Party of Canada

CANADIAN POLICY Harper does a turn on the world stage Prime Minister uses his APEC visit to signal to voters a shift in his views on climate change and the Afghan mission

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IDN: 072540158

DATE: 2007.09.11

PAGE: A17 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: BRIAN LAGHI

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 953

WORD COUNT: 1017

BRIAN LAGHI OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF The annual APEC conference is a large stage that draws thousands of journalists, but often produces very little news. It is, in other words, a perfect opportunity for a prime minister who wants to be seen changing his spots.

Stephen Harper returns from the annual conference in Sydney having made new efforts to change his public image on two key issues: his government's record on the environment and the combat mission in Afghanistan. He must throw over these two albatrosses if the Conservative Party is to win a majority, and the fact that Mr. Harper made his comments in full international view demonstrates that he wants voters to know it.

While many other leaders focused on the less sexy issues of international trade, Mr. Harper used the meeting to deliver two key messages.

The first is that the Canadian government is, at the very least, in the middle of the pack when it comes to trying to ameliorate climate change. The second is the government appears increasingly doubtful about remaining in a combat role in Kandahar, and Canadians may not be hearing a whole lot more from the Conservatives about it.

As the summer began, Mr. Harper's brain trust and Tories everywhere wondered just what it would take to catapult the government into majority territory. At least some of the answers came in a poll produced by the Strategic Counsel for The Globe and Mail/CTV News last month. The Prime Minister, according to the survey results, was too right wing and too close to U.S. President George W. Bush, and a full 63 per cent said their impression of the PM would improve if the government got Canada out of its combat role right away.

Another 83 per cent said their view of the PM would get better if he implemented Canada's commitments under the Kyoto accord for reducing greenhouse gases.

Tory pollsters are no doubt telling the Prime Minister the same thing, and so it was last week that Mr. Harper began underscoring things that are in stark contrast to his government's original views.

On the environment, Canada supported and helped draw up a document in Sydney that committed APEC members to strengthen efforts to bring down greenhouse-gas emissions. While falling substantially short of

the spirit of Kyoto, the Canadian government has become a supporter of specific targets for reductions, something the United States has failed to embrace.

On the war, Mr. Harper made another quarter-turn away by saying on Sunday that he might not hold a House of Commons vote on whether to extend the Afghanistan combat mission past its expiry date of 2009. It's a move that, taken with a number of other hints over the summer, suggests Canada is getting ever-further from the possibility of recommitting to the fighting.

Why has the Prime Minister revealed himself now? Aside from the obvious – that the Australian trip was so high profile that nobody could miss what he had to say – three by-elections coming up in Quebec could be bellwethers for his party. Should the Tories win at least two of them, the PM can point to progress in Quebec, and to the fact that opposition to his climate-change and Afghanistan policies is on the wane.

Of course, Mr. Harper still has many pitfalls to negotiate.

While moving from his previous hard-line stand on climate change, he still doesn't believe in the Kyoto accord; the opposition may exploit this. Mr. Harper's previous pledge not to "cut and run" in Afghanistan is open to criticism, both from the opposition and from critics who will say that Canada is abandoning a pledge to a suffering country.

The Strategic Counsel poll found other problems, including a perception that the Prime Minister is too controlling. But the lesson from the Australian trip is that, after a summer of hints and intimations, the Harper government has become clearer on where it wants to go on its two most vexing issues. If this shift fails to move the poll numbers, Conservatives may start to ask themselves what else might be wrong.

***** Harper's positions On Afghanistan Then Under Stephen Harper, the Conservatives introduced legislation in 2006 aimed at extending the combat mission in Kandahar until 2009. The motion passed with the votes of two dozen Liberals. He also told soldiers in Kandahar in 2006 that his government wouldn't "make a commitment and then run away at the first sign of trouble," and as recently as one year ago, surrounded himself with the relatives of Canadian victims of 9/11 to garner support for the mission.

Now Recently, Mr. Harper's Defence Minister, Peter MacKay, said NATO allies have been informed that the Canadian contribution to the mission will be reconfigured after 2009. Mr. Harper has also said the mission will be extended only if there is a consensus of support from all parties in Parliament. On Sunday, he modified that yet again, saying Parliament will vote on an extension only if he is sure the Commons will support the idea.

On the environment Then During the election campaign of 2004, the Tories signalled that they would pull out of Kyoto if elected. Last April, the government cancelled at least 15 climate-change programs, including the One-Tonne Challenge that encouraged individual Canadians to conserve energy and the EnerGuide program that provided incentives to retrofit houses.

Now Mr. Harper agreed at the recent meeting of the G8 industrialized nations to support a move to set targets to cut greenhouse emissions by half by 2050. Canada was given a special mention in the recent APEC communique for proposing long-term reduction goals.

Brian Laghi

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Sydney; Australia; Canada; Industrialized World

CANADIAN POLICY Harper does a turn on the world stage Prime Minister uses his APEC visit to signal to v

SUBJECT TERM: summit conference; visits; foreign policy; foreign relations; government; political

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

THE AFGHAN MISSION Debate goals in Kandahar, not timeline, Harper tells opposition

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BYLINE: GLORIA GALLOWAY
SECTION: National News
SOURCE: STAFF CP
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Canberra AUSTRALIA
WORDS: 366
WORD COUNT: 354

GLORIA GALLOWAY With a report from Canadian Press CANBERRA Prime Minister Stephen Harper fired another salvo today at the opposition's unwillingness to continue the current mission in Afghanistan past the expiry date.

In Canberra, where he had a one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister John Howard, the roles the two countries are playing to help the Afghan people were on the table.

The Australians are performing a reconstruction mission in Uruzghan province, which is under the protection of the Dutch, and they are fearful about what could happen if the Dutch pull out when their mission ends next year. The province is on the northern border of Kandahar.

Mr. Harper said Canada has no plans to take over that province once the Dutch leave. But both Mr. Howard and Mr. Harper said the two countries can work on joint projects in Afghanistan, and announced today that they would spend an additional \$10-million on shared initiatives.

As for the possibility that Canada could withdraw its troops, Mr. Harper said he hoped that in the next year and a half the debate in Canada would turn from when Canadians will leave to what their objectives should be.

"I don't see the United Nations telling Canada to leave on a certain day . . .," Mr. Harper said.

Meanwhile yesterday, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada cautioned that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

Mr. MacKay and Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for countries like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it is ready to defend itself against the forces of terrorism.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to our shores on this continent," Mr. MacKay said after a private address in St.

Andrews, N.B., to a meeting of ambassadors to Canada.

Mr. Samad said Canadians only have to remember what Afghanistan was like when it was abandoned and forgotten by the world in the 1990s.

"It fell into the hands of international terrorists, drug dealers, warlords and al-Qaeda," he said. "Do we want Afghanistan to revert and once again become a failed state and become a threat . . . to the world at large?"

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; foreign policy; defence; government; political; statements; terrorism

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper; Peter MacKay; Omar Samad

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION Fallen soldier's parents are rallying their hopes

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072540045

DATE: 2007.09.11

PAGE: A5

BYLINE:

SECTION: National News

SOURCE: CP

EDITION: National

DATELINE: Saint John NB

WORDS: 301

WORD COUNT: 258

Canadian Press SAINT JOHN Normal will never be normal again for Laurie and Donnie Greenslade, whose son, David, was killed in Afghanistan in the spring.

But the Saint John couple are hoping a rally for Canadian troops later this month will give them the strength to go through a number of boxes that contain their son's belongings.

The young private, along with five other soldiers, was killed in Afghanistan on Easter Sunday.

"I would really like to unpack David's stuff," Ms. Greenslade said at the couple's home. "I haven't done one thing. And maybe write some thank you notes." Mr. Greenslade holds a listing of his son's belongings that were returned from Afghanistan and his quarters at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown in New Brunswick.

Twenty years of memories and belongings summed up in five pages.

A hockey helmet. Bible. Spider-Man poster. Clothes. DVDs and a DVD player. Throughout the list the word "green" appears regularly.

Their son's world was a sea of army green.

The Greenslades have embarked on a campaign to recognize and support the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

It will culminate on Sept. 28 with the Red Friday Support Rally in Saint John. Students, members of the Royal Canadian Legion, firefighters, police and the general public will march through the downtown with a colour guard.

About 15,000 people are expected to attend.

The Greenslades hope businesses will allow employees an extended lunch hour on the day so they can attend the rally, which is expected to last 90 minutes.

Any proceeds left over from the cost of the rally will be put toward a bursary in Pte. Greenslade's name. People can donate directly to the bursary, which will benefit any young cadet or military personnel who plan to further their education beyond high school.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Saint John

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; deaths

PERSONAL NAME: Laurie Greenslade; Donnie Greenslade; David Greenslade

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Reporting, military style

SOURCETAG 0709110147
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 9
BYLINE: RICHARD LATENDRESSE
WORD COUNT: 475

With this Canadian mission in southern Afghanistan, war coverage has come back into style. Not that it was ever out of style.

I remember back in June 1992, a handful of colleagues and I were there when soldiers from the First Battalion of the Van Doos reopened the Sarajevo airport.

During that period, the hatred among Serbs, Croats and Bosnians had become so bitterly intense, that we journalists were in constant danger.

Another piercing memory is that of the return of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti in 1994. American soldiers had done the groundwork, but Aristide's enemies were determined to make his return hellish. And it was. With wild gunfire into crowds of protesters, the lynching of political opponents, and random acts of violence, it was a bloody free-for-all.

The same hardened set of journalists was there each time, there in the thick of it, each of us doing our job at our own risk.

But this Afghanistan battle is seeing some fresh blood. Almost daily, a new batch of young reporters shows up, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, looking for the scoop.

They find out soon enough that this is definitely a dangerous assignment, but it's one that is heavily supervised. Being embedded with the Canadian army gives a reporter a front-row seat on the action, and daily contact with the soldiers themselves.

JOURNALISTIC SOUL

But a reporter signs away a part of his journalistic soul when he signs his military papers. The list of rules, restrictions and other obstacles is as long as the mission itself.

We're not allowed to say exactly where we are, how many people we're with, or what equipment we have with us. Don't even think about taking pictures of the inside of a combat vehicle. Don't describe how a weapon works. Don't show an antenna on a hilltop where Canadian soldiers are stationed.

Although 200 Afghans go by a given command post every day here on the ground, we can't show that command post in Canada -- it might be helping the enemy.

Do not divulge where soldiers keep their water bottles or the food rations back at base. Bite your lip if you want to describe what the Canadians know about the enemy and its military capacity. The list goes on.

The main goal in stifling journalists is to protect our troops; don't compromise any current or future mission.

The military thinks we do. The Taliban and their henchmen are everywhere, all over the world, the Canadian military tells us repeatedly. They're watching our reports, they're reading our articles, and they're passing our word on to the big cheese, the head of the Taliban, Mullah Omar.

If the pitfalls of being embedded are annoying, the alternative is deadlier.

You'd need a lot more than guts to drive along the roads here in your own vehicle, looking for a news story – you'd have to be rash and foolhardy. After all, the dangers threatening our soldiers threaten every outsider.

TANKS, ANYWAY

A heap of metal scraps paints a clear picture. It was an Afghan military vehicle before it met up with an improvised explosive device. I feel a lot safer travelling in a Canadian tank, thanks.

It's just a regular work day here. No one escapes the relentless sound of submachine guns, rocket fire and grenade launchers.

Nor do they escape they risk of kidnapping, the latest tactic in the arsenal of the Taliban and other extremists.

With these working conditions, my choice as a reporter is clear. Despite its drawbacks, there is no wise alternative to being imbedded with our soldiers.

Welcome to the new world war

SOURCETAG 0709110493
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 16
BYLINE: PAUL BERTON
COLUMN: Editorial
WORD COUNT: 282

Today, most of us will take time to remember the horrifying events of Sept. 11, 2001, and mourn the 2,974 deaths in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

But it shouldn't end there.

Global terrorism really is the new world war. We must work together to fight it and the conditions that breed it.

While the 9/11 attacks were appalling and outrageous, they were --- and are --- part of a continuum.

There have been dozens of others, some before and many since: in Germany, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, India, Algeria, Israel, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Russia, Jordan . . .

No part of the globe is immune:

In 2002 in Bali, Indonesia, 202 people died and 209 people were injured in bombings that rocked a tourist area.

In 2004 in Madrid, Spain, terrorist bombings killed 191 people and wounded 2,050.

In 2005 in London, England, 53 people were killed and almost 700 injured when suicide bombers attacked the underground.

It is not a hopeful picture.

For the war is far from over, and indeed it may just have begun. Demonstrators in Europe and elsewhere have warned that insults to Islam, even if unintended, will result in attacks that will make 9/11 pale in comparison. Indeed, they have stated that such attacks are inevitable.

Despite what you may think about the misguided and mismanaged invasion of Iraq, or the noble effort in Afghanistan, despite differences of opinion on how Canadians can best use their armed forces, certainly we can all agree on the need to better recognize and more effectively battle global terrorism.

Is it inspired by nationalism or religion? By the West's presence or absence abroad? By mental illness or poverty or social networks or a sense of injustice? Should we treat our own compatriots with suspicion or turn to them for help? Do we bomb them back? Or do we give these communities aid and infrastructure? Do we seek revenge or do we seek to understand the roots of the anger?

Despite decades of study, we don't have good answers to these questions — or a clear plan. It's time we work together and look harder to find them.

Overseas soldiers can vote Oct. 15

SOURCETAG 0709110783
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 26
WORD COUNT: 123

Edmonton soldiers serving overseas will be able to cast ballots in the municipal election after all.

City clerk David Edey said yesterday a deal has been worked out with the military to get mail-in ballots to personnel who will be away on election day – Oct. 15.

"The military has worked very closely with us to make arrangements to get the ballots out," Edey told Sun Media.

Earlier this year, city officials said soldiers in Afghanistan would not be able to vote because it would be impossible to get the ballots there and back in time. But some military personnel took exception to that.

Edey said the military is making soldiers aware the option is now available to them.

This is the first time the city has offered mail-in ballots.

Ballot packages will be sent out after an official list of candidates is available on Sept. 17 – nomination day.

Edey urged anyone who wants a mail-in ballot to request one from the city as soon as possible by contacting the city's election office. **KEYWORDS=EDMONTON**

No democracy at gunpoint; Western powers must find new tactics in Middle East struggle

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PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: The Editorial Page
PAGE: A14
KEYWORDS: TERRORISM; AIRCRAFT; PROPAGANDA;
HIJACKING
SOURCE: Calgary Herald
WORD COUNT: 612

The anniversary of the 9/11 attacks will be a convenient time for years to come to review how goes the war against those responsible for the most spectacular act of terrorism in history. Nevertheless, if the West treats the immolation of New York's twin towers as marking that war's beginning, it proceeds on dangerously misleading assumptions.

From the perspective of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, this struggle is just part of a conflict that has already lasted more than 1,200 years. During that time, Islam's armies have often had the best of it, occupying parts of Europe as far west as Spain, and limiting western influence in the Middle East until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War.

In the West, such grand sweeps of history seldom inform politicians elected to a four-year term. Bluntly put, bin Laden remembers with burning resentment what few westerners have even heard of.

His war with the West began not on Sept. 11, 2001, but on Aug. 23, 1996. It was not reported then. Outside the world of counterintelligence, few westerners had heard of him. Nevertheless, that was when bin Laden, recently arrived in the Hindu Kush mountains of Khurasan — the old Muslim name for Afghanistan he likes to use — declared war on the U.S. and Israel.

In a lengthy diatribe, he lamented historic grievances, as well as contemporary events that "shake the conscience" in countries around the world where "Zionist-Crusaders" had made "Muslim blood . . . the cheapest, and their wealth as loot."

Particularly, he felt "the pain of (the loss of) Al Quds (Jerusalem) in my internal organs," and bemoaned the presence of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia, whose ruling family he also detested. "The walls of oppression and humiliation cannot be demolished except in a rain of bullets," he concluded, urging "Muslim Brothers of the World" to fight the enemy.

Soon after, al-Qaeda terrorists attacked U.S. embassies in Africa, and the destroyer U.S.S Cole in Yemen. These events did not move America; only when hijacked airliners were crashed into landmark U.S. buildings, did Washington concede the full extent of bin Laden's ambition.

Notwithstanding Monday's upbeat report to Congress from U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, one could hardly call the western response an unqualified success.

True, it is not the unmitigated "fiasco" proclaimed by Democrats aspiring to the White House. Yet, the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have not accomplished U.S. President George W. Bush's war aim of secure governments based on liberal democratic principles, in either country. Nor has bin Laden been found.

Clearly, Allied success in remaking the politics of Germany and Japan after the Second World War was an exception proving a rule about the difficulty of imposing democracy. Postwar Germany did not so much have democracy imposed upon it, as its familiar orthodoxies restored, after a painful interlude. Japan, traumatized by atomic weapons, chose to learn from its military disaster, rather than deny it.

Neither condition prevails in the Middle East. If democratization is beyond reach, what is possible?

One could cut and run.

Or, the American dream of indigenous forces providing security for Iraqi and Afghan governments will someday mature.

Those governments may be no more democratic than Saudi Arabia's. However, by now, most Americans would think it sufficient if they were as friendly, and accept it as satisfaction for 9/11.

These options are real only for those who believe 9/11's roots are to be found in grievances that could ever be satisfied.

In 2008, Bush will be gone. Bin Laden and his acolytes (now taunting Americans to convert to Islam, if they would have peace) will still be there, in all their irreconcilable malcontent.

All that has changed after six years is what victory could look like. There is no assurance it will be durable, should it appear.

Japanese PM stands behind Afghan mission

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PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
COLUMN: Asia Report: News From the Region
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Shinzo Abe;
KEYWORDS: TRADE MISSIONS; PRIME MINISTERS
DATELINE: TOKYO
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 124

Japan's embattled Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday refused to resign and defied calls to end a controversial military mission overseas as he faced down a resurgent opposition.

Lawmakers returned after the summer recess Monday with Abe under mounting pressure after a raft of scandals and a heavy defeat in July elections that handed the opposition control of the upper house of parliament.

Japan, which is officially pacifist, provides logistical support in the Indian Ocean for 11 countries involved in the U.S.–led operations in Afghanistan.

A day after telling reporters he could quit if he fails to secure an extension of the mission, a defiant Abe told lawmakers he would stay in his job.

Abe told parliament that Japan must not abandon its "international responsibility" by withdrawing.

Some 55 per cent of voters oppose an extension of the mission, according to a weekend poll.

U.S. denies Afghanistan is 'forgotten war'; American envoy praises Canada for 'yeoman's work'

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PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: David Wilkins;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 472

Despite America's focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9/11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said Monday, the day before his country prepared to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including 24 Canadians. "We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrests last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terror-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Wilkins said in an interview.

This year's 9/11 anniversary comes as key American allies — Canada and the Netherlands — are embroiled in national debates on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

In Australia during the weekend, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

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Wilkins stressed that while he hopes Canada remains in Afghanistan, it is up to parliamentarians to decide.

"The United States appreciates Canada as a friend and as an ally. You're not only our largest trading partner, you're our partner in the war on terror. You've done yeoman's work in Afghanistan, so we hope that will continue."

Despite its massive military entanglement in Iraq, the U.S. still contributes the bulk of western forces to Afghanistan — about 30,000 troops.

It is also the runaway leader in casualties, said Wilkins. As of Sunday, 60 per cent of the 617 western military personnel killed in Afghanistan since 2001 were from the United States. In all, 372 American troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared with 76 British and 70 Canadians (along with one diplomat). Germany has lost 25 soldiers while the Dutch have suffered 10 fatalities.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9/11," Wilkins warned.

"It's not just the United States. The arrests in Germany, the arrests in Canada, the arrests in London all within the last year show that no one is immune from the terrorist plots."

Canada and the Netherlands are key American allies on the front lines of fighting in the particularly dangerous southern provinces of Afghanistan, with more than 4,000 troops between them.

PM urges continued fight against terrorism

IDNUMBER 200709110017
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Stephen Harper;
KEYWORDS: CANDIDATES; POLITICAL PARTIES; POLITICIANS; POLITICS; OPPOSITION;
RESULTS
DATELINE: CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA
BYLINE: Mike De Souza
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 234

Canada and Australia have both been "bloodied by terror," and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," Harper said Tuesday night in his speech.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms.

In wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebecois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Harper also praised all of the Australian political parties for standing together in support of the mission in Afghanistan. Taking an indirect shot at Canada's opposition parties who have questioned the mission, he said the solidarity of the political rivals in Australia was greatly appreciated by Canadian troops.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Harper noted men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

The PM's time out

IDNUMBER 200709110045
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A14
SOURCE: Lethbridge Herald
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 466

Viewpoint: Lethbridge (Alta.) Herald

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision to prorogue Parliament isn't all bad, despite fair criticism of the move. After all, plenty of small-c conservatives were steamed whenever the long governing Liberals held up the business of Parliament for its own partisan interests, and Harper did promise his government would work from higher ground.

By delaying a resumption of Parliament by a month, the Conservatives free up their supporters to concentrate on the provincial election in Ontario. They also buy some time to avoid uncomfortable questions, particularly about the future of Canada's military efforts in Afghanistan.

But with this "New Government" in need of a voter-friendly, fresh agenda and having weathered a spring session spent largely on the defensive, particularly over the issue of Afghanistan, a new speech from the throne may be just the ticket to clearing the air and setting a more productive tone.

For starters, the Conservatives must articulate a vision for what remains of the mission in Afghanistan and what it views as Canada's evolving role there. It's a vision that has eluded many Canadians thus far, which is unfortunate given the considerable investment of manpower, money and lives expended there.

It's also an opportunity for the Conservatives to address climate change, an issue they completely overlooked when they first came to power and spent the first year clumsily bobbling.

The prime minister suggests the first session was "exceptionally productive."

"We delivered on all the major commitments we made to Canadians during the 2006 election," the PM said in a news release announcing his intention to end the session, rather than resume this month.

While it did deliver on its promise to cut the GST by 1 per cent, it failed to deliver more meaningful tax cuts across the board where it most counts -- on income taxes.

It promised to crack down on crime, but among the bills now at risk of dying on the order paper with the session's end are key law-and-order measures including raising the age of consent for sexual activity to 16 from 14, the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences for gun crimes and legislation that would reverse the onus in bail hearings for individuals charged with gun crimes (the accused would have to make a case for release on bail pending trial).

Other bills that hadn't yet received Commons approval include changes to Canada's firearms laws to repeal the need to register long guns as well as proposed legislation affecting how senators are selected and the duration of the terms they can serve.

Those bills were all part of the package Conservatives presented Canadians when they won their minority government.

With a few babies potentially caught up in the bathwater, Conservative supporters will have to hope next month's speech from the throne provides the spark Harper's looking for in an anticipated lead up to a federal election and more is gained in this strategy than is lost.

Suicide attack kills 28 Afghans

IDNUMBER 200709110008
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
SOURCE: The Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 224

A suicide bomber detonated explosives yesterday in a marketplace in southern Afghanistan, killing 28 people in one of the deadliest bombings since the fall of the Taliban. Children selling chewing gum and cigarettes were among the victims of the blast.

The attacker was apparently targeting a police commander when he detonated his bomb near a taxi stand around 6:30 p.m. in the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the world's largest poppy-growing region and site of the country's worst violence of 2007.

Taliban militants have set off a record number of suicide blasts this year — more than 100 through the end of August — but few are as deadly as the Helmand attack. The Taliban typically aim their attacks at international and Afghan military and police forces.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force said the attacker was driving a motorized rickshaw — a small engine-powered cart commonly used as a taxi in southern Afghanistan.

General Mohammad Zahir Azimi, the Defence Ministry spokesman, said a local police commander who survived the attack appeared to have been the target.

A Taliban spokesman couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

A shopkeeper, Abibullah Khan, whose 16-year-old son was wounded, said young children who walk the market selling cigarettes and chewing gum were among the blast's victims. He said more than a dozen shops were damaged.

"I saw a lot of people wounded and killed on the ground," Khan said.

"It's a very crowded area. At this time of night many villagers are in Gereshk's big market."

MackKay on 9/11: 'We have to be vigilant'

IDNUMBER 200709110007
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Gene J. Puskar, the Associated Press /;
DATELINE: SHANKSVILLE, Pa.
SOURCE: Hamilton Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 164

Visitors to the Flight 93 National Memorial were among thousands across the United States who held observances last night on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Flight 93, the fourth hijacked plane, was brought to the ground by its 40 passengers before it could strike its intended target.

As Canadians prepared to mark the anniversary, Defence Minister Peter MacKay cautioned that the world risks more attacks if peace and stability aren't restored in Afghanistan.

"Let's not forget that on 9/11, terrorism came to ... this continent," he said after addressing a meeting of ambassadors in St. Andrews, N.B.

"We have to be vigilant and very responsible in continuing to play a role" in Afghanistan where 2,500 Canadian soldiers are part of a NATO-led security force.

Afghan Ambassador Omar Samad said the price of failure is too high for nations like Canada to consider abandoning Afghanistan before it can defend itself against terrorism.

"Do we want Afghanistan to ... once again become a failed state and become a threat not only to its own people, but to the region and to the world at large?"

Afghan suicide attack kills 27, dozens hurt

IDNUMBER 200709110073
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C2
COLUMN: World Report
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Compiled from Star News Services
WORD COUNT: 114

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber slammed a bomb-packed rickshaw into a police convoy in southern Afghanistan Monday, killing 27 people, around half of them civilians, officials said.

The early evening attack in the small town of Gereshk was one of the deadliest seen in Afghanistan, which has suffered a rash of suicide blasts as part of an intensifying Taliban-led insurgency.

"Twenty-seven bodies have been taken to the hospital and among them 13 are police," Gereshk district Gov.

Abdul Manaf told Agence France-Presse. "Fifty-seven wounded people including some police are also in the hospital."

The defence ministry in Kabul gave a similar toll for the dead and wounded and also said 13 policemen were killed.

"There is blood everywhere, on the bridge and on the road," a witness named Feda Mohammad said.

He said the attacker had been driving a three-wheeled motorcycle, sometimes called an auto rickshaw.

Remember bin Laden's war; U.S. marks 9–11; Afghan campaign occupies allies

IDNUMBER 200709110066
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B7

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Bloomberg photo: Stephen Hilger / **RISINGAGAIN:** After years of planning and wrangling, construction is underway at Ground Zero, the 16-acre World Trade Center site in New York City. Today marks the sixth anniversary of the attacks that killed almost 3,000 people when terrorists hijacked passenger jets and aimed them at New York's World Trade Center and targets in Washington. ; Colour Photo: David Wilkins ;

DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 569

OTTAWA -- Despite America's focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9–11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said Monday, the day before his country prepared to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including 24 Canadians. "We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrest last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terror-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Wilkins said in an interview.

This year's 9–11 anniversary comes as key American allies -- Canada and the Netherlands -- are embroiled in national debates on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

In Australia during his current visit, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

Opposition parties are calling for an end to Canada's combat role in Kandahar province by then. In fact, the New Democratic Party wants the soldiers withdrawn immediately.

The Dutch parliament, meanwhile, must renew its commitment to Afghanistan by next August.

Wilkins stressed that while he hopes Canada remains in Afghanistan, it is up to parliamentarians to decide.

"Americans aren't the only ones that lost their lives in 9–11 and I certainly hope that, worldwide, the freedom-loving countries remember that," Wilkins said.

FRIENDS

"The United States appreciates Canada as a friend and as an ally. You're not only our largest trading partner, you're our partner in the war on terror. You've done yeoman's work in Afghanistan, so we hope that will continue."

Wilkins would not discuss the possible domino effect that some experts say could result if the Dutch and other countries begin to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Despite its massive military entanglement in Iraq, the U.S. still contributes the bulk of western forces to Afghanistan — about 30,000 troops.

It is also the runaway leader in casualties, said Wilkins.

As of Sunday, 60 per cent of the 617 western military personnel killed in Afghanistan since 2001 were from the United States. In all, 372 American troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared with 76 British and 70 Canadians (along with one diplomat). Germany has lost 25 soldiers while the Dutch have suffered 10 fatalities.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9–11," Wilkins warned.

"It's not just the United States. The arrests in Germany, the arrests in Canada, the arrests in London all within the last year show that no one is immune from the terrorist plots."

Canada and the Netherlands are key American allies on the front lines of fighting in the particularly dangerous southern provinces of Afghanistan, with more than 4,000 troops between them.

"The war on terror is going to continue and we hope that all countries are going to be vigilant and on guard and participate in that war. Canada has certainly done its part in Afghanistan, there's no question about that," said Wilkins. "We hope all the NATO countries will continue that mission because the job's not yet done."

In Ottawa, the U.S. embassy marks the 9–11 anniversary by allowing visitors to sign a condolence book this morning.

Timely film shows why we fight

IDNUMBER 200709110061
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Entertainment
PAGE: B5
COLUMN: Fine Tuning
BYLINE: Alex Strachan
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 616

It's a growing debate: Six years after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, as 9-11's anniversary falls for the first time on a Tuesday — the day of the week it happened — how much tribute is too much? How much is enough, and how much is not enough? In an indirect and yet profound way, tonight's season finale of PBS's *Wide Angle* provides the perfect answer.

The real post-9-11 conflict — as many Canadians know all too well — is in Afghanistan, and as tonight's quiet, remarkable film *A Woman Among Warlords* shows, a kind of uneasy democracy is taking hold in a place where women's rights were until recently unheard of.

A Woman Among Warlords is not about war — the war goes completely unmentioned — but the subtext is plainly obvious: The old guard is still there, waiting, hoping to turn back the clock.

As it is, Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghani women's rights advocate at the heart of this remarkable film, has had her life threatened. More than once.

In the film, she has the temerity, among other things, to tell an 80-year-old warlord and opium trader that, no, he cannot shack up with the 13-year-old girl he's chosen to become one of his wives, if she's against it (she is), her family is against it (they are) and if the new Afghanistan frowns on January-December romances (it does).

Shotgun weddings — or is that AK-47 weddings? — don't fly in the new democracy, especially when the bride-to-be says things like, "He has weapons and walks with a limp; I can't find happiness with him," and her father vows, "I'd rather cut off my head than give him my child. He already has two wives."

The story has neither a happy nor an unhappy ending. It ends, like life, messily and up-in-the-air. Joya herself, though diplomatic when dealing with armed men who'd like to kill her, is less diplomatic when she's finally elected to the Afghan parliament. She lectures the old men with beards about their manners and the true meaning of being a gentleman, and for her trouble she's tossed out — and told not to come back until she apologizes.

Wide Angle, PBS's summer-long documentary showcase of films from around the world, has had a strong season. Afghanistan and Iran have played dominant roles in this season's selections, and tonight's film seems doubly appropriate as a result.

A Woman Among Warlords is a quiet, thoughtful look at the post 9-11 Afghanistan — it could just as easily have been subtitled *Why We Fight* — and is emotionally involving and spiritually uplifting, as well as

informative and eye-opening.

If you want to acknowledge the Sept. 11 anniversary, but want something beyond the usual tributes and ceremonies, do consider this remarkable program. You won't regret it. (10 p.m., PBS, channel 56, cable 67)

– Please don't keel over from sheer excitement: The latest Canadian Idol winner is crowned tonight. If viewers vote alphabetically, by first name, Brian will win over Jaydee. If, however, viewers vote by last name, Jaydee Bixby will beat Brian Melo. Either way, it's a coin toss. (8 p.m., CTV, channel 42, cable 13)

– The Biggest Loser is billed as the first reality series "where everybody loses." Except those viewers who scarf munchies while watching, no doubt. The new season bows tonight, with a new host (Days of Our Lives' Alison Sweeney), the return of killer trainer Jillian Michaels and a "where are they now?" segment. (8 p.m., NBC, channel 4, cable 5, and E!, cable 59)

– Jodie Foster joins Jon Stewart on The Daily Show to talk about films, politics, Stewart's acting in Death to Smoochy, and whether Jon has more Emmys than Jodie has Oscars. (11 p.m., Comedy, cable 44, and midnight, CTV, channel 42, cable 13)

Harper lauds Australian ties; Speech lambastes Senate back home

IDNUMBER 200709110042
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Agence France–Presse, Getty Images: Greg Wood /REMEMBRANCE: Prime Minister Stephen Harper places a poppy at the Roll of Honour along the Cloisters at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australia's capital, on Monday. His week–long visit to Australia finishes after an address to the parliament today. ;

DATELINE: CANBERRA, Australia
BYLINE: Mike De Souza
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 460

CANBERRA, Australia — Canada and Australia have both been victimized by terrorism, and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is both noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper will tell Australia's parliament today.

Harper speaks today to a joint session of the Commonwealth country's Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Harper's remarks says.

Harper's appearance follows Australian Prime Minister John Howard's speech to the Canadian Parliament in May 2006. Howard has stood firmly behind U.S. policies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and on climate change.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebecois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Harper notes men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

AFGHAN DANGERS SHARED

"Seventy Canadian soldiers and one of our diplomats have fallen in Afghanistan, as well as a Canadian carpenter, murdered by the Taliban after he built a school for the children of a remote Afghan village," says Harper, who is only the sixth foreign leader to address Australian MPs and senators.

"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror. And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it.... The cause is noble and necessary."

Harper says that the 9–11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

Some of Harper's harshest warnings are directed at Canadian senators, as he highlights one of the main differences between the systems of government in the two countries.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say: When we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy.'

"Because, in Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as long as 45 years."

He claims Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

"It's a rare pleasure for me to be among senators who are actually elected by the people they represent."

He added that Australia's senators reflected the very essence of a responsible government since they have a mandate to govern from the people.

Harper's visit comes as his opposite faces mounting political difficulties. Calls for Howard's resignation have mounted as opinion polls turn negative. He may call a general election Wednesday.

Issues move to back seat

IDNUMBER 200709110026
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
COLUMN: Susan Riley
BYLINE: Susan Riley
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 831

Well, it didn't take long for political Ottawa to get back to the most pressing issue facing the nation. After a fairly calm summer, and within minutes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's announcement last week that a new Parliamentary session will begin Oct. 16, the election countdown started. Again.

Who will pull the plug? When? Under what pretext? Will we be off to the polls as early as fall? What does our Machiavellian prime minister have up his sleeve? Will Stephane Dion take the bait? Who will be Jack Layton's new friend? To which I must add, at risk of losing my licence to practise journalism: Who cares?

Enough with this time-wasting obsession. Enough with these fevered calculations, these shopworn parlour games. You could argue we are a fortunate country, indeed, if all we have to worry about is the election timetable. Whatever happened to Afghanistan, climate change, health care, Senate reform? (OK, maybe that can wait.) It is as if we are sitting in the middle of the railway tracks, all of us journalists and political schemers and lobbyists, speculating over what they are serving in the dining car while the freight train bears down on us at top speed.

For example, one of the consequences of Harper's decision to prorogue Parliament and start afresh, rather than simply calling the old class back, is a lot of wasted work. Bills that were debated for months, fine-tuned and fretted over, die — some deservedly, others not. One prominent victim is the much-edited clean air act, or whatever they ended up calling it. The government wanted this one eliminated, mainly because it had been amended beyond recognition by the opposition parties in committee. In fact, it actually threatened to be effective in curbing greenhouse gas emissions and further limiting ground pollution.

No chance of that now. In terms of federal environmental law, observers say we are back where we were when Dion was environment minister. Oh, except for a new law banning incandescent light bulbs. The Harper government has also introduced regulations to limit the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions, targets so weak the oil industry will surpass them in the normal course of expansion. (Provinces have come up with consumer-friendly green gambits and some have even promised to reduce fossil fuel emissions. But not one has formally passed a law imposing hard caps on industry, or even legislated tougher building codes.)

Last week the prime minister attended the APEC meeting in Australia, where he was expected to chart a middle course on climate change between doing little (Australia, United States) and doing something (Europe, the United Nations and China — which is, inconveniently for Harper, voicing support for the Kyoto accord.) This third way involves pretending to do something, thereby satisfying mounting domestic concern without troubling our oil sector with hard targets, strict deadlines or adequate financial penalties.

When Parliament does resume, climate change will have to compete with Afghanistan for top billing in a theatre that favours simple, one-act dramas. In central Canada, at least, the weather was not particularly extreme this summer, which may foster complacency — at least until the next big storm. Meanwhile, the New Democrats will feel vindicated in their campaign for an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan if their candidate, Thomas Mulcair, beats the Liberal in the Sept. 17 byelection in Montreal's Outremont riding. But, as usual, more attention is being paid to Layton's strategic positioning, than to the merits of his proposal.

As for the Liberals, they seem to be test-driving the economy as an issue, predicting future trouble that they hope to turn to their electoral advantage. In the real world, the forestry industry is in crisis, the softwood lumber deal may be unravelling, the North American car industry is struggling, venerable Canadian companies are being snapped up by foreigners and no amount of money seems enough to fix health care. So there is fodder there for the opposition.

But will any of these issues command much space in a session that promises to be as tiresomely partisan as the last? The prime minister is all about strategy: he has some closely-held conservative beliefs, but he appears to take more pleasure in outsmarting the Liberals than lowering taxes. Besides, he, Dion and even Layton have yet to prove to their parties that they are winners. And it has fallen to Gilles Duceppe (for now) to rescue sovereignty as a plausible option in Quebec.

In short, there are a lot of careers resting on the outcome of the next election. Maybe that's why they are so much more obsessed with the timing than regular people, with more serious concerns.

Susan Riley is an Ottawa Citizen columnist. E-mail: sriley@thecitizen.canwest.com .

Putting a new perspective on the tragedy of 9–11

IDNUMBER 200709110025
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: Bob Bergen
SOURCE: Special to The Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 660

Today marks the day 24 Canadians were killed or were lost and presumed dead in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

The question is what should we make of 9–11 six years later?

Not to trivialize those deaths or the nearly 3,000 Americans who died in the twin towers or aboard the four hijacked jets, but they need to be seen in perspective.

Here is one way of looking at it: In 2001, 2,781 Canadians were killed in car accidents and 221,121 injured, according to Transport Canada.

In the United States, there were more than 42,000 traffic deaths in 2001.

As a result, an argument can be made that there were 100 times more Canadians and 14 times more Americans killed in traffic accidents in 2001 than on 9–11 and that the terrorist threat has been blown out of proportion.

That is one view, here is another: 19th-century British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli said: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics."

Statistical comparisons to traffic deaths, while interesting, don't put a proper perspective on the horrific events that were 9–11 in the United States; trauma to that nation the likes of which most Canadians can't understand.

I was born on Sept. 11. On the morning of my birthday in 2001, I was horrified by the video of the second hijacked jet slamming into the South Tower of the World Trade Center played over and over again on television.

I knew immediately that the world would be reordered and that it might not be for the better.

As always, history helps us to better understand the present and what the future might hold.

Some baby boomers of my generation will remember the school drills we had as youngsters during the Cold War.

We routinely got up from our desks as instructed by the principals' voice over the public address system and walked, not ran, calmly downstairs to the school's basement auditorium where, hopefully, we could survive a nuclear blast.

Even though television was in its relative infancy, we had all seen the black and white pictures — yes, black and white television pictures — of the mushroom cloud billowing over Hiroshima, the result of a United States nuclear bomb in 1945.

We asked our teachers how we would survive if the school crumbled and fell on us.

We all knew who the enemy was then: the Soviet Union, the Russians.

We all knew the Russians had launched the first satellite Sputnik in 1957 and that they had missiles and weapons they could attack us with.

We watched American television shows in which the ethical question presented was whether it was appropriate to shoot neighbours attempting to break into your homemade bomb shelters during a nuclear attack.

We knew Canada was a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and that NATO protected us against the Russians.

We all knew that should North America ever be bombed by the Russians, the United States would respond with its nuclear weapons and that, caught in the middle, missiles and nuclear bombs would rain over Canada and that no one might survive.

Now that was terror.

That was why the Summit hockey series between Canada and Russia in 1972 was a monumental pitting of the forces of good against evil incarnate.

As we grew older, some of us learned that the principle behind NATO was that an attack against one member was an attack against all.

The Cold War ended in 1991 and many NATO countries, Canada included, cut back on their militaries, naively believing the world was more stable than in the past and that they could reap a "peace dividend."

Fast-forward 10 years to 9–11: We didn't immediately know who did it, but Canada's responsibility as a NATO ally was clear – we had to stand shoulder to shoulder with our American neighbours.

We learned later that Osama bin Laden and his al–Qaida fundamentalist religious movement masterminded the attacks.

That is why the Canadian Forces are in Afghanistan today, as a NATO ally, and why they should remain there until the objectives of the internationally agreed–upon Afghan Compact are achieved.

Canadians should not only remember the Canadians and Americans who died on 9–11, but also the news reports of Nov. 13, 2002.

On that day, grainy pictures of bin Laden on Al–Jazeera television appeared under headlines declaring Canada as a legitimate target by Muslim nations waging jihad.

Now think of this: If al–Qaida can obtain nuclear weapons of any size or type, it will use them against the West just as surely as its suicidal hijackers used airlines in 2001.

That is 9–11 in perspective six years on.

We baby boomers have lived with nuclear terrorism before. The big difference is that the Russians actually cared whether they lived or died.

Bob Bergen is a research fellow with the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) in Calgary. Learn more about the CDFAI and its research on the Internet at www.cdfai.org.

The woman vs. the warlords: a post-9/11 story

IDNUMBER 200709110141
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.11
EDITION: Early
SECTION: Arts
PAGE: C16
COLUMN: Fine Tuning – Today on TV
BYLINE: Alex Strachan
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 737

It's a growing debate: Six years after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, as 9/11's anniversary falls for the first time on a Tuesday — the day of the week it happened — how much tribute is too much? How much is enough, and how much is not enough? In an indirect and yet profound way, tonight's season finale of PBS's Wide Angle provides the perfect answer.

The real post-9/11 conflict — as many Canadians know all too well — is in Afghanistan, and as tonight's quiet, remarkable film *A Woman Among Warlords* shows, a kind of uneasy democracy is taking hold in a place where women's rights were until recently unheard of. *A Woman Among Warlords* is not about war — the war goes completely unmentioned — but the subtext is plainly obvious: The old guard is still there, waiting, hoping to turn back the clock.

Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghan women's rights advocate at the heart of this remarkable film, has had her life threatened more than once. In the film, she has the temerity, among other things, to tell an 80-year-old warlord and opium trader that, no, he cannot shack up with the 13-year-old girl he's chosen to become one of his wives, if she's against it (she is), her family is against it (they are) and if the new Afghanistan frowns on January–December romances (it does).

Shotgun weddings — or is that AK-47 weddings? — don't fly in the new democracy, especially when the bride-to-be says things like, "He has weapons and walks with a limp; I can't find happiness with him," and her father vows, "I'd rather cut off my head than give him my child. He already has two wives."

The girl, Rahela Nakim, is a fifth-grader who can read and write, thanks to the emergence of schools — this, in no small part, due to men and women, many of them Canadian, who have, and who continue, to sacrifice their lives so that girls like Nakim don't have to live a life of terror, oppression and forced marriages to 80-year-olds. Nakim is special, Joya pleads on the girl's behalf before the local militias: she could become a lawyer one day; she could become a doctor, a writer, a national leader. Bah! the warlord counters. The opium trade is a hard business. His soldiers — men with guns — are illiterate and can't count. He needs Nakim to keep the books.

The story has neither a happy nor an unhappy ending. It ends, like life, messily and up-in-the-air. Joya herself, though diplomatic when dealing with armed men who'd like to kill her, is less diplomatic when she's finally elected to the Afghan parliament. She lectures the old men with beards about their manners and the true meaning of being a gentleman, and for her trouble she's tossed out and told not to come back until she apologizes.

A Woman Among Warlords is a quiet, thoughtful look at the post-9/11 Afghanistan — it could just as easily have been subtitled "Why We Fight" — and is emotionally involving and spiritually uplifting, as well as informative. The film was adapted from Danish filmmaker Eva Mulvad's Enemies of Happiness, winner of the Sundance World Cinema Jury Prize at this year's festival. If you want to acknowledge the Sept. 11 anniversary, but want something beyond the usual tributes and ceremonies, consider this remarkable program. (10 p.m., PBS)

Don't keel over from excitement: The Canadian Idol winner is crowned tonight. If viewers vote alphabetically by first name, Brian will win over Jaydee. If, however, viewers vote by last name, Jaydee Bixby will beat Brian Melo. It's a coin toss. (8p.m., CTV)

The Biggest Loser is billed as the first reality series "where everybody loses." Except those viewers who scarf munchies while watching, no doubt. The new season bows in tonight, with a new host (Days of Our Lives' Alison Sweeney), the return of killer trainer Jillian Michaels and a "where are they now?" segment. (8 p.m., E!, NBC)

Jodie Foster joins Jon Stewart on The Daily Show to talk about films, politics, Stewart's acting in Death to Smoochy, and whether Jon has more Emmys than Jodie has Oscars. (12:05 a.m. CTV, 11 p.m., Comedy Network)

U.S. envoy says Afghanistan is 'not a forgotten war'; American troops suffer the most losses: Wilkins

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: David Wilkins;
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
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Despite the U.S. focus on Iraq, Afghanistan is not the forgotten war as some in his country have characterized it, the U.S. ambassador to Canada said on the eve of the sixth anniversary of 9/11.

"It's not a forgotten war," David Wilkins said yesterday, the day before his country prepared to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks that claimed almost 3,000 lives, including 24 Canadians.

"We've lost more troops (in Afghanistan) than any other country; we have more troops on the ground than any other country."

Germany's arrests last week of three men accused of a major bomb plot, the foiled plots in Canada 13 months ago, and terror-related arrests in Britain underscore the need to continue the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, as well as through vigorous law enforcement at home, Mr. Wilkins said in an interview.

This year's 9/11 anniversary comes as key American allies — Canada and the Netherlands — are embroiled in national debates on whether to keep troops in Afghanistan.

In Australia on the weekend, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he wants to delay a vote in Parliament on extending the mission beyond February 2009 until opposition parties are prepared to back an extension.

Opposition parties are calling for an end to Canada's combat role in Kandahar province by then. In fact, the New Democratic Party wants the soldiers withdrawn immediately. The Dutch parliament, meanwhile, must renew its commitment to Afghanistan by next August.

Mr. Wilkins stressed that while he hopes Canada remains in Afghanistan, it is up to parliamentarians to decide.

"The United States appreciates Canada as a friend and as an ally. You're not only our largest trading partner, you're our partner in the war on terror. You've done yeoman's work in Afghanistan, so we hope that will continue."

Despite its massive military entanglement in Iraq, the U.S. still contributes the bulk of western forces to Afghanistan — about 30,000 troops.

It is also the runaway leader in casualties, said Mr. Wilkins. As of Sunday, 60 per cent of the 617 western

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military personnel killed in Afghanistan since 2001 were from the United States. In all, 372 American troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared with 76 British and 70 Canadians (along with one diplomat). Germany has lost 25 soldiers, while the Dutch have suffered 10 fatalities.

"The major concern with a place like Afghanistan is that if a democracy is not established there, if we pull out before it is firmly established and can fend for itself, we are giving an opportunity for another safe haven to be established once again, where terrorists can plot yet another 9/11," Mr. Wilkins warned.

"It's not just the United States. The arrests in Germany, the arrests in Canada, the arrests in London all within the last year show that no one is immune from the terrorist plots."

In Ottawa, the U.S. Embassy will mark the 9/11 anniversary by allowing visitors to sign a condolence book between 9 a.m. and noon.

Bomb-laden rickshaw kills 27 in Afghan town

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DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Nasrat Shoaib
SOURCE: Agence France-Presse
WORD COUNT: 232

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A suicide bomber slammed an explosives-packed rickshaw into a police convoy in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing 27 people, about half of them civilians, officials said.

The early evening attack in the small town of Gereshk was one of the deadliest in Afghanistan, which has suffered a rash of suicide blasts as part of an intensifying Taliban-led insurgency.

"Twenty-seven bodies have been taken to the hospital and among them, 13 are police," Gereshk district governor Abdul Manaf said. "Fifty-seven wounded people, including some police, are also in the hospital."

The defence ministry in Kabul gave a similar toll of dead and wounded.

"There is blood everywhere, on the bridge and on the road," a witness named Feda Mohammad told AFP.

He said the attacker had been driving a three-wheeled motorcycle, sometimes called an auto rickshaw.

Another witness, Abdullah Jan, said the attacker had launched himself at the police convoy, which had stopped at a checkpoint near a bridge in a busy part of town.

"Since the place is so crowded and full of civilians, lots of civilians were killed as well. All I could see was bodies and wounded being taken in different directions," he said.

"You could imagine it had rained blood there," he said.

It was the deadliest suicide attack since one in the capital on June 17 that police said at the time had killed 35 people -- which would have made it the worst of the insurgency -- but some officials say it killed 24.

A defence ministry spokes-man said the attack in Gereshk was apparently aimed at the provincial head of the auxiliary police, who survived. Gereshk is 600 kilometres southwest of Kabul.

PM praises ally for role in terror fight; Harper talks about NATO, Senate reform in Australia

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Tim Wimborne, Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife, Laureen, walked along the Eastern cloisters of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra yesterday. Mr. Harper speaks to the combined houses of the Australian Parliament today. ;

DATELINE: CANBERRA, Australia

BYLINE: Mike De Souza

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 636

CANBERRA, Australia – Canada and Australia have been victimized by terrorism, and must stick together to fight it in a cause that is noble and necessary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a special joint session of the Commonwealth country's Parliament on the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Mr. Harper's remarks today said.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Mr. Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terrorism and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Québécois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Mr. Harper said men and women from both countries are now putting their lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

"Seventy Canadian soldiers and one of our diplomats have fallen in Afghanistan, as well as a Canadian carpenter, murdered by the Taliban after he built a school for the children of a remote Afghan village," said Mr. Harper, who is only the sixth foreign leader to address Australian MPs and senators.

"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said. "And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it. ... The cause is noble and necessary."

Mr. Harper said the 9/11 attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

But some of Mr. Harper's harshest warnings were directed at Canadian senators, as he highlighted one of the main differences between the systems of government in the two countries.

"As one Canadian political scientist I know likes to say: When we look at Australia, we suffer from 'Senate envy'," Mr. Harper said, referring to Ted Morton, a Conservative member of the Alberta legislature who ran unsuccessfully for the party leadership. "Because, in Canada, senators remain appointed, not elected. They don't have to retire until age 75, and may warm their seats for as long as 45 years."

He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper house to make senators elected and accountable.

"Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change or, like the old upper houses of our provinces, vanish," he said.

Mr. Harper also stressed that the two countries had overcome many similar challenges through parallel histories, developing common values and principles that made them strong.

"Australia was born in English, Canada in French, at Quebec City 400 years ago next year — reflected to this day by the presence of francophones and the 'Québécois nation' within our united country," he said.

He said the two countries have established solid reputations, defending freedom, democracy and human rights, building multilateral institutions and establishing international law.

But Mr. Harper also stressed that countries should always be vigilant and prepared for unexpected obstacles such as the threat of an economic downturn.

"I believe that one of the great dangers facing both our countries today is complacency about the economy," he said. "Complacency because many of our citizens have long forgotten, or have never experienced, economic recession." He said both are faced with new competition from rising economic giants such as China and India that demand new international efforts to develop "freer and fairer trade for developed and developing countries alike."

Mr. Harper's visit coincides with a political crisis for Australian Prime Minister John Howard, facing calls for his resignation because of devastating opinion polls on the eve of a general election that some believe he will call tomorrow after Mr. Harper returns home.

9/11 + six

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Maureen Basnicki of Toronto, who was made a widow by the 9/11 attacks, is absolutely right: This nation needs an official annual ceremony to honour the 24 Canadians who died in the terror attacks on New York's Twin Towers six years ago today. Ms. Basnicki, whose husband Ken was among the 2,750 who died in the World Trade Center, correctly points out that "this wasn't an exclusively American event, but an attack on democracy and freedom and all the values that we hold dear as Canadians."

As we move further away from that horrific day, and as support for the war on terror gets bogged down in the worldwide controversy over events in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is too easy to forget the barbarity of what happened six years ago, and the hateful agenda of those who perpetrated it.

The 9/11 jihadis killed indiscriminately. They killed to intimidate us. Their goal was not to free themselves in their own countries, but to imprison us in ours — so they would be able to spread their brand of hate and intolerance throughout the rest of the world. Osama bin Laden's minions even hoped they might ultimately frighten us into turning over Western civilization to shariah law and their perverted interpretation of Islam.

Whatever one thinks of the tactics chosen by the American administration and its coalition partners in the war on terror, whether one agrees or not with NATO's goal of establishing a functioning democracy in Afghanistan or America's project to pacify Iraq, the Western world must never forget what is at stake.

Even if Western nations withdrew to their own borders, terror masters like bin Laden, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would still seek our destruction. It is our very existence they despise, not our alleged cultural imperialism abroad.

Just last week, for the first time in three years, bin Laden delivered a video message to the West, once again urging us to convert to Islam. Until we do, he warned, it is the "duty" of Muslims to continue "fighting and killing" us. His video should give pause to all those appeasers who argue that if the West simply leaves the Muslim world alone, radical Muslims will leave us alone.

We would do well to remember just what is at stake each year on Sept. 11. And one of the best ways to do that is to have an annual commemorative ceremony at which the names of the Canadian victims are read out and their losses recalled. We therefore urge Prime Minister Stephen Harper to use the occasion of today's 9/11 anniversary to announce the implementation of Ms. Basnicki's fine suggestion.

KEYWORDS: TERRORISM

Taliban Says It Is Ready To Talk With Government In Afghanistan

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COLUMN: World Report
ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: / President Hamid Karzai.;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France–Presse
WORD COUNT: 236

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan –The Taliban said yesterday it was ready for talks with the Afghan government after President Hamid Karzai offered negotiations in a bid to end the rebels' nearly six–year bloody insurgency. With the insurgency spiralling to its highest level this year, Mr. Karzai made the offer on Sunday, saying peace could not be achieved without dialogue. "For the sake of national interests ... we are fully ready for talks with the government," said Yousuf Ahmadi, a senior Taliban spokesman, adding the movement had a "limited" number of conditions for a meeting. Homayun Hamidzada, Mr. Karzai's spokesman, said the "government's doors are open to anyone who agrees to obey the constitution and other laws of the country to join peace." In the past two years, the Taliban has redoubled its insurgency, which it launched after being removed from government in 2001 for not handing over its al–Qaeda allies after the 9/11 attacks. Yesterday was no different: A suicide bomber hit a police convoy in southern Afghanistan, killing about 27 people, half of them civilians. The early–evening attack in the small town of Gereshk, 600 kilometres southwest of the capital, Kabul, was one of the deadliest seen in Afghanistan.

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

Our cause is noble, Harper tells Australians

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ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: / Prime Minister Stephen Harper.;
DATELINE: CANBERRA, Australia
BYLINE: Mike De Souza
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 502

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"The buildings may have been American, but the targets were every one of us: Every country and every person who chooses tolerance over hatred, pluralism over extremism, democracy over tyranny," a draft of Mr. Harper's remarks said.

As the first Canadian leader to address Australia's two chambers, Mr. Harper continued to defend NATO's military efforts in Afghanistan as essential for fighting terror and safeguarding freedoms. But, in wide-ranging remarks, he also mused about abolishing the Canadian Senate, and praised the "Quebecois nation within our united country" as fundamental to Canada's historical development.

Listing other attacks that have struck major cities, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that claimed the lives of dozens of Australians, Mr. Harper noted men and women from both countries are now putting their own lives on the line to eliminate terrorist havens in Afghanistan.

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"So, both our countries have been bloodied by terror," he said. "And both of us are doing our part to confront and defeat it. ... The cause is noble and necessary."

He said the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that "if we abandon our fellow human beings to lives of poverty, brutality and ignorance, in today's global village their misery will eventually and inevitably become ours."

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He noted that Australians had "done a much better job" in reforming their upper House to make senators accountable.

"By the nature of the [Canadian] system, they're not accountable to voters. So it's a rare pleasure for me to be among senators who are actually elected by the people they represent."

He added that Australia's senators reflected the very essence of a responsible government because they have a mandate to govern from the people. He said this was a minimum condition of 21st-century democracy, hinting that the days of Canadian senators might be numbered.

"Canadians understand that our Senate, as it stands today, must either change or, like the old upper Houses of our provinces, vanish," he said.

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA