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Tory government won't fall despite throne speech hype

IDNUMBER 200710150046
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: GEOFFREY STEVENS
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 778

Quick, what is the significance of the date Oct. 19, 2009?

No, it's not the 16th anniversary of the Toronto Blue Jays' last World Series championship. Good guess, but that's not until Oct 23. Nor is it Stephen Harper's 50th birthday. That's April 30, 2009.

Oct. 19, 2009, is the date fixed for the next federal election. Last May, Parliament approved Bill C-16, which established the third Monday in October every fourth year as election day, starting in 2009.

If you will permit a small digression, Parliament did not exactly rush pell-mell to embrace fixed elections the way Ontario did, relatively speaking. The change at the federal level had been recommended 35 years earlier, away back in 1972, by the Special Commons-Senate committee on the Constitution of Canada, but Ottawa does tend to move at a measured pace.

That said, alarm bells are ringing this week. Waiting for the throne speech tomorrow night, Parliament Hill is gripped by election fever. A showdown is at hand, or so we are told. The Toronto Star captured the drama in a front-page headline yesterday: The Week Stephen Harper Says: Go Ahead, Make My Day.

Yikes. "Clint" Harper, our very own Dirty Harry, is facing down Stephane Dion and the rest of the opposition punks, warning if they don't throw down their policies and surrender their principles he will blast them into electoral oblivion. It's great imagery, but is the country really on the precipice of its third federal election in 3 1/2 years? Or is it a case of a bunch of the boys test-driving their testosterone after a too-long summer holiday?

I suspect it's the latter. Barring an accident — and accidents can always happen (just ask Joe Clark) — there will be no election this fall. The reason: no one wants one. The Canadian public doesn't want an election. None of the political parties wants one, not even the Conservatives, for all their chest-thumping about campaign preparation.

Harper has most of his ducks lined up. The economy is strong. Unemployment is low. The government is wracking up handsome surpluses. The loonie is outperforming the Yankee dollar. Tory coffers are brimming. And — icing on the cake — the Liberal opposition is in disarray.

The biggest ducks stubbornly refuse to line up, however. They are the opinion polls. No matter what Harper does (and no matter how hapless Dion seems), he cannot move the Conservatives' numbers into majority-government range. They remain stranded a little below the 36 per cent of the vote they received in the 2006 election.

The people are telling the pollsters that while they are reasonably comfortable with a Conservative minority government for the time being, they are not ready to trust them with a majority. An election would be a real gamble for Harper. The odds are he would come back with another minority, but the chances of a Tory majority are no better than the chances of a Liberal minority.

Harper is no Dirty Harry. He is not a risk-taker. Until the polls give him another seven or eight points, he will not gamble what he has in the hope of gaining the 29 extra seats he needs for a majority.

Although Bill C-16 sets the four-year timetable for elections, it allows flexibility for elections to be called earlier if (a) the government is defeated on a direct motion of non-confidence or (b) it loses on a piece of legislation that the government has declared is so important as to involve confidence in the administration.

There will be three direct non-confidence votes in the six-day throne speech debate beginning this week. The Conservatives will survive those votes because Dion intends to ensure that enough Liberal backbenchers absent themselves to prevent the government from falling.

Harper has already signalled that he will treat votes on some of his priority legislation as matters of confidence. These include tax cuts, anti-crime measures, environmental protection and a limit on federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions. None of them will bring down the government.

The one issue that could defeat the Conservatives is Canada's military commitment in Afghanistan, where the Tories stand alone against the three opposition parties. But Harper has cunningly defused that landmine by turning it over to a five-member bomb-disposal unit headed by former Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley. The panel will not report until January. Chances are its report will offer enough common ground to hold off an election for months -- perhaps as long as Oct. 19, 2009.

Cambridge resident Geoffrey Stevens, an author and former Ottawa columnist and managing editor of the Globe and Mail, teaches political science at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Guelph. He welcomes comments at geoffstevens@sympatico.ca.

Afghan bomber attacks during festival

IDNUMBER 200710150025
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A5
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 337

The suicide bomber who blew himself up at a crowded marketplace in the border town of Spin Boldak on Saturday stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest.

It is a crude but effective weapon and an indiscriminating one when it comes to killing, spraying deadly shrapnel in all directions.

Of the eight people who died in the blast, five were civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr at a community festival. Three of the dead were Afghan National Border Police officers who are so often targeted by insurgents.

"It's the end of Ramadan, so there are a lot of festivities taking place in Afghanistan," said Maj. Pierre Huet, commanding officer of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, which set up an emergency triage at Canada's forward operating base in Spin Boldak to treat the victims.

"The market was full. There were lots of games for children, many people in the market. . . ."

Seven people were killed instantly when the bomber blew himself up around 7 p.m. One more victim died en route to the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Two children, ages 8 and 9, were among the survivors treated by Canadian soldiers at Spin Boldak.

"We received about 10 pickup trucks loaded with injured people, about five to six injured in each truck," Huet told reporters yesterday.

Two doctors were dispatched from Kandahar Airfield but emergency medics with the reconnaissance squadron went immediately to work.

"Within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated," Huet said.

"It's the largest incident of mass casualties we've had," said Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron, deputy commander of the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

"At the moment, everyone is stable, everyone has received the appropriate care and everyone is basically out of danger. Most, if not all, will fully recover from their injuries."

It was the third incident in recent months in this bustling border town.

In August, a Taliban ambush killed five and injured 11 police officers and in September another suicide bomber injured 12. A second suicide bomber was arrested by Afghan security forces before carrying out his deadly plan.

Huet said Afghan national security forces, notably border police chief Abdul Razik, were targeted in the attacks.

Gen. Dan McNeill, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, called it an "abominable violent act."

"Yet again, we see in such senseless acts that the victims have been largely civilians," McNeill said yesterday.

"Taliban extremists do not offer a hopeful future for this country, but one of violence and death."

Dion wary of traps set by PM in throne speech

IDNUMBER 200710150007
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A1
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he hopes Harper will adopt a more conciliatory tone in his throne speech. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 463

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he's sure Stephen Harper is itching to hit the campaign trail this fall, but that doesn't mean the Grits will give him the excuse he needs to do so.

"It's clear he's looking for an election," Dion declared yesterday in an interview on CTV's Question Period.

He went on to signal he's not anxious to help the prime minister on his way by voting down the Conservative throne speech that will open a new parliamentary session tomorrow.

"We will look at the throne speech as a whole, as we have always said, and we will think about the interests of Canadians," said Dion.

That could mean the official Opposition will topple the government if its legislative agenda is an "outrageous" one animated by a "very right-wing radical" ideology, said the Liberal leader.

But assuming Harper adopts a more conciliatory tone, Dion said his party would try to "make Parliament work" and let the Tories continue to govern for the time being, even if the Grits don't agree with everything their opponents want to do.

The Liberals have been licking their wounds since they suffered three byelection losses in Dion's home province of Quebec last month, and opinion polls show the party lagging well behind the ruling Conservatives at the national level as well.

The effort to recover lost ground wasn't helped by the publication on the weekend of former prime minister Jean Chr tien's memoirs, which lambasted one-time leadership rival Paul Martin.

Bloc Qu b cois Leader Gilles Ducesse accused Chr tien of "lying" to Quebecers in the 1995 sovereignty referendum by telling them, on the eve of the vote, that the fate of the country was at stake -- when in fact, as he wrote in his memoirs, he had no intention of accepting a pro-separatist verdict.

Ducesse also reiterated he won't support Harper's throne speech unless the Tories meet a series of demands that include a firm commitment to end Canada's combat role in Afghanistan and to abolish the use of the federal spending power to create national social programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The Tories are expected to use the throne speech to outline plans to curtail the spending power but not to do away with it entirely — a proposal that would be unpalatable in the rest of the country.

Harper has also moved to buy time on the Afghanistan issue by appointing a five-member panel, chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, to study the options and report early next year.

That has failed to win over NDP Leader Jack Layton, who like Duceppe has been hinting for weeks that his party is virtually certain to vote against the throne speech.

"Most Canadians think that Mr. Harper is going in the wrong direction," Layton said yesterday in his own interview with CTV. "The NDP is prepared to take him on."

Dion, by contrast, has been waffling in public while Liberal strategists circulate word privately that they're considering ways to show displeasure with the Tories but stop short of bringing them down and forcing an election.

Cdn. troops recount suicide bomb attack; Multinational medical staff at Kandahar base pressed into service to treat the wounded

IDNUMBER 200710150063
PUBLICATION: Times & Transcript (Moncton)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: News
PAGE: B1
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript
(Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 412

The suicide bomber who blew himself up at a crowded marketplace in the border town of Spin Boldak on Saturday stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest.

It is a crude but effective weapon and an indiscriminating one when it comes to killing, spraying deadly shrapnel in all directions.

Of the eight people who died in the blast, five were civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr at a community festival. Three of the dead were Afghan National Border Police officers who are so often targeted by insurgents.

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"The market was full. There were lots of games for children, many people in the market...."

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Two children, ages 8 and 9, were among the survivors treated by Canadian soldiers at Spin Boldak.

"We received about 10 pick-up trucks loaded with injured people, about five to six injured in each truck," Huet said yesterday.

Two doctors were dispatched from Kandahar Airfield but emergency medics with the reconnaissance squadron went immediately to work. "Within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated," Huet said.

Twenty-one of 36 survivors were evacuated by air to the multinational military hospital at Kandahar Airfield. Canadian soldiers in Spin Boldak took the rest to the local hospital by armoured vehicle.

The entire multinational medical staff at Kandahar Airfield, 120 people, was pressed into service. From just after 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. the victims arrived in waves.

Cdn. troops recount suicide bomb attack; Multinational medical staff at Kandahar base pressed into service

"The injuries, most of them were shrapnel wounds," said Maj. Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services for the Canadian contingent and one of the two doctors dispatched to Spin Boldak to help treat the wounded.

The ball bearings had the desired effect. Body parts were brought to the hospital with the victims.

"The people closest to the suicide bomber received the most serious injuries," Dodaro said.

He lauded the reconnaissance squadron for their response. "I don't have a number of lives that were saved but the Canadian Forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure," Dodaro told reporters.

Five patients remained at the military hospital at Kandahar yesterday. The others were evacuated to military facilities at NATO bases in Terin Kot, Camp Bastion and Kabul.

"It's the largest incident of mass casualties we've had," said Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron, deputy commander of the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

"At the moment, everyone is stable, everyone has received the appropriate care and everyone is basically out of danger. Most, if not all, will fully recover from their injuries."

NBers told 'pay close attention' to throne speech; Widespread interest in whether the Opposition will back or reject Tory plans

IDNUMBER 200710150042
PUBLICATION: Times & Transcript (Moncton)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: News;News
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Kate Wright Times & Transcript Staff
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 460

New Brunswickers could be headed to the polls this fall if the Throne Speech delivered tomorrow by Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not supported by Opposition parties.

Speculation is swirling on Parliament Hill and across the country today as political observers try and gauge what news Harper may deliver tomorrow as Parliament resumes for its fall sitting.

While only the prime minister and a few top aides know the content, New Brunswick political watchers say the speech and the possibility of a fall election could have political payoffs for the region.

The speech will likely contain big-ticket commitments on Canada's role in Afghanistan and the environment, but it will also address matters of regional importance that will dictate Harper's relationship with the province.

Donald Savoie, a professor at l'Université de Moncton and a specialist in regional development, said recent polls show Harper's Conservatives are ahead in the polls and he may be looking to pick up support in the province.

After the Liberals suffered a disappointing upset in the recent Quebec byelection and have been waging public in-party battles over the past few weeks, Harper's Tories will likely be looking to cash in on that slip.

The Throne Speech will set the tone for the upcoming session and Savoie said it could contain issues that could greatly impact the relationship the federal government has with the province.

"It will be interesting to see if in the speech if Harper addresses federal spending power and how he plays that," he said. "Environment and infrastructure funding may also be at the top of the file and all of those issues would play to us."

Savoie said New Brunswickers should pay close attention to Harper's take on spending in the provinces. While he's hesitant to praise the way Harper has taken to spending in New Brunswick, Savoie said the PM could change his spending patterns in tomorrow's speech.

"Federal spending has helped provinces like Ontario and Quebec and what we get are transfer payments," he said. "If you look at spending patterns, we are not getting real investment." The latest federal budget gave New Brunswick just 1.8 per cent or \$26 million more in equalization payments. By comparison, Quebec got

NBers told 'pay close attention' to throne speech; Widespread interest in whether the Opposition will back or

nearly 29 per cent more.

The feds recently posted a \$14-billion surplus.

Infrastructure spending will also likely play a role in the speech and New Brunswick municipalities hankering for a piece of the government's \$33-billion infrastructure fund will want to pay close attention.

Harper's environmental stand will also be of critical importance to New Brunswick's fishery, agriculture and tourism sectors.

Tamara Small, a political scientist at Mount Allison University, said Harper may have tightened his support in Nova Scotia after signing an offshore oil deal with the province last week.

However, she said there has been little buzz in New Brunswick and early polling suggests there will be no big movements in New Brunswick's political landscape.

"We're not getting any sense there's going to be a radical shift," she said. "Parliament would likely look very similar to the one they have right now."

Letters

IDNUMBER 200710150002
PUBLICATION: Times & Transcript (Moncton)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: D8
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript
(Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 1022

Police presence appreciated

To The Editor:

Since the suspicious activity lately in Salisbury, the police have really been stepping up their presence and it is very comforting to see that.

I was sitting here on the couch and noticed that there was a police car driving through my subdivision, and it really makes me feel a lot safer considering that it was 2 a.m. and they were still on duty.

I just wanted to make a comment about the news I have been reading lately and that is kind of putting the officers down about the way they are doing their jobs. I just wanted to say that they are greatly appreciated and I hope to continue seeing them around and making our little community safer.

Sarah Huckins,

Salisbury

Trojan spirit alive and well

To The Editor:

I was a first year student at Harrison Trimble High School in 1982 and I remember clearly the assembly when the cheque was presented to Kier Colpitts and his family. It was a very emotional and proud moment.

It does not surprise me that the Trojan spirit is alive and well and that the generosity continues.

I am still, and always will be, so proud to be a Trojan. Onward we march together.

M. Sullivan,

Moncton

(Via Canadacast.com)

It's a strange world we have

To The Editor:

Almost incredible! From one of your regular columnists. "Dear Abby supports same-sex marriage?" (Oct. 11, B3)

Who will be next? Ginette Petitpas-Taylor? Gwynne Dyer?

Would you believe Charles W. Moore?

It's a strange world. . .

Eldon Hay,

Sackville

Good job on Vaughan Harvey

To The Editor:

The extension of Vaughan Harvey Boulevard really looks good and gives easy access to everything. It is just easier to get around.

It really is a job well done.

And my co-workers agree it does look nice.

Things are marked well and there is almost no chance of getting lost.

A "good job" to all.

Meanwhile, I'd like to say that for Shediac Deputy Mayor Leo Doiron to salute the volunteers in his community is a positive thing because they are so seldom given commendation.

I join him in saluting all volunteers: we are proud of your work and you do a fine job. Volunteers may not get paid for their services, but they do a fine job in our communities.

Dave Daigle Jr.,

Riverview

(Via e-mail)

Best protest at ballot box

To The Editor:

Since the Dieppe Citizens' Coalition was formed last May, we have received a tremendous amount of support and encouragement from Dieppe residents.

Our mission continues to be the same: to inform the public even with the meager amount of information we are able to obtain or decipher from City Hall. Because of the overwhelming amount of support given to us from residents, we intend to continue our work.

However, we do not condone the action of a bomb threat which occurred during the Dieppe Council meeting

of Oct. 9. Several members of the coalition were present in council chambers when this unfortunate event occurred.

If those responsible for this action want to express their frustration towards members of Dieppe Council, they should do so at the ballot box when the next municipal election is held in May 2008. This is more effective and much more powerful than a bomb threat.

Romeo LeBlanc,

President,

Dieppe Citizens' Coalition,

Dieppe

(Via e-mail)

Support troops, bring them home!

To The Editor:

Just a short note to comment on Charles Moore's column "Anti Yellow Ribbon protests dishonour sacrifices" which appeared Oct. 9.

I found the piece to be very simplistic with petty arguments, full of veiled (and not so veiled) sarcasm directed towards the young girl leading the anti-war coalition protest in Fredericton.

It is quite obvious that Mr. Moore for all his Don Cherryesque chest thumping and flag waving has no real understanding of the causes and consequences of our involvement in Afghanistan.

I doubt very much that he has family, (either close or extended) that are actually putting their lives on the line. Why, Mr. Moore probably thinks that Canada has a wonderful record with our government's involvement in Haiti, for example. (I therefore suggest that he read "Canada in Haiti" by Yves Engler and Anthony Fenton.)

Regarding Afghanistan again, Gwynne Dyer's column of Oct. 10 gives a much more realistic view of reality, something which Mr. Moore sorrowfully lacks. I hope he read it. The futility of the mission as it is now, is well explained.

Support our troops, yes, and let's bring them home to their loved ones NOW!

Ron Murphy,

Shediac Bridge

(Via e-mail)

Bombing others isn't justified

To The Editor:

In the fall of 2002, by invitation, I had work in an American publication which included articles by former U.S. presidential candidate and decorated veteran George McGovern, Ralph Nader, and peace advocate James

Twyman.

Mr. McGovern, who was front page, said we needed to feed the hungry of the world, not threaten anyone with bombs. He said if people attacked countries that seemed to pose threats, we'd have endless wars. He aptly pointed out that the United States was the most heavily armed nation in history, and the most feared.

At that very time, Robert Muller, former Secretary-General to the United Nations, said there were two world super powers today: the United States and world public opinion.

As someone who braved the cold to the point of acquiring pneumonia, voicing my opposition to the illegal invasion of Iraq, I know how erroneous Mr. Muller's well-intentioned statement was. Today, we have gone from world-renowned peacekeepers to active fighting in arenas such as Afghanistan. Some oppose our actions and are labeled anti-Canadian or anti-military, shades of questioning George Bush and being labeled anti-American.

Our soldiers, volunteers in peacetime, trained to kill, are doing murderous deeds on foreign soil. We are losing many of our youth, while those who will return will be wounded in just about every sense of the word. We are the ones on foreign soil. If our soldiers were defending our own turf, yes, heroes, but that's not the case.

And in so many ways, our "brave" youth are paid assassins. It may not sound good, but how else to word that? As far as being behind the U.S. in any campaign, let's look to the U.S. in Iraq, a country it randomly attacked, which had neither weapons of mass destruction nor involvement in 9/11. We say Muslims are fanatics, and surely some are, but our leaders are avowed Christians and use words like "crusades".

Who is more fanatical or dangerous?

Which country is the only one to ever use nuclear weapons on others?

Are we really doing good or God's work by rallying behind the U.S.? Or are we being duped, like always?

And when our clerics bless the outgoing fleets and give elaborate religious rites to the glorious dead, is that what Christ would have done? What's wrong with this picture?

Yellow ribbons do what? Are we fighting legitimate battles or are we asked to support insanity and falsehoods? When bombs are dropped on the innocent, overseas, is that fixing anything? When has murderous enterprise ever resulted in anything positive?

A few of ours die and it's horrific tragedy. How about the hundreds of thousands killed by coalition forces in the past few years, on their own home turf?

How tragic and ungodly is that?

Richard Doiron,

Moncton

(Via e-mail)

Harper's throne speech has New Brunswickers eyeing federal dollars

IDNUMBER 200710150036
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: News;News
PAGE: A4
BYLINE: KATE WRIGHT wright.kate@dailygleaner.com
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WORD COUNT: 453

New Brunswickers could be headed to the polls this fall if the Conservative party's throne speech, to be delivered Tuesday by Gov.-Gen. Michaëlle Jean, is not supported by opposition parties.

Speculation is swirling on Parliament Hill and across the country today as political observers try to gauge what news Prime Minister Stephen Harper will deliver Tuesday as Parliament resumes for its fall sitting.

While only the prime minister and a few top aides know the results, New Brunswick political watchers say the speech and the possibility of a fall election could have political payoffs for the region.

The speech will likely contain big-ticket commitments on Canada's role in Afghanistan and the environment.

But it will also address matters of regional importance that will dictate Harper's relationship with the province.

Donald Savoie, a professor at l'Université de Moncton and a specialist in regional development, said recent polls show Harper's Conservatives are ahead in the polls and he may be looking to pick up support in the province.

After the Liberals suffered disappointing results in recent Quebec byelections, along with public in-party battles over the past few weeks, Harper's Tories will likely be looking to cash-in on those gaffes.

The throne speech generally sets the tone for the upcoming session and, Savoie said, it might contain issues that greatly impact the relationship the federal government has with the province.

"It will be interesting to see if ... Harper addresses federal spending power and how he plays that," he said. "Environment and infrastructure funding may also be at the top of the file, and all of those issues would play to us."

Savoie said New Brunswickers should pay close attention to Harper's take on spending in the provinces.

While he's hesitant to praise the way Harper spends federal dollars in New Brunswick, Savoie said the prime minister could change his spending patterns in Tuesday's speech.

"Federal spending has helped provinces like Ontario and Quebec and what we get are transfer payments," he said. "If you look at spending patterns, we are not getting real investment."

The latest federal budget gave New Brunswick \$26 million more -- an increase of 1.8 per cent -- in equalization payments. By comparison, Quebec received nearly 29 per cent more.

The feds recently posted a \$14-billion surplus.

Infrastructure spending might also play a role in the speech with \$33 billion up for grabs.

Harper's stance on the environment will also be watched closely by New Brunswick's fishery, agriculture and tourism sectors. If opposition parties don't agree with the Tories' take on the new parliamentary session and an election looms, it remains unclear who would benefit most from a fall run at the polls.

Tamara Small, a political scientist at Mount Allison University, said Harper may have tightened his support in Nova Scotia after signing an offshore oil deal with the province last week.

However, she said there has been little buzz in New Brunswick and early polling suggests there will be no big movements in New Brunswick's political landscape.

"We're not getting any sense there's going to be a radical shift," she said. "Parliament would likely look very similar to the one they have right now."

Letters | Missing mother hardest part

IDNUMBER 200710150017
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: D5
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(Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 1063

I have recently overcome one of the hardest challenges I will ever face.

I am a Grade 12 Oromocto High School student.

My mom just spent six months in Afghanistan. She was over there risking her life every day. It was one of the hardest things my family has ever gone through.

Last week I opened the paper and was faced with the campaign to take down yellow ribbons launched by the Fredericton Peace Coalition. As I was reading, it I felt so hurt and upset. I can't imagine how some of the troops must feel as they read that article.

I believe the Fredericton Peace Coalition is looking at the issue the wrong way. I think it is insulting they would ask companies as well as individuals to remove their yellow support–our–troops ribbons.

For them to say the yellow ribbons show support for the war is false. The yellow ribbons are there to show that we support the troops, we support the individuals risking their lives each and everyday.

Our troops are not there to fight George W. Bush's war. They are there on a peace mission.

I wear a yellow ribbon on my jacket, and there is one on my car as well.

No matter what is said, I will not remove my ribbon. I don't think many others will either. The ribbons give the troops support. They show the troops that what they are doing will not go unnoticed, that their lives are worth so much to us.

Christina Moore

Oromocto, N.B.

Arrogant feds must return taxes

Arrogance is hard to take. Especially from your employees.

What? You don't have uppity employees? Sure you do.

Remember the recent budget surplus disclosures that happened because we were over–taxed? The government, your employee, doesn't want to give it back. They want to keep it in case they need it for a rainy day.

They think it is their money. It's not. It's your money, a quarter billion dollars that they got by mistake. You might have put your share in a cookie jar for Christmas or maybe paid off the car loan.

Sometimes governments stub their toe on the smallest of things that later, at election time, come back to haunt them. You don't have to go outside this province to recall a few recent instances.

And sometimes governments think they are doing such a good job for the voters that we will overlook their mistakes. Maybe they rationalized that the benefits we are getting from the red hot loonie more than make up for that quarter billion dollars?

Well, not for those of us who can't or won't shop across the border. And try telling it to all those who lost their jobs last week because of that self-same loonie.

Apparently our employees don't understand simple economics. To put it simply, we need money now to pay the bills we have to meet now. These are bills we could more easily have met if our government hadn't taken our dollars for their future bills.

They tell us they don't need to give back these dollars that they don't need right now. How do they get the right to decide this? It's our money. They made the mistake, not us. But we pay the penalty.

Are they so arrogant that they think we poor dumb taxpayers don't know any better?

Bill Evans

Dumfries, N.B.

Feds must cough up cash

If New Brunswick's tuition fees are deregulated and UNB Saint John closes, thank Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

While New Brunswickers wrestle with sustaining a viable, public post secondary education system, the federal Conservative government is racking up another multi-billion-dollar surplus.

These two seemingly unrelated issues are linked through a decade of chronic under funding of post secondary education at the federal level. Core federal funding for colleges and universities, in proportion to the economy, is less than one half what it was before the Liberal cuts of the 1990s.

As a result, tuition fees in New Brunswick have more than doubled, and average student debt has reached \$32,000. These deep cuts --- applauded by the Reform--Alliance ancestors of today's Conservative government --- have undermined the public nature of Canada's post secondary education system.

Increasing corporate investment and presence on public campuses and forcing administrations to run like private corporations instead of public institutions, threaten academic freedom and the status of education as a public good.

These are the roots of the recent task force on post secondary education in New Brunswick which has generated considerable opposition for good reason. The more than 120,000 people in the Saint John area deserve access to a full university program offering a range of courses as good or better than they already have.

And limiting student debt to \$28,000 hardly qualifies as improving access, especially when tuition fees are

allowed to soar uncontrollably.

However, it is hard to fault the report's authors for its fundamental flaw. A truly accessible, high-quality, public postsecondary system requires public investment which has been sorely lacking in New Brunswick and across Canada for a long time. After a decade of pressure from student groups and the NDP, the last federal budget committed to re-invest \$800 million — not this year, but in 2008–09 — in core post secondary funding across Canada.

However, this one-time fix still falls more than \$1 billion short of what the post secondary community needs to re-build. Earlier this year, we introduced C-398, the Canada Post-Secondary Education Act, akin to the Canada Health Act, which would guarantee accountable, stable federal transfers to protect affordable, quality, public post-secondary education for generations of Canadian students to come.

Ottawa's debt to Canada's students and post secondary institutions is long past due.

Denise Savoie, MP Victoria

Federal NDP advocate for post secondary education

Promise of repair not enough

When Mayor Brad speaks, Irving listens?

But the mayor's message is garbage.

Brad Woodside won't be a hero until something is done to preserve Fredericton's old train station. If he's jumping into the game now, he had better score the winning touchdown.

I have no patience for people who appear to like a superhero with empty words.

Woodside should be making things happen. Stop talking and start doing. Nothing in his message is new.

Mary Keith, vice-president of communications for J.D. Irving, disappoints me with the "pending review and approval by others" card. That's wearing thin.

The full repairs won't be done for years until the Fredericton Review Board and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada give approval.

We know that will take a long time, much longer since I doubt any of the "schedule of repairs to be initiated and completed" has even been started. The roof has to be repaired to prevent further damage this winter.

I don't care that the Irvings will have to choke up \$2 million to repair the station. It will take far less than that to fix the roof.

We have said this repeatedly and it's not getting through. Nothing has changed that I can see. My petition will be delivered, and demand action from politicians. The petition has reached 319 signatures from people from around the world.

Two days ago I watched Kent employees pull up at the station and make short work of covering a broken door. I'm sure they repaired the gaping holes in the fence as well. They must do the same with the roof; now would be a good time.

If this doesn't happen in the next few days, action will be taken by others.

That's a scoop for something newsworthy in the near future.

Tim Scammell

Acting president

Fredericton Friends of the Railway

Canadian troops save lives after Afghanistan blast

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B6

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Dene Moore

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 429

The suicide bomber who blew himself up at a crowded marketplace in the border town of Spin Boldak on Saturday stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest.

It is a crude but effective weapon and an indiscriminating one when it comes to killing, spraying deadly shrapnel in all directions.

Of the eight people who died in the blast, five were civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al–Fitr at a community festival. Three of the dead were Afghan National Border Police officers who are so often targeted by insurgents.

"It's the end of Ramadan, so there are a lot of festivities taking place in Afghanistan," said Maj. Pierre Huet, commanding officer of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, which set up an emergency triage at Canada's forward operating base in Spin Boldak to treat the victims.

"The market was full. There were lots of games for children, many people in the market."

Seven people were killed instantly when the bomber blew himself up around 7 p.m. One more victim died en route to the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Two children, ages 8 and 9, were among the survivors treated by Canadian soldiers at Spin Boldak.

"We received about 10 pick–up trucks loaded with injured people, about five to six injured in each truck," Huet told reporters yesterday.

Two doctors were dispatched from Kandahar Airfield but emergency medics with the reconnaissance squadron went immediately to work.

"Within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated," Huet said.

Twenty–one of 36 survivors were evacuated by air to the multinational military hospital at Kandahar Airfield. Canadian soldiers in Spin Boldak took the rest to the local hospital by armoured vehicle.

The entire multinational medical staff at Kandahar Airfield, 120 people, was pressed into service. From just after 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. the victims arrived in waves.

The medical headquarters for the hospital was quickly turned into a temporary triage area as medical staff waited for the sound of helicopters to cut through the night sky.

"The injuries, most of them were shrapnel wounds," said Maj. Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services for the Canadian contingent and one of the two doctors dispatched to Spin Boldak to help treat the wounded.

The ball bearings had the desired effect. Body parts were brought to the hospital with the victims.

"The people closest to the suicide bomber received the most serious injuries," Dodaro said.

He lauded the reconnaissance squadron for their response.

"I don't have a number of lives that were saved but the Canadian Forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure," Dodaro told reporters.

Five patients remained at the military hospital at Kandahar yesterday. The others were evacuated to military facilities at NATO bases in Terin Kot, Camp Bastion and Kabul.

"It's the largest incident of mass casualties we've had," said Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron, deputy commander of the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Gen. Dan McNeill, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, called it an "abominable violent act."

"Yet again, we see in such senseless acts that the victims have been largely civilians," McNeill said Sunday.

"Taliban extremists do not offer a hopeful future for this country, but one of violence and death."

Chretien accused of lying to Quebecers; Duceppe says PM didn't act respectably

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B1

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Karine Fortin

DATELINE: TROIS–RIVIERES, Que.

ILLUSTRATION: Chretien; Duceppe

WORD COUNT: 384

Former prime minister Jean Chretien was lying when he told Quebecers before the 1995 sovereignty referendum that voting Yes meant they'd be leaving Canada, Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said yesterday.

Chretien says in his about-to-be-released memoirs a loss by the No side "would not have led quickly or inevitably to the breakup of Canada."

"A very slight majority for the Yes side could not have been interpreted as irrefutable proof that a majority of Quebecers wanted to sever their historic links with Canada," he writes.

But just a few days before the crucial vote 12 years ago, he said Chretien made it clear in a televised pitch that the fate of Canada was at stake.

"That means he lied to Quebecers in his speech to them ... before the referendum," Duceppe said after a weekend Bloc meeting in Trois–Rivieres, Que.

"He said then that the question was clear and that if they [Quebecers] voted Yes, then they would be leaving Canada and that if they voted No, they'd be staying in Canada.

"It was very clear then that he would respect the verdict ... Today, he tells us that's not what he was thinking. I think he lied and it is not very respectable for a Canadian prime minister to behave that way."

Duceppe said he still believes the slimmest of Yes victories – 50 per cent plus one vote – would be enough for Quebec to separate if there is another referendum.

"In Quebec, the main parties – the Action democratique du Quebec, the Liberals and the Parti Quebecois – all agree on the concept of 50 per cent plus one."

Anything else would be patently unfair, he said.

"It would be like a referee telling two teams in a football game 'Play the game and at the end I'll tell you what margin of victory you need to win,' " he added.

Duceppe, who received 95 per cent support in a confidence vote from party members on Saturday, reiterated the party is ready for a general election if tomorrow's throne speech is defeated.

The Bloc is sticking to its position that it will vote against the speech unless the Tories promise to:

eliminate all federal spending powers in provincial jurisdictions.

respect the Kyoto Protocol.

continue supply management in the agriculture sector.

help Quebec's battered forestry industry.

and state clearly that Canadian soldiers will leave Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

Asked whether he would be ready to compromise if Prime Minister Stephen Harper agreed to four of the five conditions, Duceppe replied: "It's up to him to show some flexibility, to keep his word and to respect the consensus in Quebec."

"I said there are five conditions – and there are five conditions." That means the federal Liberals' position on the throne speech could determine whether Canadians go to the polls this fall.

MPs gear up for throne speech; NDP leader urges Liberals to show up for confidence votes

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B1

SOURCE: Sun Media

BYLINE: Kathleen Harris

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 587

The spectre of a snap election hangs overhead as federal lawmakers return to work in the capital.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean officially opens a new session of Parliament tomorrow with an evening Speech from the Throne that will map out the Conservative government's priorities. And depending on the contents, the remainder of Stephen Harper's minority government could be prolonged or cut short.

The Conservative parliamentary blueprint is expected to put broad strokes on several key areas: Canada's future role in Afghanistan, asserting Arctic sovereignty, protecting the environment, strengthening the economy and the federation and implementing tough crime–busting measures. Despite public opinion polls that show the Tories climbing toward majority territory, insiders insist the PM is not designing a speech to deliberately self–destruct and trigger an election.

"The prime minister does not want an election because the Canadian public does not want an election – they're basically tuned out," said one strategist. "We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're just beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

The throne speech is expected to lay the foundation for a fall economic statement and spring budget by pledging tax cuts, help for struggling manufacturing and forestry sectors and initiatives that will lift interprovincial trade barriers and enhance labour mobility.

Commitments to assert sovereignty in the North, tackle climate change and carve a path forward on the Afghanistan mission will also feature prominently, as will a pledge to strengthen the federation with senate reform and new limits on federal spending power in provincial jurisdiction.

The speech will also make a determined pledge to pass stalled crime bills on dangerous offenders, bail reform, conditional sentencing and the age of consent, and introduce an overhaul for the youth justice system.

The NDP and Bloc Québécois have already stated they don't expect to like what they hear in the speech, leaving the survival or defeat of the Conservative government in the hands of the reeling Liberals.

NDP Leader Jack Layton is urging Liberal MPs to show up for confidence votes stemming from the Throne Speech instead of abstaining or staying home to avoid toppling the government. Mass absenteeism would only give Harper carte blanche to ram down an agenda most Canadians don't want.

But a heavy–handed approach by Harper could lead to a eventual backlash at the polls, he warned.

"I can't see Canadians liking an approach which essentially holds Parliament in contempt, where he tries to pretend he has absolute power when in fact you've got the Canadian people on a completely different track," Layton said. "I think it will underline people's sense of the man as someone you really can't trust."

Liberal House Leader Ralph Goodale accused Harper of being "bellicose and belligerent" on the eve of a new session of Parliament, and suggested the PM's aides are plotting to make Canada "a Republican clone by stealth." But Conservatives should not take the Liberals for granted.

"He's trying the tactics of thuggery and Liberals are not going to be intimidated by that," he said.

"We will take the issues as they come along and make our considered judgements on them one by one as they are presented. We don't want to trigger an election, we want this Parliament to work, but the ball is really in Mr. Harper's court. If he wants to defeat himself by being so entirely offensive and unreasonable, and if that causes an election then so be it. We'll be ready for it and we'll be fully competitive in all parts of the country."

Can Afghan mission succeed?; There are signs of progress, even against high odds

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: Forum

PAGE: 5

BYLINE: Den Tandt, Michael

PHOTO: Michael Den Tandt/Osprey News Network

DATELINE: KANDAHAR CITY

ILLUSTRATION: Soldiers of the Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar City pay a visit to students at Mazara School, on the outskirts of Kabul. Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers designed, supervised and paid \$24,000 for construction of a security wall around the school.

WORD COUNT: 963

If Canada's mission to Afghanistan succeeds, it will be because of this place. And if Canadians knew a little more about what goes on here, the tenor of the Afghan debate in Ottawa might be quite different.

This three–acre, whitewashed compound – a former tomato–canning plant, turned Soviet base, turned Taliban base, turned American base, and finally turned Canadian base – is where a small team of Canadian soldiers came in July 2005 to help the Afghans begin to rebuild their country.

The conditions they met were worse than appalling: grinding poverty; 80–per–cent illiteracy; rampant disease; a filthy, primitive hospital; schools regularly burned by the Taliban in the night.

The Islamist insurgency was then just gearing up, and Canadian troops began sustaining the first serious injuries and casualties from suicide attacks and roadside bombs. Still, the numbers were small. At that time, few people back home seemed to notice.

All that changed on Jan. 15, 2006, when senior Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry was killed by a suicide blast. The same attack, which occurred just a few hundred metres from the provincial response team's main gate, cost Master Cpl. Paul Franklin his legs and injured two other soldiers (both of whom have since recovered). Suddenly, Canadians, and the Canadian media, were focused on the mission.

I first arrived here about a week after that bombing. The Provincial Reconstruction Team's soldiers, and a handful of civilians from other government departments such as the RCMP and the Canadian International Development Agency, were still in shock. Nevertheless, their work went on just as before. If anything, they worked with greater determination.

Each day, convoys of armoured Mercedes jeeps left the Provincial Reconstruction Team's razor–wired front gate and made their way through the city to various projects: an orphanage, a school, a new police station on the outskirts of town. By night, convoys raced up the road to the Kandahar Airfield, avoiding the increasingly treacherous warrens of the downtown whenever possible.

Bombings in the city were routine. There was gunfire nearly every night. Foot patrols, which until then had been carried out regularly, slowed to a trickle, then stopped. The Canadians' jeeps were replaced by heavily armoured LAV III troop carriers.

During the month or so that I was here in 2006, I met and interviewed as many Afghans as I could, given the constraints on travel outside the wire. What I learned was frightening: a minister of education terrified by death threats and a grenade left hanging from his office door; medical clinics burned to the ground.

The agriculture minister complained that local farmers were starving because Western aid had failed to reach the intended recipients.

The police seemed utterly incapable of defending themselves. They went out in groups, hanging off the backs of pickup trucks, and were blown up. The main guard post of Kandahar's police station was struck by a motorcycle-borne suicide bomber, killing 13 Afghans.

I saw the injured and the dying as they lay in an unsanitary ward at Kandahar City's Mirwais hospital.

Their bodies were burned black. There were no nurses on the ward, no doctors – only grieving family members.

By the time I left Kandahar, I was deeply skeptical about whether any kind of progress could ever take place here, given the virulence of the insurgents' hatred for any kind of progress.

And yet, it seems to me that there has been progress – hard, measurable progress – in the face of extraordinary odds.

Certainly, the insurgency is still raging. Last Wednesday night, Kandahar Airfield sustained two rocket attacks.

In the past two months, the Provincial Reconstruction Team itself has been targeted three times by insurgents firing rocket-propelled grenades. Travel through the city and throughout the province is still very dangerous. Every foray by western troops outside the perimeters of their armed camps is treated, tactically, as a mission into enemy territory. Training in combat first aid is mandatory for anyone who arrives at Kandahar Airfield.

But in spite of that, development work goes doggedly on. In early 2006, there were two RCMP officers here, helping to train the Afghan National Police. There are now 11. Over the past year, three police stations have been built in the city, each costing between \$200,000 and \$400,000. Two more are in construction. All have been designed and planned by Canadian army engineers, but built by local contractors, as a means of stimulating the local economy. Thirteen mobile police checkpoints have been built, all within the last eight months.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team's civilian-military co-operation unit, better known as CIMIC, has 200 projects in various stages of completion, ranging from small village wells to bridges to police stations. The Afghan National Army, which Canadians are helping train, is growing in strength and competence. And the woeful undertraining of the Afghan National Police is finally being seriously addressed, through the same kind of mentoring program that has proven successful with the army. Canadians are deeply involved in that, too.

This is not to deny that the province and the country are still beset by enormous problems. Mirwais hospital is still hopelessly inadequate. The country is still covered in Soviet-era mines. Tribal infighting and corruption are rampant. Poppy cultivation is exploding. And there's a war on.

Teachers and doctors and anyone who works with the international community still receive death threats in the night.

But the new police stations in Kandahar City are not being bombed or burned down. Local businessmen are

beginning to make plans for the future and to consider small investments, according to officers here. There are signs of life returning. And all that is happening largely thanks to this extremely stubborn Provincial Reconstruction Team, the people who staff it and the much larger contingent of combat soldiers who protect them.

It's an extraordinary story, inspiring even. Critics of the mission should look here, visit here, before they speak.

Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team

– Michael Den Tandt is editor of the Owen Sound Sun Times. He is on assignment in Afghanistan. He can be reached at michaeldentandt@yahoo.com.

There will be no peace in Afghanistan until the foreigners leave

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: Forum

PAGE: 5

BYLINE: Dyer, Gwynne

WORD COUNT: 927

The sixth anniversary of the start of U.S. air strikes against al–Qaida and its Taliban hosts in Afghanistan recently occurred. It was a very clever politico–military operation, and by December of 2001 all of Afghanistan was under the control of the United States and its local allies for a total cost of 12 American dead. Then, for no good reason, it fell apart, and now the war is lost.

In the days just after 9/11, George Tenet, the Central Intelligence Agency's chief, came up with a bold proposal. Why invade Afghanistan with a large American army, deploying massive firepower that kills large numbers of locals and alienates the population? Why give Osama bin Laden the long anti–American guerrilla war that he was undoubtedly counting on?

Instead, Tenet proposed sending teams of CIA agents and special forces into the country to win the support of the various militias, loosely linked as the Northern Alliance, that still dominated the northern regions of the country. Although the Taliban had controlled most of the country since 1996, they had never decisively won the civil war. So why not intervene in that war, shower the Taliban's opponents with money and weapons, and tip the balance against the Taliban?

It worked like a charm. Pakistan, whose intelligence services had originally created the Taliban, withdrew its support, the regime fled Kabul, and most of the Taliban troops melted back into their villages. The government of a country of 27 million people was taken down for a death toll that probably did not exceed 4,000 on all sides.

By mid–December 2001, the United States effectively controlled Afghanistan through its local allies, all drawn from the northern minority groups: Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara. There had not been the mass killing of innocent bystanders that would inevitably have accompanied a conventional U.S. invasion, so there was no guerrilla war. The traditional ruling group and biggest minority, the Pashtun, who had put their money on the Taliban and lost, would have to be brought back into the game somehow, but the usual Afghan deal–making would suffice.

Washington had the wit to make Mahmoud Karzai, a Pashtun from a clan that never had much to do with the Taliban, its puppet president in Kabul but it didn't carry through. It froze out all the prominent Pashtun political and religious leaders who had had dealings with the Taliban – which was, of course, almost all of them.

The Taliban had been the government of Afghanistan for almost five years and were, at the time, the political vehicle of the Pashtun ascendancy in the country. If you were a traditional Pashtun leader, how could you not have had dealings with them? An amnesty that turned a blind eye to the past, plus pressure by the United States on its recent allies to grant the Pashtuns a fair share of the national pie, would have created a regime in Kabul to which Pashtuns could give their loyalty, even if they were less dominant at the centre than usual. But that never happened.

The United States had so closely identified the Taliban with al-Qaida (although bin Laden probably never told the Taliban leadership what he was planning) that it would not talk to Pashtun leaders who had been linked to the Taliban. Six years after the invasion that wasn't, the Pashtuns are still largely frozen out. That is why the Taliban are coming back.

Afghanistan has usually been run by regional and tribal warlords with little central control: nothing new there. But now it is also a country where the biggest minority has been largely excluded from power by foreign invaders who sided with the smaller minorities, and then blocked the process of accommodation by which the various Afghan ethnic groups normally make power-sharing deals.

The Taliban are still the main political vehicle of the Pashtuns, because there has been no time to build another. It doesn't mean that all Pashtuns are fanatics or terrorists. Indeed, not all the Taliban are fanatics (though many of them are), and hardly any of them nurse the desire to carry out terrorist acts in other countries. That was the specialty of their (rather ungrateful) Arab guests, who fled across the border into the tribal areas of Pakistan almost six years ago.

The current fighting in the south, the Pashtun heartland, which is causing a steady dribble of American, British and Canadian casualties, will continue until the Western countries pull out. (Most other NATO members sent their troops to various parts of northern Afghanistan, where non-Pashtun warlords rule non-Pashtun populations and nobody dares attack the foreigners.) Then, after the foreigners are gone, the Afghans will make the traditional inter-ethnic deals and something like peace will return.

Will Karzai still be the president after that? Yes, if he can convince the Pashtuns that he is open to such a deal once the foreigners leave.

Will the Taliban come back to power? No, only to a share of power, and only to the extent that they can still command the loyalty of the Pashtuns once it is no longer a question of resistance to foreigners.

Will Osama bin Laden return and recreate a "nest of terrorists" in Afghanistan. Very unlikely. The Afghans paid too high a price for their hospitality the first time round.

– Gwynne Dyer is a London-based Canadian freelance journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

Military chief should stay on

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: Editorial page

PAGE: 4

COLUMN: Opinion digest

SOURCE: Sudbury Star

WORD COUNT: 161

It is encouraging to see Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Defence Minister Peter MacKay squelch – at least temporarily – a media report that Gen. Rick Hillier will be replaced as chief of defence staff. Canada's 2,500 troops in Afghanistan are said to have a great deal of respect for the general, and a protracted dispute over his leadership would not serve those troops well. Canadian soldiers stationed in that country say they understand the need for a debate over the mission and whether Canadian troops should extend their stay, but their leadership and their efforts have continually been lauded at home and internationally.

Chiefs of defence staff typically last three years, which means Hillier's appointment is likely to conclude in 2008. It makes no sense to replace the chief of defence staff with one year remaining in the scheduled mission.

Chretien lied to Quebec – Duceppe; Bloc leader: Ex-PM wasn't honest about stance in 1995 referendum

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A5

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Karine Fortin

ILLUSTRATION: Former prime minister Jean Chretien says in his memoirs that a slim Yes vote in the 1995 sovereignty referendum might not have led to the breakup of Canada. (Paul Chiasson / CP); Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says the former prime minister made it clear 12 years ago that the fate of Canada was at stake. (Ryan Remiorz / CP)

WORD COUNT: 430

TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. – Former prime minister Jean Chretien was lying when he told Quebecers before the 1995 sovereignty referendum that voting Yes meant they'd be leaving Canada, Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said Sunday.

Chretien says in his about-to-be-released memoirs a loss by the No side "would not have led quickly or inevitably to the breakup of Canada."

"A very slight majority for the Yes side could not have been interpreted as irrefutable proof that a majority of Quebecers wanted to sever their historic links with Canada," he writes.

But just a few days before the crucial vote 12 years ago, he said Chretien made it clear in a televised pitch that the fate of Canada was at stake.

"That means he lied to Quebecers in his speech to them . . . before the referendum," Duceppe said after a weekend Bloc meeting in Trois-Rivieres, Que.

"He said then that the question was clear and that if they (Quebecers) voted Yes, then they would be leaving Canada and that if they voted No, they'd be staying in Canada.

"It was very clear then that he would respect the verdict. Today, he tells us that's not what he was thinking. I think he lied and it is not very respectable for a Canadian prime minister to behave that way."

Duceppe said he still believes the slimmest of Yes victories – 50 per cent plus one vote – would be enough for Quebec to separate if there is another referendum.

"In Quebec, the main parties – the Action democratique du Quebec, the Liberals and the Parti Quebecois – all agree on the concept of 50 per cent plus one."

Anything else would be patently unfair, he said.

"It would be like a referee telling two teams in a football game 'Play the game and at the end I'll tell you what margin of victory you need to win,'" he added.

Duceppe, who received 95 per cent support in a confidence vote from party members on Saturday, reiterated the party is ready for a general election if Tuesday's throne speech is defeated.

The Bloc is sticking to its position that it will vote against the speech unless the Tories promise to:– eliminate all federal spending powers in provincial jurisdictions. – respect the Kyoto Protocol.– continue supply management in the agriculture sector.– help Quebec's battered forestry industry.– and state clearly that Canadian soldiers will leave Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

Asked whether he would be ready to compromise if Prime Minister Stephen Harper agreed to four of the five conditions, Duceppe replied: "It's up to him to show some flexibility, to keep his word and to respect the consensus in Quebec."

"I said there are five conditions – and there are five conditions." That means the federal Liberals' position on the throne speech could determine whether Canadians go to the polls this fall.

'It was very clear then that he would respect the verdict. Today, he tells us that's not what he was thinking.'

Political circus comes to town in Kandahar

PUBLICATION:	The Chronicle–Herald
DATE:	2007.10.15
SECTION:	News
PAGE:	A3
BYLINE:	Scott Taylor
ILLUSTRATION:	Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier offers soldiers JosLouis cakes at Patrol Base Wilson in Afghanistan on Oct. 7. (Paul Chiasson / CP)
WORD COUNT:	726

THERE WAS an avalanche of news stories out of Afghanistan as Canadian politicians descended on the Kandahar airfield from all directions. The first to land was the delegation that included Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier and International Co–operation Minister Bev Oda. Their "secret" junket to Afghanistan was about the worst–kept secret in Ottawa, as every news outlet had advance notice of the trip days before they left Canadian soil.

Coinciding with this hush–hush albeit formal visit, Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre had already embarked on his own well–publicized, one–man, unembedded, fact–finding trip into Kabul and Kandahar. Due to a delay of Coderre's UN–chartered flight, Bernier and Oda had a full day's head start on the Liberal critic.

Knowing that Coderre was champing at the bit, foaming at the mouth and, at this point in his travels, unstoppable, the Conservative Party launched a pre–emptive barrage.

In Kandahar, Bernier and Oda told journalists that Coderre's visit was a publicity stunt that would put soldiers at risk. This message was repeated in Ottawa by Defence Minister Peter MacKay, who claimed Coderre had failed to provide advance notice of his travel plans.

Of course, anyone following the media circus revolving around this political sideshow knew that Coderre had been vocalizing his travel intentions for days prior to actually embarking on his mission. He and his staff had gotten wind of the Bernier–Oda visit and Coderre felt that if he shouted long enough and hard enough someone would back down and invite him to fly over on the air force plane. The Conservatives played a game of chicken with Coderre and, in the end, the bellicose defence critic had no choice but to go it alone as he had publicly promised.

There was probably nobody more anxious over Coderre's solitary journey into hell than his staffers and Liberal colleagues. During his flamboyant career as a politician, Coderre has become well–known as a loose cannon on Parliament Hill, and he is not exactly a seasoned veteran of adventure travel destinations. As one insider quipped, "Now I know what those NASA scientists felt when they first blasted a chimpanzee into space." But I digress.

Outside of partisan politics and regardless of personal opinions about the Afghan mission, Coderre's courage in travelling unescorted into a war zone should be universally commended.

Of course, that's not how Bernier and Oda viewed things. They had arrived in theatre sporting flak jackets and helmets, conducted 13 photo ops in 24 hours (including handing out Jos Louis cupcakes to soldiers) and had only given in to allow a media scrum when reporters threatened to boycott their junket unless they actually answered some questions. Thus, it was difficult for the embedded journalists not to recognize the pot calling the kettle black when these same cabinet ministers decried Coderre as a publicity hound.

In fact, it was noted that upon arrival Coderre conducted his own photo ops at exactly the same locations as his colleagues, particularly in front of the Tim Hortons on the airfield boardwalk. Some of those embedded journalists who see themselves as DND cheerleaders took issue with Coderre's message. He had used his presence in Kandahar to reassert the Liberal Party's policy to end the mission in February 2009. "Why come here if your mind is already made up?" whined the pro-war tub-thumpers regarding Coderre's visit. More balanced reporters noted that Bernier and Oda had deplaned in Kandahar reading from texts prepared by their staff in Ottawa, so their fact-finding mission was no more inquisitive than Coderre's.

Both the Liberal loner and the Conservative delegation had simply brought their soapboxes from Ottawa to Kandahar.

By far the largest leap of logic espoused during this battle of the political fact-finders was the military assessment provided by Oda. Addressing a gobsmacked collection of Afghani journalists, Oda claimed the recent increase in roadside and suicide bombs in the heretofore relatively secure capital of Kabul is proof of NATO's success in southern Afghanistan. The shift of violence into the Afghan capital from Kandahar is proof that the insurgents have become desperate.

By that logic, if the Taliban start launching attacks in North America we'll know we've really got them on the run.

Fact-finding politicians indeed.()

Aftermath of a blast; Canadian soldiers lauded for response in ball bearing suicide attack

PUBLICATION:	The Chronicle–Herald
DATE:	2007.10.15
SECTION:	World
PAGE:	A3
SOURCE:	The Canadian Press
BYLINE:	Dene Moore
ILLUSTRATION:	Maj. Pierre Huet, commanding officer of Canada's reconnaissance squadron, left, listens as Lt.–Cmdr. Charles Gendron recounts the aftermath of a suicide blast during a news conference Sunday at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. (Dene Moore / CP)
WORD COUNT:	511

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The suicide bomber who blew himself up at a crowded marketplace in the border town of Spin Boldak on Saturday stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest.

It is a crude but effective weapon and an indiscriminating one when it comes to killing, spraying deadly shrapnel in all directions.

Of the eight people who died in the blast, five were civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al–Fitr at a community festival. Three of the dead were Afghan National Border Police officers who are so often targeted by insurgents.

"It's the end of Ramadan, so there are a lot of festivities taking place in Afghanistan," said Maj. Pierre Huet, commanding officer of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, which set up an emergency triage at Canada's forward operating base in Spin Boldak to treat the victims.

"The market was full. There were lots of games for children, many people in the market."

Seven people were killed instantly when the bomber blew himself up around 7 p.m. One more victim died en route to the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Two children, ages 8 and 9, were among the survivors treated by Canadian soldiers at Spin Boldak.

"We received about 10 pickup trucks loaded with injured people, about five to six injured in each truck," Huet told reporters Sunday.

Two doctors were dispatched from Kandahar Airfield but emergency medics with the reconnaissance squadron went immediately to work.

"Within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated," Huet said.

Twenty–one of 36 survivors were evacuated by air to the multinational military hospital at Kandahar Airfield. Canadian soldiers in Spin Boldak took the rest to the local hospital by armoured vehicle.

The entire multinational medical staff at Kandahar Airfield, 120 people, was pressed into service. From just after 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. the victims arrived in waves.

The medical headquarters for the hospital was quickly turned into a temporary triage area as medical staff waited for the sound of helicopters to cut through the night sky.

"The injuries, most of them were shrapnel wounds," said Maj. Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services for the Canadian contingent and one of the two doctors dispatched to Spin Boldak to help treat the wounded.

The ball bearings had the desired effect. Body parts were brought to the hospital with the victims.

"The people closest to the suicide bomber received the most serious injuries," Dodaro said.

He lauded the reconnaissance squadron for their response.

"I don't have a number of lives that were saved but the Canadian Forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure," Dodaro told reporters.

Five patients remained at the military hospital at Kandahar on Sunday. The others were evacuated to military facilities at NATO bases in Terin Kot, Camp Bastion and Kabul.

"It's the largest incident of mass casualties we've had," said Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron, deputy commander of the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

"At the moment, everyone is stable, everyone has received the appropriate care and everyone is basically out of danger. Most, if not all, will fully recover from their injuries."

It was the third incident in recent months in this bustling border town.

In August, a Taliban ambush killed five and injured 11 policemen and in September another suicide bomber injured 12. A second suicide bomber was arrested by Afghan security forces before carrying out his deadly plan.

Huet said Afghan national security forces, in particular border police chief Abdul Razik, was the target of these attacks.

Gen. Dan McNeill, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, called it an "abominable violent act."

"Yet again, we see in such senseless acts that the victims have been largely civilians," McNeill said Sunday.

"Taliban extremists do not offer a hopeful future for this country, but one of violence and death."

'The Canadian Forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure.'

Canadian troops recount Afghan suicide attack; Suicide bomber kills eight at crowded market in border town

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: World

PAGE: B12

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

WORD COUNT: 296

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waited for the sound of helicopters to cut through the night sky.

"The injuries, most of them were shrapnel wounds," said Maj. Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services.

Prince Edward bestows medals on Islanders; The prince became colonel-in-chief of the P.E.I. Regiment, then pinned medals on five of its members for their service in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)
DATE: 2007.10.15
SECTION: Provincial
PAGE: A3
BYLINE: Wayne Thibodeau

ILLUSTRATION: Cpl. Calvin Arsenault, left, has his Afghanistan campaign medal pinned on his uniform by HRH The Prince Edward, while waiting for his turn is Cpl. Anthony MacLean. The presentations took place Sunday during a ceremony installing the prince as colonel-in-chief of the regiment. Guardian photos by Nigel Armstrong; HRH The Prince Edward, centre, followed by Lt-Col. Glenn Moriarity, inspects members of the Prince Edward Regiment moments before he took the appointment as colonel-in-chief of the regiment during a ceremony Sunday in Charlottetown. Guardian photo

WORD COUNT: 501

Prince Edward had only been presented his pennant as colonel-in-chief of the Prince Edward Island regiment for minutes when he honoured five members of the regiment for their service in Afghanistan.

Cpl. Calvin Arsenault, Cpl. Roy Good, Cpl. Jerry Landry, Cpl. Anthony MacLean and Cpl. Benjamin Miller received their Afghanistan campaign medals during a ceremony under bright sunny skies and light winds Sunday morning in Charlottetown. The ceremony was held in the parking lot behind the provincial government buildings, adjacent to Government House.

A series of military vehicles lined one side of the parking lot while the flags of Canada's provinces draped the other.

Prince Edward, dressed in his Canadian military uniform, became the regiment's colonel-in-chief during the ceremony. His Royal Highness was appointed colonel-in-chief on Aug. 2, 2005, but this was his first visit to the province since taking over the ceremonial reins of the regiment.

During the ceremony, he signed his appointment papers and received his colonel-in-chief pennant as Lt.-Col. Glenn Moriarity, commander of the regiment, looked on.

Cpl. Good of Mermaid, one of the five honoured Sunday, served in Afghanistan from Feb. 3 to Aug. 15.

"It was very hot, near 60 C most of the time. Stressful. Your days could start anywhere from midnight to 2 a.m. and go all night and into the next day and then into the next night. It was very long days," Good said, when asked about his experiences in Afghanistan.

Good, 22, is now waiting to join the regular forces.

"I'd go back after a little bit of a break," he said, adding that his girlfriend may have a say about that though.

Good's mom, Lorna Dockendorff of Fort Augustus, hopes her son will never have to return to the war-torn country.

Dockendorff said she couldn't be prouder of her son, as she watched from the sidelines as Prince Edward pinned a medal on her son's chest.

A stark contrast to the six-months she spent worrying about her son while he was serving in Afghanistan – months she described as terrifying.

Nancy MacLean of Charlottetown watched, as well, as her 22-year-old son left for war last February. She said she's glad to have her son home, and proud to see him receive his award from the prince Sunday. "It certainly was a very special day for our family," said an emotional MacLean. "To be able to go and represent your country and then to have the honour to be awarded this medal by the prince, not many people have the opportunity to do that."

MacLean also served from February to August.

"It was a great honour to receive my medal over here," he said. "To get in front of family and friends, and from somebody of such importance, it was definitely a great honour."

MacLean spent much of his time on the frontlines in Afghanistan as a light armoured vehicle driver.

"I was right out in front," he said, adding there was no shortage of close calls while he was on his tour of duty. "There were all kinds of risks. There were risks to everybody there – but being up front where all the action was – I would say we definitely had more of a risk than some."

MacLean said he wants to focus on his new family now, and does not plan to return to Afghanistan anytime soon.

"I got a year-and-a-half old daughter so it's time to stay home and be a dad for a while."

Editor's Note: Video-on-Demand from Prince Edward's service in Charlottetown on Sunday is available now on our website.

Prince charms his Island; Prince Andrew tells UPEI convocation that each person must strive to serve society

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.10.15

SECTION: Front

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: Wayne Thibodeau

ILLUSTRATION: Prince Edward checks his notes during his address to students as part of a ceremony granting him an honorary degree Saturday from the University of Prince Edward Island. Guardian photo by Nigel Armstrong

WORD COUNT: 593

Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, says people should be more worried about their responsibilities in the world rather than the rights bestowed to them.

During a special convocation address at UPEI Saturday, Prince Edward, the third son and youngest child of The Queen, motivated his young audience by encouraging them to make a difference in the world, to set goals and to work hard to achieve them.

"Nobody's got a right," he said during his 15-minute address.

"They've got responsibilities. You've got responsibilities to your society. You've got responsibilities to your neighbour. Those are far more important."

The University of Prince Edward Island, which shares His Royal Highness's name, handed Prince Edward an honorary doctor of laws degree during a special convocation at the W.A. Murphy Student Centre at UPEI Saturday afternoon.

More than 200 people packed McMillan Hall for the ceremony, most of which were high school students from the three Maritime provinces participating in the Student Leadership Symposium.

Prince Edward spent much of his time addressing the young people in the audience.

"You've had a lot of people talking to you today about leadership," he said. "Not everybody is a leader."

What's far more important, Prince Edward said, is to provide a service to the community, to help make a difference.

"You read out a lovely citation. I really haven't done very much at all. I'm not a leader . . . what I'm passionate about is giving young people opportunities."

Prince Edward said he's also becoming more and more passionate about the province that bears his name.

"You can rest assured it is a great pleasure to be back here in Prince Edward Island," said Prince Edward, who has visited the Island on four occasions now.

"I have developed over the years a special affection for the place – I suppose it has something to do with sharing the same name but I think there are probably a few other things as well that seem to bring me back."

UPEI President Wade MacLauchlan described it as a special occasion to have Prince Edward at UPEI.

"Welcome to this special Island which shares your name," MacLauchlan said.

"We are especially proud today, your Royal Highness, that you will become a member of the UPEI family with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from this university."

Earlier Saturday, Prince Edward took part in military exercises in Pisquid with the Prince Edward Island Regiment.

Prince Edward spent Saturday night at Government House, the guest of Lt.–Gov. Barbara Hagerman.

On Sunday, Prince Edward attended church services at St. Peter's Anglican.

He was then officially welcomed as colonel-in-chief of the Prince Edward Island Regiment.

Moments after taking over the reins of the regiment, he handed five members of the regiment medals for their tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Prince Edward's address at UPEI, his only public address while on the Island, was laid back and casual as he joked with the crowd and shared stories about his experiences in Canada.

He has visited Canada 25 times.

At one point, Prince Edward stepped away from the podium and walked to the edge of the crowd as he talked to the young people in the audience about the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

"Life is constantly throwing you challenges," he said.

"Unless you've actually had the experience of how to be able to accept a challenge, set out a challenge, set out how you are going to achieve it, and overcome it, and gain the confidence, and know what it's like to overcome a challenge, to gain that confidence – you don't know how you are going to be able to get on with the rest of your life."

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PRINCE EDWARD QUICK FACTS

The Queen's youngest son

– The Earl and Countess of Wessex carry out engagements in support of The Queen, and on behalf of a diverse range of organizations.

– The Earl of Wessex is the third son and youngest child of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh. He was born on March 10, 1964, and christened Edward Antony Richard Louis.

– Upon his marriage to Sophie Rhys–Jones in 1999, he was created The Earl of Wessex and Viscount Severn. At the same time it was announced that His Royal Highness will be given the title Duke of Edinburgh in due course, when the present title now held by Prince Philip eventually reverts to the Crown.

Prince charms his Island; Prince Andrew tells UPEI convocation that each person must strive to serve society

– Their Royal Highnesses have a young daughter, Lady Louise, who was born in 2003.

SOURCE: www.royal.gov.uk

Canadian troops recount suicide bomb attack

PUBLICATION:	The Telegram (St. John's)
DATE:	2007.10.15
SECTION:	National/World
PAGE:	A7
SOURCE:	The Canadian Press
BYLINE:	Dene Moore
DATELINE:	Kandahar, Afghanistan
ILLUSTRATION:	Maj. Pierre Huet (left), commanding officer of Canada's reconnaissance squadron, looks on as Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron describes to reporters the aftermath of a suicide bombing in Afghanistan, Sunday. – Photo by The Canadian Press
WORD COUNT:	321

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Climate change creates opportunity for Ottawa firm's parachute system

IDNUMBER 200710150066
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: C8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Jana Chytilova, CanWest News Service / Robert Adam, technical manager and product manager at MMIST, stands next to the latest product, Snow goose, an unmanned Aerial Vehicle. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: David Pugliese
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 650

OTTAWA — The effects of global warming in Canada's north could provide a new market for an Ottawa company as it looks to expand its business in military unmanned aerial vehicles designed to deliver supplies behind enemy lines.

Mist Mobility Integrated Systems Technology is planning to use its aerial systems, originally built for the military and in use in Iraq and Afghanistan, to drum up sales in the civilian market, particularly in resupplying gas and oil exploration firms operating in remote northern areas.

In the past, trucks driving across frozen lakes and tundra have delivered equipment and supplies to such crews. But warmer temperatures have significantly cut down on the amount of time that those ice roads are available, says Sean McCann, president of MMIST.

"With global warming the more traditional methods of using ice roads becomes less and less effective as the seasons shortens," said McCann.

"Logistics in the commercial sense becomes a bottleneck for a lot of the work being done now."

The Canadian-owned company, with 40 employees, sees the civilian market as a growth area for both its Snow goose and Sherpa systems.

The Sherpa, which is suspended underneath a parachute, uses a satellite tracking device and can guide itself to within 100 metres of its target area while carrying up to 1,000 kilograms of supplies. It is dropped out of the back of an aircraft or from a helicopter and its onboard computer determines when to open its parachute so it can touch down precisely on the right location. If needed, it can be launched as far as 25 kilometres from its target.

The firm bills the Snow goose, which operates with a parasail and is propeller-driven, as the first cargo unmanned aerial vehicle in production. The machine is outfitted with six cargo bays, each capable of carrying 45 kilograms of medical supplies, food, water, fuel or spare parts.

Snow goose disperses boxes of supplies, each equipped with a small disposable parachute, over the target area. A computer system determines where and when to release the supplies so they accurately touch down in a pre-determined area. The Snow goose can be launched from an aircraft or the back of a truck.

McCann says the systems are environmentally friendly and cheaper than aircraft to operate since they use less fuel. They also don't require landing strips to be built since they can be launched from planes overhead.

McCann said the firm hopes to be operating such systems for the oil and gas industry sometime in November or December. As well, MMIST would be one-stop shopping for such customers, both providing and operating the systems, he added.

McCann also sees a role for the firm's machines in distributing relief supplies during an emergency such as a Hurricane Katrina situation where access to airports is limited.

The company, however, has not turned its back on the defence market, which is still its bread and butter. MMIST has contracts with the U.S. and various NATO militaries and both its Snow goose and Sherpa are in use in Afghanistan and Iraq with U.S. troops. The Canadian Forces also tested the Sherpa system earlier this year at Cold Lake, Alta.

In 2004, MMIST received a \$75 million contract to provide its Snow goose to U.S. special forces for use in delivering propaganda leaflets. The company is also looking to expand the role the system can play on the battlefield, touting it as a potential surveillance platform if outfitted with cameras and sensors.

McCann said MMIST is also moving ahead with its product development by creating larger variants of its systems, which further cut down on the cost of delivering supplies.

U.S. Marines who used the Sherpa during operations in Iraq last year had praise for the device, noting that it was useful to resupply forces who were cut off by the enemy or who didn't have access to supplies brought in by ground convoys.

Canadian military officials examined the Sherpa for use in Afghanistan but in a report issued in August they recommended more tests of the system be conducted at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa.

Afghan mission takes its toll on minds, bodies of soldiers

IDNUMBER 200710150009
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / Canadian soldiers from the NATO-led coalition are enveloped in a dust cloud created by a helicopter lifting off from Ma'sum Ghar camp in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan, last week. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 753

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental-health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by the command indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during that battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the command's data.

"About 15 per cent have common mental-health problems," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the Department of National Defence office dealing with the health of deployed troops. He was referring to the number of troops reporting mental-health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"I would say that it is significant," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental-health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental-health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics.

To increase the chances of surviving injuries to the extremities, every Canadian deployed in Afghanistan carries a tourniquet in the same place on their armoured vest. They have also been provided with cutting edge battle dressings.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here, they can survive."

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities, while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this [rotation]."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental-health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" after weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and clergy during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

Prince Edward presents medals to soldiers who served in Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.10.14
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 400

CHARLOTTETOWN _ Prince Edward awarded medals Sunday to five soldiers from the Prince Edward Island Regiment, which has named him its colonel-in-chief, for serving in Afghanistan.

Edward finished his Canadian visit with a ceremony in Charlottetown, where he was presented with his colonel-in-chief pennant before handing service medals to Cpl. Calvin Arseneault, Cpl. Roy Good, Cpl. Jerry Landry, Cpl. Anthony MacLean and Cpl. Benjamin Miller.

Edward, the Earl of Wessex, was appointed colonel-in-chief in 2005, but this was his first visit to the province since taking over the ceremonial reigns of the regiment.

Dressed in his Canadian military uniform, the prince presented the awards as Lt.-Col. Glenn Moriarity, commander of the regiment, and families of the soldiers looked on.

Good, a 22-year-old from Mermaid, P.E.I., recalled his time in Afghanistan from February to August of this year.

"It was very hot. ... Stressful. Your days could start anywhere from midnight, 2 a.m. and go all night and into the next day and then into the next night. It was very long days," said Good, adding that he wants to return eventually.

"I'd go back after a little bit of a break," he said.

MacLean's mother, Nancy, said she was proud to see her 22-year-old son receive his medal.

"It certainly was a very special day for our family," said MacLean, who lives in Charlottetown.

"To be able to go and represent your country and then to have the honour to be awarded his medal by the prince, not many people have the opportunity to do that."

MacLean, who spent much of his time on the front-lines in Afghanistan as a light-armoured vehicle driver, said he doesn't have any plans for a second trip to the war-torn country any time soon.

"I got a year-and-a-half old daughter so it's time to stay home and be a dad for a while," he said.

Prince Edward, who is the third son and youngest child of the Queen, has been in Canada for almost a week, also stopping in Ottawa and Montreal.

On Saturday, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Prince Edward Island, where he addressed an audience of about 200 young people.

He told the audience they should be more worried about their responsibilities in the world rather than the rights owed to them, encouraging them to make a difference in the world, to set goals and to work hard to

achieve them.

“Nobody's got a right,” he said. “They've got responsibilities. You've got responsibilities to your society. You've got responsibilities to your neighbour. Those are far more important.”

Edward spent Saturday evening with Lt.–Gov. Barbara Hagerman, and attended church services at St. Peter's Anglican on Sunday.

Edward, who married Sophie Rhys–Jones in 1999, will inherit the title of Duke of Edinburgh when it passes from father, Prince Phillip.

(Charlottetown Guardian)

9 killed, 29 wounded in suicide blast in southern Afghanistan

DATE: 2007.10.14
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 167

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Officials in Afghanistan have raised the death toll in a suicide bomb attack Saturday to nine.

A bomber on a motorbike detonated explosives in a crowded marketplace near Afghan police, killing nine people and wounding at least 29, officials said.

The blast Saturday killed two police officers and seven civilians in the city of Spin Boldak in the southern province of Kandahar near the border with Pakistan, a statement from NATO's International Security Assistance force said.

NATO evacuated 11 of the wounded victims by helicopter to Canada's base in Kandahar, while the rest were taken to the Spin Boldak hospital, it said.

Canadian soldiers in the area of Spin Boldak were sent to help local authorities with the evacuation, as were two doctors from Kandahar Airfield.

Such attacks against Afghan police have become a trademark of Taliban suicide bombers. More than 600 police have been killed in insurgency-related violence this year, the Interior Ministry has said.

Violence has killed more than 5,200 people this year, according to an Associated Press count based on official figures, the deadliest year since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

bc-CCN-ON-PLT

DATE: 2007.10.14

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 133

^Media Advisory/CIDA: Minister Oda to Announce Increased Support for @<

October 14, 2007

OTTAWA, ONTARIO---(Marketwire – Oct. 14, 2007) – On October 15, 2007, the Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, will make an announcement regarding Canadian support of girls' education in Afghanistan.

Minister Oda will be joined by Mr. Khalil Shariff, CEO of Aga Khan Foundation Canada, at a student forum being held at Ottawa's Joan of Arc Academy.

DATE: Monday, October 15, 2007< TIME: 1 p.m.< LOCATION: Joan of Arc Academy< 2221 Elmira Drive, Ottawa< (Located just south of the Queensway, between< Woodroffe and Greenbank)<

/T/

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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<http://www.cida.gc.ca> (electronic version of document)

INDUSTRY: Government – International, Government – Local,

Government – National, Government – Security (law enforcement,

homeland etc), Government – State

SUBJECT: PLT

bc-CCN-ON-PLT

Dion wary of electoral traps set by Harper in throne speech

DATE: 2007.10.14

KEYWORDS: POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 647

OTTAWA _ Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he's sure Stephen Harper is itching to hit the campaign trail this fall, but that doesn't mean the Grits will give him the excuse he needs to do so.

"It's clear he's looking for an election," Dion declared Sunday in an interview on CTV's Question Period.

He went on to signal he's not anxious to help the prime minister on his way by voting down the Conservative throne speech that will open a new parliamentary session on Tuesday.

"We will look at the throne speech as a whole, as we have always said, and we will think about the interests of Canadians," said Dion.

That could mean the official Opposition will topple the government if its legislative agenda is an "outrageous" one animated by a "very right-wing radical" ideology, said the Liberal leader.

But assuming Harper adopts a more conciliatory tone, Dion said his party would try to "make Parliament work" and let the Tories continue to govern for the time being, even if the Grits don't agree with everything their opponents want to do.

The Liberals have been licking their wounds since they suffered three byelection losses in Dion's home province of Quebec last month, and opinion polls show the party lagging well behind the ruling Conservatives at the national level as well.

The effort to recover lost ground wasn't helped by the publication on the weekend of former prime minister Jean Chretien's memoirs, which lambasted onetime leadership rival Paul Martin.

Dion tried to downplay that development, insisting the divisions that once split the Liberals into warring factions are a thing of the past. Others, however, were only too ready to make political hay from the book.

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe accused Chretien of "lying" to Quebecers in the 1995 sovereignty referendum by telling them, on the eve of the vote, that the fate of the country was at stake _ when in fact, as he wrote in his memoirs, he had no intention of accepting a pro-separatist verdict.

Duceppe also reiterated he won't support Harper's throne speech unless the Tories meet a series of demands that include a firm commitment to end Canada's combat role in Afghanistan and to abolish the use of the federal spending power to create national social programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The Tories are expected to use the throne speech to outline plans to curtail the spending power, but not to do away with it entirely _ a proposal that would be unpalatable in the rest of the country.

Harper has also moved to buy time on the Afghanistan issue by appointing a five-member panel, chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, to study the options and report early next year.

That has failed to win over NDP Leader Jack Layton, who like Duceppe has been hinting for weeks that his party is virtually certain to vote against the throne speech.

“Most Canadians think that Mr. Harper is going in the wrong direction,” Layton said Sunday in his own interview with CTV. “The NDP is prepared to take him on.”

Dion, by contrast, has been waffling in public while Liberal strategists circulate word privately that they're considering ways to show displeasure with the Tories but stop short of bringing them down and forcing an election.

One possibility is that the Liberal front bench will vote against the throne speech but backbenchers will either be absent in sufficient numbers to let it pass, or will accomplish the same goal by abstaining when the roll is called.

Even an effort by Harper to box Dion in on one of his pet issues _ the environment _ has apparently failed to force the hand of the Liberal leader.

Conservative sources say the throne speech will declare the greenhouse-gas emission targets in the Kyoto Protocol to be unattainable. The aim is to force Dion either to oppose the speech and precipitate an election, or to back down publicly from his long-standing support for Kyoto.

But David McGuinty, the Liberal environment critic, has already dismissed the tactic as a meaningless trick. “The Liberal Party of Canada isn't going to be goaded into the boxing ring with Stephen Harper,” McGuinty said last week.

Canadian troops recount suicide bomb attack in Afghan border town

DATE: 2007.10.14

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 523

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ The suicide bomber who blew himself up at a crowded marketplace in the border town of Spin Boldak on Saturday stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest.

It is a crude but effective weapon and an indiscriminating one when it comes to killing, spraying deadly shrapnel in all directions.

Of the eight people who died in the blast, five were civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr at a community festival. Three of the dead were Afghan National Border Police officers who are so often targeted by insurgents.

"It's the end of Ramadan, so there are a lot of festivities taking place in Afghanistan," said Maj. Pierre Huet, commanding officer of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, which set up an emergency triage at Canada's forward operating base in Spin Boldak to treat the victims.

"The market was full. There were lots of games for children, many people in the market. ..."

Seven people were killed instantly when the bomber blew himself up around 7 p.m. One more victim died en route to the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Two children, ages 8 and 9, were among the survivors treated by Canadian soldiers at Spin Boldak.

"We received about 10 pick-up trucks loaded with injured people, about five to six injured in each truck," Huet told reporters Sunday.

Two doctors were dispatched from Kandahar Airfield but emergency medics with the reconnaissance squadron went immediately to work.

"Within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated," Huet said.

Twenty-one of 36 survivors were evacuated by air to the multinational military hospital at Kandahar Airfield. Canadian soldiers in Spin Boldak took the rest to the local hospital by armoured vehicle.

The entire multinational medical staff at Kandahar Airfield, 120 people, was pressed into service. From just after 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. the victims arrived in waves.

The medical headquarters for the hospital was quickly turned into a temporary triage area as medical staff waited for the sound of helicopters to cut through the night sky.

"The injuries, most of them were shrapnel wounds," said Maj. Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services for the Canadian contingent and one of the two doctors dispatched to Spin Boldak to help treat the wounded.

The ball bearings had the desired effect. Body parts were brought to the hospital with the victims.

“The people closest to the suicide bomber received the most serious injuries,” Dodaro said.

He lauded the reconnaissance squadron for their response.

“I don't have a number of lives that were saved but the Canadian Forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure,” Dodaro told reporters.

Five patients remained at the military hospital at Kandahar on Sunday. The others were evacuated to military facilities at NATO bases in Terin Kot, Camp Bastion and Kabul.

“It's the largest incident of mass casualties we've had,” said Lt.-Cmdr. Charles Gendron, deputy commander of the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

“At the moment, everyone is stable, everyone has received the appropriate care and everyone is basically out of danger. Most, if not all, will fully recover from their injuries.”

It was the third incident in recent months in this bustling border town.

In August, a Taliban ambush killed five and injured 11 policemen and in September another suicide bomber injured 12. A second suicide bomber was arrested by Afghan security forces before carrying out his deadly plan.

Huet said Afghan national security forces, in particular border police chief Abdul Razik, was the target of these attacks.

Gen. Dan McNeill, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, called it an “abominable violent act.”

“Yet again, we see in such senseless acts that the victims have been largely civilians,” McNeill said Sunday.

“Taliban extremists do not offer a hopeful future for this country, but one of violence and death.”

Afghan–Cda–Violence–Update (revised toll)

DATE: 2007.10.14
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 143

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A doctor dispatched to Spin Boldak to help treat the wounded in yesterday's suicide bombing is crediting the Canadian Forces with saving lives.

Major Jocelyn Dodaro, the physician in charge of hospital services for the Canadian contingent, says Canadian soldiers saved a number of lives, but he doesn't have an exact figure.

The bomber had stuffed ball bearings among the explosives packed into his vest and it sprayed deadly shrapnel at the crowded marketplace.

Eight people died in the blast — five of them civilians celebrating the Muslim holiday of Eid al–Fitr at a community festival — the other three Afghan National Border Police officers.

The Canadian reconnaissance squadron set up an emergency triage at Canada's forward operating base in Spin Boldak.

Major Pierre Huet says victims arrived by the pickup–truck load and within two hours, everyone had been evaluated, treated and evacuated.

Twenty–one of 36 survivors were flown to the military hospital at Kandahar Airfield.

Canadian soldiers drove the rest to the local hospital.

(The Canadian Press)

PTH

Throne-Speech-Jockeying-Update (adds Layton, Prentice)

DATE: 2007.10.14

KEYWORDS: POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 158

OTTAWA -- The Opposition parties say they'll wait and see what's in Tuesday's throne speech before deciding whether to vote for or against it.

Stephane Dion tells CTV's "Question Period" it's clear Prime Minister Stephen Harper is looking for an election this fall, but that doesn't mean he'll get one.

The Liberal leader is reserving the right to vote it down if it's an outrageous speech guided by radical right-wing ideology.

But if there's a reasonable and conciliatory agenda, he says the Grits could try to make Parliament work.

The N-D-P leader says he's looking for a change in direction in the speech on a range of issues including help for low-income workers, universal drug coverage, climate change and Afghanistan.

Jack Layton says he's hoping Harper delivers but, if he doesn't, he says the N-D-P's mandate from 2.5 (m) million Canadians is to oppose the direction Harper's going and the N-D-P will do that.

Industry Minister Jim Prentice says the throne speech will frame the issue -- a mandate for the government to govern or the possibility of an election.

He says what follows is in the hands of the Opposition.

(CTV, The Canadian Press)

PTH

INDEX:Defence, International

DATE: 2007.10.14
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 117

CHARLOTTETOWN – Prince Edward has awarded medals to five soldiers in Prince Edward Island for their service in Afghanistan.

Edward, who is the honorary colonel-in-chief of the Prince Edward Island Regiment, finished his Canadian visit today with a ceremony in Charlottetown.

He was presented with his colonel-in-chief pennant before handing service medals to Cpl. Calvin Arsenault, Cpl. Roy Good , Cpl. Jerry Landry, Cpl. Anthony MacLean and Cpl. Benjamin Miller.

Edward, who is the third son and youngest child of the Queen, has been in Canada for almost a week, also stopping in Ottawa and Montreal.

On Saturday, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward, who married Sophie Rhys-Jones in 1999, will inherit the title of Duke of Edinburgh when it passes from father, Prince Phillip.

(The Canadian Press)(Charlottetown Guardian)

Afghan–Violence

DATE: 2007.10.14
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 119

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ Officials in Afghanistan have raised the death toll in a suicide bomb attack Saturday.

Officials say a bomber on a motorbike detonated explosives in a crowded marketplace near Afghan police, killing nine people and wounding at least 29.

The blast Saturday killed two police officers and seven civilians in the city of Spin Boldak in the southern province of Kandahar near the border with Pakistan.

NATO evacuated 11 of the wounded victims by helicopter to Canada's base in Kandahar, while the rest were taken to the Spin Boldak hospital.

Canadian soldiers in the area of Spin Boldak were sent to help local authorities with the evacuation, as were two doctors from Kandahar Airfield.

Such attacks against Afghan police have become a trademark of Taliban suicide bombers.

More than 600 police have been killed in insurgency–related violence this year.

(The Associated Press)

SAF

Speech could trigger fall vote; But Tory strategist doubts PM will deliver a 'poison pill' statement to provoke opposition

IDNUMBER 200710150012
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Dave Chanfred, Reuters / Prime Minister Stephen Harper received a standing ovation after tabling the throne speech last year. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway with files from Marianne White
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 722

OTTAWA — The big question hanging over the minority Conservative government's throne speech Tuesday is how hard Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to squeeze the opposition parties and possibly force a federal election.

Will Harper — emboldened by his party's 40-per-cent popularity rating in a fresh national survey — insert into the speech a "poison pill" statement or policy plan so egregious to all three opposition parties they would have no choice but to vote against it and plunge the country into an election?

Tom Flanagan, a former Harper confidant and party strategist, says the prime minister can afford to be "fairly bold" but going the poison pill route is risky.

"Engineering a defeat is not easy because a throne speech that would simultaneously provoke the Liberals, Bloc and NDP to vote against it would probably be a throne speech that's not popular with voters," he said.

Harper, who has insisted he would prefer governing to having an election, could not be defeated unless all three opposition parties united to bring down his government.

The Bloc and the NDP have already signalled they won't support the speech, leaving it to the Liberals to throw a lifeline to the Harper government if they don't want an election by voting with the government or abstaining in a string of three possible confidence motions in the coming week or so.

The earliest the government could fall is Thursday, the earliest day for a vote on a Bloc Quebecois sub-amendment to the speech.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion, struggling to right his listing party, says he doesn't want a fall election, and that if one happens, it will be because Harper has "set up his own defeat."

And that's exactly what Dion suspects Harper wants.

"It's clear that he's looking for an election," Dion said Sunday on CTV's Question Period, adding the Liberals will be looking at the speech "as a whole" before deciding whether or not to support it.

The Liberals don't have to fully agree with the speech to support it, he said.

"It will be a Conservative throne speech, not a Liberal one, we accept that," Dion said. "But if it is a throne speech that is outrageous regarding the values that we Liberals believe, we cannot be under any obligation to support something that we believe to be wrong for Canadians."

Harper told a news conference that if the speech — considered a matter of confidence under parliamentary tradition — wins approval in the Commons, the government will interpret that as a licence to govern according to the blueprint Gov.-Gen. Michaëlle Jean will lay out Tuesday when she reads the speech.

Harper said he would treat legislation flowing from the speech as matters of confidence, meaning the defeat of almost any legislation would cause the government to fall and trigger an election.

Harper softened that position Friday, telling reporters the government would not "abuse" the system, and that the government would only consider making a vote a matter of confidence if the legislative issue was significant enough to fight an election over.

Harper's original ultimatum, which Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale has since dismissed as "political and parliamentary fantasy" in a minority government, has nonetheless intensified election preparations in all four parties. The latest Ipsos-Reid poll, which had the Conservatives leading the Liberals by 12 points and within sight of winning a majority government, threw fresh fuel on those efforts.

Harper has said the speech will talk about everything from tax relief and the environment to the combat mission in Afghanistan and Arctic sovereignty.

But the details of what will be said have been the subject of weeks of private plotting among a tiny circle of Harper's most trusted advisers.

The opposition parties will be listening closely to the government's words on two of the most divisive issues in recent memory — namely the Kyoto environmental accord and Afghanistan.

Harper took some of the sting out of the Afghan issue Friday, winning a nod of approval from the Liberals.

He appointed a five-member panel, led by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, to advise the government by the end of January on what the future involvement of Canada should be after the current NATO commitment expires in February 2009.

The NDP has called for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops, while the Liberals and Bloc want a government commitment to end the "combat" mission in Kandahar in February 2009.

The three parties are, however, united in their opposition to the Conservatives' approach to the Kyoto accord. The opposition parties want the government to commit to trying to meet the Kyoto targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, something the government has ruled out on grounds it would be too onerous on the economy.

Returning troops face psychological issues; 15 per cent of soldiers who served in Afghanistan develop mental health problems, report says; experts find figure is not high

IDNUMBER 200710150010
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: WAR; MENTAL HEALTH
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 748

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by CEFCOM indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the CEFCOM data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one of the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics. The TCCC have been embedded with the infantry, sniper teams and convoys, as well as other units.

"A severe loss of blood can be devastating," Coombs said in an interview in her office, metres from the Canadian-led multinational hospital here. "But we have known for a long time that if you can get a tourniquet on it and do damage control it greatly expands the chances that they will survive, maybe with an amputated foot. Simple tourniquets have saved a lot of lives here."

To increase the chances of surviving injuries to the extremities, every Canadian deployed in Afghanistan carries a tourniquet in the same place on their armoured vest. They have also been provided with cutting edge battle dressings.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here, they can survive."

"Every Canadian soldier is in a two-way bubble from the time they hit the ground to when they are here. So far on this roto (rotation) they have all made it within 90 minutes."

A speech to live or die by

IDNUMBER 200710150100
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
BYLINE: Chantal Hebert
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 518

Tomorrow's Speech from the Throne may well be the most important speech in Stephen Harper's life as prime minister.

From all indications, including the decision to deliver it in prime time in the evening, this speech should be the most comprehensive road map to government that Harper has put forward to date.

In the Prime Minister's best-case scenario, it will provide his minority regime with a decisive second wind. When the House adjourned last spring, the Conservatives were spinning their wheels in Parliament and in public opinion, at apparent loss to pull themselves out of the 2006 rut that left them a fair distance from majority territory.

In the worst-case scenario, the speech will reinforce resistance to the prospect of a Conservative majority at the very time when it finally seems to be flagging. For the first time last week, a poll put the party in majority territory, far ahead of the Liberals.

What is certain is that the speech stands to mark a change in the government's tack.

In the last election, Harper campaigned on the implicit promise that he would not rock the federal boat. His platform was so modest it bordered on insignificance. It steered clear of anything smacking of a grand design.

In his year-and-a-half in office, the Prime Minister largely stuck to that. Until last summer, the Conservatives had been trying to assemble the basis for a majority one constituency at a time. But incrementalism has its limits. In the absence of comprehensive positions on most core issues, Harper came close to losing control of the agenda.

Tomorrow's speech is designed to fill in some of the big blanks in the government's profile.

But Conservative momentum will be achieved at the cost of placing the minority regime on a collision course with the opposition parties.

The Bloc Quebecois and the Liberals wanted the speech to include a clear signal that the Canadian deployment in Afghanistan would not be extended beyond February 2009. Instead, they are getting a high-profile commission led by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley to advise the government on the follow-up to the deployment. No option, including that of an extension, is excluded from its mandate.

So far, Harper's vision of federalism has largely remained on the drawing board. But he has promised both to curtail the federal spending power and to strengthen Canada's economic union. A move on the first tomorrow would open him up to Liberal charges that he is undermining the country's social union, while initiatives on the second could be highly controversial with the Bloc.

For better or for worse, the Conservative government has chosen its path on climate change and it veers away from the Kyoto protocol. Beyond confirming that there will be no turning back, the speech is said to include a stinging rebuttal of the Liberal environment record under Stephane Dion.

In normal circumstances, that alone would guarantee the defeat of the minority government. But the times are anything but normal, especially for the Liberals.

Tomorrow's speech may reveal more about Harper's long-term agenda than Canadians have been privy to since he first ran as leader of a united Conservative party in 2004.

But the debate that follows will also tell a lot about Dion's leadership mettle. This will be a defining week for both of them.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs

column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Dion not eager for vote; Liberal leader says he will 'think about interests of Canadians' in throne speech

IDNUMBER 200710150096
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
ILLUSTRATION: MARK BLINCH reuters Stephane Dion, shown at the Economic Club of Toronto Friday, said his party will try to make Parliament work. ;
BYLINE: Jim Brown
SOURCE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 615

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says he's sure Stephen Harper is itching to hit the campaign trail this fall, but that doesn't mean the Grits will give him the excuse he needs to do so.

"It's clear he's looking for an election," Dion said yesterday in an interview on CTV's Question Period.

He signalled he's not eager to help the Prime Minister on his way by voting down the Conservative throne speech that will open a new parliamentary session tomorrow.

"We will look at the throne speech as a whole, as we have always said, and we will think about the interests of Canadians," said Dion.

That could mean the official Opposition will topple the government if its legislative agenda is an "outrageous" one animated by a "very right-wing radical" ideology, said the Liberal leader.

But assuming Harper adopts a more conciliatory tone, Dion said his party would try to "make Parliament work" and let the Tories continue to govern for the time being, even if the Grits don't agree with everything their opponents do.

The Liberals have been licking their wounds since they suffered three by-election losses in Dion's home province of Quebec last month, and opinion polls show the party lagging well behind the ruling Conservatives at the national level.

The effort to recover lost ground wasn't helped by the publication on the weekend of former prime minister Jean Chretien's memoirs, which lambasted one-time leadership rival Paul Martin.

Dion tried to downplay that development, insisting the divisions that once split the Liberals into warring factions are a thing of the past. Others, however, were only too ready to make political hay from the book.

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe accused Chretien of "lying" to Quebecers in the 1995 sovereignty referendum by telling them, on the eve of the vote, that the fate of the country was at stake – when in fact, as he wrote in his memoirs, he had no intention of accepting a pro-separatist verdict.

Duceppe also reiterated he won't support Harper's throne speech unless the Tories meet a series of demands that includes a firm commitment to end Canada's combat role in Afghanistan and to abolish the use of federal spending power to create national social programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The Tories are expected to use the throne speech to outline plans to curtail the spending power, but not to do away with it entirely – a proposal that would be unpalatable in the rest of the country.

Harper has moved to buy time on the Afghanistan issue by appointing a five– member panel, chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, to study the options and report early next year.

That has failed to win over NDP Leader Jack Layton, who like Duceppe has been hinting for weeks that his party is virtually certain to vote against the throne speech.

"Most Canadians think that Mr. Harper is going in the wrong direction," Layton said yesterday in his own interview with CTV. "The NDP is prepared to take him on."

Dion, by contrast, has been waffling in public while Liberal strategists circulate word privately that they're considering ways to show displeasure with the Tories but stop short of bringing them down and forcing an election.

One possibility is that the Liberal front bench will vote against the throne speech but backbenchers will either be absent in sufficient numbers to let it pass, or will accomplish the same goal by abstaining when the roll is called.

Even an effort by Harper to box Dion in on one of his pet issues – the environment – has apparently failed to force his hand.

Conservative sources say the throne speech will declare the greenhouse–gas emission targets in the Kyoto protocol unattainable. The aim is to force Dion either to oppose the speech and precipitate an election, or to back down publicly from his long–standing support for Kyoto.

But David McGuinty, the Liberal environment critic, has already dismissed the tactic as a meaningless trick. "The Liberal Party of Canada isn't going to be goaded into the boxing ring with Stephen Harper," McGuinty said last week.

No place for politics in Afghanistan debate

IDNUMBER 200710150074
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Letter
PAGE: AA07
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 94

Naming of Manley sparks

controversy

Oct. 13

Once again, Prime Minister Stephen Harper gives any rational thinker a reason to suspect his motives. Does he really expect Canadians to believe that his special panel to examine our future involvement in Afghanistan will recommend anything other than more gruesome years of combat in what has become a no-win war?

Why wasn't a committee of sitting, elected MPs formed to examine alternatives to the current combat mission? The answer, of course, is that any multi-partisan group would not have recommended continuing this expensive charade.

Gary Cousins, Gananoque, Ont.

Parliament must decide

IDNUMBER 200710150001
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: AA06
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 347

For months now, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been issuing conflicting signals on what role he wants Canada to play in Afghanistan after our current tour in Kandahar ends in February 2009.

Under pressure from opposition parties who feared he might act unilaterally, Harper has promised to let Parliament vote on the future of the mission. That vote likely will occur in February in order to give NATO time to replace our troops if the decision is to withdraw them.

Harper had been expected to spell out in his throne speech on Tuesday what he sees as a possible new mission in Afghanistan.

But he managed to put the issue on the backburner for now with his announcement on Friday that he has appointed a five-member advisory panel, headed by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, to review the future of the mission.

The panel, which is to report at the end of January, will consider four options: continue training Afghan forces so Canada can start withdrawing its forces in 2009; focus on reconstruction and have other NATO forces replace us in Kandahar; shift our troops to another region in Afghanistan; or withdraw virtually all Canadian military.

The idea of a panel is good one, especially if it can provide Parliament with hard facts and an unbiased assessment of the policy options. It has been clear for months now that the Afghan debate, on all sides, has been filled with rhetoric and short of fact-based analysis.

However, it may prove difficult for the panel to do a thorough job, given the short time it has to complete its report and the questions surrounding Manley's role. Although Manley is a former Liberal cabinet minister, he has always been hawkish toward Afghanistan, saying in the past that Canada should not abandon its mission there.

To do its job properly, Manley and the panel must consider all options, including a possible total troop withdrawal, with an open mind.

But regardless of what the panel recommends, the final decision of our role in Afghanistan must rest with Parliament. That's because elected MPs – not panel members personally appointed by the Prime Minister – are ultimately responsible for our foreign policy.

Canadians clean up suicide attack

IDNUMBER 200710150088
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 314

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian soldiers and medical staff were left to pick up the pieces and treat the wounded this weekend after a suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted a truck carrying Afghan National Border Police in a market crowded with Afghans celebrating the end of Ramadan.

Eleven people including seven police officers died and 36 were injured in the attack on a post–Ramada fair on Saturday at Spin Boldak, near the border with Pakistan, where the Quebec–based Royal 12th Armoured Regiment has a small reconnaissance base. Two of the wounded were children.

All of those hit by the blast were brought by trucks to the remote Canadian outpost, about 80 kilometres east of Kandahar, where triage assessments were made by medics. Canadian doctors and medics flown out from the Canadian–led NATO hospital at Kandahar Airfield made further assessments and brought back 21 of the most seriously wounded with them in two waves of helicopters.

"The bomber was on a motorcycle with a vest full of explosives and ball bearings," Maj. Pierre Huet, the reconnaissance squadron commander, said on Sunday. "We found ball bearings all over the place, a few parts of the motorcycle and body parts that were collected and brought to our base."

It was the fourth attack in three months on border police in Spin Boldak where the local boss, Col. Razik, is an implacable foe of the Taliban and "the most influential person in Spin Boldak," according to Huet. An ambush there in August caused five deaths and 11 were wounded. A suicide bombing in September resulted in 12 injuries. Another suicide bomber was thwarted recently before he could detonate his bomb at Razik's wedding party.

Although unproven, it was likely the bombers came to Spin Boldak from Pakistan, which is only a few kilometres away. Between 20,000 and 30,000 Afghans and Pakistanis cross the border there every day.

Afghan mission taking toll on minds, bodies; Almost 400 soldiers may have come home with mental problems

IDNUMBER 200710150087
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / Canadian soldiers conduct a livefire exercise in the desert of Kandahar province ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 850

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- The heavy toll the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by CEFCOM indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the CEFCOM data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

Afghan mission taking toll on minds, bodies; Almost 400 soldiers may have come home with mental health problems

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one of the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics. The TCCC have been embedded with the infantry, sniper teams and convoys, as well as other units.

"A severe loss of blood can be devastating," Coombs said in an interview in her office, metres from the Canadian-led multinational hospital here. "But we have known for a long time that if you can get a tourniquet on it and do damage control it greatly expands the chances that they will survive, maybe with an amputated foot. Simple tourniquets have saved a lot of lives here."

To increase the chances of surviving injuries to the extremities, every Canadian deployed in Afghanistan carries a tourniquet in the same place on their armoured vest. They have also been provided with cutting edge battle dressings.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here they can survive."

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this roto."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

Afghan mission taking toll on minds, bodies; Almost 400 soldiers may have come home with mental health problems

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Zamorski said.

Poland's top soldier empathizes with Canada on role in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710150086
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: World
PAGE: D7
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Photo handout / Poland's Gen. Franciszek Gagor is running for NATO's top job ;
DATELINE: WARSAW
BYLINE: Peter O'Neil
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 430

WARSAW — Gen. Franciszek Gagor, Poland's top soldier and perhaps NATO's after an upcoming vote to replace Canadian Ray Henault as chair of the western alliance's military committee, can empathize with Canada's public relations challenge over Afghanistan.

"Well, it's a challenge for us also," Poland's chief of the general staff told CanWest News Service.

Gagor, competing with generals from Spain and Italy to replace Henault in the Nov. 14 vote, would be the first officer from the former Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact alliance to become top soldier in the 26-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

He brings to the international table considerable peacekeeping experience in the Middle East and guarded optimism about the Afghanistan mission.

But Gagor cannot claim popular support in his own country for Poland's military role there. One poll this month by the Warsaw-based firm CBOS said 72 per cent of those surveyed were opposed to Poland's decision earlier this year to deploy 1,200 soldiers primarily in the dangerous southeast provinces of Ghazni and Patika. Poland also has elite forces working with Canadians in Kandahar.

Objections to the fighting are even stronger than in Canada, where public unease and election fever have caused the government to declare that Canada's current role in Kandahar, where there are more than 2,000 Canadian troops, won't continue past early 2009 without an endorsement from Parliament. Three of four Canadian parties, in a position to trigger an election after Tuesday's throne speech, currently oppose an extension.

Poland, despite its rich though often tragic military history facing brutal invasions by neighbours like Germany and Russia, is a "peaceful nation," according to TNS Global managing director Andrzej Olszewski, a Warsaw-based pollster.

"We have become good soldiers because we are usually defending ourselves. But people don't recognize war as something good and beneficial."

Poland's public mood is soured partly by Iraq, where the country has lost about 20 soldiers since 2003. One soldier has been killed so far in Afghanistan.

The public objections, however, don't appear likely to have an influence on Poland's role. Despite this country's own current election fever there is no organized peace movement, the issue doesn't get major media coverage and the conflict hasn't become a political football in Poland's Oct. 21 parliamentary elections.

One possible explanation is that Poland, with 38.5 million people in a country half the size of Alberta, has been anxious since breaking free of Moscow's dominance in 1989 to use Europe and the U.S. as buffers against Russia. There is therefore an elite consensus to go along with NATO and, like Canada, take on a challenging role in a high-risk region of Afghanistan.

Cynical move could backfire

IDNUMBER 200710150023
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A8
COLUMN: SP Opinions
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 434

There's no doubt that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision to ask a prominent Liberal to lead a panel looking into Canada's mission in Afghan has more to do with politics than security.

John Manley was a powerful member of Jean Chrétien's Liberal cabinet that decided to send Canadian soldiers to Afghanistan and has made it clear he still believes in the mission.

And it is equally likely that the other members of the panel, too, are committed to Canada's role. After all, this military mission is the most important endeavour Canada has undertaken in decades to forge strong alliances and to build international security.

But if the panel is to have an impact on the debate in Canada, it can't simply become a cheerleader that looks for reasons to justify keeping Canadian soldiers on the firing line.

Through no apparent fault of the Canadians, the Afghan mission is in deep trouble and sinking by the month. This despite Germany's decision last week to support its troops involved in the NATO portion of the mission, based on the widely held belief by German lawmakers that, in the words of Chancellor Angela Merkel, "We must not leave Afghanistan in the hands of terrorists."

But Germany continues to refuse to send its troops to the front lines. Its commitment to save Afghanistan and protect itself from terror attacks is limited to training and equipping an Afghan police force — a goal Germany admits has been an abject failure, having trained but a negligible force in five years.

And if Germany's half-hearted commitment is an embarrassment to itself and the alliance, consider what American commander Maj.-Gen. Robert Cone told NATO ambassadors when asked this month how many men in the Afghan army are fit for combat: "To be perfectly honest — zero."

Even in relatively peaceful regions of the country, NATO commanders complain their resources are stretched so thin that Taliban and outlaw gangs have a free run of the land. This fact isn't lost on Afghans, who believed a couple of years ago that the international community would protect them. They are today too frightened to work with NATO for fear of what will happen to them once the westerners cut and run.

Canada's forces have done a stellar job on the impossible task they were handed. In an effort to provide greater security for the people under their protection, they have even taken to training police themselves and distributing the pay to officers as they backfill the failure of allies.

Harper's panel was a cynical attempt to shame the Liberals. But if it does its job, its report is just as likely to shame the Conservative government and the country.

Throne speech fuels talk of election

IDNUMBER 200710150003
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters / Liberal Leader Stephane Dion;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 917

OTTAWA -- The big question hanging over the minority Conservative government's throne speech Tuesday is how hard Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to squeeze the opposition parties and possibly force a federal election.

Will Harper -- emboldened by his party's 40 per cent popularity rating in a fresh national survey -- insert into the speech a 'poison pill' statement or policy plan so egregious to all three opposition parties they would have no choice but to vote against it and plunge the country into an election?

Tom Flanagan, a former Harper confidant and party strategist, says the prime minister can afford to be "fairly bold" but going the poison pill route is risky.

"Engineering a defeat is not easy because a throne speech that would simultaneously provoke the Liberals, Bloc and NDP to vote against it would probably be a throne speech that's not popular with voters," he said.

Harper, who has insisted he would prefer governing to having an election, could not be defeated unless all three opposition parties united to bring down his government.

The Bloc and the NDP have already signalled they won't be supporting the speech, leaving it to the Liberals to throw a lifeline to the Harper government if they don't want an election by voting with the government or abstaining in a string of three possible confidence motions in the coming week or so.

The earliest the government could fall is Thursday, the earliest day for a vote on a Bloc Quebecois sub-amendment to the speech.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, struggling to right his listing party, says he doesn't want a fall election, and that if one happens, it will be because Harper has "set up his own defeat."

And that's what Dion suspects Harper wants.

"It's clear that he's looking for an election," Dion said Sunday on CTV's Question Period, adding the Liberals will be looking at the speech "as a whole" before deciding on whether or not to support it.

The Liberals don't have to fully agree with the speech to support it, he said.

"It will be a Conservative throne speech, not a Liberal one, we accept that," Dion said. "But if it is a throne speech that is outrageous regarding the values that we Liberals believe, we cannot be under any obligation to support something that we believe to be wrong for Canadians."

Rick Anderson, a former Reform party strategist and political pundit, says Harper has to tread carefully.

"If he looks like he's writing the throne speech with the goal of provoking Dion, then people are not going to be happy with it. The public has got their antennae way up on that kind of stuff," he said.

Betting was all over the map in the countdown to the speech, which Harper billed earlier this month as a "fish or cut bait" proposition for the opposition parties.

Harper told a news conference that if the speech — considered a matter of confidence under parliamentary tradition — wins approval in the Commons, the government will interpret that as a licence to govern according to the blueprint Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean will lay out Tuesday evening when she reads the speech.

Harper said he would treat legislation flowing from the speech as matters of confidence, meaning the defeat of almost any legislation would cause the government to fall and trigger an election.

Harper softened that position Friday, telling reporters the government would not "abuse" the system, and that the government would only consider making a vote a matter of confidence if the legislative issue was significant enough to fight an election over.

Harper's original ultimatum, which Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale has since dismissed as "political and parliamentary fantasy" in a minority government, has nonetheless, intensified election preparations in all four parties. The latest Ipsos-Reid poll, which had the Conservatives leading the Liberals by 12 points and within sight of winning a majority government, threw fresh fuel on those efforts.

Harper has said the speech will talk about everything from tax relief and the environment to the combat mission in Afghanistan and Arctic sovereignty.

But the details of what will be said have been the subject of weeks of private plotting among a tiny circle of Harper's most trusted advisers.

The opposition parties will be listening closely to the government's words on two of the most divisive issues in recent memory — namely the Kyoto environmental accord and Afghanistan.

Harper took some of the sting out of the Afghan issue Friday, winning a nod of approval from the Liberals.

He appointed a five-member panel, led by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, to advise the government by the end of January on what the future involvement of Canada should be after the current NATO commitment expires in February 2009.

The NDP has called for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops, while the Liberals and Bloc says they want a government commitment to end the "combat" mission in Kandahar in February 2009.

The three parties are, however, united in their opposition to the Conservatives' approach to the Kyoto environmental accord.

The opposition parties want the government to commit to trying to meet the Kyoto targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, something the government has ruled out on grounds it would be too onerous on the economy.

The Kyoto standoff, therefore, might afford Harper a shot at riling the three opposition parties enough to bring his government now or further down the road. Other opportunities might arise if the opposition parties balk at promised crime legislation.

NDP Leader Jack Layton suggested on Question Period Sunday that if the Liberals support a Conservative throne speech that comes up short on key issues such as the environment and Afghanistan, they will abandoning their responsibility to act as the Official Opposition.

"They will clearly have given up," Layton said.

Whatever the wording of the speech, Conservative Senator Hugh Segal predicts it will not leave Canadians scratching their head in confusion about the government's intentions.

"I'd be surprised if we would walk away from the throne speech with a lot of question marks about where the government is headed. It's not his style," Segal said of Harper.

(Ottawa Citizen)

New warfare, rules

IDNUMBER 200710150032
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Viewpoints
PAGE: B6
BYLINE: Duncan B. Hollis
SOURCE: The Los Angeles Times; Washington Post News Service
WORD COUNT: 822

Estonia claimed to be under attack last spring, but not by guns or bombs. This assault came in the form of data requests from more than a million computers. It overwhelmed the Baltic nation's computer networks, crashing e-mail for its parliament, taking down emergency phone lines and freezing online services of government offices, banks, universities and hospitals. Estonia accused Russia of conducting a cyberwar in retaliation for a decision to move a Soviet-era war memorial. The Russian government denied involvement.

Likewise, when hackers somewhere in China infiltrated a U.S. Defense Department network in September, Chinese officials denied its army had any role. (British, French, German and New Zealand officials have complained of similar China-based hacking.) Though no one accused China of acts of war, both events revealed how the Internet is reshaping warfare.

The Internet creates real risks for societies dependent on information networks. In an experimental cyberattack in March, researchers at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory managed to make a generator self-destruct. Computer attacks don't just threaten other computers, but the larger infrastructure. Viruses could become as dangerous as missiles. At the same time, cyberattacks have the potential to minimize the costs of conflict in lives and dollars. Instead of demolishing an electrical grid, cyberattacks offer militaries the option of disabling it temporarily.

Although hotly debated in the '90s, discussions of cyberwar's risks and potential had gone dormant since 9/11. But the Estonia event quickly put cybersecurity back on NATO's agenda. And after the Defense Department breach, U.S. President Bush conceded the vulnerability of American systems to cyberattack and the government's need to develop defenses against them.

Countries must, however, do more than recognize cyberspace as a new battleground. They also need to know when and how they can deploy weapons. What are the rules of cyberwar?

For more than a century, nations have devised rules of international law, such as the Geneva Convention, which seek to avoid war or minimize human suffering when conflicts occur. And as new technologies emerge, nations have weighed whether to draft new rules, such as treaties restricting biological, chemical and laser weapons.

Governments and scholars so far, however, have resisted calls to craft new rules of international law to govern attacks on or by computers. Conventional wisdom suggests that the laws we have extend by analogy to cover cyberspace.

And they do. But serious "translation" problems make them ill-suited to the task. For example, the UN Charter clearly prohibits states from using force except in self-defense or with UN authorization. So does that

ban Russia from computer attacks on Estonia? It might. Or is it a "use of force" only if the target is physically harmed? Or only if it leads to death and destruction? Or simply whenever the target is critical to a nation's security? Similar uncertainties surround rules on neutrality and civilian distinction.

Such uncertainty can unintentionally escalate conflicts if participants have different interpretations of what's permissible. Or states might shy away from cyberattacks entirely if they don't know what's allowed — even in cases in which those attacks might cause less harm than the bombs they'll use instead.

Existing laws of war also focus primarily on conflicts between nations. But 9/11 and the ongoing asymmetrical warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan underscore how insufficient that approach is. Cyberwar undoubtedly will attract groups like al-Qaida; the technology is inexpensive, easy to use and can be deployed from almost anywhere. As the Russia-Estonia and China-U.S. cases show, it is also hard to pin the origins of a cyberattack on a country rather than on individual hackers.

When the laws of war don't apply — even by analogy — a complex set of other international and foreign laws kicks in. For example, assume the hackers in the Estonia case were indeed operating from Russia but had no ties to the government or military. Under existing rules, Estonia should respond by asking Russia to police its own territory. To counter-attack would violate Russia's sovereignty. With new rules, however, nations could agree to waive sovereignty concerns and permit a direct response in certain cases, such as cyberattacks by terrorists that all nations might want thwarted.

The status quo presents dangers that countries need to stop ignoring. We need new rules of international law so military commanders can operate with greater certainty in cyberspace, and can use new cybertools in ways that reduce the collateral costs of conflict.

War has entered the Information Age, and it's time for international law to get a needed update.

— Hollis is an associate professor of law at Temple University and a contributor to the international law blog *Opinio Juris*. Distributed by the Los Angeles Times — Washington Post News Service.

Afghan mission takes toll on soldiers' bodies, minds

IDNUMBER 200710150018
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 986

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by CEFCOM indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwahi/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics. The TCCC have been embedded with the infantry, sniper teams and convoys, as well as other units.

"A severe loss of blood can be devastating," Coombs said in an interview in her office, metres from the Canadian-led multinational hospital here. "But we have known for a long time that if you can get a tourniquet on it and do damage control it greatly expands the chances that they will survive, maybe with an amputated foot. Simple tourniquets have saved a lot of lives here."

To increase the chances of surviving injuries to the extremities, every Canadian deployed in Afghanistan carries a tourniquet in the same place on their armoured vest. They have also been provided with cutting edge battle dressings.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here they can survive."

"Every Canadian soldier is in a two-way bubble from the time they hit the ground to when they are here. So far on this roto (rotation) they have all made it within 90 minutes."

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this roto."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers

and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Zamorski said. "It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody."

More than half of those troops who had "major concerns about PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms were already receiving care," a report based on the mental health questionnaire said.

High risk drinking was identified as an issue for about 17 per cent of the returnees. About one soldier in three reported that they felt their general health had deteriorated, which was well above the Canadian Forces average, the report concluded.

Still, it was rare to have soldiers develop serious psychiatric problems in-theatre, Zamorski said because most such problems only became evident months and years after soldiers returned home.

"Two psychiatrists who have served in Afghanistan have told me this is distinctly uncommon," he said.

INSIDE TODAY'S GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880158

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE:

SECTION: News Index

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 248

WORD COUNT: 295

Families of fallen soldiers furious at former PM Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan reacted angrily to news yesterday that former prime minister Jean Chretien blames Paul Martin for Canada's presence in the dangerous southern Afghan province of Kandahar.

NEWS, PAGE A8 On the U.S. preparing to invade Iraq: "Wait a minute, I thought to myself – Saddam isn't the Taliban or al-Qaeda, so what does he have to do with the attacks on New York and Washington?... "

QUOTING FROM CHRETIEN'S autoBIOGRAPHY NEWS: PAGE A9 DION SIDES with MARTIN ON GOMERY: Liberal Leader Stephane Dion sided with Paul Martin yesterday for calling an inquiry into the sponsorship scandal in spite of suggestions in Jean Chretien's new autobiography that it wasn't necessary.

NEWS, PAGE A8 Homecoming chaos Police and surveillance equipment from Toronto had to be brought to Kingston, Ont., for the annual homecoming street party for students at Queen's University.

NEWS, PAGE A3 'Bye George Colourful boss George Steinbrenner, who has had recent health troubles, is turning over control of the New York Yankees to his two sons. GLOBE SPORTS Crossing those hurdles Perdita Felicien, the star Canadian hurdler, is changing her personal rules about competing. And that stumble: "It was just one moment in time," she tells The Globe's Sarah Hampson .

GLOBE LIFE Not so goodly numbers The Samaritans' numbers have dwindled because of a tradition of marrying only within the community. NEWS, PAGE A12

AFGHANISTAN: SUICIDE BOMBINGS Canadians caught in border violence Taliban attacks on southern Afghan town are making life more dangerous for troops and forcing out residents

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072880156
DATE: 2007.10.15
PAGE: A15
BYLINE: OMAR EL AKKAD
SECTION: International News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 655
WORD COUNT: 676

OMAR EL AKKAD KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Canadian troops in the southern Afghan border town of Spin Boldak are in the midst of escalating Taliban violence in an area that, until just a few months ago, saw relatively few suicide bombings.

Three Taliban attacks on Afghan border police in and around the town in the past three months have prompted Canadian troops stationed at the Spin Boldak forward operating base to conduct more joint patrols with their Afghan allies. The increased activity has already shown results: Troops managed to catch a suicide bomber in early September before he was able to blow himself up, although it is not clear whether he intended to use the bomb in Spin Boldak or at another location.

But another suicide bomber struck Saturday, and the escalating violence threatens not only to make life more dangerous for Canadian and Afghan troops in the area, but also to hasten the exodus of residents from the south to Kandahar city, which is already straining under the pressure of current refugees.

Eight people were killed and another 36 injured in Spin Boldak on Saturday, the latest and bloodiest salvo in a battle between the Taliban and an Afghan border police commander determined to crack down on the insurgency group. It's a battle that has turned a popular and porous border crossing into a scene of frequent and escalating violence.

"We've increased presence patrols," said Major Pierre Huet, whose area of operations from the forward operating base in Spin Boldak covers about 100 kilometres of the border. "It's [normally] quieter . . . but there's increasing activity." Saturday's attack marks the most serious in a series of similar incidents. In August, a Taliban ambush targeted at Spin Boldak border police killed five and injured 11. In late September, a suicide bomber blew himself up in the town, injuring 12 people.

As many as 30,000 people cross the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan at Spin Boldak every day. That large transfer of people, combined with hundreds of kilometres of surrounding, loosely guarded border territory, has made Spin Boldak a popular choice for insurgents travelling in and out of Afghanistan. Taliban fighters find the crossing especially useful because Afghan security forces can't follow them back to Pakistan, whereas they can bring more fighters from Pakistan back into Afghanistan.

"There are so many gaps [along the border territory]," Major Huet said.

Because the territory is so vital, it is generally seen as being in the Taliban's best interest to minimize the amount of attention the area receives. But recently that concern seems to have taken a backseat to eliminating the head of Spin Boldak's border police, Abdul Razik.

Mr. Razik, considered one of the most influential people in Kandahar district, has a reputation for operating his force like a militia and brutally cracking down on insurgents. His reputation has made him many enemies; he and his men have been subject to ambushes in Kandahar province as far back as last year.

"He's definitely a target," said Major Huet, adding that members of Mr. Razik's family have already been killed by the Taliban. "He's the most influential target [in Spin Boldak]." It is unlikely this latest attack will have any effect on how Mr. Razik carries out his job in Spin Boldak; similar attacks in the past have left him unfazed.

Canadian officers would not comment on where they believe Saturday's attacker came from, or on the specifics of how they plan to combat the new wave of attacks. After the attack, armoured vehicles and counter-IED teams helped cordon off the area and collected pieces of the wreckage, from pieces of the bomber's motorcycle to parts of the bomber himself, some of which were found hundreds of metres away from the blast site.

"This is the third incident of this scope," Major Huet said of the attack. "We're getting used to it."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Pakistan; Spin Boldak

SUBJECT TERM: strife; deaths; refugees; defence

PERSONAL NAME: Pierre Huet

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban; Armed Forces

THE CHRETIEN MEMOIRS: LIBERAL INFIGHTING: FORMER PRIME MINISTER TURNS AFGHAN MISSION INTO A POLITICAL FOOTBALL Chretien: Martin's dithering led to soldiers' deaths in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880155

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A1 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: MICHAEL VALPY

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 898

WORD COUNT: 903

MICHAEL VALPY On the eve of Parliament's re-opening, former prime minister Jean Chretien has driven a new wedge into the federal Liberal Party with his indictment of Paul Martin as having blood on his hands over the deployment of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

Mr. Chretien makes the charge in the just-published second volume of his memoirs, stating that because his successor "took too long to make up his mind" about what should be done with Canadian troops stationed in and around the Afghan capital of Kabul, "our soldiers were ... sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar." It is a scenario rejected by a number of officials who took part in the discussions leading up to the 2005 deployment but who refused to be identified by name for fear of being seen as taking sides in the years-long political fight between two former Liberal prime ministers.

A Martin spokesman, Jim Pimblett, said, "Mr. Martin was not provided with an advance copy of Mr. Chretien's book. He is therefore not in a position to react in any detail, nor is he inclined to do so today or in the foreseeable future." But he added: "Undoubtedly, there are clear differences in recollection between the two men." One senior defence official who took part in the discussions leading to the Kandahar deployment said the delay in the issue reaching Mr. Martin had nothing to do with the then prime minister but resulted from a year-long bickering over deployment between the departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs, from bureaucrats in the two departments who didn't tell their ministers what was going on and from conflicting pressures from Canada's allies.

The official said the reality is that Mr. Martin made the decision on Kandahar – the first commitment of Canadian troops to combat since the Korean War more than half a century ago – within weeks of the issue being put before him.

Like others interviewed, the official spoke on condition of anonymity.

That assessment is supported by a new book on the Kandahar conflict, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, written by Janice Gross Stein, director of University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies, and Eugene Lang, chief of staff to former Liberal defence ministers John McCallum and Bill Graham in the Chretien and Martin cabinets.

The book traces in detail how the decision was made – the first full public account of what transpired – and quotes Mr. Martin at several points in the narrative.

The Stein–Lang book says Mr. Martin merely affirmed the recommendation of Defence Minister Bill Graham and newly appointed Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier.

It says Mr. Martin, not keen on Canada's military engagement in Afghanistan, agreed to troops being sent to Kandahar after he was assured by Gen. Hillier that Canada would also retain the capability of sustaining peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Darfur, which were more to his liking.

Gen. Hillier is quoted in the Stein–Lang book as saying he gave the assurance that Mr. Martin wanted but underestimated the strength of the Taliban insurgency in Kandahar that Canadian troops would face.

According to the book, the decision was complex and multi–faceted.

It was taken by politicians, generals and civil servants fumbling in the darkness of ignorance, trying to craft rules on the run for a new kind of international military engagement they did not fully understand in a country they did not understand at all.

Mr. Chretien, in his memoirs, says that when he was prime minister he placed Canadian troops in and around Kabul as part of the European–lead International Security Assistance Force which he says was a very good deal for Canada.

He then writes: "Later, unfortunately, when my successor took too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend our term with ISAF, our soldiers were moved out of Kabul and sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar." The Stein–Lang book implies that the decision to withdraw Canadian troops from ISAF was made in mid–2003, when Mr. Chretien was still prime minister and long before the Kandahar deployment. In any event, the ISAF mandate, at the urging of Canadian policy makers, was being expanded beyond Kabul in order to more fully support the new Afghan government.

As the next step after ISAF, Mr. McCallum in December, 2003 committed Canada to deploying what was known as a provincial reconstruction team in Afghanistan but no decision was made on where it would be located.

It was this decision that officials in the departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence squabbled over for more than a year without ministers being informed of what was going on, the Stein–Lang book says. At the same time, several NATO allies were giving Canada conflicting signals on where its PRT was located.

Finally, in early 2005, Mr. Graham wrote to Mr. Martin recommending that it should be located in Kandahar, a recommendation reinforced by Gen. Hillier when he met Mr. Martin several weeks later in March.

Gen. Hillier said the PRT should be reinforced by a strong combat deployment in Kandahar as well as strategic advisory teams attached to most Afghan ministries – the so–called "three–block war" approach.

Mr. Martin gave his approval in

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; autobiography; books; my years as prime minister; foreign policy; defence; the unexpected war: canada in kandahar; statements

THE CHRETIEN MEMOIRS: LIBERAL INFIGHTING: FORMER PRIME MINISTER TURNS AFGHAN MISS

PERSONAL NAME: Paul Martin; Jean Chretien; Rick Hillier; Janice Gross Stein; Eugene Lang

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Liberal Party; Taliban

ATTACK AT SPIN BOLDAK: THE AFTERMATH From carnage to triage: How Forces personnel came to aid of wounded

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880154

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A15

BYLINE: OMAR EL AKKAD

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN

WORDS: 562

WORD COUNT: 521

OMAR EL AKKAD KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN All across Afghanistan, families were celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the holy day marking the end of Ramadan. In Spin Boldak, a town that straddles the Afghan-Pakistani border in the southeast of Kandahar district, residents packed the downtown markets. At around 7 p.m.

Saturday, a truck full of Afghan border police officers, charged with monitoring one of the most popular border crossings in the region, was heading downtown.

A man on a motorcycle followed just behind them. As the truck entered the market, the man on the motorcycle closed in and detonated explosives packed into his vest.

The carnage was immediate: Seven people were killed instantly, three of them from the targeted border police force. Another 36 people suffered injuries, ranging from lacerations to life-threatening head wounds.

The attack prompted the biggest emergency medical operation ever carried out by this rotation of Canadian forces in Kandahar, an operation involving hundreds of personnel and multiple military bases.

Not long after Saturday's attack, Major Pierre Huet received a phone call at the Canadian Forces' forward operating base in Spin Boldak.

Major Huet, the commanding officer of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, had been having a relatively quiet night; although there were two similar attacks in Spin Boldak over the past two months, there was no specific threat warning that night.

That quickly changed. Fifteen minutes after receiving a call telling him what had just happened in town, Major Huet watched as half-a-dozen Toyota pickup trucks rumbled toward his base, each carrying half-a-dozen wounded.

"I just told [my staff] to get ready," Major Huet said. "We were going to do our best." At around the same time, Major Jocelyn Dodaro was finishing up dinner. The military doctor was walking out of a cafeteria in the Kandahar military base when he, too, received a phone call. Moments later, he was on a chopper bound for Spin Boldak.

By the time Dr. Dodaro reached the Spin Boldak forward operating base, Major Huet and his staff had all but finished setting up triage.

Most of the injuries involved penetration wounds from the shrapnel, some of which could be deceiving: A large bloody wound to the thigh may be far less life-threatening than a wound the size of a pinprick to the head.

Two choppers transported 21 patients to the Canadian-led Kandahar military hospital, according to acting hospital head Lieutenant-Commander Charles Gendron. One of the injured died during the 80-kilometre trip.

In Kandahar, more than 100 medical staff gathered at the base hospital, preparing for the casualties. Mixed with the explosives were thousands of ball bearings, designed to cause as wide a wave of damage as possible. The victims heading toward the base included two boys: an eight-year-old and a nine-year-old suffering from shrapnel wounds to the arms and legs. Another casualty suffered a penetrating wound to the head, a potentially life-threatening injury.

"You're dealing with a huge number of patients," Dr. Dodaro said.

"It's basically war medicine." By the end of the night, every patient who arrived alive was in stable condition. Those who required the attention of specialists such as neurosurgeons were transported to other hospitals across the country.

"It was amazing work they've done," Dr. Dodaro said. "Canadian forces saved a number of lives, that's for sure."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Pakistan; Canada; Spin Boldak

SUBJECT TERM: strife; deaths; defence

PERSONAL NAME: Pierre Huet

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE CHRETIEN MEMOIRS: THE MILITARY: RELATIVES REACT Families of fallen soldiers blast Chretien for politicizing their losses 'It's really frustrating because it's our sons and daughters that are at risk,' says mother of slain private

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880153

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A6 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: JOE FRIESEN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Winnipeg MB

WORDS: 748

WORD COUNT: 662

JOE FRIESEN WINNIPEG Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan reacted angrily to news yesterday that former prime minister Jean Chretien blames Paul Martin for Canada's presence in the dangerous southern Afghan province of Kandahar.

Wanda Watkins, whose son Lane, a 20-year-old private from Clearwater, Man., was killed by a roadside bomb in Kandahar in July, said she's tired of the political games being played over Afghanistan.

"When I hear Mr. Chretien or any other politician talking about stuff like that, blaming each other, it's really frustrating because it's our sons and daughters that are at risk," Ms. Watkins said.

"To say things like that is very frustrating for their families." Mr. Chretien said in his memoirs that while he was prime minister, Canada's involvement was focused in the capital, Kabul, considered more stable than southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban are based.

But after he took over the prime minister's office, Mr. Martin couldn't decide whether to extend Canada's presence in Afghanistan, allowing other NATO countries to take up the less dangerous missions and forcing Canada to "the killing fields around Kandahar," Mr. Chretien writes.

"Having a son or daughter in the military makes the politics of the whole mission and everything around it extremely frustrating," Ms. Watkins said. "My son died in Kandahar province, but I'm sure if you talked to a mother whose son died in Kabul, it wouldn't feel any different to them. One life lost to that family is just as devastating." She's upset not only at the Liberal finger-pointing, but at the failure of successive governments to invest in the military, which she says cost Canadian lives.

"We didn't have the air support we should have had. People and goods are moved by convoys on those dangerous roads. My son was killed by a roadside bomb," she said.

Roxanne Priede, whose son, Master Corporal Darrell Priede, died in Afghanistan this year, said the former prime minister's comments confirm what she thought all along. "I think anybody who dies in any war dies

needlessly," she said. "I don't know much about the politics, but I think Canada was uncertain whether to go at all." She said she remains opposed to Canada's war in Afghanistan, but stands behind the Canadian troops who are asked to serve in dangerous circumstances. "The political hogwash that's going on around it is just more hurtful than anything," she said.

Barry Mellish is the father of Warrant Officer Frank Mellish, a 38-year-old father of two who was killed by Taliban fire while trying to reach a fallen comrade in Afghanistan last year.

Mr. Mellish awoke yesterday morning in Nova Scotia to see Mr.

Chretien's comments reported in the local newspaper. He said he wasn't impressed.

"As far as I'm concerned, the memoirs of Chretien or Mulroney, they're just baloney most of the time. Hot air. They're trying to get attention," he said.

"If they want to play their silly little games, let them go ahead.

People will recognize it for what it is. I don't think Canadians will put much stock in it. . . . I think most Canadians realize they're trying to cover up their own failings by blaming other people." Mr. Mellish said his views on Canada's involvement in Afghanistan haven't changed in years. He said the country's political leaders made a commitment to an international mission, and they must honour that commitment.

"There's no such thing as a nice war. Never was and never will be. Our soldiers are very well-trained and capable, but they can't do the job as long as the media and politicians keep criticizing every day." Margaret Walsh, whose son, Master Corporal Jeffrey Walsh, died in Kandahar after being shot accidentally by a Canadian soldier, said her son didn't pay much attention to the political manoeuvring around the war. He did what he was asked because that was his duty.

"My son died to defend our country and help the people of Afghanistan.

Politics aside, that's why he went. To keep our kids free. To keep Canada free," she said. "He didn't get into the politics of it.

That was his job and he had to do his job to the best of his ability.

That's what he did, and he died for it."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; defence; deaths; political; statements; books; my years as prime minister

PERSONAL NAME: Paul Martin; Jean Chretien

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

THE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN: SWEET TALK

Goodwill gesture no cakewalk for Bernier Minister gets creamed for handing out chocolate treats to troops at outpost

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880134

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A5 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: TU THANH HA

SECTION: National News

EDITION: National

DATELINE: Montreal PQ

WORDS: 341

WORD COUNT: 330

TU THANH HA MONTREAL More than a week after he flew to Afghanistan for a Thanksgiving weekend visit with the Canadian military, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier is still facing questions and is being teased about handing out Jos. Louis cakes to soldiers at a remote outpost.

By the time he got home, Mr. Bernier's gesture had given birth to a new mocking expression, "Jos. Louis diplomacy," apparently first uttered by Liberal military critic Denis Coderre, who had been on a rival visit to Afghanistan.

Again yesterday, on a public-affairs show on the TVA network, Mr. Bernier was told that it was "ketaine" (tacky) to give the snacks to soldiers from the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment.

And in a weekend speech, Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said the Conservatives' policies amounted to "gas for Alberta, cars for Ontario – and for Quebec, little cakes." The Jos. Louis is a plastic-wrapped cream-filled cake snack of the same style as the Twinkie or the May West.

Pierre Cote, a trends analyst and one-time head of an Internet-based marketing agency, said the Jos. Louis is one of Quebec's oldest brands and has a strong stamp in the popular consciousness here.

To people who support the Afghanistan mission, a Jos. Louis cake could be comfort food, a reminder of home similar to what a Tim Hortons doughnut would be for anglophone soldiers, Mr. Cote said.

But, he noted, for critics of the mission, the Jos. Louis handout looked like a piffling reward for the soldiers.

On his blog, humorist Stephane Laporte called the minister a "Jos.

Louis pusher." "It was humiliating to see the little soldiers having to look grateful!" he wrote. "Life is worth more than a Jos. Louis." Mr. Bernier said on TVA yesterday, "It's too bad it came out like this." The cakes are made at a factory in his riding of Beauce, south of Quebec City. He said the distribution came at the request of a soldier from the Beauce region.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

THE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN: SWEET TALK Goodwill gesture no cakewalk for Bernier Minister gets creamed for handing out chocolate treats to troops at outpost

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: visits; political; defence

PERSONAL NAME: Maxime Bernier

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

Soft power strikes back

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880110

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A17

BYLINE: LAWRENCE MARTIN

SECTION: Comment Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 687

WORD COUNT: 676

LAWRENCE MARTIN David Brooks, the estimable conservative columnist for The New York Times, recently interviewed U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates.

He found some of Mr. Gates's thoughts striking.

On the best ways to spread democracy, Mr. Gates said, "We have a variety of tools. Not all of them are hammers." On how to promote freedom in Iran, Mr. Gates emphasized soft power, the columnist said. "Again and again," Mr. Brooks said, "he returned to the importance of soft power." A Bush guy endorsing soft power! On this side of the border, Lloyd Axworthy's ears were lighting up.

He senses – and may well be correct in doing so – that his much–derided foreign–affairs strategy is gaining credibility, as 9/12ers wrestle away the agenda after years of fear–mongering wrought by the 9/11 calamity.

Mr. Axworthy made soft power a centrepiece of his diplomacy when he served as foreign minister in the late 1990s. Academic Joe Nye coined the term to mean the use of power to co–opt, rather than to coerce: constructive engagement as an alternative to military force.

Under the panoply of soft power, Mr. Axworthy sought to advance humanitarian causes and peace efforts by reaching out to forces in civil society and playing a lead role in campaigns to create the International Criminal Court and to secure a land mine treaty.

He helped bring terms like "the human security agenda" and "the responsibility to protect" into the lexicon.

Lambasted for wimpiness from critics for this and his strong opposition to the invasion of Iraq, Mr. Axworthy now looks on as his detractors dig into plates of crow on the war and as they soften their criticism of marshmallow diplomacy.

Hard power has taken a big hit. Here is Colin Powell, the former secretary of state, talking in a recent interview in GQ about how America's image can be restored. "We should remember what that image was, back after World War II. It was the image of a generous country that sought not to impose its will on other countries or even impose its values. But it showed the way." The Bush administration is not making any radical turn toward constructive engagement. But there are some encouraging signs and, among Democratic Party leaders (one of whom is likely to be the next president), soft power has become a staple.

"Iraq and to some extent Afghanistan have shown," said Mr. Axworthy, who now serves as President of the University of Winnipeg, "that relying on primarily the military to carry out your foreign policy doesn't work."

American influence has substantially diminished, added the long-time Liberal, who supported the use of hard power in Kosovo. "How do they rebuild it? They start talking to people.

They start assisting people. They start using diplomacy and public diplomacy and all the tools of soft power that we talked about here." Former president Bill Clinton, who could play a central role in the next administration, has had the look of a one-man soft-power dynamo, going around the globe stirring up goodwill, publishing a book called *Giving*, celebrating the growing power of NGOs. Ex-president Jimmy Carter has been doing much the same.

Paul Heinbecker, who served as foreign-affairs adviser under Brian Mulroney and as United Nations ambassador from 2000 to 2003, sees Mr. Axworthy as a trailblazer. "While we don't talk about the human security agenda much in Canada, it's becoming an accepted term internationally – a term that is used and attributed to Canada." Jean Chretien releases his memoirs this week. His years may be remembered well for soft power and for staying out of Iraq. Where they left a gaping hole was in the armed forces. Under Paul Martin and more so now under Stephen Harper, that hole is being filled as the military gains munitions and respect.

Soft power works better, as John Manley says, if you have hard power to back it up.

While big flaws in our foreign policy performance remain, the country is demonstrating some strength in both kinds of power.

lmartin@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: United States; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; foreign policy; foreign relations; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Lloyd Axworthy

PARLIAMENT: WEIGHING THE CHANCES OF A FALL ELECTION Liberals may let Throne Speech pass, Dion says Support for the government's agenda will depend on how 'conciliatory' a tone it strikes, the Liberal Leader asserts

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072880010

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A4

BYLINE: BILL CURRY

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 680

WORD COUNT: 675

BILL CURRY OTTAWA The trigger for a fall election will not be pulled this week, provided Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Throne Speech is not outrageous, radical and very right-wing, said Liberal Leader Stephane Dion yesterday.

That is the bar set by Mr. Dion, whose caucus of 96 MPs must decide this week whether to topple the Conservative government.

Mr. Dion's comments yesterday appeared to leave plenty of room for his party to allow the government's speech to pass, even if it contains aspects that the Liberals don't like.

He gave the Prime Minister praise for displaying a more conciliatory political tone last Friday, when Mr. Harper announced former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley would chair a panel on the future of Canada's mission in Afghanistan. If that tone is on display again Tuesday night in the Throne Speech, Mr. Dion suggested, Liberals will let it pass.

But he made clear there are limits to what Liberals can stomach.

"If we have a very right-wing, radical Throne Speech, then it will be different. We'll see if the conciliatory tone of Mr. Harper – the last reincarnation of Mr. Harper – is the real one, and not the very aggressive one we have seen a week ago, when he said everything would be a vote of confidence and so on," he said on CTV's Question Period.

Because the Bloc Quebecois and the New Democrats were quick to issue a list of non-negotiable demands regarding the Throne Speech, both parties are expected to vote against the government in the coming series of confidence votes flowing from the speech. Together, these two parties do not have enough votes to defeat the government, making the Liberal position in the minority Parliament critical.

Conservative strategist Tom Flanagan has publicly urged the government to seize the current political dynamic as an opportunity to move more aggressively on the policy front.

PARLIAMENT: WEIGHING THE CHANCES OF A FALL ELECTION Liberals may let Throne Speech pass, 10/15/07

There has been speculation the speech will contain wording critical of the Kyoto Protocol in a bid to embarrass Mr. Dion, should he decide to let the speech pass either by voting in favour or abstaining in large numbers.

Speaking on behalf of the government on the TV program, Industry Minister Jim Prentice yesterday insisted the government is not looking for a fall election.

"The Throne Speech will frame the issue: on the one hand, a mandate for the government to govern on the priorities of Canadians; on the other, the possibility of an election, that is really in the hands of the opposition parties. But we want to govern; we don't seek an election," he said. "We want to proceed on the priorities of Canadians with a Throne Speech that deals with their issues – the economy, the environment, criminal justice – and we want to move forward and make Parliament work." The speech is expected to promise future tax cuts in a spring budget. It will also address concerns regarding the manufacturing sector of the Canadian economy. Senate reform and Arctic sovereignty are also expected to be raised in the government's plan, which provides the broad outline for action in both the short and long term.

The government's appointment of an expert panel on Afghanistan was not driven by political strategy for the Throne Speech, Mr.

Prentice said.

"There's been no attempt to put the Liberals into an impossible position. The Liberals, led by Mr. Dion, find impossible positions all by themselves," he said. "It's an attempt to have a responsible debate, a non-partisan debate about an extremely important issue to the country." For his part, NDP Leader Jack Layton is urging all members of the Liberal Party to stand in the House and vote one way or the other on the speech.

"I'm urging that they all be there and take their responsibilities," he told CTV. "I think staying out of your seat in Parliament is an irresponsible thing to do, and we're certainly hoping that that doesn't happen on this vote on the Speech from the Throne."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; throne speech; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Jack Layton; Stephane Dion; Stephen Harper; Jim Prentice

ORGANIZATION NAME: Conservative Party of Canada; Liberal Party; New Democratic Party

Fighting words

IDNUMBER 200710150057
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: A17
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 173

The headline, "U.K. general urges more action against Taliban propaganda," (Oct. 12) caught my attention.

A good idea, I thought. The Afghan population, after years of bloody occupation by NATO forces, must be looking back to the good old days of the Taliban rule with nostalgia and be vulnerable to Taliban propaganda.

Reading on, I realized that it is we, the gullible Canadian taxpayers, who must be protected from Taliban propaganda. In the nick of time, just a week before the government's speech from the throne, Gen. David Richards, head of the German-based NATO rapid-action force, rushed to Ottawa to rescue us.

Here is his urgent message: "As a soldier with a moral streak in me, I like to know that I am fighting a good war. Afghanistan is a good war; it's UN-mandated. If we don't succeed, it will come back to bite us. Whether it's London or Toronto or Ottawa, Washington, Bonn, Berlin, we need to win this in our own self-interest."

One more piece of propaganda provided to the gullible Canadian taxpayers by our government in Ottawa.

Cecily Mills, Edmonton

Mental health issues plague returning soldiers; About 1 in 7 soldiers report problems ranging from depression to suicidal tendencies

IDNUMBER 200710150005

PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A2

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Reuters / Canadian soldiers from the NATO-led coalition gather at Ma'sum Ghar camp in Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan on Friday. ;

KEYWORDS: MENTAL HEALTH; MENTALLY DISABLED; HEALTH CARE

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 565

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The war in Afghanistan is taking a heavy toll on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops, according to data provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

In addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan since February 2006, a further 243 have been wounded.

And a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops found nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression to panic attacks and suicidal tendencies.

"I would say that it is significant," said Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the Department of National Defence office dealing with the health of deployed troops. The data comes from a questionnaire filled out anonymously by 2,700 of the 4,700 troops who served in Kandahar about three to six months after their tour of duty.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa. "About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

The number who suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home was small, he said.

High-risk drinking was identified as an issue for about 17 per cent of the returnees. About one soldier in three reported that they felt their general health had deteriorated, which was well above the Canadian Forces average, the report concluded.

Extrapolating these figures would suggest that as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with a mental health problem.

However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Zamorski says the military has put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans. These measures include better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody," Zamorski said. He stressed that serious psychiatric problems are rare in the battle theatre, usually becoming evident only months or years after soldiers return home.

Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was also not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said.

Coombs says treatment in the field is equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards, allowing more Canadians to survive battle wounds that often involve heavy bleeding from explosives and shrapnel from improvised bombs.

About 60 per cent of wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities, while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said. She added that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this roto (rotation)."

CEFCOM data show that along with injuries and mental health issues after the tour of duty is over, another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar because of "diseases and non-battle injuries," including family problems and combat stress.

Manley is inspired choice to head Afghanistan panel; The committee also takes the war off the parliamentary table until January

IDNUMBER 200710150050
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A23
COLUMN: L. Ian MacDonald
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: REUTERS / John Manley's committee will consider four options. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; CANDIDATES; POLITICAL PARTIES; CAMPAIGNS
BYLINE: L. IAN MACDONALD
SOURCE: Freelance
WORD COUNT: 799

Stephen Harper's appointment of John Manley to head an expert panel on Afghanistan is both a brilliant tactical stroke and a bipartisan gesture that is good for the country.

The appointment of the Manley panel doesn't take Canada's Afghanistan mission out of tomorrow's Throne Speech, but it does take it off the floor of the House for the fall sitting. The five-member panel will report in January, around the start of the winter sitting, and there is no need to debate the mission before then.

The Liberals, through their new shadow foreign affairs critic Bob Rae, immediately welcomed the appointment, and so they should have. Not only is Manley one of their own, not only is he answering the call of country, but he allows them to drop Afghanistan as a confidence question in the Throne Speech.

Stéphane Dion should grab on to it. There might be other issues on which he will either trigger an election or keep half his members out of the house to avoid one. And given the big lead the Conservatives have opened up in this weekend's Ipsos poll, it should not only be a preference, but a matter of survival for Dion.

Kyoto could still be an election-maker, especially if Harper taunts Dion with language in the Throne Speech about emissions-reductions targets being unattainable (because of the Liberals' sorry record in office, including Dion's 18 months as environment minister). But that's just a game of truth or dare.

Afghanistan is serious stuff. Time and again, Dion has said Canada's military mission in Afghanistan must end with the current Kandahar rotation in February 2009.

In appointing the Manley panel on Friday, Harper asked them to consider four options, although the PM added: "they may consider other options."

Option 1: continue training Afghan army and police personnel with a view to withdrawing from Kandahar in early 2009. Option 2: shift the emphasis completely to reconstruction and aid, leaving other NATO countries to assume our security role in the south. In both options, we are outta there, and just putting them on the table

Manley is inspired choice to head Afghanistan panel; The committee also takes the war off the parliamentary

is enough cover for Dion and the Liberals.

Option 3: rotate military and aid efforts out to another province. This is the burden-sharing scenario, of another NATO country taking up a load we will have carried long enough. Option 4: withdraw all forces after February 2009 except for small units to protect aid workers. Still outta there, or at least out of Kandahar.

The bipartisan nature of the panel is quite striking, as are the impressive credentials of all five members. Manley was one of the outstanding cabinet ministers of the Chrétien era. As foreign affairs minister after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, he made waves by suggesting that Canada was punching below its weight in the world. He's been to Afghanistan twice, first as foreign minister in 2002 and earlier this year as a director of CARE Canada, one of the NGOs doing good and under-publicized work in the country. As he writes in an article in the current Policy Options: "We often seek to define Canada's role in the world. Well, for whatever reason we have one in Afghanistan. Let's not abandon it too easily. But let's use our hard-earned influence to make sure the job is done right."

You could spend a week drafting terms of reference for the Manley panel, but you couldn't put it better than that.

As for his fellow panel-members – Derek Burney, Paul Tellier, Pam Wallin and Jake Epp – this is an extremely high-powered group.

Burney is a former Canadian ambassador to the United States, chief of staff to Brian Mulroney and head of Harper's transition team. Tellier is a former clerk of the Privy Council who went on to become CEO of CN and Bombardier in Montreal.

Full disclosure, I've worked for them both in Ottawa, and these are guys who demand all the facts. At the end of the day, they don't sleep unless they have answers. Pam Wallin is the network journalism star who went on to serve Canada with distinction as our consul-general in New York. And Jake Epp, health minister during the Mulroney years, is head of Health Partners International, one of the NGOs in the region.

They have three months to travel to the region, weigh the options and come up with their recommendations.

Bipartisanship isn't easily achieved in our public discourse. It's more in the U.S. tradition of presidential commissions and advisory boards such as the Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by Republican Jim Baker and Democrat Lee Hamilton.

There are lots of issues on which this minority House can divide and the government can fall. With the appointment of this bi-partisan panel, Afghanistan isn't one of them. Harper deserves credit for reaching out to a Liberal of Manley's stature. Manley, and his colleagues, deserve thanks for responding to the call.

www.lianmacdonald.ca

Manley is inspired choice to head Afghanistan panel; The committee also takes the war off the parliamentary

U.S. to probe claim of burning of Quran

IDNUMBER 200710150040
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A16
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=ASADABAD,
Afghanistan
SOURCE: AFP
WORD COUNT: 111

The U.S. military said yesterday it would investigate claims that its soldiers had burned a copy of the Quran in Afghanistan, as angry locals demanded action and threatened retaliation.

Allegations that troops tore up and burnt the Muslim holy book during a raid in the eastern province of Kunar on Saturday led several hundred villagers to demonstrate the same day, blocking a main road for hours.

Locals repeated the charges at a heated meeting yesterday in the provincial capital, Asadabad, of representatives of the U.S. military, Afghan officials and more than a dozen men from the area near the raid site in Narang district.

"You have desecrated our religion," resident Azim Khan said.

U.S. Captain Jason Coughenour said the allegations would be treated seriously.

Afghan mission is a challenge in Poland; 72% oppose. Polish general vying for NATO top job

IDNUMBER 200710150039
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A16
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: FINBARR O'REILLY, REUTERS / Bandoliers ofbullets hang from a lookout tower at Three Tank Hill base, which overlooks a Panjwahi town in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan. ; Photo: CANWEST NEWS / Vote for NATO job is Nov. 14. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: WARSAW
BYLINE: PETER O'NEIL
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 299

General Franciszek Gagor, who might soon become NATO's top soldier, can empathize with Canada's public relations challenge over Afghanistan.

"Well, it's a challenge for us also," Poland's chief of the general staff said.

Gagor, competing with generals from Spain and Italy to replace Canadian Ray Henault as head of the western alliance's military committee, would be the first officer from the former Warsaw Pact alliance to become top soldier in the 26-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The vote is Nov. 14.

He brings to the international table considerable peacekeeping experience in the Middle East and guarded optimism about the Afghan mission.

But Gagor cannot claim popular support in his own country for Poland's military role there. One poll this month by the Warsaw-based firm CBOS said 72 per cent of those surveyed were opposed to Poland's decision this year to deploy 1,200 soldiers primarily in the dangerous southeast provinces of Ghazni and Patika. Poland also has elite forces working with Canadians in Kandahar.

Objections to the fighting are even stronger than in Canada, where public unease and election fever have caused the government to declare that Canada's current role in Kandahar, where there are more than 2,000 Canadian troops, won't continue past early 2009 without an endorsement from Parliament. Three of four Canadian parties, in a position to trigger an election after tomorrow's Throne Speech, currently oppose an extension.

Poland's public mood is soured partly by Iraq, where the country has lost about 20 soldiers since 2003. One soldier has been killed so far in Afghanistan.

The public objections, however, don't appear likely to have an influence on Poland's role. Despite this country's own current election fever there is no organized peace movement, the issue doesn't get major media coverage and the conflict hasn't become a political football in Poland's Oct. 21 parliamentary elections.

Throne Speech: Is it blueprint or poison pill?; Harper may be hoping to lose vote. All three opposition parties must unite for Conservative minority government to fall

IDNUMBER 200710150026
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: NORMA GREENAWAY
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 792

The big question hanging over the minority Conservative government's Throne Speech tomorrow night is how hard Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to squeeze the opposition parties and possibly force a federal election.

Governor-General Michaëlle Jean will read the speech, setting out the government's agenda.

Will Harper – emboldened by his party's 40-per-cent popularity rating in a fresh national survey – insert into it a "poison pill" statement or policy plan so egregious to all three opposition parties they would have no choice but to vote against it and plunge the country into an election?

Tom Flanagan, a former Harper confidant and party strategist, says the prime minister can afford to be "fairly bold," but going the poison-pill route is risky.

"Engineering a defeat is not easy because a Throne Speech that would simultaneously provoke the Liberals, Bloc and NDP to vote against it would probably be a Throne Speech that's not popular with voters," he said.

Harper, who has insisted he would prefer governing to having an election, could only be defeated if all three opposition parties unite to bring down his government.

The Bloc and the NDP have already signalled they won't be supporting the speech, leaving it to the Liberals to throw a lifeline to government if they don't want an election by voting with it or abstaining in a string of three possible confidence motions in the coming week or so.

The earliest the government could fall is Thursday, the earliest day for a vote on a Bloc Québécois sub-amendment to the speech.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, struggling to right his listing party, says he doesn't want a fall election, and that if one happens, it will be because Harper has "set up his own defeat."

Throne Speech: Is it blueprint or poison pill?; Harper may be hoping to lose vote. All three opposition parties

And that's what Dion suspects Harper wants.

"It's clear that he's looking for an election," Dion said yesterday on CTV's Question Period, adding the Liberals will be looking at the speech "as a whole" before deciding on whether or not to support it.

The Liberals don't have to fully agree with the speech to support it, he said.

"It will be a Conservative Throne Speech, not a Liberal one; we accept that," Dion said.

"But if it is a Throne Speech that is outrageous regarding the values that we Liberals believe, we cannot be under any obligation to support something that we believe to be wrong for Canadians."

Rick Anderson, a former Reform Party strategist and political pundit, says Harper has to tread carefully.

"If he looks like he's writing the Throne Speech with the goal of provoking Dion, then people are not going to be happy with it. The public has got their antennae way up on that kind of stuff," he said.

Betting was all over the map in the countdown to the speech, which Harper billed this month as a "fish or cut bait" proposition for the opposition parties.

Harper told a news conference that if the speech – considered a matter of confidence under parliamentary tradition — wins approval in the Commons, the government will interpret that as a licence to govern according to that blueprint.

Harper said he would treat legislation flowing from the speech as matters of confidence, meaning the defeat of almost any legislation would cause the government to fall and trigger an election.

He softened that position Friday, telling reporters the government would not "abuse" the system, and that the government would only consider making a vote a matter of confidence if the legislative issue was significant enough to fight an election over.

Harper's original ultimatum, which Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale has since dismissed as "political and parliamentary fantasy" in a minority government, has nonetheless intensified election preparations in all four parties.

The latest Ipsos–Reid poll, which had the Conservatives leading the Liberals by 12 points and within sight of winning a majority government, threw fresh fuel on those efforts.

Harper has said the speech will talk about everything from tax relief and the environment to the combat mission in Afghanistan and Arctic sovereignty. But the details of what will be said have been the subject of weeks of private plotting among a tiny circle of Harper's most trusted advisers.

Harper took some of the sting out of the Afghan issue Friday.

He appointed a five–member panel, led by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, to advise the government by the end of January on what the future involvement of Canada should be after its current NATO commitment expires in February 2009.

The NDP has called for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops, while the Liberals and Bloc says they want a government commitment to end the "combat" mission in Kandahar in February 2009.

The three parties are, however, united in their opposition to the Conservatives' approach to the Kyoto

Throne Speech: Is it blueprint or poison pill?; Harper may be hoping to lose vote. All three opposition parties

environmental accord.

The opposition parties want the government to commit to trying to meet the Kyoto targets for cutting greenhouse-gas emissions, something it has ruled out on grounds it would be too onerous on the economy.

The Kyoto standoff, therefore, might afford Harper a shot at riling the opposition parties enough to bring down his government. Other opportunities might arise over promised crime legislation.

Whatever the wording of the speech, Conservative Senator Hugh Segal predicts it will not leave Canadians scratching their heads in confusion.

"I'd be surprised if we would walk away from the Throne Speech with a lot of question marks about where the government is headed. It's not his style," Segal said of Harper.

Ottawa Citizen

War casualty: Mental health; 15 % of veterans report problems when surveyed by Defence

IDNUMBER: 200710150001
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
KEYWORDS: MENTAL HEALTH; MENTALLY DISABLED; HEALTH CARE
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: MATTHEW FISHER
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 649

Nearly 400 of 2,700 Canadian soldiers who have served in Kandahar province might have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

In addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February 2006, 243 have been wounded, according to the data.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for additional treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries," including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa in late summer 2006 when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the CEFCOM data.

About 2,700 of 4,700 troops who served in Kandahar answered a questionnaire anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended. The number of troops reporting mental health problems in that questionnaire was significant, said Mark Zamorski, the doctor who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops. "About 15 per cent have common mental health problems."

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation – it is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers might have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one of the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here, they can survive."

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities, while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work" this rotation.

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and chaplains during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

MPs head back to Ottawa Throne Speech charts Tory plans

SOURCETAG: 0710150515

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: 1. file photo by CP Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean acknowledges applause as she takes the throne in the Senate for the first time on Sept. 27, 2005. 2. photo of STEPHEN HARPER Eyes majority

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 611

The spectre of a snap election hangs overhead as federal lawmakers return to work in the capital.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean officially opens a new session of Parliament tomorrow in Ottawa with an evening Speech from the Throne that will map out the Conservative government's priorities. And depending on the contents, the remainder of Stephen Harper's minority government could be prolonged or cut short.

The Conservative parliamentary blueprint is expected to put broad strokes on several key areas: Canada's future role in Afghanistan, asserting Arctic sovereignty, protecting the environment, strengthening the economy and the federation and implementing tough crime-busting measures. Despite public opinion polls that show the Tories climbing toward majority territory, insiders insist the PM is not designing a speech to deliberately self-destruct and trigger an election.

"The prime minister does not want an election because the Canadian public does not want an election -- they're basically tuned out," said one strategist. "We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're just beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

The throne speech is expected to lay the foundation for a fall economic statement and spring budget by pledging tax cuts, help for struggling manufacturing and forestry sectors and initiatives that will lift interprovincial trade barriers and enhance labour mobility. Commitments to assert sovereignty in the North, tackle climate change and carve a path forward on the Afghanistan mission will also feature prominently, as will a pledge to strengthen the federation with Senate reform and new limits on federal spending power in provincial jurisdiction.

The speech will also make a determined pledge to pass stalled crime bills on dangerous offenders, bail reform, conditional sentencing and the age of consent, and introduce an overhaul for the youth justice system.

The NDP and Bloc Québécois have already stated they don't expect to like what they hear in the speech, leaving the survival or defeat of the Conservative government in the hands of the reeling Liberals.

NDP Leader Jack Layton urged Grits to show up for confidence votes stemming from the Throne Speech instead of abstaining or staying home to avoid toppling the government. Mass absenteeism would give Harper carte blanche to ram down an agenda most Canadians don't want.

But a heavy-handed approach by Harper could lead to a backlash at the polls, he warned.

"I can't see Canadians liking an approach which holds Parliament in contempt, where he tries to pretend he has absolute power when in fact you've got the Canadian people on a completely different track," Layton said. "I think it will underline people's sense of the man as someone you really can't trust."

Liberal House Leader Ralph Goodale accused Harper of being "bellicose and belligerent" on the eve of a new session of Parliament, and suggested the PM's aides are plotting to make Canada "a Republican clone by stealth." He warned Conservatives not to take the Grits for granted.

"He's trying the tactics of thuggery and Liberals are not going to be intimidated by that," he said. "We will take the issues as they come along and make our considered judgments on them one by one as they are presented. We don't want to trigger an election, we want this Parliament to work, but the ball is in Mr. Harper's court. If he wants to defeat himself by being so entirely offensive and unreasonable, and if that causes an election, then so be it. We'll be ready."

OPPOSITION WISH LISTS

LIBERALS

- Commit to an end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan by February 2009
- Reintroduce clean air legislation, Bill C-30, that didn't pass in to law in the last session
- Develop action plan to fight poverty
- Concrete measures to strengthen Canada's industrial sector.

BLOC QUEBECOIS

- Eliminate federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions
- Respect the Kyoto Protocol
- Continue supply management in the agricultural sector
- Help for Quebec's forest industry
- A commitment to pull troops from Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009

NDP

- Immediate withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan
- A plan to tackle the prosperity gap
- Commitment to reaching Kyoto targets and reintroduce C-30 KEYWORDS=CANADA

Is it time to pull out? The truth about Canada's mission in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG: 0710150672
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 32
ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos by Michael Den Tandt, Sun Media 1. A Canadian soldier stands guard on the outskirts of Kabul. 2. Children at Baba Wali Sahbb School, near Kandahar City, hold up cards made for them by Canadian children and distributed by soldiers at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar.
BYLINE: MICHAEL DEN TANDT, SUN MEDIA
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 1121

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If we pull out, much of that will be lost.

The mission will continue but the setback will be huge and Canada's standing in Afghanistan, and the world, will suffer immeasurably. KEYWORDS=CANADA

MPs head back to Ottawa Throne Speech charts Tory plans

SOURCETAG: 0710150642

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 5

ILLUSTRATION: 1. file photo by CP Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean acknowledges applause as she takes the throne in the Senate for the first time on Sept. 27, 2005. 2. photo of STEPHEN HARPER Eyes majority

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 611

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"The prime minister does not want an election because the Canadian public does not want an election -- they're basically tuned out," said one strategist. "We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're just beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

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Is it time to pull out? The truth about Canada's mission in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG: 0710150440

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

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SOURCETAG: 0710150438

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 5

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- KEYWORDS=OTTAWA AND REGION

Manley to the rescue?

IDNUMBER 200710150028
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
COLUMN: Susan Riley
BYLINE: Susan Riley
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 772

In what is conceded to be a strategic master-stroke, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has commissioned a five-member panel on Afghanistan that not only neutralizes a troubling issue in the short term, but is likely to provide the long-term answers he wants.

That is because the panel, headed by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, has a decidedly conservative cast. Manley himself has been a strong supporter of the mission in Afghanistan, a stout ally of the United States in the "war against terror" and a leading member of his party's centre right.

Second, while the panel's scope is not formally limited, it has been asked to consider four main options -- excluding the removal of combat troops from Kandahar before Canada's formal commitment ends in February 2009.

This is what the New Democratic Party and a fluctuating number of voters want, but it will probably elicit no more than polite interest, if any, from Harper's "non-partisan" panel.

Other members include former federal bureaucrats Derek Burney and Paul Tellier, former Mulroney minister Jake Epp and former broadcaster Pamela Wallin. None are New Democrats, supporters of the Bloc Québécois or known to be close to the antiwar movement.

The first option on their list -- the one, however wildly ambitious, the prime minister appears to favour -- is continuing the present effort to train Afghan police and army units to defend their own fledgling government, with a view to beginning to withdraw Canadian forces by the 2009 deadline. In his press conference last week, Harper suggested this represents the status quo. In fact, it is an important refinement: For the first time, Harper appears to be ruling out adding to our 2,500-person contingent in Kandahar after 2009.

The other options include focusing exclusively on reconstruction in Kandahar and letting another country take over security; moving our aid and military efforts to another, more settled part of the country; or, withdrawing all troops by 2009 except for a small contingent.

Today, at least, these appear to be non-starters -- at least for the Harper government. That is because of the caveats the prime minister attached to the panel's work. Its recommendations, he said, must respect the sacrifice, in lives and money, already made in Afghanistan, must take into account the potential for chaos there if Canada's mission changes radically, and must honour our obligation to our allies.

That narrows the choice considerably. While it can be argued that preventing further pointless casualties does not dishonour the lives lost so far, no one can guarantee that Afghanistan will not fall into chaos -- or back

into the hands of the Taliban. But this is true whether foreign troops stay or leave.

As experience in Iraq suggests, state-building is neither a predictable nor a rapid task. As to honouring our military promise to allies, by February 2009 that duty will be discharged and, many argue, it will be past time for some other country to volunteer for front-line duty.

Indeed, whatever the panel recommends, the future of the Canadian mission will be decided in collaboration with NATO.

If Manley's group concludes, as some Afghan-based development experts have, that Canada would be more effective working in Kabul after 2009, where foreign help is actually wanted, NATO would have to find someone to hold the Taliban at bay in Kandahar.

So far no one, not even the British, who are pulling some troops from Iraq and bolstering their mission in Afghanistan's Helmand province, sound keen to step in.

This doesn't mean the panel can't be useful, if it holds sessions in public — particularly meetings with aid workers, foreign diplomats and Afghan politicians. The more first-hand testimony we hear, from a variety of sources, the better informed debate should be.

This is what Harper says he wants. If so, it runs counter to Conservative strategy so far, which has been to paint doubters as unpatriotic wimps, hand out pencil cases to little Afghan girls and Jos. Louis cakes to Quebec soldiers, and endlessly parrot talking points proclaiming allied success, while independent observers suggest otherwise.

Indeed, Harper's critics have largely written off the Manley panel as more manipulation from a shrewd tactician who leaves nothing to chance. New Democrats portray the exercise as an insult to Parliament.

Any hearings, they argue, should occur before a committee of MPs. In theory, yes. But in this minority Parliament, committees have become a hyper-partisan waste of time, as MPs berate witnesses, shout furious accusations at one another and budge not an inch from their pre-ordained positions.

All the more reason to hope that the Manley panel confounds its critics, opens its ears and delivers a surprise — and not just another affirmation of elite opinion.

Susan Riley's column runs Monday, Wednesday and Friday. E-mail: sriley@thecitizen.canwest.com

Poland feels strain of Afghan conflict; Top soldier sees his country, Canada in similar roles

IDNUMBER 200710150019
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
DATELINE: WARSAW
BYLINE: Peter O'Neil
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 326

WARSAW – Gen. Franciszek Gagor, Poland's top soldier and perhaps NATO's after an upcoming vote to replace Canadian Ray Henault as chairman of the western alliance's military committee, can empathize with Canada's public relations challenge over Afghanistan.

"Well, it's a challenge for us also," Poland's chief of the general staff said.

Gen. Gagor, competing with generals from Spain and Italy to replace Gen. Henault in the Nov. 14 vote, would be the first officer from the old Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact alliance to become top soldier in the 26-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

He brings to the international table considerable peacekeeping experience in the Middle East and guarded optimism about the Afghanistan mission.

But Gen. Gagor cannot claim popular support in his own country for Poland's military role there. One poll this month by the Warsaw-based firm CBOS said 72 per cent of those surveyed were opposed to Poland's decision earlier this year to deploy 1,200 soldiers, primarily in the dangerous southeast provinces of Ghazni and Patika. Poland also has elite forces working with Canadians in Kandahar.

Objections to the fighting are even stronger than in Canada, where public unease and election fever have caused the government to declare that Canada's current role in Kandahar, where there are more than 2,000 Canadian troops, won't continue past early 2009 without an endorsement from Parliament.

Three of four Canadian parties, in a position to trigger an election after tomorrow's throne speech, currently oppose an extension.

Poland, despite its rich, though often tragic, military history facing brutal invasions by neighbours like Germany and Russia, is a "peaceful nation," according to TNS Global managing director Andrzej Olszewski, a Warsaw-based pollster.

"We have become good soldiers because we are usually defending ourselves. But people don't recognize war as something good and beneficial."

One soldier has been killed so far in Afghanistan.

The public objections, however, don't appear likely to have an influence on Poland's role.

Despite the country's current election fever, there is no organized peace movement, the issue doesn't get major media coverage and the conflict hasn't become a political football in its Oct. 21 parliamentary elections.

Darfur peace depends on single arrest; Chief prosecutor of international court says powerful official must face trial for war crimes

IDNUMBER 200710150017
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Chris Cobb
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 709

There is almost no chance of a proposed expanded UN peacekeeping force being effective in Darfur until the Sudanese government agrees to arrest one of its most powerful ministers and send him to the International Criminal Court to be prosecuted for crimes against humanity, says the court's chief prosecutor.

The ICC -- created through a treaty with 120 signatory countries, including Canada -- was established in 2002 specifically to prosecute individuals for genocide and other crimes against humanity. The court has an outstanding warrant against Ahmed Haroun, Sudan's minister of humanitarian affairs, alleging he gave militia groups resources and licence to kill and displace civilians deemed enemies of the government.

The Sudanese regime, apparently contemptuous of efforts to have Mr. Haroun arrested and tried, gave him the humanitarian affairs portfolio and control over about two million people he is said to have been responsible for displacing.

"It's a big problem," said Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the ICC's chief prosecutor, in an interview with the Citizen. "With Haroun as minister of humanitarian affairs, there can be no humanitarian or security solution in Darfur. Arresting him will be a big breakthrough, but on the contrary, keeping him in charge will block any humanitarian solution.

"It's very serious that we (world governments) are not being consistent in insisting that the government arrest Haroun. In the last few weeks, he has been appointed head of a committee to investigate human rights violations. We have a responsibility to protect these two million people or they will die."

The United Nations announced in April that it would expand its current beleaguered peacekeeping force of 7,000 African Union troops with 3,000 heavily armed peacekeepers by this fall, although the prospects of that happening are looking increasingly doubtful.

But Mr. Moreno-Ocampo said troops alone will not bring an end to strife in the country.

"We need a comprehensive solution that includes arresting Haroun," the 55-year-old Argentine lawyer said. "If not, there will be no solution there."

The international court has six outstanding warrants against government and rebel militia leaders in Uganda, Sudan, the Central African Republic and Congo.

Since being appointed the court's first prosecutor four years ago, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo has built up a staff of 200 to investigate and prosecute alleged human rights violators. The challenge, he said, has been to create a body of international law that will provide a consistent single voice.

"Our biggest current challenge is how to arrest the individuals identified by the court. Political support is vital to isolate and undermine the criminals and to reduce the flow of money to these groups. Canada has a consistent approach to respect the law and we need the same from the international community. If we arrest people, our deterrent effect (across the world) will increase dramatically. If they get immunity, it will be reduced."

Mr. Moreno-Ocampo came to international prominence in the legal community during the mid-1980s as deputy prosecutor in the trials of members of the Argentine military junta accused of masterminding that country's "dirty war." They were the first trials against top commanders accused of mass killings since the Nuremberg proceedings against Nazi war criminals after the Second World War.

Now based in The Hague, Mr. Moreno-Ocampo travels to Buenos Aires every three weeks to visit his wife and four children.

"It's a long commute," he said, "but when you apply the law in these cases, you draw the line between life and death.

"I was very proud of my work in Argentina because, for my country, it was so important. But now we are drawing a line in the world, so the global scale is incredible. For me, there is nothing better to do. ... It is such an incredible noble mission — a great responsibility, but a great honour."

There is anecdotal evidence, he says, that the court is having an effect on the behaviour of government and rebel military leaders — including FARQ rebels in Colombia — who are adjusting their tactics to avoid possible prosecution.

"I was in Australia," said Mr. Moreno-Ocampo, "and a colonel there was joking about how he starts discussions of Australia's rules of engagement in Afghanistan (by) saying, 'Pay attention generals. If not, you could end up in The Hague.'

"We have many stories from different countries about how people are trying to avoid prosecution. A few investigations by this court can have an impact across the world. It is very cost-effective."

Disappointment a likely part of PM's 'gift'

IDNUMBER 200710150012
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
COLUMN: Deirdre McMurdy
BYLINE: Deirdre McMurdy
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 972

It has turned into the political equivalent of Christmas. For weeks now — at least within the rarefied precinct of Ottawa — anticipation has been building. Paper has been rustling. There's whispering, winking and constant speculation about who may get what when the big day finally arrives.

Yes, Virginia, there's a throne speech tomorrow. Not only that, there's extra excitement in the air because it's being delivered three hours later than usual to either ensure that a maximum number of Canadians have the opportunity to listen — or that Opposition parties have a more cramped and awkward window in which to respond.

But just as it is with Christmas, it would be a mistake not to factor a considerable element of disappointment and misunderstanding into the equation.

Take, for example, the relentless focus on Stéphane Dion. Received wisdom is that the embattled Liberal leader is the one with the most at stake: he may not be in a sufficiently strong position to embark on a federal election campaign, but the Tories may try to force his hand — and pursue an elusive majority — by making the contents of the speech too difficult for him to swallow.

Will he survive, ponder the pundits, given that he's probably got just one shot at leading his fractured party into battle?

Arguably, however, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has at least as much — if not more — hanging in the balance as he frames the mandate for Tory 2.0 this week.

That's because the PM, having driven the Conservative party smack into the middle of the ideological road, now has to prove that his strategy — which many of the faithful consider to be a galling compromise — can actually deliver an unequivocal victory.

It doesn't matter a fig if Mr. Harper's more moderate tone reflects the reality of doing business from a minority position: The general rule of thumb in politics is that people support specific leaders for at least one of three reasons: personal loyalty, shared belief in a cause or the individual's ability to win. (Ref. McGuinty, Dalton, Ontario election; October 2007.)

With his hold over caucus defined more by the fear he evokes than by personal popularity, and his determination to place pragmatism ahead of political principle, the pressure is now building on Mr. Harper to cough up the big win with a solid majority. That means a second Conservative minority would, at least internally, be almost the same as a defeat. It would say to committed small "c" conservatives that his

incremental steps to their goal kept too many of their ilk from voting for him, while the progressive wing of the party would likely say that his earlier reputation as a right-winger had the same result.

Until the past week, poll results consistently indicated that a majority government would be a considerable challenge for Mr. Harper: At the same time as his moderate positioning of the Conservative party has stirred internal debate, opinion polls consistently prove that this strategy has not resonated with voters as much as was clearly expected. That's all the more remarkable given that the Liberals are in such a public state of disarray.

In part, that may be because this government is far more transactional than it is transformative. Mr. Harper probably has more in common on that score with the Liberal master of minimalism, Jean Chrétien, than he does with fellow Conservative Brian Mulroney.

During his time in office, Mr. Chrétien deliberately went out of his way to downplay any grand vision for the country and, instead, solved problems as they arose and generally kept government out of the face of Canadians (as Mr. Chrétien cheerfully reminds Canadians in his new book, *My Years as Prime Minister*, which goes on sale today.)

Ironically, the release of Mr. Chrétien's book may serve to highlight the similarities between the governing styles of the two leaders — including the heavy hand of the Prime Minister's Office in virtually every aspect of government. (Mr. Chrétien, however, was far more subtle on that score: He deliberately let his ministers take the spotlight in most policy announcements, while Mr. Harper is seldom far from a microphone in similar situations.) But overall, the Chrétien-era template of speaking softly and avoiding grand promises was largely adapted for the first term of "Canada's New Government," which made a point of setting a list of five eminently achievable priorities and sticking very closely to them — and not much else.

In fact, during their time as Opposition, the Liberals have undergone the most changes: Although they initially deployed Canadian troops to Afghanistan, they are now advocating their return, while the Tories have kept them on. (In a shrewd move, Mr. Harper has included Liberals and Conservatives in his non-partisan, five-person panel charged with reviewing Canada's presence there.)

The Conservatives are also more preoccupied with Quebec now than are the Liberals, a reversal of their respective roles in the past — and one that is reflected in the Tories' improving fortunes in the province. In fact, despite his native-son status, it's Mr. Dion who has been accused of being out of touch with what Quebec wants, while Mr. Harper has won points through such measures as his government's recognition of Quebec's status as "a nation." So far, that looks like an inspired measure — but it's another move that may come back to haunt him among disenchanted hard-core conservatives outside that province if it doesn't translate into more seats in the next election.

Still, with the throne speech, as with Christmas, we won't really know what's in that brightly wrapped box until it's opened tomorrow.

Then comes the decision by often-fickle voters to keep — or return — the contents.

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Global warming opens doors for area firm; Unmanned aerial systems could be used to deliver supplies in Canada's North

IDNUMBER 200710150007
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: MMIST / DROPPING IN SUPPLIES: Guided by precision navigation systems and powered by a small motor, the SnowGoose was developed by Ottawa-based defence company MMIST. The firm's SnowGoose and Sherpa systems have earned high praise from troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. ;

BYLINE: David Pugliese
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 607

The effects of global warming in Canada's North could provide a new market for an Ottawa company as it looks to expand its business in military unmanned aerial vehicles designed to deliver supplies behind enemy lines.

Mist Mobility Integrated Systems Technology is planning to use its aerial systems, originally built for the military and in use in Iraq and Afghanistan, to drum up sales in the civilian market, particularly in resupplying gas and oil exploration firms operating in remote northern areas.

In the past, transport trucks driving across frozen lakes and tundra have delivered equipment and supplies to such crews. But warmer temperatures have significantly cut the amount of time that those ice roads are available, says Sean McCann, president of MMIST.

"With global warming, the more traditional methods of using ice roads become less and less effective as the seasons shorten," said Mr. McCann. "Logistics, in the commercial sense, becomes a bottleneck for a lot of the work being done now."

The Canadian-owned company, with 40 employees, sees the civilian market as a growth area for its SnowGoose and Sherpa systems.

The Sherpa, which is suspended underneath a parachute, uses a satellite tracking device and can guide itself to within 100 metres of its target area while carrying up to 1,000 kilograms of supplies. It is dropped out of the back of an aircraft or from a helicopter and its onboard computer determines when to open its parachute so it can touch down precisely at the right location. If needed, it can be launched as far as 25 kilometres from its target.

The firm bills the SnowGoose, which operates with a parasail and is propeller-driven, as the first cargo unmanned aerial vehicle in production. The machine is outfitted with six cargo bays, each capable of carrying 45-kilograms of medical supplies, food, water, fuel or spare parts.

SnowGoose disperses boxes of supplies, each equipped with a small disposable parachute, over the target area. A computer system determines where and when to release the supplies so they accurately touch down. The SnowGoose can be launched from an aircraft or the back of a truck.

Mr. McCann says the systems are environmentally friendly and cheaper than aircraft to operate since they use less fuel. They also don't require landing strips to be built since they can be launched from planes overhead.

Mr. McCann said the firm hopes to be operating such systems for the oil and gas industry sometime in November or December.

Mr. McCann also sees a role for the firm's machines in distributing relief supplies during an emergency, such as a Hurricane Katrina situation, where access to airports is limited.

The company, however, has not turned its back on the defence market, which is still its bread and butter. MMIST has contracts with the U.S. and various NATO militaries and its SnowGoose and Sherpa are in use in Afghanistan and Iraq with U.S. troops. The Canadian Forces also tested the Sherpa system earlier this year at Cold Lake, Alta.

In 2004, MMIST received a \$75-million contract to provide its SnowGoose to U.S. special forces for use in delivering propaganda leaflets.

The company is also looking to expand the role the system can play on the battlefield, touting it as a potential surveillance platform if outfitted with cameras and sensors.

Mr. McCann said MMIST is also moving ahead with its product development by creating larger variants of its systems, which cut the cost of delivering supplies.

U.S. marines who used the Sherpa during operations in Iraq last year praised the device, noting that it was useful to resupply forces who were cut off by the enemy or who didn't have access to supplies brought in by ground convoys.

Canadian military officials examined the Sherpa for use in Afghanistan, but in a report issued in August, they recommended more tests be conducted at CFB Petawawa.

Harper could force an election by inserting 'poison pill'; Throne speech tactic to provoke opposition a risky move: experts

IDNUMBER 200710150004
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway and Tim Naumetz
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 1090

The big question hanging over the minority Conservative government's throne speech tomorrow is how hard Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to squeeze the opposition parties and possibly force a federal election.

Will Mr. Harper — emboldened by his party's 40-per-cent popularity rating in a fresh national survey — insert into the speech a poison pill statement or policy plan so egregious to all three opposition parties that they would have no choice but to vote against it and plunge the country into an election?

Tom Flanagan, a former Harper confidant and party strategist, says the prime minister can afford to be "fairly bold," but going the poison pill route is risky.

"Engineering a defeat is not easy because a throne speech that would simultaneously provoke the Liberals, Bloc and NDP to vote against it would probably be a throne speech that's not popular with voters," he said.

Mr. Harper, who has insisted he would prefer governing to having an election, could not be defeated unless all three opposition parties united to bring down his government.

The Bloc and the NDP have already signalled they won't be supporting the speech, leaving it to the Liberals to throw a lifeline to the Harper government if they don't want an election by voting with the government or abstaining in a string of three possible confidence motions in the coming week or so.

The earliest the government could fall is Thursday, when a vote on a Bloc Québécois sub-amendment to the speech is scheduled.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, struggling to right his listing party, says he doesn't want a fall election, and that if one is called, it will be because Mr. Harper has "set up his own defeat."

And that's what Mr. Dion suspects Mr. Harper wants.

"It's clear that he's looking for an election," Mr. Dion said yesterday on CTV's Question Period, adding the Liberals will be looking at the speech "as a whole" before deciding on whether or not to support it.

The Liberals don't have to fully agree with the speech to support it, he said.

Harper could force an election by inserting 'poison pill'; Throne speech tactic to provoke opposition a risky move: experts

"It will be a Conservative throne speech, not a Liberal one, we accept that," Mr. Dion said. "But if it is a throne speech that is outrageous regarding the values that we Liberals believe, we cannot be under any obligation to support something that we believe to be wrong for Canadians."

Rick Anderson, a former Reform party strategist and political pundit, says Mr. Harper has to tread carefully.

"If he looks like he's writing the throne speech with the goal of provoking Mr. Dion, then people are not going to be happy with it. The public has got their antennae way up on that kind of stuff," he said.

Betting was all over the map in the countdown to the speech. The chances of an election were "significantly better than 50 per cent," according to Liberal MP Derek Lee, who said the Ontario provincial election had "no good news" for Mr. Harper. The sweeping victory of Mr. Harper's nemesis in Newfoundland and Labrador, Conservative Premier Danny Williams, was equally disturbing for the prime minister.

NDP MP Joe Comartin said that in his view the only thing that might interrupt Mr. Harper's plan to continue governing for now, if not until the next general election set by law for 2009, might be blundering on the part of the fractured Liberals.

"What I'm really worried about is we have an election because they screw up," said Mr. Comartin, the NDP deputy House leader who has been involved in behind-the-scenes negotiations between all four parties prior to the beginning of the current Parliament's second session tomorrow.

Earlier this month, Mr. Harper billed the throne speech as a "fish or cut bait" proposition for the opposition parties. He told a news conference that if the speech — considered a matter of confidence under parliamentary tradition — wins approval in the Commons, the government will interpret that as a licence to govern according to the blueprint Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean will lay out tomorrow evening when she reads the speech.

Mr. Harper said he would treat legislation flowing from the speech as matters of confidence, meaning the defeat of almost any legislation would cause the government to fall and trigger an election.

Mr. Harper softened that position Friday, telling reporters the government would not "abuse" the system, and that the government would only consider making a vote a matter of confidence if the legislative issue was significant enough to fight an election over.

Mr. Harper's original ultimatum, which Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale has since dismissed as "political and parliamentary fantasy" in a minority government, has nonetheless intensified election preparations in all four parties. The latest Ipsos Reid poll, which had the Conservatives leading the Liberals by 12 points and within sight of winning a majority government, threw fresh fuel on those efforts.

Mr. Harper has said the speech will talk about everything from tax relief and the environment to the combat mission in Afghanistan and Arctic sovereignty.

But the details of what will be said have been the subject of weeks of private plotting among a tiny circle of Mr. Harper's most trusted advisers.

The opposition parties will be listening closely to the government's words on two of the most divisive issues in recent memory — the Kyoto environmental accord and Afghanistan. Mr. Harper took some of the sting out of the Afghanistan issue Friday, winning a nod of approval from the Liberals.

He appointed a five-member panel, led by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, to advise the government by the end of January on what the future involvement of Canada should be after the current

Harper could force an election by inserting 'poison pill'; Throne speech tactic to provoke opposition ~~111~~ a risky m

NATO commitment expires in February 2009.

The NDP has called for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops, while the Liberals and Bloc say they want a government commitment to end the "combat" mission in Kandahar in February 2009.

The three parties are, however, united in their opposition to the Conservatives' approach to the Kyoto accord.

The opposition parties want the government to commit to trying to meet the Kyoto targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, something the government has ruled out on grounds it would be too onerous on the economy.

The Kyoto standoff, therefore, might afford Mr. Harper a shot at riling the three opposition parties enough to bring down his government now or further down the road. Other opportunities might arise if the opposition parties balk at promised crime legislation.

NDP leader Jack Layton suggested on Question Period yesterday that if the Liberals support a Conservative throne speech that comes up short on key issues such as the environment and Afghanistan, they will be abandoning their responsibility to act as the Official Opposition.

"They will clearly have given up," Mr. Layton said.

Whatever the wording of the speech, Conservative Senator Hugh Segal predicts it will not leave Canadians scratching their heads in confusion about the government's intentions.

"I'd be surprised if we would walk away from the throne speech with a lot of question marks about where the government is headed. It's not his style," Mr. Segal said of Mr. Harper.

The hidden scars of war; Hundreds of troops return home with mental health issues

IDNUMBER 200710150001

PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / A small number of troops who responded to a recent questionnaire reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home from Afghanistan. ;

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 703

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by the command indicate that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries," including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa last summer, when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwai/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later Royal Canadian Regiment battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Dr. Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

However, Dr. Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one of the reasons many Canadians survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards and they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Lt.-Col. Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here, they can survive."

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities, while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this roto."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Dr. Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Dr. Zamorski said. "It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody."

Overall, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed since the military deployment to Afghanistan began in early 2002.

Throne speech could trigger election

SOURCETAG 0710150567
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, SUN MEDIA NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 351

The spectre of a snap election hangs overhead as federal lawmakers return to work in the capital.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean officially opens a new session of Parliament tomorrow with a speech from the throne that will map out the Conservative government's priorities.

Depending on the contents, the remainder of Stephen Harper's minority government could be prolonged or cut short.

The Conservative parliamentary blueprint is expected to put broad strokes on several key areas — Canada's future role in Afghanistan, asserting Arctic sovereignty, protecting the environment, strengthening the economy and the federation and implementing tough crime-busting measures.

Despite public opinion polls showing the Tories climbing to majority territory, insiders say the PM is not designing a speech to deliberately trigger an election.

"The prime minister does not want an election because the Canadian public does not want an election — they're basically tuned out," said one strategist.

"We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

The throne speech lays the foundation for an economic statement and spring budget pledging tax cuts and help for manufacturing and forestry sectors and initiatives to lift interprovincial trade barriers.

Commitments to assert sovereignty in the North, tackle climate change and carve a path forward on the Afghanistan mission will also feature prominently, as will a pledge to strengthen the federation with Senate reform and new limits on federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions.

The speech will also make a determined pledge to pass stalled crime bills on dangerous offenders, bail reform, conditional sentencing and the age of consent and introduce an overhaul for the youth justice system.

The NDP and Bloc Québécois have already stated they don't expect to like what they hear in the speech, leaving survival or defeat of the Conservative government in the hands of the Liberals.

NDP Leader Jack Layton is urging Grit MPs to show up for confidence votes stemming from the throne speech instead of abstaining or staying home to avoid toppling the government.

Mass absenteeism would only give Harper carte blanche to ram down an agenda most Canadians don't want. But a heavy-handed approach by Harper could lead to an eventual backlash at the polls, he warned.

"I can't see Canadians liking an approach which holds Parliament in contempt, where he tries to pretend he has absolute power when you've got the Canadian people on a completely different track."

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Is it time to pull out? The truth about Canada's mission in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG: 0710150851
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 18

ILLUSTRATION: who are very critical of the U.S.–led international effort here, and of the Karzai regime. 2 photos by Michael Den Tandt, Sun Media 1. A Canadian soldier stands guard on the outskirts of Kabul. 2. Children at Baba Wali Sahbb School, near Kandahar City, hold up cards made for them by Canadian children and distributed by soldiers at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar.

BYLINE: MICHAEL DEN TANDT, SUN MEDIA
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
WORD COUNT: 1121

The Afghan war is not one conflict but three -- a guerrilla war, a development war, a communications war.

Canada is gaining ground in the first, slowly winning the second and losing the third.

The military and the media deserve some measure of blame for this. Mainly though, responsibility falls to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Even as he struggles to sell the Afghan mission to an increasingly uneasy public, his mania for control is stifling the truth about what's happening here.

On Friday, Harper announced he has tasked a blue–ribbon team to study Canada's future role in Afghanistan. Led by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, the five–member group will begin by meeting with troops and development workers in Kandahar. The panel is expected to report back in February 2008.

The truth of what is happening in Afghanistan is extraordinary: It's a story of courage and grit and idealism that, if more Canadians only knew it, would make them very proud.

PLEASE DON'T GO

But most don't know it, because the people best positioned to tell it have been gagged.

I came back to Afghanistan to find answers to two questions: Is Canada's deployment here still worthwhile, despite the rising toll in lives? And if it is, then why do so many people back home think it isn't?

In the past week I've spoken to dozens of Canadian soldiers, non–governmental aid workers, and Afghans, some who are very critical the U.S.–led international effort here, and of the Karzai regime.

Their message was clear: Please, Canada, don't go.

Our country has an influence and a reputation here that is vastly disproportionate to the number of troops we have on the ground.

That's partly because we are spending money — a great deal of money, \$1.2 billion committed over 10 years — on rebuilding and redevelopment.

Your tax dollars are helping pay for a vast national de-mining project, led by Canada but in partnership with the United Nations. Every day on a mountain top in Kabul, Afghans mentored by Canadians carry on the painstaking and dangerous work of removing and destroying the thousands of pieces of unexploded ordnance that litter this country. Canada is the single largest donor, contributing \$20 million annually.

Your tax dollars are paying for a project that will help 3,000 war widows in Kabul start micro-businesses this year. Often, the aid begins with a single cow or goat.

Your tax dollars are paying for the training of a professional Afghan National Army, which is increasingly imposing order in the volatile south.

Thirty-four thousand troops are already trained. A thousand new troops a month are graduating from the Afghan National Training Centre in Kabul. Canadians are in the forefront of the training effort.

Your tax dollars are paying for 200 small aid projects in Kandahar City, all geared to stimulating local business and trades, and developing a functioning local economy.

These efforts are not being carried out on your behalf at arms' length. They're led, supported and protected by a Canadian military that has learned, through half a century of peacekeeping, how to properly and modestly engage with a foreign culture.

You may have heard that no one can tell Canadians and Americans apart any longer. In Afghanistan, everyone knows the difference.

Canadians are leaders here in the delicate trick of combining military power with aid. Other nations in the 37-member international coalition come to our Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Kandahar City, to study our methods.

The PRT, Camp Nathan Smith, is a model, an experiment in a new kind of military engagement: Soldiers, working hand in hand with RCMP officers, diplomats, lawyers, doctors, specialists in governance and foreign aid workers helping the Afghans manage their own affairs, raise their standard of living and establish a functional state.

You've heard about the 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat who've lost their lives in Afghanistan. You've heard about the CBC journalist and cameraman whose armoured vehicle was blown up by a roadside bomb.

What you haven't heard, perhaps, is that the vast majority of the casualties and injuries in this civil war are Afghan. Mentored and supported by Canadian officers. The Afghans are in the forefront of every combat operation in the south and 85% of the casualties treated for war injuries at Kandahar Air Field, the main coalition base in the south, are Afghan army or Afghan police.

It follows from this that our deployment here is not an occupation: It's a support mission. But few people back home appreciate this, because nobody's covering the Afghan side of the war. Afghan casualties, even mass casualties, get short shrift.

The leading edge of Canada's humanitarian engagement here is the PRT, Camp Nathan Smith. But for reasons that defy explanation, only the soldiers stationed there are allowed to speak publicly about their work.

The five officials from foreign affairs, the 10 RCMP officers engaged in training Afghan police, the head of

the CIDA mission in the province (with a budget of \$39-million this year alone), are not allowed to speak to the media. According to multiple sources here, they have been gagged by the Prime Minister's Office.

Figure that one out. The very people who could best spread the word about the good works Canada is carrying out beneath the security umbrella provided by our troops, can't talk about it. This translates into a distorted portrait of the mission at home.

The military can't get off scot-free either. The Canadian army's communications resources in Kandahar province are located at the Kandahar Air Field — the centre of combat operations. Reporters at the airfield are supported by satellite and media tents with sophisticated communications equipment.

At the PRT, there's a single media tent. It has no reliable, permanent Internet hookups. There's no satellite for television transmissions. As a result, most reporters choose to stay at the airfield — where they don't hear a lot about development work, because it's all based at the PRT.

The media? We're at fault too. Reporters driven by competition and the demands of editors back home, are hell-bent on covering Canadians in combat. That's a good thing, as far as it goes: Canadians need a public witness to the exercise of lethal force by their representatives abroad. Combat stories are dramatic and gripping and the tales we hear about soldiers at war can inspire and move us the way few other stories can.

But the entire mission stands or falls on whether development can succeed. For media to ignore the tangible evidence of progress simply because these stories aren't as dramatic as combat, is beyond belief.

Here's why all this matters so much: The Taliban are not fighting a conventional guerrilla war. All their efforts are geared towards forcing Western governments to pull their soldiers out of Afghanistan.

DISTORTED VIEW

Every suicide bombing and IED attack is about hurting Western troops, but it's even more about causing fear and uncertainty back home. This is why there's such frustration, among soldiers here, about the posturing and chest-beating in Ottawa each time a Canadian dies in combat. Each cluster of front-page stories is, in effect, a tactical victory for the insurgents.

What happens if we pull out? Some say it would make no difference. The Americans could easily replace us.

But it's not nearly that simple. The Afghans don't trust the Americans. Their approach is different from ours — much more blunt, less culturally sensitive. Canada has an institutional memory now in Kandahar, won by five years of hard work on the ground.

Canada has the aid projects, just now beginning to bear fruit. Canada has credibility with the Afghans, won by our soldiers' willingness to fight and die on their behalf.

If we pull out, much of that will be lost.

The mission will continue but the setback will be huge and Canada's standing in Afghanistan, and the world, will suffer immeasurably. KEYWORDS=WORLD

MPs head back to Ottawa Throne Speech charts Tory plans

SOURCETAG: 0710150842

PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 7

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. file photo by CP Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean acknowledges applause as she takes the throne in the Senate for the first time on Sept. 27, 2005. 2. photo of STEPHEN HARPER Eyes majority

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

WORD COUNT: 611

The spectre of a snap election hangs overhead as federal lawmakers return to work in the capital.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean officially opens a new session of Parliament tomorrow in Ottawa with an evening Speech from the Throne that will map out the Conservative government's priorities. And depending on the contents, the remainder of Stephen Harper's minority government could be prolonged or cut short.

The Conservative parliamentary blueprint is expected to put broad strokes on several key areas: Canada's future role in Afghanistan, asserting Arctic sovereignty, protecting the environment, strengthening the economy and the federation and implementing tough crime-busting measures. Despite public opinion polls that show the Tories climbing toward majority territory, insiders insist the PM is not designing a speech to deliberately self-destruct and trigger an election.

"The prime minister does not want an election because the Canadian public does not want an election -- they're basically tuned out," said one strategist. "We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're just beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

The throne speech is expected to lay the foundation for a fall economic statement and spring budget by pledging tax cuts, help for struggling manufacturing and forestry sectors and initiatives that will lift interprovincial trade barriers and enhance labour mobility. Commitments to assert sovereignty in the North, tackle climate change and carve a path forward on the Afghanistan mission will also feature prominently, as will a pledge to strengthen the federation with Senate reform and new limits on federal spending power in provincial jurisdiction.

The speech will also make a determined pledge to pass stalled crime bills on dangerous offenders, bail reform, conditional sentencing and the age of consent, and introduce an overhaul for the youth justice system.

The NDP and Bloc Québécois have already stated they don't expect to like what they hear in the speech, leaving the survival or defeat of the Conservative government in the hands of the reeling Liberals.

NDP Leader Jack Layton urged Grits to show up for confidence votes stemming from the Throne Speech instead of abstaining or staying home to avoid toppling the government. Mass absenteeism would give Harper carte blanche to ram down an agenda most Canadians don't want.

But a heavy-handed approach by Harper could lead to a backlash at the polls, he warned.

"I can't see Canadians liking an approach which holds Parliament in contempt, where he tries to pretend he has absolute power when in fact you've got the Canadian people on a completely different track," Layton said. "I think it will underline people's sense of the man as someone you really can't trust."

Liberal House Leader Ralph Goodale accused Harper of being "bellicose and belligerent" on the eve of a new session of Parliament, and suggested the PM's aides are plotting to make Canada "a Republican clone by stealth." He warned Conservatives not to take the Grits for granted.

"He's trying the tactics of thuggery and Liberals are not going to be intimidated by that," he said. "We will take the issues as they come along and make our considered judgments on them one by one as they are presented. We don't want to trigger an election, we want this Parliament to work, but the ball is in Mr. Harper's court. If he wants to defeat himself by being so entirely offensive and unreasonable, and if that causes an election, then so be it. We'll be ready."

OPPOSITION WISH LISTS

LIBERALS

- Commit to an end to Canada's combat role in Afghanistan by February 2009
- Reintroduce clean air legislation, Bill C-30, that didn't pass in to law in the last session
- Develop action plan to fight poverty
- Concrete measures to strengthen Canada's industrial sector.

BLOC QUEBECOIS

- Eliminate federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions
- Respect the Kyoto Protocol
- Continue supply management in the agricultural sector
- Help for Quebec's forest industry
- A commitment to pull troops from Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009

NDP

- Immediate withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan
- A plan to tackle the prosperity gap
- Commitment to reaching Kyoto targets and reintroduce C-30 KEYWORDS=CANADA

Prince Edward graces island

SOURCETAG 0710150779

PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 34

ILLUSTRATION: photo by CP Prince Edward is followed by Lieut.-Col. Glenn Moriarity. Prince Edward took the appointment as colonel-in-chief of the P.E.I. Regiment during a ceremony in Charlottetown yesterday.

BYLINE: CP

DATELINE: CHARLOTTETOWN

WORD COUNT: 210

Prince Edward awarded medals yesterday to five soldiers from the P.E.I. Regiment, which has named him its colonel-in-chief, for serving in Afghanistan.

Edward finished his Canadian visit with a ceremony in Charlottetown, where he was presented with his colonel-in-chief pennant before handing service medals to Cpl. Calvin Arsenaault, Cpl. Roy Good, Cpl. Jerry Landry, Cpl. Anthony MacLean and Cpl. Benjamin Miller.

Edward, the Earl of Wessex, was appointed colonel-in-chief in 2005, but this was his first visit to the province since taking over the ceremonial reigns of the regiment.

Dressed in his Canadian military uniform, the prince presented the awards as Lt.-Col. Glenn Moriarity, commander of the regiment, and families of the soldiers looked on.

Good, a 22-year-old from Mermaid, P.E.I., recalled his time in Afghanistan from February to August of this year.

"It was very hot ... Stressful. Your days could start anywhere from midnight, 2 a.m. and go all night and into the next day and then into the next night.

"It was very long days," said Good, adding he wants to return eventually.

"I'd go back after a little bit of a break."

MacLean's mother, Nancy, said she was proud to see her 22-year-old son receive his medal.

Prince Edward, who is the third son and youngest child of the Queen, has been in Canada for almost a week, also stopping in Ottawa and Montreal.

On Saturday, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Prince Edward Island, where he addressed an audience of about 200 young people.

Edward, who married Sophie Rhys-Jones in 1999, will inherit the title of Duke of Edinburgh when it passes from father, Prince Phillip. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Spectre of snap election hangs over Ottawa

SOURCETAG 0710150741
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 7
ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. file photo by CP Michaele Jean will deliver the throne speech tomorrow, which could trigger a national election. 2. photo of STEPHEN HARPER Possible vote
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 231

The spectre of a snap election hangs overhead as federal lawmakers return to work in the capital.

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And depending on the contents, the remainder of Stephen Harper's minority government could be prolonged or cut short.

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"We've just had an Ontario election and an election in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're just beginning one in Saskatchewan. That's really, really not on, unless there is an unfortunate accident."

The NDP and Bloc Quebecois have already stated they don't expect to like what they hear in the speech, leaving the survival or defeat of the Conservative government in the hands of the reeling Liberals.

NDP Leader Jack Layton is urging Grit MPs to show up for confidence votes instead of abstaining to avoid toppling the government.

Liberal House Leader Ralph Goodale accused Harper of being "bellicose and belligerent" on the eve of a new session of Parliament, and suggested the PM's aides are plotting to make Canada "a Republican clone by stealth." **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

PM recruiting Manley -- shrewd or cynical?

IDNUMBER 200710150049
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A15
COLUMN: James Travers
DATELINE: Ottawa
BYLINE: James Travers
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 533

Point, set, and maybe even match to Stephen Harper. With the single stroke of recruiting Liberal John Manley to help rescue Conservatives from Afghanistan, the prime minister is protecting his party from voter backlash in a looming fall election and putting knee-buckling pressure on St phane Dion.

This is how politics is played when it's played shrewdly.

Days before tomorrow's pivotal throne speech, Harper is neutralizing the combat mission as a ballot issue while steering the country toward the consensus Conservatives favour on a continuing Afghanistan role.

What Jean Chr tien's former deputy prime minister gives Harper is political cover and policy consistency. Attacking recommendations from a Liberal with better credentials than his own won't be easy for Dion. Better still for Harper, there's no risk this hand-picked panel will tell Canadians anything he doesn't want them to hear.

Manley's views are known: Afghanistan helps define Canada internationally and shouldn't be easily abandoned. Equally important for Harper, Manley sees policy priorities through the U.S. prism. His ministerial resum lists foreign affairs, finance and 9/11 security czar, responsibilities that require finessing Ottawa's hypersensitive relationship with Washington.

Weaving those two strands into a single thread is striking new evidence that successive Liberal governments were more concerned with healing Bush administration wounds than curing Afghanistan's terrorism virus or building democracy from chaos.

In a riveting new book, Janice Gross Stein, the University of Toronto's wise international thinker, and Ottawa policy insider Eugene Lang document how Canada slipped unwittingly into a war in a country it knew nothing about.

What Stein and Lang detail in *The Unexpected War* -- and what voters need to know to fully appreciate Manley's appointment -- is that Afghanistan was Canada's way of saying "yes" to the United States after saying "no" to joining the Iraq invasion and ballistic missile defence.

Understanding Canada's motivation then is also vital to reaching an informed choice on what Canada should do in 2009 when the Kandahar mission ends.

One of the two annoying realities Harper expects Manley to help manage is that Ottawa is mired in a counter-insurgency it didn't anticipate, wasn't prepared to fight and now can't escape without damaging NATO as well as cross-border relations.

The other reality is that Harper wants Canada to stay for many of the same U.S.-centric reasons that persuaded Chr tien and former prime minister Paul Martin that it was in Canada's overarching interest to join the most dangerous and expensive offshore operation in generations. Harper's problem is the gaping disconnect between those reasons and how a reconstruction mission that turned into a war is being marketed to a polarized country with a minority government that could fall next week, month or year.

So the prime minister is doing what successful politicians always do: He's buying time while prepping the country for a foregone conclusion.

By the time Manley reports in January the election may be over and, even if not, his findings will only make it easier for the prime minister to argue for a continuing, if modified, Afghanistan presence.

That's cynically intended to mute any meaningful election debate on why Canadians are dying in Afghanistan and what their deaths can reasonably achieve.

But, as Stein and Lang write, politicians have never been straight with voters about a war that took Ottawa by surprise while it was pleasing Washington.

James Travers writes a national affairs column.

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Election move will backfire

IDNUMBER 200710150039
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A14
BYLINE: Howard Elliott
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 536

Tomorrow's speech from the throne will be more interesting than most, for all the wrong reasons.

As well as containing the usual platitudes, spin and a helpful amount of information about what the Conservative government thinks is important, the speech could easily lead to an election.

If that happens, it'll be an election that most Canadians don't want or need, especially in campaign-weary Ontario and other provinces that have had, or will have, provincial elections this year. If that happens, it'll be for strictly partisan reasons, and that's not a good enough justification for the expense and energy drain a federal campaign would impose.

The problem is that the governing Conservatives, and the opposition parties, have been unable or unwilling to make adequate ideological accommodation for one another. That has frustrated everyone involved, no one more so than Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who is basically daring opposition parties to topple his government on a non-confidence matter. In fact, the PM and his brain trust are going one step further than a dare and apparently setting a trap for the Liberals by including language that says the Kyoto protocols are unattainable. The thinking is that the Liberals, who authored the Kyoto commitment, will be embarrassed by two unappealing choices. If they accept the throne speech, they repudiate their own environmental priorities, and if they don't, they get painted as the folks who forced the election no one admits to wanting.

It's a lovely bit of political blood-sport strategy, but it overlooks one other bigger consideration: An election caused by political manoeuvring that doesn't have a clear benefit to Canadians will quickly be exposed as just that, and the people responsible might very well pay a price at the polls. And if the Harper Conservatives don't think they'll be held responsible to some degree, they're underestimating the intelligence of the electorate.

The Conservatives aren't alone in needing a figurative slap upside the head for this brinkmanship. The Liberals' slavish refusal to consider budging on Kyoto rings hollow, since their inability to define a workable strategy to achieve the targets are a big part of the problem. The NDP's insistence that Canada withdraw immediately from Afghanistan rather than honour its commitment and wait until 2009 is an embarrassment too, but they don't have the parliamentary muscle to force an election, at least not alone.

Partisan concerns aside, what reasons are there for a federal election now? If the government intended to arbitrarily extend Canada's military mission, that might qualify. But Harper has already said he wants a bipartisan solution to the question, and he's not foolish enough to ignore the will of Canadians, which we'd

argue is to honour our commitment and then get out of a combat role and into something else.

Beyond that, there is no compelling reason to send Canadians to the polls this fall. If that happens because of some trumped up, politically expedient agenda, the perpetrators should pay an appropriate price.

Editorials are written by members of the editorial board. They represent the position of the newspaper, not necessarily the individual author.

Chr tien says 'goons' pushed him out

IDNUMBER 200710150029
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A10
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canadian Press File Photo / In the second volume of his memoirs, former prime minister Jean Chr tien has harsh words for Paul Martin. ;
DATELINE: Ottawa
BYLINE: Joan Bryden
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 1207

Jean Chr tien would not have meekly accepted the breakup of Canada if separatists had won the 1995 referendum on Quebec independence, the former prime minister reveals in his memoirs.

The second volume of the Liberal war horse's candid recollections of his term in the country's highest elected office also includes some scathing — but expected — criticism of leadership rival and eventual successor Paul Martin while offering some surprisingly charitable words for former Tory prime minister Brian Mulroney.

The 412–page tome, titled *My Years as Prime Minister*, also provides a rare glimpse at his dealings with foreign leaders, particularly his friendship with former U.S. president Bill Clinton.

The 73–year–old was to have launched his new book on Monday but plans for a book tour were derailed when he underwent emergency heart surgery two weeks ago. He is now recuperating at home in Ottawa.

Chr tien asserts that he will never debate what he would have done had the Yes side squeaked out a victory in the 1995 referendum instead of being defeated by a mere 55,000 votes. But he then goes on to say that a loss by the No side "would not have led quickly or inevitably to the breakup of Canada."

"No matter what tricks (then Quebec premier) Jacques Parizeau might have held up his sleeve, the reality was that the crooked question had not asked for a mandate to separate. Events would have been chaotic, emotions would have run high but a very slight majority for the Yes side could not have been interpreted as irrefutable proof that a majority of Quebecers wanted to sever their historic links with Canada," he writes.

"Resolving the problems would have taken a long, long time, without any certainty that the separatists would triumph in the end."

The assertion is in contrast to the televised pitch Chr tien made to Quebecers a few days before the crucial vote, in which he made it plain that the fate of Canada was at stake.

Chr tien recounts how he set about in the months following the nail–biter referendum to ensure that no future prime minister would ever have to face the same dilemma again. He asked the Supreme Court to rule on the legality of unilateral secession and, based on that ruling, introduced the Clarity Act, spelling out the rules for separation, including requiring a clear majority vote on a clear question to secede.

Chr tien has warm words for St phane Dion, the current Liberal leader, whom he recruited from academe to lead the postreferendum unity mission. While he had always avoided showing preference for any of his cabinet ministers which could give rise to "jealousies and complications," Chr tien says, "Dion proved an exception."

Despite his admiration and friendship for Dion, Chr tien says elsewhere in the book that Bob Rae probably would have beaten Dion in last year's leadership contest had the former Ontario NDP premier agreed to run for the Liberals in 2000, when Chr tien tried to recruit him.

By contrast, Chr tien has little nice to say about his immediate successor at the Liberal helm, Paul Martin. He doesn't even offer much praise for Martin's performance as his finance minister, suggesting that it was he, as prime minister, who made all the really tough decisions while other ministers, particularly Marcel Masse in Treasury Board, did not get the credit they deserved for taming the national deficit.

Chr tien says Martin would tell Liberal MPs and groups looking for cash for a pet project that he favoured the investment but it was the prime minister who blocked it.

Chr tien says he considered firing Martin and cancelling government contracts with his lobbyist friends in 2000, after the minister's supporters met secretly at a Toronto airport hotel to stir the leadership pot. He was talked out of it by top advisers, Eddie Goldenberg and Jean Pelletier.

"Both were to regret their advice and I soon regretted my decision to keep him," he writes.

Still, Chr tien says he's thankful to Martin in one respect. The plotting to push him into early retirement so angered Chr tien's wife, Aline, that she released him from an earlier pledge to serve only two terms as prime minister.

"To be very frank, now that Aline had removed the only impediment to my staying, I was damned if I was going to let myself be shoved out the door by a gang of self-serving goons."

After securing a third consecutive election victory in 2000, Chr tien admits he made two big mistakes: surrendering control of the party to Martin and failing to disclose publicly his private timetable for retiring after serving three years of his third mandate. The latter fed the perception that he intended to cling to power indefinitely and ultimately led to a caucus revolt that forced him to move up his retirement announcement by about six months.

Even then, Chr tien says, he intended to stay until February of 2004 and take the heat for the auditor general's scathing report on the sponsorship scandal. He would have encouraged the police to follow up any evidence of fraud, "taken some hits in the press for a couple of weeks" and, by the time Martin took over "the whole issue would have been history and (Martin) could have begun his mandate without that albatross around his neck."

But Martin was impatient to take over and advised Chr tien, through an intermediary, that he wanted him to resign immediately after the leadership contest in November 2003. Martin later changed his mind and let it be known that he wanted Chr tien to hang on until the end of January but, badgered by Martin's supporters who were "in the media every day accusing me of clinging to power for dear life," Chr tien replied that he'd stay only if Martin asked him personally.

"I never even had a phone call from him, with disastrous consequences for him and the Liberal party."

Martin ended up taking the heat for the AG's report and compounded the scandal by launching the Gomery inquiry. The inquiry dragged the Liberals' dirty laundry through the media for months and tarnished the party's brand, particularly in Quebec.

Chr tien, who is still fighting in court to overturn the inquiry's finding that he was ultimately responsible for allowing the sponsorship program to become a vehicle for fraud, is contemptuous of public inquiries, describing them as costly "kangaroo courts" that smear reputations and fatten lawyers' bank accounts.

It was Chr tien who first committed Canadian troops to help rebuild the Afghanistan capital of Kabul, but he blames Martin's indecisiveness for the fact that the soldiers were eventually reassigned to "the killing fields" in Kandahar province.

Much of the book is devoted to Chr tien's dealings with foreign leaders, including attempting to talk British prime minister Tony Blair out of joining the American-led invasion of Iraq. He suggests that the invasion was motivated as much by Iraq's oil reserves as by the fear of weapons of mass destruction, the evidence of which he says wouldn't have convinced a municipal court judge in Shawinigan.

He reserves particular warmth for Clinton. At one point, when Clinton was facing a barrage of reporters' questions about his extramarital adventures, Chr tien says he advised him: "Your private life is your own. You should just tell them all to go to hell. You're a good president and the best thing you can do is keep doing a good job."

Dion plays waiting game Decision awaits throne speech

IDNUMBER 200710150019
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A7
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ryan Remiorz, the Canadian Press / Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion said his party would try to 'make Parliament work' if the prime minister is more conciliatory. ;
DATELINE: Ottawa
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 262

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion says he's sure Stephen Harper is itching to hit the campaign trail. But that doesn't mean the Grits will give him the excuse he needs by voting down the Tory throne speech tomorrow.

"We will look at the throne speech as a whole ... and we will think about the interests of Canadians," Dion told CTV's Question Period yesterday.

That could mean the official Opposition -- involving three parties -- will topple the government if its legislative agenda is an "outrageous" one animated by a "very right-wing radical" ideology, he said.

But assuming Harper adopts a more conciliatory tone, Dion said his party would try to "make Parliament work" and let the minority Conservatives continue to govern for the time being, even if the Grits -- who lag well behind in opinion polls -- don't agree with everything their opponents want to do.

One possibility is that the Liberal front bench will vote against the throne speech, but backbenchers will either be absent in sufficient numbers to let it pass, or will accomplish the same goal by abstaining.

As for the rest of the opposition, Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe has reiterated that he won't support Harper's throne speech unless the Tories meet a series of demands, including a firm commitment to end Canada's combat role in Afghanistan.

And NDP Leader Jack Layton has been hinting for weeks that his party is also virtually certain to vote against the throne speech.

Defeating the 126-seat minority Conservatives would require a joint effort by some combination of the 96 Liberals, 49 Bloc MPs and/or 30 NDP members. There are also three independent MPs and four vacancies.

RELATED STORY: A10

Afghan mission takes toll on troops' mental health

Data show hundreds of soldiers reported problems

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A13

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 673

CNS Matthew Fisher KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Hundreds of Canadian soldiers who have served in Afghanistan have come home with mental health problems, a new report shows.

According to the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, the office responsible for the health of deployed troops, nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar reported varying degrees of mental health problems.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the data.

"I would say that it is significant," said Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems.

The data are based on a questionnaire answered anonymously by 2,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected." A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures included all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with mental health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned the data did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military health-care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Zamorski said. "It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody." Meanwhile, other data indicate that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics. The TCCC have been embedded with the infantry, sniper teams and convoys, as well as other units.

"A severe loss of blood can be devastating," Coombs said in an interview in her office, metres from the Canadian-led multinational hospital here. "But we have known for a long time that if you can get a tourniquet on it and do damage control it greatly expands the chances that they will survive, maybe with an amputated foot.

Simple tourniquets have saved a lot of lives here." -- CanWest News Service

Chretien lied to Quebec: Duceppe

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A10

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 388

CP Wire Karine Fortin TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. — Former prime minister Jean Chretien was lying when he told Quebecers before the 1995 sovereignty referendum that voting Yes meant they'd be leaving Canada, Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe said Sunday.

Chretien says in his about-to-be-released memoirs a loss by the No side "would not have led quickly or inevitably to the breakup of Canada." "A very slight majority for the Yes side could not have been interpreted as irrefutable proof that a majority of Quebecers wanted to sever their historic links with Canada," he writes.

But just a few days before the crucial vote 12 years ago, he said Chretien made it clear in a televised pitch that the fate of Canada was at stake.

"That means he lied to Quebecers in his speech to them... before the referendum," Duceppe said after a weekend Bloc meeting in Trois-Rivieres, Que.

"He said then that the question was clear and that if they (Quebecers) voted Yes, then they would be leaving Canada and that if they voted No, they'd be staying in Canada.

"It was very clear then that he would respect the verdict. Today, he tells us that's not what he was thinking.

"I think he lied and it is not very respectable for a Canadian prime minister to behave that way." Duceppe said he still believes the slimmest of Yes victories — 50 per cent plus one vote — would be enough for Quebec to separate if there is another referendum.

"In Quebec, the main parties — the Action democratique du Quebec, the Liberals and the Parti Quebecois — all agree on the concept of 50 per cent plus one." Anything else would be patently unfair, he said.

"It would be like a referee telling two teams in a football game 'Play the game and at the end I'll tell you what margin of victory you need to win,'" he added.

Duceppe, who received 95 per cent support in a confidence vote from party members on Saturday, reiterated the party is ready for a general election if Tuesday's throne speech is defeated.

The Bloc is sticking to its position that it will vote against the speech unless the Tories promise to: z eliminate all federal spending powers in provincial jurisdictions; z respect the Kyoto Protocol; z continue supply management in the agriculture sector; z help Quebec's battered forestry industry; z state clearly Canadian soldiers will leave Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

— The Canadian Press

EDITORIAL – Mr. Manley goes to war

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A14

SECTION: Editorial Leaders

WORD COUNT: 613

Editorial Staff Sometimes, rarely, but sometimes, something that appears to be an act of blatant political partisanship can also be in the best interest of the nation. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's appointment of former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley to head a panel looking at the future of Canada's mission in Afghanistan would seem to fit that bill exactly.

It certainly works well for the Conservative government. Although no one appears to really want an election this fall, there is a lot of bluster and bravado on the part of both the government and the opposition surrounding Tuesday's throne speech and, in politics, bluster and bravado can sometimes run wild, seizing the reins from reason and rationality.

If that happens, Mr. Harper may have effectively neutralized the Afghan war as an election issue. The opposition parties oppose Canada's combat mission there, the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois wanting an immediate halt to it, the Liberals under Stephane Dion wanting a throne speech promise to the Taliban that Canadian forces will quit the Kandahar war zone no later than Feb. 2009, when the current terms of engagement expire.

The government, however, sensibly prefers to leave its options open and Mr. Manley's panel has been asked to consider four separate paths: to maintain the status quo in a combat role; to hand over the combat role to another NATO nation and concentrate on reconstruction under the protection of those guns; to leave the combat zone and focus on reconstruction in safer areas of Afghanistan; or to completely cut and run, leaving a few soldiers behind as bodyguards for diplomats and aid workers.

Mr. Manley, perhaps as conservative a Liberal as one might find in the higher reaches of that party — and its most credible spokesman on defence and foreign policy issues — has said he will not be bound by those options. Everything, he says is "on the table." And that works well for the nation. It is in fact, exactly what the nation needs to resolve the bitter Afghanistan debate, to replace the petty political partisanship that has defined that discussion so far. Mr. Manley's committee will report back in January with its conclusions, a process that effectively removes Afghanistan as an election issue, at least for the Liberal party, as became clear from the squeals of outrage that emerged from party officials when Mr. Manley enthusiastically accepted the post. The Bloc and the NDP may still squeak about the war if they choose, but no one is likely to pay them much attention now. The Liberals are constrained by a committee led by one of their elder and most distinguished statesmen, the Conservatives curtailed by their own creation of the committee.

In the event of an election, this certainly gets the Conservatives off the hook created by a country deeply divided by a war that it has never clearly understood. In that sense it was a clever but partisan act of politics. But it is more than that. It gives Canadians — regardless of whether there is an election between now and January when the Manley report comes back — an opportunity for reasoned reflection on the role their country must play in a rapidly changing world, a world that may require an increasingly dangerous commitment from them.

Curtain is set to rise on theatre at Parliament Hill

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.15

PAGE: A15

SECTION: Focus

WORD COUNT: 968

Tom Ford Tom Ford OTTAWA -- The curtain goes up tomorrow at the theatre on Parliament Hill. The question is: Does anyone give a damn? Last season's performances produced overwhelming somnolence everywhere except on Parliament Hill. The feelings of most Canadians about the major actors haven't changed much over the past year -- despite the fact Prime Minister Stephen Harper made some big-spending announcements; strutted around at international meetings (at least once wearing a cowboy hat) and shuffled his cast of characters.

The Liberals have tried their best to entertain. They threatened to throw themselves -- or at least their leader -- off the ramparts of Quebec City; they got rid of some of their Ottawa staff, triggering a civil court case, and brought in some experts well-cured in the nation's smoky backrooms.

The result? Not much applause. Until recently, the Conservatives had been stuck at 33 per cent in the polls for months, almost tied with the Liberals. Now, a new Canadian Press/Harris-Decima survey puts the Conservatives at 35 per cent, the Liberals at 28, the NDP at 17 per cent, the Greens at 10 and the Bloc Quebecois at eight.

The Liberals' tribulations may be one reason for their ratings drop.

But the Conservatives are still well below majority-government territory and what they earned on election day in 2006.

A lot of Canadians apparently feel the theatre on Parliament Hill is, in fact, a theatre and has little relationship to them. They have decided to get on with their lives and ignore federal politicians.

Since Parliament Hill is considered a theatre, I've decided to call on my alter ego, boulevardier Thomas Smythe-Fordington, a Stratford theatre critic to review the opening of Parliament. Without further ado, here's Mr. Smythe-Fordington.

The first thing that simply must be said is that the theatre on Parliament Hill would not exist without massive government subsidies.

People studiously ignore parliamentary theatre because they think: The plots are childish and repetitive; the actors are stiff, don't ring true and seem to be only interested in self-aggrandizement.

Last year, Mr. Harper played a stolid, slit-eyed accountant determined to save Canada through improved federal government bookkeeping.

As critic Dorothy Parker once said of another actor, Mr. Harper ranged the gamut of emotions from A to B.

Mr. Harper's performance is not helped by the fact he likes to speak all the parts and that he's usually accompanied by a mute chorus of fawning acolytes.

His insistence on repeating five simple policy points made one wonder whether he thought his audience was made up of untutored gits. He thought he had to pander to us. We're not smart enough to know what he knows is good for us.

This season, Mr. Harper has chosen to play a very different character: Little Miss Sunshine, complete with a mop of curls, crinoline skirt and patent leather button shoes. This sweet, delicate child is trying so dreadfully hard to punish bad Canadians and reward good ones.

But she's being thwarted by Snively Whiplash, a cunning villain with a massive, black handlebar moustache. Mr. Harper has decided the role of Whiplash should be played by Liberal Leader Stephane Dion — surely one of the worst casting decisions in Canadian theatre.

Mr. Dion has the demeanour of a nervous boy scout and his approach is more teddy bear than grizzly bear.

Mr. Harper has stomped his button shoe and made it clear that if Snively and the opposition don't vote for the speech from the throne and the legislation that flows from it, he will precipitate an election — an election many Canadians don't want and one that Mr. Harper himself says will probably end up in another minority.

Mr. Harper's new role as Little Miss Sunshine may be seen by many in the audience as just another attempt to win at the ballot box.

A recent poll commissioned by an environmental group found that 68 per cent of Canadians thought the government's efforts on climate change were motivated by "trying to win votes" rather than any deep-seated conviction.

As well, some Canadians are confused by the government's actions in Afghanistan. A paper by the UN Department of Safety and Security in August said "the security situation in Afghanistan is assessed by most analysts as having deteriorated at a constant rate through 2007." Violent incidents have increased almost 25 per cent this year, said the report. That figure may be conservative, it added.

But this month Maxime Bernier, the foreign affairs minister, said during a quick trip to Afghanistan that insurgent attacks have decreased in Kandahar, leaving the province more secure for humanitarian work.

In another policy area, the Conservative government has indicated it will put some controls on foreign government-owned corporations attempting to take over Canadian firms. But is that enough? Figures compiled by Montreal-based Secor Consulting indicate foreigners bought almost \$40 billion more of Canada's corporate assets in the past three years than Canadian businesses bought abroad.

"Canadian companies are losing ground in the now-global market for corporate control," Secor says.

Another warning: The Canadian Auto Workers union says Canada is heading for its largest automotive trade deficit on record this year. A unique success story has turned into "an industrial nightmare," says CAW economist Jim Stanford. We had a record auto trade surplus of \$14.4 billion in 1999; this year's deficit is estimated at \$8 billion.

The estimate is important because passenger vehicles are still Canada's largest export by dollar value, despite the jump in the price of oil and increasing oilsands production.

Looming in the background is the fear that Canada's position in the world is weakening. There's already talk we may be dropped from the key G7 club of industrial nations and be replaced by India, China and the euro group of the European Union.

Will Little Miss Sunshine and Whiplash deal with important issues such as these? Or will their performances degenerate into useless bickering? Those of us who still care will know after the curtain goes up tomorrow.

z z z Smythe–Fordington reminds me that in an earlier column I got the name of Stratford's main stage wrong. It's called the Festival Theatre.

Tom Ford is managing editor of The Issues Network.

{Ottawa ONT}

Triumphs & tragedies; Singer Loreena McKennitt passionate about her public career and private life

IDNUMBER 200710150063
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Entertainment
PAGE: B4 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CANADIAN: Loreena McKennitt recently won a court case against a former friend over a tell-all book. ;
BYLINE: Ted Shaw
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 758

Loreena McKennitt is used to baring her soul for the sake of her art, usually with highly creative results. But in recent years the spotlight has shone on her for matters that have nothing to do with art.

McKennitt has spent her career exploring the historical reference points of Celtic and folk music. But for someone who has charted her personal journey in liner notes on her albums and on her website, her recent experiences in a British courtroom were eye-openers.

Her music has given her celebrity status. But there came a point where the public person invaded the "ordinary, private person," she said, when a woman who professed to be a friend published a tell-all book about McKennitt.

"I realized I had to make my mark in the sand," she said. So she took Niema Ash, a former employee, to court in England.

McKennitt had originally agreed to allow Ash to self-publish the book in Great Britain on condition that certain details about her private life be left out. But when *Travels with Loreena McKennitt: My Life as a Friend* hit shelves in the summer of 2005, it was clear Ash had breached that confidence.

After two years of sometimes bitter court proceedings, McKennitt won a settlement in the British High Court only a week ago to cease all further publication of the book. Partly in response, McKennitt set to work on a book of her own to be published later this year, *Loreena McKennitt: The Journeys and The Songs*.

Reacting to the court case, she had this to say: "I passionately believe that if an aspect of one's career places one directly in the public eye or if extraordinary events make an ordinary person newsworthy for a time, we all still should have the basic human dignity of privacy for our home and family life."

The parts of Ash's book which were most troubling, she said, were how she dealt with the death in 1998 of her late partner, Ronald Rees, who perished along with his brother and a friend in a boating accident. "It was something I certainly didn't want to have to relive."

The incident occurred in July 1998 while McKennitt was in Europe putting the finishing touches on her two-CD recording, *Live in Paris and Toronto*.

One of the things she did was to initiate the Cook–Rees Memorial Fund for Water Search and Safety, using the proceeds of the double album, *Live in Paris and Toronto*. Her active support for educational programs about water safety led eventually to McKennitt's appointment as an honorary colonel of the 435 Search and Rescue and Transport Squadron in Winnipeg, her hometown.

"I went into it without any training or knowledge at all," she said. "I am no expert in search and rescue, nor do I pretend to be."

But she got firsthand experience on actual missions to Canada's north, learning along the way much about northern security and sovereignty.

Her military exercises, however tightly supervised, raised eyebrows among some of the more liberal-minded followers of her music, McKennitt admitted. But at the same time, her natural curiosity and interest in history drove her to find out more about her country's military involvement overseas.

She also learned to differentiate between Canada's political military involvement in Afghanistan and the non-political nature of the country's military.

"Our military is predominantly a neutral instrument of the government, and it undertakes these missions for the benefit of all Canadians."

Not surprisingly, McKennitt's rediscovery of her Canadian heritage following two decades of chasing her Celtic muse around the globe prompted her to launch her first major tour of Canada since 1998, the year Rees died.

While not seen as a memorial, McKennitt said the 19 concerts in 17 communities took her to some of the more remote places she had visited in years.

That tour wrapped up at the end of September, and McKennitt didn't miss a beat by launching right into the American leg which brings her to Detroit's Fox Theatre on Tuesday.

The concerts come at the tail-end of the *An Ancient Muse* tour in support of her bestselling album of that title, released in the fall of 2006. This summer, McKennitt followed it up with a live CD/DVD collection, her first live recordings in nine years, titled *Nights from the Alhambra*.

Taped during a magical series of September 2006 concerts in the famous 14th-century Moorish castle of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, the performance was made for public television in the United States.

Musically, she said, as well as historically – McKennitt was granted unprecedented access to the Alhambra – it was one of the most challenging undertakings of her career.

"To be on that stage with those marvellous musicians and in that environment was, to say the least, breathtaking," she said.

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BOX OFFICE

Loreena McKennitt's *An Ancient Muse* Tour comes to Detroit's Fox Theatre, Tuesday at 8 p.m. Tickets US\$69.50–\$39.50, available at Ticketmaster.

Chretien rips Martin in book; Memoir describes pressure from 'self-serving goons'

IDNUMBER 200710150045
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters file photo: Jim Young / Jean Chretien,left, and Paul Martin ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Elizabeth Thompson
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 567

OTTAWA – Former prime minister Paul Martin is responsible for Canadian troops ending up in the "killing fields" around Kandahar because he took too long to make a decision, former prime minister Jean Chretien charges in a new book.

In a memoir likely to rip open old Liberal wounds and exacerbate divisions within the party only days before a possible plunge into a federal election, the former Liberal leader attacks Martin on several fronts, from his scheming to force Chretien out of office to Martin's handling of Canada's Kyoto environmental protocol commitments. He also argues that Martin has only himself to blame for the grief he suffered as a result of the sponsorship scandal.

Chretien, long described as a political brawler, takes off the gloves when it comes to Martin. He says manoeuvring by Martin and his supporters to push him out of the Prime Minister's Office actually steeled his resolve to stay on.

"I was damned if I was going to let myself be shoved out the door by a gang of self-serving goons," Chretien writes after describing the hurt and betrayal he felt upon learning in the spring of 2000 about a meeting Martin supporters had held in a Toronto airport hotel. "By trying to force me to go, they aroused my competitive spirit, ignited my anger, and inadvertently gave me the blessing I needed from Aline (his wife) to fight for a third term. For that, ironically, I owed Paul Martin a great deal of thanks."

Chretien also recounts that after the Taliban government of Afghanistan was overthrown, he carefully engineered things so Canada's soldiers were stationed around the safer area of Kabul, helping to rebuild the Afghan capital.

"Later, unfortunately, when my successor took too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend our term with the International Security Assistance Force, our soldiers were moved out of Kabul and sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar," Chretien writes.

Jim Pimblett, a spokesman for Martin, said his boss did not receive an advance copy of the book and was "not in a position to react in any detail, nor is he inclined to do so today or in the foreseeable future.

In Jean Chretien, My Years as Prime Minister, Chretien blasts Martin's handling of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse-gas reduction and accuses him of lying to the Liberal caucus.

Chretien says when he left office, Canada was on track to meet its commitments under the Kyoto accord.

'SERIOUS DAMAGE'

"Unfortunately, whether for political or ideological reasons, my successors succumbed to the fears and threats of the anti-Kyoto forces and did serious damage to Canada's progress and our reputation in the process."

Chretien says, if Martin hadn't been in such a hurry to take over the PMO, he wouldn't have had to worry about the sponsorship scandal.

Knowing Auditor general Sheila Fraser's report was going to be "tough," Chretien was prepared to receive it, thank her for her work and then say if there was evidence of theft or fraud that the police should catch the crooks and the courts should put them in jail.

"Of course, I expected to have to take some hits in the press for a couple of weeks, but that hadn't frightened me in the past and it didn't frighten me now. By the time Martin was to take over, the whole issue would have been history and he could have begun his mandate without that albatross around his neck."

Liberal MP had no right to visit Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710150035
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A7
BYLINE: Larry Washburn
SOURCE: Windsor Star
WORD COUNT: 71

The visit to Afghanistan by Liberal Denis Coderre was very inappropriate. He is not in the political party in power and does not represent the government. Peter MacKay is the person to represent the Canadian government. That is why we have elections, to choose one voice to represent us. Mr. Coderre, mind our own business.

Larry Washburn

Windsor

Mission haunts soldiers; Afghanistan takes toll on minds, bodies of Canadian troops

IDNUMBER 200710150001
PUBLICATION: The Windsor Star
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 535

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by CEFCOM indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress. This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the CEFCOM data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major

depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served in Afghanistan since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems. However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said.

"Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

Data show war's toll on troops; Injury And Illness; Hundreds with mental health issues from duty

IDNUMBER 200710150069
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Color Photo: Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters / An Afghan National Army soldier mans an observation post overlooking Panjwaii, Kandahar province, yesterday. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 695

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The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Lt.-Col. Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here they can survive."

About 60% of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities while 20% had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this [rotation]."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care, because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Dr. Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Dr. Zamorski said. "It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody."

KEYWORDS: MENTAL HEALTH; MENTALLY DISABLED; HEALTH CARE

Canadians treated survivors of Afghan suicide blast

IDNUMBER 200710150068
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 280

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Canadian soldiers and medical staff were left to pick up the pieces and treat the wounded this weekend after a suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted a truck carrying Afghan National Border Police in a market crowded with Afghans celebrating the end of Ramadan.

Eleven people — including seven policemen — died and 36 were injured in the attack on a post–Ramadan fair on Saturday at Spin Boldak, near the border with Pakistan, where the Quebec–based Royal 12th Armoured Regiment has a small reconnaissance base. Two of the wounded were children.

All of those hit by the blast were brought by trucks to the remote Canadian outpost, about 80 kilometres east of Kandahar, where triage assessments were made by medics. Canadian doctors and medics flown out from the Canadian–led NATO hospital at Kandahar Airfield made further assessments and brought back 21 of the most seriously wounded with them in two waves of helicopters.

"The bomber was on a motorcycle with a vest full of explosives and ball bearings," Major Pierre Huet, the reconnaissance squadron commander, said yesterday. "We found ball bearings all over the place, a few parts of the motorcycle and body parts that were collected and brought to our base."

It was the fourth attack in three months on border police in Spin Boldak, where the local boss, Colonel Razik, is an implacable foe of the Taliban and "the most influential person in Spin Boldak, according to Maj. Huet.

Although unproven, it was likely the bombers came to Spin Boldak from Pakistan, which is only a few kilometres away. Between 20,000 and 30,000 Afghans and Pakistanis cross the border there every day.

"There are so many gaps," Maj. Huet said. "Just in my district, we have 100 kilometres of border."

KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; BOMBINGS

Chretien Flays Martin's 'Goons'; Explosive Memoirs; Paul Martin attacked on several fronts

IDNUMBER 200710150057
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: National
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Black & White Photo: / Former PM Jean Chretien.;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Elizabeth Thompson
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 505

OTTAWA – Former prime minister Paul Martin is responsible for Canadian troops ending up in the "killing fields" around Kandahar because he took too long to make a decision, former prime minister Jean Chretien charges in a new book, *My Years as Prime Minister*, to be published this week.

In a memoir likely to rip open old Liberal wounds and exacerbate divisions within the party only days before a possible plunge into a federal election, the former Liberal leader attacks Mr. Martin on several fronts, from his scheming to force Mr. Chretien out of office to Mr. Martin's handling of Canada's Kyoto environmental protocol commitments. He also argues that Mr. Martin has only himself to blame for the grief he suffered as a result of the sponsorship scandal.

But Mr. Chretien, long described as a political brawler, takes off the gloves when it comes to Mr. Martin. He says manoeuvring by Mr. Martin and his supporters to push him out of the Prime Minister's Office actually steeled his resolve to stay on.

He doesn't mince words.

"I was damned if I was going to let myself be shoved out the door by a gang of self-serving goons," Mr. Chretien writes after describing the hurt and betrayal he felt upon learning in the spring of 2000 about a meeting Martin supporters had held in a Toronto airport hotel. "By trying to force me to go, they aroused my competitive spirit, ignited my anger, and inadvertently gave me the blessing I needed from Aline [his wife] to fight for a third term. For that, ironically, I owed Paul Martin a great deal of thanks."

Mr. Chretien also recounts that after the Taliban government of Afghanistan was overthrown, he engineered things so Canada's soldiers were stationed around the safer area of Kabul, helping to rebuild the Afghan capital.

"Later, unfortunately, when my successor took too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend our term with the International Security Assistance Force, our soldiers were moved out of Kabul and sent south again to battle the Taliban in the killing fields around Kandahar," Mr. Chretien writes.

Jim Pimblett, a spokesman for Mr. Martin, said his boss did not receive an advance copy of the book and was "not in a position to react in any detail, nor is he inclined to do so today or in the foreseeable future."

"Obviously, it is disappointing to hear reports that old divisions are being revisited at a time when the Liberal party needs to stand unified behind [Liberal leader Stephane) Dion." Mr. Pimblett acknowledged that the two men had their differences at times "but their partnership in government generated tremendous achievements."

Mr. Chretien reveals that he contemplated removing Mr. Martin from the finance ministry, firing the conspirators on Mr. Martin's staff and cancelling the government contracts with Mr. Martin's friends and advisors at the Earncliffe strategy and communications firm, but was talked out of it by his top advisors Jean Pelletier and Eddie Goldenberg.

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

5 Minute Herald; Breaking news at calgaryherald.com

IDNUMBER 200710150082

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: B12

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Angry crowd confronts white supremacists; Colour Photo: Vladimir Putin ; Colour Photo: Ibrahim Gambari ; Colour Photo: Luisa De Paola, Agence France–Presse / Picture of the Day: Some 200,000 people crowd Atlantica Avenue with a rainbow flag Sunday during the Gay Pride parade in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Lesbians, gays and transexuals asked for opportunities, equality and respect, as well as for punishment for those who discriminate against homosexuals. ; Colour Photo: Sondra Musa ; Colour Photo: Henry Burris ; Graphic: Childless families seek their place in society ; Photo: (See hard copy for description). ; Colour Photo: Bret Hart ; Colour Photo: Woman wins rock paper scissors championship ;

KEYWORDS: 0

BYLINE: Compiled by Meg de Jong

SOURCE: Calgary Herald

WORD COUNT: 1007

Top Stories

Future of City in Hands of Voters

After 28 days of campaigning and promises, Calgary voters are now in the driver's seat as they head to the polls to choose their next city council. The 13 people elected tonight — two aldermen have been acclaimed — will make decisions over the next three years that will impact the lives of all Calgarians.

Page A1

Doctors Pass Billing on to Private Firms

Some Calgarians may soon find a bill from the doctors' office in their mailboxes, after several local family physicians began contracting companies to invoice patients. The move is sparking debate between those who say charging low-income patients isn't fair and supporters who say the extra cash could help the profitability of family doctors' offices.

Page A1

War Takes Toll on Minds, Bodies of Soldiers

The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

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City & Region

Muslim Community Denies Religion–Based Subdivision

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Canada denies in a letter to the Calgary Herald that it has any plan to build a religion–based subdivision at the north end of the city.

Page B1

Angry Crowd Confronts White Supremacists

A group of 15 neo–nazis, most wearing woolen camouflage balaclavas and carrying black flags bearing a "white pride" Celtic cross symbol, clashed with a crowd of more than 60 counter protesters Sunday afternoon east of 8th Avenue and Macleod Trail.

Page B2

Canada

Canada Tops European Immigration Index

An influential Europe–wide immigration index, which probes how well nations are set up to integrate newcomers into mainstream society, has included Canada for the first time and given this country one of its top rankings.

Page A5

World

Putin Told of Plot to Kill Him in Tehran, Says Kremlin

President Vladimir Putin has been warned by his special services of a possible plot to assassinate him during a visit to Tehran this week, the Kremlin said on Sunday.

Page A11

Myanmar Rounds Up Activists as UN Begins Tour

Myanmar's military rulers are still rounding up activists, rights groups said Sunday, even as UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari arrived in Bangkok for an Asian tour aimed at piling pressure on the generals.

Page A14

NASA to Launch, Despite Risk

NASA managers have decided to launch their next shuttle mission Oct. 23 over the objections of their own safety experts, who wanted a two–month delay to repair tiny cracks on the surface of wing panels.

Page A13

Traffic

- Left lane closed, speed restricted to 50 km/h: On Barlow Trail at 16th Avenue N.E., the left lanes are closed in both directions from 9 a.m. today until Oct. 19.
- Left lanes closed: On westbound 4th Avenue between 3rd Street and 4th Street S.W. until Oct. 21.
- Road closure: On 42nd Street between Bow Trail and Windermere Road S.W. Road closed to traffic until Oct. 31.
- Lane closed: On 12th Avenue between 3rd Street and Olympic Way S.E. until Oct. 31.

Commuter Weather

6 A.M. Off to Work: Sunny.

Temperature: 3 C

12 Noon Lunch: Sunny. Winds light.

Temperature: 12 C

5 P.M. Heading Home: Clear.

Temperature: 14 C

Overnight: Clear with a few clouds overnight. Low: 2 C

Tuesday: Mainly sunny with cloudy periods. High: 16 C Low: 3 C

Sunday: High: 18.8 C Low: 1.1 C

Online Extras

News: Global warming opens doors for parachute delivery system.

News: Native chief to address B.C. legislature on treaty process.

Sports: Jackson behind centre in B.C., for now.

Sports: Cannonball Pitre an original Flying Frenchman.

Quote of the Day

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems"

Dr. Mark Zamorski, of troops who have served in Kandahar.

See story, Page A3.

Calgary Business -- B5

Relax! Rate Hike Unlikely

Whew! The most deeply indebted generation of Canadians can relax, at least for now, as the Bank of Canada this week almost certainly passes on another opportunity to raise interest rates.

Page B5

Arthouse Eschews Bad 'Tattitudes'

Sondra Musa, owner and operator of tattoo shop The Arthouse Inc., has more than tripled her clientele in five years. Her staff of five sees between three to five clients a day, six days a week, and is booked months in advance. Musa started Arthouse in 2002 after making body jewelry at another tattoo shop. "I always loved tattoos and had been interested in body modification, so that just clicked for me," she said, from the sun-filled shop.

Page B5

Editorial — A16

Doctors Need Better Way to Collect Fees

The proliferation of billing companies doing the dirty work of collecting for uninsured medical services does little to help physicians deal with the increasing expenses of running an office. Rather, the Band-Aid solution threatens the universality of our system.

Page A16

Letter of the Day

"Police Chief Rick Hanson has it exactly right. Hard-core repeat offenders should be in jail. The courts must get tougher with these gangland criminals. . . . With the prior convictions, firearm prohibitions and drug charges some of these arrested individuals have against them already, it would sure seem to me that jail, not bail, is a good idea.

Gino Barberio, Page A17

Sports — D1

Stampeders' Burris Returns a Conquering Hero

After a week of questions about his ability to start after an injury absence, Calgary Stampeders quarterback Henry Burris was healthy, he was ready to go, and he was brilliant in leading his team to a 38-25 Canadian Football League win over the Winnipeg Blue Bombers on Sunday afternoon at McMahon Stadium.

Page D1

Freewheelin' Conroy Ok With Flip-Floppin'

"It's weird how my career has been all over the map," acknowledges Flames' Craig Conroy, "but it's better to have more than one thing instead of saying you can only do this or only do that," he insists.

Page D9

Real Life — C5

Childless Families Seek Their Place in Society

Dealing with the reality of infertility, especially after years of unsuccessful fertility treatments, is brutal because husband and wife have to completely rewrite a different future than they imagined, writes Herald columnist Kim Gray.

Page C7

Housework Could Be a Health Risk

Housework might be bad for your health, according to a study suggesting that tidying up as little as once a week with common cleaning sprays and air fresheners could raise the risk of asthma in adults.

Page C7

Sudoku

World's Hottest Puzzle Craze

How to Play:

Complete this grid by placing the digits 1 to 9 exactly once, and only once, in each horizontal row and in each column. Also, each digit should only appear once in every 3x3 shaded or white mini-grid in the puzzle. Sudoku appears on the 5 Minute Herald page Monday to Friday and on the Saturday and Sunday puzzle pages.

Entertainment -- C1

Hart Bares His Soul

Calgary wrestling legend Bret (Hitman) Hart is releasing an autobiography based on his experiences on the road. *Hitman: My Real Life In The Cartoon World of Wrestling* will be in stores Oct. 16.

Page C1

Tonight's TV Picks:

- Heroes: 10 p.m. on Global (Ch. 7).
- Corner Gas: 10:30 p.m. on CTV (Ch. 3).

It's An Odd World

Woman Wins Rock Paper Scissors Championship

Angela Farina, of Syracuse, New York, was crowned 2007 Rock Paper Scissors International World Champion this weekend. Farina, the first-ever female champion, won the annual tournament in Toronto, outlasting 500 other competitors from six countries: Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, England and Wales.

'It's a challenge for us also'; Poland empathizes on Afghan mission

IDNUMBER 200710150027
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Courtesy, NATO / Poland's Gen. FranciszekGagor is likely to replace Canada's Ray Henault as head of NATO committee. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: WARSAW
BYLINE: Peter O'Neil
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 244

Gen. Franciszek Gagor, Poland's top soldier and perhaps NATO's after an upcoming vote to replace Canadian Ray Henault as chairman of the western alliance's military committee, can empathize with Canada's public relations challenge over Afghanistan.

"Well, it's a challenge for us also," Poland's chief of the general staff told CanWest News Service.

Gagor, competing with generals from Spain and Italy to replace Henault in the Nov. 14 vote, would be the first officer from the old Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact alliance to become top soldier in the 26-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He brings to the international table considerable peacekeeping experience in the Middle East and guarded optimism about the Afghanistan mission.

But Gagor cannot claim popular support in his own country for Poland's military role. One poll this month by the Warsaw-based firm CBOS said 72 per cent of those surveyed were opposed to Poland's decision earlier this year to deploy 1,200 soldiers primarily in the dangerous southeast provinces of Ghazni and Paktia. Poland also has elite forces working with Canadians in Kandahar.

Objections to the fighting are even stronger than in Canada, where public unease and election fever have caused the government to declare that Canada's current role in Kandahar, where there are more than 2,000 Canadian troops, won't continue past early 2009 without an endorsement from Parliament.

Poland's public mood is soured partly by Iraq, where the country has lost about 20 soldiers since 2003. One soldier has been killed so far in Afghanistan.

Grits fear Harper may set up defeat; Throne speech lets PM squeeze opposition

IDNUMBER 200710150015
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.15
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Stephen Harper;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 726

The big question hanging over the minority Conservative government's throne speech Tuesday is how hard Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants to squeeze the opposition parties and possibly force a federal election.

Will Harper — emboldened by his party's 40 per cent popularity rating in a fresh national survey — insert into the speech a "poison pill" statement or policy plan so egregious to all three opposition parties they would have no choice but to vote against it and plunge the country into an election?

Tom Flanagan, a former Harper confidant and party strategist, says the prime minister can afford to be "fairly bold," but going the poison pill route is risky.

"Engineering a defeat is not easy because a throne speech that would simultaneously provoke the Liberals, Bloc and NDP to vote against it would probably be a throne speech that's not popular with voters," he said.

Harper, who has insisted he would prefer governing to having an election, could not be defeated unless all three opposition parties united to bring down his government.

The Bloc and the NDP have signalled they won't be supporting the speech, leaving it to the Liberals to throw a lifeline to the Harper government if they don't want an election by voting with the government or abstaining in a string of three possible confidence motions in the coming week or so.

The earliest the government could fall is Thursday, the earliest day for a vote on a Bloc Quebecois sub-amendment to the speech.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, struggling to right his listing party, says he doesn't want a fall election, and that if one happens, it will be because Harper has "set up his own defeat."

And that's what Dion suspects Harper wants.

"It's clear that he's looking for an election," Dion said Sunday on CTV's Question Period, adding the Liberals don't have to fully agree with the speech to support it, he said.

"It will be a Conservative throne speech, not a Liberal one, we accept that," Dion said, "but if it is a throne speech that is outrageous regarding the values that we Liberals believe, we cannot be under any obligation to support something that we believe to be wrong for Canadians."

Rick Anderson, a former Reform party strategist and political pundit, said Harper has to tread carefully.

"If he looks like he's writing the throne speech with the goal of provoking Dion, then people are not going to be happy with it. The public has got their antennae way up on that kind of stuff," he said.

Betting was all over the map in the countdown to the speech, which Harper billed earlier this month as a "fish or cut bait" proposition for the opposition parties.

Harper told a news conference that if the speech — considered a matter of confidence under parliamentary tradition — wins approval in the Commons, the government will interpret that as a licence to govern according to the blueprint. Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean will lay out Tuesday evening when she reads the speech.

Harper said he would treat legislation flowing from the speech as matters of confidence, meaning the defeat of almost any legislation would cause the government to fall and trigger an election.

Harper softened that position Friday, telling reporters the government would not "abuse" the system, and that the government would only consider making a vote a matter of confidence if the legislative issue was significant enough to fight an election over.

Harper's original ultimatum, which Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale has since dismissed as "political and parliamentary fantasy" in a minority government, has nonetheless, intensified election preparations in all four parties. The latest Ipsos Reid poll, which had the Conservatives leading the Liberals by 12 points and within sight of winning a majority government, threw fresh fuel on those efforts.

The opposition parties will be listening closely to the government's words on two of the most divisive issues in recent memory — namely the Kyoto environmental accord and Afghanistan.

Harper took some of the sting out of the Afghan issue Friday, winning a nod of approval from the Liberals.

He appointed a five-member panel, led by John Manley, a former Liberal cabinet minister, to advise the government by the end of January on what the future involvement of Canada should be after the current NATO commitment expires in February 2009.

The three parties are, however, united in their opposition to the Conservatives' approach to the Kyoto environmental accord. The Kyoto standoff, therefore, might afford Harper a shot at riling the three opposition parties enough to bring down his government now or further down the road. Other opportunities might arise if the opposition parties balk at promised crime legislation.

Afghan mission takes toll on body and mind; 'Significant' number of soldiers come home with mental health problems

IDNUMBER 200710150014

PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald

DATE: 2007.10.15

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CanWest News Service Archive / Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers deployed to the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, says a report. ; Photo: CanWest News Service Archive / Many injured Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan have survived their injuries because of the superior medical care available to them. ; Photo: CanWest News Service Archive / Reaching hospital quickly is key to improving survival rates. ;

KEYWORDS: MENTAL HEALTH; HEALTH CARE; MENTALLY DISABLED; WAR

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 1007

The heavy toll that the war in Afghanistan has taken on the minds and bodies of Canadian troops has been revealed in data, documents and interviews provided by the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command.

Nearly 400 of 2,700 soldiers who have served in the province of Kandahar may have come home with mental health problems, according to a report by the office responsible for the health of deployed troops.

Other data provided by CEFCOM indicates that in addition to the 63 Canadian soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan since February of 2006, 243 have been wounded.

Of this number, 136 suffered injuries that were serious enough that they were flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany. Ninety-one casualties were subsequently sent to Canada for further treatment.

Another 185 troops returned to Canada during their tours in Kandahar for "diseases and non-battle injuries" including family problems and combat stress.

This number spiked during Operation Medusa late last summer when the Royal Canadian Regiment battle group led a fierce offensive against the Taliban in the Panjwaii/Zhari districts.

Soldiers serving during this RCR battle group's six-month rotation were as much as four times more likely to have been repatriated to Canada for non-combat reasons as during the tours of a later RCR battle group and a battle group from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry that had preceded them, according to the CEFCOM data.

"I would say that it is significant," Dr. Mark Zamorski, who heads the DND office dealing with the health of deployed troops, referring to the number of troops reporting mental health problems based on a questionnaire

that 2,700 of 4,700 troops who have already served in Kandahar had answered anonymously between three and six months after their tours ended.

"About 15 per cent have common mental health problems," Zamorski said in a telephone interview from Ottawa and in several follow up e-mails.

"About five per cent had symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Another five per cent had major depression. Some have more than one condition. This is commensurate with the difficult nature of the operation. It is what was to be expected."

A small number of troops reported that they had suffered panic attacks or had suicidal tendencies since coming home.

If the figures on mental health collected so far were extrapolated to include all those who had served since early last year, as many as 1,000 of 7,000 soldiers may have returned to Canada with one of seven potential mental health problems.

However, Zamorski cautioned that the data his office had received did not mean that large numbers of Afghan vets now in Canada had serious mental health issues.

"The substantial majority of CF members who return from a deployment, even a difficult one, will do just fine," he said. "Only a minority will require professional help."

Similarly, Lt.-Col. Heather Coombs, an emergency medicine specialist from Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital, said the number of dead and wounded in battle in Afghanistan was not surprising.

"If you look at the number of lost and how many have been injured, it does not seem that high to me," she said, adding that one the reasons many Canadians had survived their wounds was that the medical care available to them in Afghanistan was equal to that of Canada's best emergency wards.

Many of the wounded had been struck by improvised bombs packed with explosives and shrapnel. The key to surviving such incidents is to stop bleeding in the field. To do this better, several hundred Tactical Combat Casualty Care specialists have recently been trained to assist the regular corps of medics. The TCCC have been embedded with the infantry, sniper teams and convoys, as well as other units.

"A severe loss of blood can be devastating," Coombs said in an interview in her office, metres from the Canadian-led multinational hospital here. "But we have known for a long time that if you can get a tourniquet on it and do damage control it greatly expands the chances that they will survive, maybe with an amputated foot. Simple tourniquets have saved a lot of lives here."

To increase the chances of surviving injuries to the extremities, every Canadian deployed in Afghanistan carries a tourniquet in the same place on their armoured vest. They have also been provided with cutting edge battle dressings.

The other reason that a relatively large number of Canadians had survived their injuries was that they had reached hospital quickly.

"In trauma treatment, time is everything," Coombs said. "People die of bleeding. If you can plug the hole and get them here they can survive."

"Every Canadian soldier is in a two-way bubble from the time they hit the ground to when they are here. So far on this roto (rotation) they have all made it within 90 minutes."

Afghan mission takes toll on body and mind; 'Significant' number of soldiers come home with mental health

About 60 per cent of the wounded Canadians had injuries to their extremities while 20 per cent had been wounded in the neck or head, she said, adding that "we have been returning a lot of the injured back to work this roto."

Only a few soldiers now back in Canada were expected to require professional mental health care because the military had put in place "robust measures" since weaknesses in the military medical care system were identified after missions in Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans, Zamorski said.

These measures included better preparation for troops going overseas, access to psychiatrists, social workers and padres during tours, a short decompression period in a resort after leaving Afghanistan and before arriving home, and closer post-tour monitoring in Canada.

"We try to identify those at risk and get them the best treatment that money can buy," Zamorski said. "It is a complicated, overlapping web to try to make sure we do not miss anybody."

More than half of those troops who had "major concerns about PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms were already receiving care," a report based on the mental health questionnaire said.

High-risk drinking was identified as an issue for about 17 per cent of the returnees. About one soldier in three reported that they felt their general health had deteriorated, which was well above the Canadian Forces average, the report concluded.

Still, it was rare to have soldiers develop serious psychiatric problems in-theatre, Zamorski said because most such problems only became evident months and years after soldiers returned home.

"Two psychiatrists who have served in Afghanistan have told me this is distinctly uncommon," he said.

Interpreting some of the data was problematic because it did not differentiate between soldiers repatriated for personal or professional reasons from those who had mental health problems.