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Dedication planned for new monument

IDNUMBER 200710160047
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Local
PAGE: B2
DATELINE: CAMBRIDGE
SOURCE: RECORD STAFF
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 236

A dedication ceremony for the new soldiers memorial in Galt's Queen's Square has been scheduled for the day before Remembrance Day.

The the \$25,000 monument honours the city's fallen soldiers who died after the Korean War.

City staff have finalized the wording for the monument's face. It will read: "In memory of the men and women who have died serving in the Canadian Forces since 1954."

So far, only two names will be etched onto the monument. One is that of a soldier buried in Mountview cemetery who died in Vietnam, said Cambridge chief administrative officer, Don Smith. The other is Braun Woodfield, the eighth Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan.

Woodfield was born in the West, but moved around with his military family and considered Cambridge his home, said his uncle Richard Woodfield, who was behind the push to build the memorial.

The black granite obelisk-style monument will sit metres from the existing Galt cenotaph, which honours war dead up to and including the Korean War. In order for a the name of a "fallen hero" to be etched on the new monument, they must meet one of three criteria. He or she must be a member of the Canadian Forces who was born in Cambridge, raised in Cambridge, has immediate family members -- defined as spouse, parent, child, sibling, or grandparent -- in Cambridge.

Smith said the city has been in touch with local legions and Veterans Affairs and haven't uncovered any more soldiers who meet the criteria.

Further details about the Nov. 10 ceremony will be available later.

Demand for civilians grows in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710160023
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A5
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 119

Canada's military plans to expand the role of civilian contractors at the main coalition base in Kandahar to ease the strain on the heavily taxed army.

Senior defence officials say they hope soon to replace some uniformed medical staff, such X-ray technicians and health clerks, with civilian contract employees in Afghanistan.

They would be part of a growing workforce of contractors, which has so far included vehicle mechanics and computer maintainers.

"Certainly the demand is there for them," said Maj. Gwen Walsh, the manager of operational contracts.

Finding bunk space at Kandahar Airfield, NATO's principal base in the region, is the biggest impediment to adding more civilian technicians, she said.

Since Canadian troops deployed to southern Afghanistan in the spring of 2006, the number of contractors working in support and logistics roles has more than doubled to nearly 200.

Canadian to go to trial in Guantanamo Bay

IDNUMBER 200710160011
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 93

A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay.

Judge Col. Peter Brownback cited the need for the case to proceed in a "judicious manner." The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals. The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15.

Throne speech targets Dion's limping Liberals

IDNUMBER 200710160005
PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A1
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 412

With his chief opponent down, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appears set to use today's throne speech to deliver a few swift kicks to the Liberal party in places that hurt.

Government insiders suggest the speech — which reopens Parliament and lays out the Conservatives' plans — is designed to embarrass and neutralize the Liberals on key issues they hope to campaign on.

They say Harper has put on paper what he has been saying since he was elected: The government will not meet its climate-change commitments under the Kyoto accord, but will target greenhouse gases.

Harper will also remain committed to the Afghanistan mission, while restating that there will be a parliamentary debate on the issue after his hand-picked panel reports back with its recommendation on the future of the deployment.

The speech is being televised nationally, beginning at 6:35 p.m.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will oppose the speech, if it's too extreme — a move that would bring down the minority Conservative government, given that the NDP and the Bloc Qu b cois have already suggested they'll vote against it.

But Liberals also say the throne speech is only a blueprint — they'll make their stand when it comes to legislation.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday it will herald major tax cuts and fewer internal trade barriers.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has said he will crack down on gun crimes and juvenile offenders.

Conservatives dangled the election option in front of Dion yesterday, repeating Harper's suggestion that even if the current Parliament survives the throne speech vote, the Tories plan to keep calling the shots.

One senior Liberal said the most likely option for Dion is having some front-bench MPs vote against the throne speech while backbench MPs abstain.

"It would have to be completely disgusting (for us to oppose it)," said the senior Liberal. "I mean, it would pretty much have to say, 'We're staying in Afghanistan until 2020.'"

The Tories hope to pressure Dion into either rushing into an election or risk losing credibility on his party's dearest issues.

"Continued Liberal obstruction in the Parliament of Canada will not be an alternative and support for the throne speech will be taken as support for the government's agenda," Industry Minister Jim Prentice wrote in an e-mail.

That sort of majority-government talk from a minority government means Dion might find himself in the untenable position of having to rescue Harper on every confidence vote while the NDP and Bloc oppose him.

As for Afghanistan, Harper has already demonstrated publicly how he intends to insulate himself against the thorny issue in the event of a fall election campaign. Last week, he named former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley to lead a panel that will spend the next few months examining Canada's future options in the war-torn country.

Khadr trial to go ahead next month: U.S. Judge

IDNUMBER 200710160081
PUBLICATION: Times & Transcript (Moncton)
DATE: 2007.10.16
SECTION: News
PAGE: C9
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript
(Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 287

A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay.

Judge Col. Peter Brownback cited the need for the case to proceed in a "judicious manner."

The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U. S. Court of Appeals.

The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15.

Brownback says he has a duty to proceed with the case when the appeals court has not issued a stay of proceedings.

Omar's lawyers say they may seek just such a stay of proceedings from the U. S. Court of Appeals.

Khadr's lead military lawyer Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler says the practical effect of the judge's order is to deny Khadr's right to seek a meaningful review of a decision by a special military appeals court allowing the trial to resume.

In his e-mail order, Brownback agrees it would be "unprecedented" to hold court sessions while an appeal was pending at the Court of Appeals. "Unprecedented, however, does not mean improper or unlawful," Brownback says.

The judge says the military commission trying Khadr disagrees with the defence "that the commission has some duty to stay its proceedings while waiting for the Court of Appeals to act on the appeal."

"To the contrary, the commission finds that it has a duty to proceed with the case in a judicious manner, absent a stay imposed by the Court of Appeals (or another body)."

Kuebler calls the whole process "Alice in Wonderland."

The U.S. Defence Department, he said, "is so desperate to validate this broken process that they will disregard just about any concern of judicial economy or fairness to the accused. "They write a rule giving Omar a right to appeal, they tell Omar he has a right to appeal, and when he appeals, they claim he doesn't have a right to appeal."

Throne speech keeps leaders guessing

IDNUMBER 200710160035
PUBLICATION: The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
DATE: 2007.10.16
SECTION: News;News
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: KATE WRIGHT wright.kate@dailygleaner.com
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 The Daily Gleaner (Fredericton)
WORD COUNT: 488

The city's political leaders will be keeping a close eye on tonight's throne speech as Prime Minister Stephen Harper sets the tone for the upcoming parliamentary session and tries to keep his minority government afloat.

While the environment, justice bills, tax cuts and Canada's role in Afghanistan are likely to be addressed, New Brunswick politicians and business leaders are anxious to learn how Harper's new vision will impact the province.

Fredericton MP Andy Scott said he'll be looking at Harper's take on provincial–federal relations.

He said he has his eye on the province's economic development and how Premier Shawn Graham's quest to make New Brunswick self–sufficient fits into Harper's agenda.

"Because I've been home since June, I'm very anxious to see how the relationship between Graham and Harper progresses," he said.

Scott said New Brunswick stands to gain from the speech if Harper plays his cards right.

With Graham looking to position the province as an energy hub and increase its skilled–labour market, Scott said the province is a prime location for increased skills training that could benefit the country.

"New Brunswick could take that on — we could do it in both official languages — and it's the kind of thing the province can put to the federal government and get legitimate assistance without being seen as side deal," he said.

Scott is also hoping education will be addressed in the upcoming session. He said investing in "knowledge," such as research and development projects, could act as wealth–generators, which may ease the province's sell to Ottawa.

Much–needed infrastructure funding for projects such as Fredericton's multimillion–dollar convention centre are also key, said Scott.

The federal Conservatives introduced a revamped, \$33–million infrastructure fund.

The city's economic drivers echo Scott's sentiment.

Anthony Knight, general manager of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, said the city's business community needs infrastructure dollars to kick start development.

He said the Conservatives' promise to further cut the GST by one per cent was a poor decision, and the government needs to instead look at tax cuts for businesses and low- and middle-income earners.

"The high Canadian dollar has had an effect on many sectors, such as the forest sector where we're seeing job losses, facility closures, and we'd like to see support from government," he said.

"We need investments in infrastructure, technology and skills adjustments -- those are the types of efforts that ought to be addressed."

Economic development is also on regional minister Greg Thompson's mind.

While he's waiting to hear the details of the speech, Thompson said economic development in struggling resource-based industries needs attention.

He said his government is open to work with the province to move New Brunswick's economy forward.

"As an MP representing an area dependent on resource-based industries, it's always a concern," Thompson said.

"We also have concerns on the environmental, concerns on the Bay of Fundy and the herring and lobster fishery. Those are always big issues with us."

Tobique-Mactaquac MP Mike Allen said relief could be coming to the province by way of lower tax rates or accelerated investments in the forestry sector.

"On the tax side of it, we'll see some signals, especially for small- and medium-sized businesses."

The capital has been full of election talk, and reaction tonight from the opposition parties could dictate the parties' desire for a fall election.

The speech will go to a vote later this week. The Bloc Quebecois and the NDP have already declared they won't support it and now, it rests in the hands of the Liberal party to support it or vote it down.

MPs were largely staying out of the political guessing game Monday.

"Your guess is as good as mine," Allen said with a laugh. "Everyone's got an opinion, but it's very difficult to tell."

Manley panel a brilliant political stroke, and good for the country; Move eliminates Afghanistan as issue that could topple Harper

IDNUMBER 200710160046
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A18
COLUMN: L. Ian MacDonald
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
BYLINE: L. Ian MacDonald
SOURCE: Freelance
WORD COUNT: 742

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 today'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.

Stephane 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-reduction 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 is enough cover for Dion and the Liberals.

Manley panel a brilliant political stroke, and good for the country; Move eliminates Afghanistan as issue that

– 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 out 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 Chretien 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 underpublicized 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, Pamela 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 bipartisan 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 panel a brilliant political stroke, and good for the country; Move eliminates Afghanistan as issue that

Politics don't change the job: top general

IDNUMBER 200710160033
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Journal Stock / Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier;
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 533

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The senior general directing Canada's war in Afghanistan says the political furor at home over the future of the mission has not changed how he does his work.

"It does not affect planning," Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, said in an exclusive interview Monday. "Our focus is on the mandate, period. The horizon that I look at is 12 to 18 months. There is not much need at my level to look beyond that."

As Parliament prepared to hear today's speech from the throne, in which Afghanistan could be a central theme, the commander of all Canadian Forces overseas added that he welcomes the involvement of a blue-ribbon panel struck by the Harper government last week to recommend what Canada should do here after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

"I hope that it will lead to a better understanding for Canadians, beyond 15-second sound bites, of all that needs to be done here and the role that we ought to play."

Moments before he boarded an aircraft for Canada at the end of his 18th visit to Afghanistan since 2002, Gauthier quietly outlined the successes and failures of the mission so far and the long, slow road ahead.

The three-leaf general, who seldom speaks at length with journalists, had "observed a sense of confidence that is palpable up and down the chain of command," during his most recent visit. "We have the initiative. From our perspective, the insurgents are in disarray. The leadership has been seriously interrupted. We are getting indications that they are losing their willingness to fight."

But, at the same time, he added, "I don't want to sound too rosy."

"The Taliban are continuing to fight. They will still launch attacks and plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices). From time to time they will mount an offensive. But they are outmatched and they know it."

It has been a steep learning curve with some miscalculations along the way, Gauthier acknowledged, particularly involving the Afghan National Police.

Part of the plan had been for Afghan police to take over some of the security responsibilities after last year's battlefield successes, "but as we came into (this) summer, and the height of the fighting season, we were not able to hold the checkpoints," Gauthier said.

As the checkpoints failed, Canadian forces pulled back. "This was a conscious retraction. It was not a retreat. It was a consolidation," Gauthier said. "We gave up some ground because of the support that was available to us at the time."

As part of NATO's mentoring plan, the Afghan National Army, which is generally held in high regard by the Canadians, has been deploying with Canadian help into new areas over the past two months. But the police, who also have Canadian mentors, have not yet inspired similar confidence.

Gauthier said that a holding operation had been planned through the summer fighting season. But the Royal 22nd Regiment battle group, dubbed Van Doo, exceeded expectations by quickly establishing new checkpoints and building police substations across the Zhari and Panjwahi districts.

"I was on Route Summit two days ago and there were Afghans out on motorcycles or walking with their kids. Where three platoons were dug in last year, there is now a police substation."

"Clearly progress is fragile," the general said. "I don't want to be a propagandist. What we have done in the past year are small steps forward."

Martin didn't dither over troops: book; Unenthusiastic, but decisive about Afghan mission, authors say

IDNUMBER 200710160023
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: Montreal Gazette; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 378

OTTAWA – It's not true that Canadian soldiers are deployed to the volatile province of Kandahar, rather than Afghanistan's safer capital of Kabul, because of dithering by former prime minister Paul Martin, a new insider examination of the mission says.

Instead, a book by two experts argues that lobbying by Canada's top general, Rick Hillier, helped overcome Martin's reservations about the mission.

In their book, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, authors Eugene Lang, a chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, and academic Janice Gross Stein counter charges levelled by Martin's predecessor, Jean Chretien, in a new memoir.

Chretien says in his book that he sent soldiers to Afghanistan, but after the Taliban fell, arranged that they would be stationed near the safer area of Kabul.

"Later, unfortunately, when my successor (Martin) 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.

Martin has refused to comment on Chretien's suggestion that his indecision was responsible for the loss of Canadian lives. However, in interviews with Lang and Gross Stein, Martin reveals he was unenthusiastic about Hillier's proposal to deploy forces to Kandahar to repair Canada's relationship with the U.S. and had other priorities.

"Afghanistan was not a priority for me the way Darfur, Haiti and the Middle East were," Martin told the authors. "Afghanistan had become our biggest aid commitment, and it shouldn't have been."

In fact, Martin was one of the few members of the government to openly challenge Hillier's proposal and doubted it would bring the political and military benefits he promised.

"I made four demands of Hillier before I agreed to the mission," Martin is quoted as saying, adding that he told the general: "I want in, but I (also) want out. We do peacemaking and reconstruction and win hearts and minds. I am going to make a big demand on Darfur soon and you have to tell me I have all the troops I need. And you must have the capacity for Haiti if that blows up again."

Martin didn't dither over troops: book; Unenthusiastic, but decisive about Afghan mission, authors say

But after Hillier gave Martin the assurances he was seeking, the Liberal cabinet approved a mission in which the combat infantry task force would withdraw from Kandahar early in 2007.

Turning up political heat; Harper will aim at Dion in tonight's throne speech

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A8
BYLINE: Alexander Panetta the Canadian Press
WORD COUNT: 425

OTTAWA – With his chief opponent down, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appears set to use tonight's throne speech to deliver a few swift kicks to the Liberal party in places that hurt.

Government insiders suggest the speech – which reopens Parliament and lays out the Conservatives' plans – is designed to embarrass and neutralize the Liberals on key issues they hope to campaign on eventually, such as Kyoto and Afghanistan.

They say Harper has put on paper what has been saying since he was elected: that the government will not meet its climate–change commitments under the Kyoto accord, but it will take action to cut greenhouse gases.

Harper will also remain committed to the Afghanistan mission, while restating that there will be a parliamentary debate on the issue after his hand–picked panel reports back with its recommendation on the future of the deployment.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will oppose the speech if it's too extreme – a move that would bring down the minority Conservative government, given that the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois have already said they'll vote against it.

But with the Tories well ahead in the polls and the Liberals struggling in public opinion and fundraising, Dion's troops admit privately that they will glumly accept the political beating and almost certainly allow the speech to pass.

One senior Liberal said the most likely option for Dion is having some front–bench MPs vote against the throne speech while backbench MPs abstain.

"It would have to be completely disgusting (for us to oppose it)," said the senior Liberal.

"I mean, it would pretty much have to say, 'We're staying in Afghanistan until 2020.' "

The Tories hope to pressure Dion into either rushing into an election or risk losing credibility on his party's dearest issues.

The Liberals counter that the throne speech is only a blueprint, and they'll make their stand when it comes to legislation.

Conservatives dangled the election option in front of Dion on Monday, repeating Harper's suggestion that even if the current Parliament survives the throne speech vote, the Tories plan to keep calling the shots.

The Conservatives would rather talk about major tax cuts and get-tough-on-crime initiatives, which the throne speech will also signal.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said Monday that the speech herald tax cuts and fewer internal trade barriers.

And Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has said he will crack down on gun crimes and juvenile offenders.

"The Dion Liberals can either support those priorities by endorsing the government's mandate to continue getting things done, or alternatively trigger an election," Industry Minister Jim Prentice wrote in an e-mail.

"Continued Liberal obstruction in the Parliament of Canada will not be an alternative and support for the throne speech will be taken as support for the government's agenda."

That sort of majority-government talk from a minority government means Dion might find himself in the untenable position of having to rescue Harper on every confidence vote while the NDP and Bloc oppose him.

Shields and swords; Are the Tories setting up a complicated trap?

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.10.16

SECTION: News

PAGE: A8

BYLINE: News Analysis by Stephen Maher Ottawa Bureau

ILLUSTRATION: Prime Minister Stephen Harper, shown last week with former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, will deliver his throne speech today. (TOM HANSON / CP)

WORD COUNT: 795

OTTAWA – When Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean reads Stephen Harper's speech from the throne tonight, the Conservatives will be arming themselves with two shields and two swords.

The shields – policies on Afghanistan and the environment – are designed to reassure Canadians about issues that pose problems for the governing party.

The swords – policies on crime and taxes – play to the Tories' strengths and their opponents' weaknesses.

Of the two swords, crime may be the sharper. Polling shows that Canadians are concerned about crime, and many believe that our justice system is too easy on criminals. Polling suggests Canadians trust the Tories to get tough.

That looked to be top of mind for Conservatives as MPs streamed back to the capital Monday night for a showdown over the government's agenda that could send Canadians back to the ballot box this fall.

The Bloc Québécois and the NDP have said they won't support the throne speech. The Tories, buoyed by polls that show them in majority territory, have their election buses gassed up and a glimmer in their eyes. The Liberals, disorganized, cash-poor and weakened by infighting, look to want to avoid a fight. They are expected to vote for the throne speech or abstain, avoiding an election that might be tough on them.

But Mr. Harper has said that his government plans to make more bills confidence motions this fall – bills that could spark an election if they are defeated.

The Tories would probably like it if the bill that leads to an election is a crime bill. The first one on the order paper is a criminal justice bill – likely a mini-omnibus bill that would make changes throughout the Criminal Code. Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has promised an overhaul of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and the Conservatives plan to reintroduce another half-dozen get-tough crime bills from last year that they blame the Liberals for stalling.

The bills, if passed, would:– Impose mandatory penalties for firearms offences.– Raise the age of consent for sex.– Make it easier to impose dangerous-offender status on repeat criminals.– Toughen bail provisions for those charged with firearms offences.– Get tougher on drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs.

The Tories can deem any of these bills confidence measures, which would mean the Liberals would have to vote for them or face an election.

"Are they setting up a trap?" Liberal MP Garth Turner said Monday. "I'm sure they are. I think it's probably one or two or three traps that are set quite deliberately for us. We need to be cautious and make sure that we're messaging out to Canadians that we care about our sons and daughters and families as much as anyone else."

It would be a complicated trap. In a minority Parliament, the opposition parties can stall and amend bills in committee for months, but they eventually have to go back to the House.

The Conservatives' chief government whip, Jay Hill, said Canadians could face a vote if the government refuses to accept opposition amendments.

"What happens if we go to reinsert those clauses that have been taken out at committee and say that those are confidence?" he said Monday. "It's all hypothetical at this point."

Mr. Hill said the government's crime bills are "in lockstep with the Canadian people."

Liberals dislike the prospect of fighting an election on the Tories' chosen turf: crime and taxes.

"If it's fought on cutting taxes and fighting crime, Harper's laughing all the way to the bank," a Liberal strategist said Monday. "I'd rather put needles under my fingernails."

The Tories relish the prospect of a campaign fought on crime. During the last election campaign, Jane Creba, a 15-year-old girl, was shot to death on a Toronto street. The NDP, Tories and Liberals all vowed to tackle crime. Voters believed the Tories.

Since then, the Liberals and NDP have dragged their feet, said Geoff Norquay, a Tory strategist and lobbyist with Earncliffe Strategy Group.

"During the campaign, there wasn't much difference in the positioning of the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP," he said. "But all of a sudden, once in office, it seemed to serve the purpose of the Liberals and the NDP to deny any progress."

The Liberals and the NDP say they are co-operating and they point to problems with some of the legislation, but those arguments might be difficult to make in an election campaign.

It all fits in with Tory plans, polling companies say.

"It's part of the narrative that they're trying to nurture in regards to (Liberal Leader) Stephane Dion, that he's a weak leader and he's also weak on crime, as opposed to the prime minister, who is being portrayed as being decisive and tough on crime," said Nick Nanos of pollster SES.

He said crime is a strong issue with suburban voters, a "key geographic target group if they want to have any chance of forming a majority government."

It is an issue that resonates everywhere, said Darrell Bricker of polling firm Ipsos Reid.

"People everywhere think it's a problem," he said. "It's not that they've necessarily experienced it themselves. If you look at the statistics, crime is actually down. There's a perception out there that there's a lot of it."

"You don't have to be living in downtown Halifax to feel like you're threatened. You could be living in the Annapolis Valley and think the same thing."()

Military to hire more civilians at Kandahar; Private contractors will take over some medical positions in Afghanistan

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A6
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
WORD COUNT: 412

OTTAWA – Canada's military plans to expand the role of civilian contractors at the main coalition base in Kandahar to ease the strain on the heavily taxed army.

Senior defence officials say they hope soon to replace some uniformed medical staff, such X-ray technicians and health clerks, with civilian contract employees in Afghanistan.

They would be part of a growing workforce of contractors, which has so far included vehicle mechanics and computer maintainers.

"Certainly the demand is there for them," said Maj. Gwen Walsh, the manager of operational contracts.

Finding bunk space at Kandahar Airfield, NATO's principal base in the region, is the biggest impediment to adding more civilian technicians, she said.

But the growth of contractors doing what have been military jobs a few years ago has some experts concerned.

Dave Perry, at Dalhousie University's conflict studies centre in Halifax, says deep budget cuts of the past have left the Forces with no alternative but to turn to civilian contractors.

"If it wants to deploy overseas, the Forces has no choice – no choice whatsoever – but to employ civilian support," Perry said in a recent interview.

And it is a costly option, according to a research paper last spring by Perry, who looked at the advantages and pitfalls of contractors. "For the short term, based upon some initial estimates for the deployment in Kandahar, it's up to 10 times more expensive" than employing military staff, he said.

But Perry said that initial outlay may be balanced over time when the costs of recruiting, training and long-term benefits for soldiers are factored in.

Last fall, the army examined increasing the number of contractors as it struggled to keep troop rotations going until February 2009, when the country's current mission expires.

At the time, the military also looked at using existing air force and navy members to fill support jobs outside of the heavy fortified airfield, such as convoy drivers.

Military to hire more civilians at Kandahar; Private contractors will take over some medical positions in Afghanistan

But documents obtained under the Access to Information Act show the idea of so-called "re-rolling" doesn't have much support among military planners and may not even be necessary.

Since Canadian troops deployed to southern Afghanistan in the spring of 2006, the number of contractors working in support and logistics roles has more than doubled to nearly 200.

The privatized support dates back to Canada's multiple deployments in the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s. Anticipating more overseas mission in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the federal government turned to defence-engineering giant SNC Lavalin, which won a five-year, \$500-million contract that has renewal options running until 2012.

The federal government has already quietly opted to renew the contract, which has set renewal dates of 2007, 2009 and 2011.

Unlike controversial U.S. corporations, such as Blackwater, Canadian contractors are not allowed to carry weapons and do not venture outside the heavily fortified confines of the base.

PM's manoeuvre a shrewd one

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.10.16

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: National Affairs

BYLINE: James Travers

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 580

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 Stéphane Dion.

This is how politics is played when it's played shrewdly. Days before today's 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 Chrétien'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 handpicked 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 resumé 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. 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 U.S. after saying "no" to joining the Iraq invasion and ballistic missile defence.

Understanding Canada's motivation then is 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 Chrétien and 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 Harper 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 is a national affairs columnist. Copyright 2007 Torstar Syndication Services

Keep sending troops, says UN envoy

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.10.16

SECTION: International

PAGE: C10

SOURCE: The Associated Press

BYLINE: Edith M. Lederer

DATELINE: United Nations

WORD COUNT: 463

The top UN envoy in Afghanistan on Monday urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force in Afghanistan not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight the Taliban.

Tom Koenigs said that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, "numbers are not a measure of capability."

NATO remains the most capable force to defend the Kabul government against a tough insurgency, he said.

Insurgent violence in Afghanistan is at its highest level since U.S.-led forces invaded the country in 2001 to oust the hard-line Islamic Taliban rulers, who harboured al-Qaida leaders blamed for planning the attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

The focus of the violence has been in Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces, but the insurgents are increasingly using Iraq-style tactics, such as roadside bombs, suicide attacks and kidnappings, to hit foreign and Afghan targets around the country.

Even though levels of violence have subsided in the past two months, Koenigs said, the number of violent incidents has increased by approximately 30 per cent from last year.

The United Nations has recorded the detonation of 606 improvised explosive devices and 133 suicide attacks compared to 88 by this time last year, Koenigs said.

"The sad result is a significant increase in the numbers of civilian casualties – at least 1,200 have been killed since January this year," he told the UN Security Council.

Koenigs told reporters afterward that better co-ordination among international and Afghan military forces and the UN mission he heads has led to improvements in the rules of engagement, "and we hope by that we can prevent civilian casualties to a certain degree."

This includes orders to all regional commands to adjust tactics where possible to increase protection of civilians, he said.

"It is imperative that the protection of civilians remains at the forefront of everyone's efforts in Afghanistan, for a failure to secure the population's support will not only protract the conflict causing further devastation, but also hold the country's development hostage to violence, and undermine the legitimacy of our efforts," he told the council.

Koenigs stressed that NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, remains essential to fight the insurgency.

"Because of this, nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment: now is not the time to wobble," he said.

NATO troops – mostly from Britain, Canada, the United States and the Netherlands – have been on the front lines of the fight. Several other NATO countries including Spain, Turkey and Germany refuse to send troops to the southern battlefields.

Rising casualties and public disenchantment have triggered calls for a withdrawal among some countries on the front line – notably Canada and the Netherlands.

About 2,300 Canadian troops are in Kandahar province where the Taliban have long been active. Seventy-one Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

The mandate for the Canadian mission expires in February 2009. The Conservative government in Ottawa has indicated it will decide by April next year whether the current mission will be extended.

General shares humour, insight at leadership forum; Hillier calls troops 'treasures in uniform'

IDNUMBER 200710160089
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: City
PAGE: C1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Wayne Cuddington, The Ottawa Citizen / Gen. Rick Hillier decried poor medical care for Afghan children. ;
BYLINE: Bruce Ward
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 296

There are moments of levity for Canadian troops even in combat situations, Canada's top soldier said yesterday.

Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier told how soldiers downwind of a burning marijuana field in Afghanistan suddenly found themselves craving snacks.

"They couldn't keep up with the orders for munchies," Gen. Hillier said yesterday in a breakfast speech to the Canadian Medical Association's annual leaders' forum.

Gen. Hillier's description of Canadian troops catching a buzz from billowing marijuana smoke caused gales of laughter among the audience — a considerable achievement considering it was barely 8 a.m. when he told the story.

Gen. Hillier, who is admired by his troops partly for his puckish sense of humour, also praised the country's armed forces personnel yesterday as "treasures in uniform."

He spoke of other surreal, but inspirational moments in Afghanistan, such as seeing a Leopard tank pull up to the drive-through window of a Tim Hortons restaurant set up in Kandahar. "There's nothing more Canadian than a double-double," he said.

Afghanistan is "an enthralling country" filled with children "who are absolutely exquisite," said Gen. Hillier.

"But two of every five children die before age five because basic medical care is not there."

He said Canadian troops are making a difference in Afghanistan with such measures as overseeing the building of more than 1,000 wells in the country. Potable well water makes an enormous difference in village life, he said, particularly for girls and women who no longer have to walk five kilometres to get fresh water.

These projects give young Afghans "hope for the future," Gen. Hillier said.

He also told the doctors that "fitness is back" in the Canadian Forces, and that recruits will be required to meet tough physical standards throughout their military career.

"Fitness is a bona-fide requirement for those who wear the uniform," he said.

Soldiers in Afghanistan are "carrying and wearing about 120 pounds of equipment" while on patrol in 45-degree heat.

"If you are not fit, your chances of survival diminish rapidly."

The CMA's leaders' forum is intended to help doctors build their leadership and management skills.

"Leadership trumps management," Gen. Hillier told CMA members attending the forum's plenary session at a downtown hotel.

Serving gods of war

IDNUMBER 200710160038
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: Margaret Tyson
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 155

Many criticize the Nobel committee who awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Al Gore, but it makes perfect sense to award the Nobel Prize to a prominent environmentalist.

Protecting the creative processes of the Earth is the essential first step in the struggle against hunger and poverty which are often the sources of conflict.

People who work for the health of the planet must, by definition, work for peace because modern warfare is the most polluting activity that mankind has ever invented.

Unfortunately, in Canada, the government's foreign policy is dedicated to the Afghanistan war, as evidenced by the amount of money and energy that Stephen Harper is pouring into that futile exercise. It does not seem to have occurred to our prime minister that his unabashed love for war casts serious doubt on his commitment to the environment. He cannot serve Mother Earth and the gods of war.

Margaret Tyson,

Ottawa

Canada pledges \$8M to improve girls' education

IDNUMBER 200710160016
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
BYLINE: Jessey Bird
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 163

Canada promised another \$8 million over five years for education in Afghanistan yesterday — this time putting the focus on women.

The funding, which is part of the government's 10-year, \$1.2-billion commitment, will be combined with an investment of \$1.3 million from the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada.

The total investment of \$9.3 million will be used for the Aga Khan's Girls' Education Support Program, which focuses on the northern provinces of Bamyan, Baghlan and Badakshan.

The program will benefit more than 100,000 girls, 4,600 teachers and 350 schools, Khalil Shariff, chief executive officer for the foundation, said.

"They've got inadequate facilities for most students ... especially girls," Mr. Shariff said. "Adolescent women are going to school where there are no bathrooms. You can imagine that this can quickly turn into a situation where girls simply do not want to go to school."

The international development agency's program will include improvement to school buildings and facilities, early childhood education, secondary education for girls and teacher training for women.

Would-be bomber kills himself, family; 'We don't want you to go to paradise this way,' mother pleaded

IDNUMBER 200710160015
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Agence France-Presse
WORD COUNT: 193

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – A would-be suicide bomber killed himself and five members of his family as his mother tried to stop him from carrying out a Taliban-inspired attack in Afghanistan, police said yesterday.

The 22-year-old man's bomb-filled vest blew up as his mother made desperate attempts to stop him from carrying out his deadly mission in the southern province of Uruzgan on Sunday.

"His mother grabbed his vest and said, 'Take this off, we don't want you to do this'," Uruzgan police Chief Juma Gul Himat said, quoting the bomber's father who was wounded in the blast.

"This was when the explosives went off. Two of his brothers, two of his sisters, his mother and Abdul Samad (the bomber) — they all died."

Another child and Mr. Samad's father were wounded in the explosion and were being treated in hospital in the Uruzgan capital, Tirin Kot, the police chief said.

The ministry said the militant had been trained in a Pakistani Islamic school and was tasked to carry out a suicide attack on security forces in Afghanistan.

"He said, 'I am going to carry out jihad against the foreigners and go to paradise,'" Chief Himat said.

His horrified mother tried to take the suicide vest off him, saying, "We don't need your money, we don't want you to go to paradise this way," Chief Himat said.

Stay the course in Afghanistan, UN envoy warns West

IDNUMBER 200710160014
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
BYLINE: Steven Edwards
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 287

UNITED NATIONS – Echoing former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the United Nations' Afghan envoy has warned Canada and other countries with troops in Afghanistan that "now is not the time to wobble."

Tom Koenigs, who heads the UN's 1,000–strong political mission in Afghanistan, said yesterday that the Afghan government remains dependent on international forces for its survival.

Though levels of violence have fallen in the past two months, they're still up 30 per cent over last year.

"Nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment," Mr. Koenigs told a special meeting of the UN Security Council.

Mrs. Thatcher gave similar advice to then–president George H. W. Bush as he appeared to hesitate about the need for resolute U.S. action in the run–up to the first Gulf War: "This is no time to wobble, George," she said.

Mr. Koenigs' warning was most poignant for Canada, where opposition parties want to see no extension of Canada's 2,500–troop deployment in Afghanistan beyond its current expiry date of February 2009.

He said the Afghan National Army is expected to field up to 70,000 soldiers by the end of next year, but added "numbers are not a measure of capability."

He also signalled that much more time is needed to develop a well–functioning Afghan police force, and said only the continued presence of international forces could keep the insurgency at bay and allow efforts to combat corruption and drug production within the country to continue.

"The successes of recent months deserve to be translated into visible, durable results for all Afghans," he said.

Speaking later with reporters, Mr. Koenigs also praised the call this month by Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier for the UN to raise the profile of its Afghan mission by appointing a "high–level" envoy to head it — much like former British prime minister Tony Blair was appointed special envoy to the Middle East peace process.

Minister names first veterans' ombudsman

IDNUMBER 200710160013
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 70

Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson yesterday announced the appointment of Canada's first veterans' ombudsman.

Col. Patrick B. Stogran, most recently the associate director general of science and technology operations at Defence Research and Development Canada, will be the first person to serve in the post.

Col. Stogran, who studied electrical engineering at the Royal Military College, has commanded Forces troops in Afghanistan. His office will be located in the national capital region.

General unfazed by home–front politics; Debate over mission's future doesn't 'really impact my job'

IDNUMBER 200710160012
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CanWest News Service / Lt.–Gen. Michel Gauthier, centre, commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, shown speaking with Afghan army officers last summer on the eve of Operation Medusa. Lt.–Gen. Gauthier said yesterday he was optimistic about the mission. While he acknowledged there is work to be done, he is pleased with the 'small steps' so far. ;

DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen

WORD COUNT: 733

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – The senior general directing Canada's war in Afghanistan says the political furore at home over the future of the mission has not changed how he does his work.

"All of these discussions do not really impact my job. It does not affect planning," Lt.–Gen. Michel Gauthier, head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, said in an exclusive interview yesterday. "Our focus is on the mandate period. The horizon that I look at is 12 to 18 months. There is not much need at my level to look beyond that."

As Parliament prepared to hear today's speech from the throne, in which Afghanistan could be a central theme, the commander of all Canadian Forces overseas added that he welcomes the involvement of a blue–ribbon panel struck by the Harper government last week to recommend what Canada should do here after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

"It provides an opportunity to generate a better understanding of the full scope of Canadian operations," Lt.–Gen. Gauthier said, referring also to the presence here of officials from the departments of Foreign Affairs and Correctional Service Canada, as well as the Canadian International Development Agency and the RCMP.

"I hope that it will lead to a better understanding for Canadians, beyond 15–second sound bites, of all that needs to be done here and the role that we ought to play."

Moments before he boarded an aircraft for Canada at the end of his 18th visit to Afghanistan since 2002, Lt.–Gen. Gauthier quietly outlined the successes and failures of the mission so far and the long, slow road ahead.

The three–leaf general, who seldom speaks at length with journalists, had "observed a sense of confidence that is palpable up and down the chain of command," during his most recent visit. "We have the initiative. From our perspective, the insurgents are in disarray. The leadership has been seriously interrupted. We are getting indications that they are losing their willingness to fight."

But, at the same time, he added, "I don't want to sound too rosy."

"The Taliban are continuing to fight. They will still launch attacks and plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices). From time to time, they will mount an offensive. But they are outmatched and they know it."

It has been a steep learning curve with some miscalculations along the way, Lt.-Gen. Gauthier acknowledged, particularly with respect to the Afghan National Police.

Part of the plan had been for Afghan police to take over some of the security responsibilities after last year's battlefield successes, "but as we came into (this) summer, and the height of the fighting season, we were not able to hold the checkpoints," Lt.-Gen. Gauthier said. As the checkpoints failed, Canadian troops pulled back.

"This was a conscious retraction. It was not a retreat. It was a consolidation," he said. We gave up some ground because of the support that was available to us at the time."

As part of NATO's mentoring plan, the Afghan National Army, which is generally held in high regard by the Canadians, has been deploying with Canadian help into new areas over the past two months. But the police, who also have Canadian mentors, have not yet inspired similar confidence.

Recalling a conversation he had in June with Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who was about to deploy from Quebec as the commander of the incoming Royal 22nd Regiment battle group, Lt.-Gen. Gauthier said that a holding operation was planned through the summer fighting season. But the regiment, known as the Van Doo, exceeded expectations by quickly establishing new checkpoints and building police substations across the Zhari and Panjwahi districts.

Notwithstanding a recent UN report that found violence has increased in southern Afghanistan, "Kandahar City is not 100-per-cent safe, but it is safer," he said.

"It is not Ottawa and will not be like Ottawa soon. But shops are staying open longer, and this speaks to a level of confidence of the people. I was on Route Summit two days ago, and there were Afghans out on motorcycles or walking with their kids. Where three platoons were dug in last year, there is now a police substation."

As for the overall picture, "clearly progress is fragile," the general said.

"I don't want to be a propagandist. What we have done in the past year are small steps forward," he said.

Military planners spent the past six months "looking at where we want to be next summer," Lt.-Gen Gauthier said.

"Fighting will not end then, but if we are successful over the next eight months, there will be a lot fewer Afghan and Canadian casualties," he predicted.

"I am confident of this as an immediate objective. I am not saying everything will be OK next summer. But it will be better than this summer, which was better than last summer."

Afghan decisions all Hillier's, authors say; General told Martin Kandahar was good PR

IDNUMBER 200710160007
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
BYLINE: Elizabeth Thompson
SOURCE: The Montreal Gazette
WORD COUNT: 412

It's not true that Canadian soldiers are deployed to the volatile province of Kandahar, rather than Afghanistan's safer capital of Kabul, because of dithering by former prime minister Paul Martin, a new insider examination of the mission says.

Instead, a book by two experts argues that lobbying by Canada's top general, Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, helped overcome Mr. Martin's reservations about the mission.

In their book, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, authors Eugene Lang, a chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, and academic Janice Gross Stein, counter charges levelled by Mr. Martin's predecessor, Jean Chrétien, in a memoir that hit bookstores yesterday.

Mr. Chrétien says in his book that he sent soldiers to Afghanistan, but after the Taliban fell, arranged that they would be stationed near the safer Kabul area.

"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. Chrétien writes.

Mr. Martin has refused to comment on Mr. Chrétien's suggestion that his indecision was responsible for the loss of Canadian lives in Afghanistan.

However, in interviews with Mr. Lang and Ms. Gross Stein, Mr. Martin says he was unenthusiastic about Gen. Hillier's proposal to deploy forces to Kandahar to repair Canada's relationship with the U.S. and had other priorities for Canada's resources.

"Afghanistan was not a priority for me the way Darfur, Haiti and the Middle East were," Mr. Martin told the authors. "Afghanistan had become our biggest aid commitment, and it shouldn't have been."

In fact, Mr. Martin was one of the few members of the government to openly challenge Gen. Hillier's proposal and doubted it would bring the political and military benefits the general had promised.

"I made four demands of Hillier before I agreed to the mission," Mr. Martin is quoted as saying, adding that he told the general: "I want in, but I (also) want out. We do peacemaking and reconstruction and win hearts and minds. I am going to make a big demand on Darfur soon and you have to tell me I have all the troops I need. And you must have the capacity for Haiti if that blows up again."

But after Gen. Hillier gave Mr. Martin the assurances he was seeking, the Liberal cabinet approved a mission in which the combat infantry task force would withdraw from Kandahar early in 2007.

The authors say some of Mr. Martin's reluctance to approve the mission was his perception that it was a legacy of Mr. Chrétien's government.

Harper far ahead of Dion, leadership poll shows; Liberals in no position to bring down Tories over throne speech

IDNUMBER 200710160002
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1 / FRONT
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway, with files from Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 644

Stephen Harper has never been accused of being the Mr. Charisma of Canadian politics, but the prime minister swamps his chief rival, Liberal Stéphane Dion, in the leadership ratings, a new national poll says.

The poll, released amid election speculation that waxes and wanes by the hour, also says Mr. Harper is giving Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe a run for his money in Quebec, where residents view the two men as almost equal in their leadership qualities and skills.

The poll, based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults over the past week, was conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global National by Ipsos Reid.

Nationally, it says 63 per cent of Canadians gave Mr. Harper "great" or "good" leadership marks, compared with only 36 per cent for Mr. Dion.

NDP leader Jack Layton scored 57 per cent, and Mr. Duceppe 15 per cent.

In Quebec, however, Mr. Duceppe's leadership rating (63 per cent) was in a virtual tie with Mr. Layton's (64 per cent), and only slightly above Mr. Harper's at 61 per cent. Mr. Dion was dead last in his home province, with 33 per cent of support in the province.

The survey, which explored voter attitudes on a range of issues, lands as the minority Conservative government prepares to announce its agenda for the coming parliamentary session. The government's plans will be outlined in a speech from the throne, to be delivered tonight by Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean.

Among other things, the poll said there appears to be no single deal-breaker issue that a majority of Canadians think warrants bringing down the government and forcing an election.

It said the majority of Canadians (56 per cent) would blame the opposition parties and their desire to "score political points" rather than the Harper government if the Tories were defeated on the speech. Forty-one per cent agreed the government would be defeated because the speech "contains policies that are bad for the country," and 53 per cent indicated they want their MP to vote in favour of the throne speech.

Darrell Bricker, president of Ipsos Reid, said the survey results are terrible news for Mr. Dion, and said he should do his best to avoid an election.

Harper far ahead of Dion, leadership poll shows; Liberals in no position to bring down Tories over ~~86~~one sp

Mr. Bricker said Mr. Dion's numbers reflect the "pounding" he has taken because of party infighting and the Liberals' loss of the once-safe seat of Outremont in a recent Quebec byelection.

"The guy who wins out of all this is Stephen Harper," he said. "If he has an election, he's in as good a position as anybody can be going into it, though he'd probably like to be a little bit higher (in the polls).

"But also, if he doesn't have an election and the speech from the throne gets through, he should have a pretty strong mandate to implement it."

The survey follows an Ipsos Reid poll released Friday that said the Tories enjoyed the support of 40 per cent of Canadians, 12 points more than the Liberals.

Asked directly in the poll released yesterday whether they would vote for Mr. Harper or Mr. Dion if an election were held today, 56 per cent of respondents picked Mr. Harper, and 35 per cent picked Mr. Dion.

The poll showed there was no single issue among 13 listed that prompted a majority of respondents to "draw a line in the sand" for the government, Mr. Bricker said.

The issue that prompted the most support was help for families living in poverty. A total of 42 per cent said it should be in the throne speech, but 50 per cent said the government should not be defeated if it is not there.

Other issues included compliance with the Kyoto environmental accord, tax cuts, the future of the Afghan mission and keeping the gun registry.

On Afghanistan, a solid majority of those interviewed (54 per cent) said they want Canadian troops to continue to be stationed in Afghanistan beyond February 2009. But the poll found many — about four in 10 — said they want the mission changed from combat duties.

Mr. Bricker said the poll shows Canadians are open to discussion on the issues of the day, and that they are content with a minority government.

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

Harper glows against Dion in poll

IDNUMBER 200710160087
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: D9
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Norma Greenaway
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 627

OTTAWA — Stephen Harper has never been accused of being the Mr. Charisma of Canadian politics, but the prime minister swamps his chief rival, Liberal Stephane Dion, in the leadership ratings, a new national poll says.

The poll, released amid election speculation that waxes and wanes by the hour, also says Harper is giving Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe a run for his money in Quebec, where residents view the two men as almost equal in their leadership qualities and skills.

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In Quebec, however, Duceppe's leadership rating (63 per cent) was in a virtual tie with Layton's (64 per cent), and only slightly above Harper's at 61 per cent. Dion was dead last in his home province, with 33 per cent of support in the province.

The survey, which explored voter attitudes on a range of issues, lands as the minority Conservative government prepared to announce its agenda for the coming parliamentary session. The government's plans will be outlined in a speech from the throne, to be delivered tonight by Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean.

Among other things, the poll said there appears to be no single deal-breaker issue that a majority of Canadians think warrants bringing down the government and forcing an election at this time.

It said the majority of Canadians (56 per cent) would blame the opposition parties and their desire to "score political points," rather than the Harper government, if the Tories were defeated on the speech. Forty-one per cent agreed the government would be defeated because the speech "contains policies that are bad for the country, and 53 per cent indicated they want their MP to vote in favour of the throne speech.

Darrell Bricker, president of Ipsos-Reid, said the survey results are terrible news for Dion, who, he says, should do his best to avoid an election.

Bricker said Dion's numbers reflect the "pounding" he has taken because of party infighting and the Liberals' loss of the once-safe seat of Outremont in a recent Quebec byelection.

"The guy who wins out of all this is Stephen Harper," he said. "If he has an election, he's in as good a position as anybody can be going into it, though he'd probably like to be a little bit higher (in the polls).

"But also, if he doesn't have an election and the speech from the throne gets through, he should have a pretty strong mandate to implement it."

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Bricker said the poll shows Canadians are open to discussion on the issues of the day, and that they are content with minority government.

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

— With files from Juliet O'Neill

Time to bring home our troops

IDNUMBER 200710160052
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: B11
BYLINE: Florence Stratton
SOURCE: The Leader-Post
WORD COUNT: 264

Regina City Council recently voted 10-1 in favour of "Support Our Troops" decals being placed on all city vehicles.

Despite the claims made by the councillors who voted for the motion, "Support Our Troops" is not a politically neutral statement.

Rather, it is a political message of support for Canada's military engagement in Afghanistan. As Prime Minister Stephen Harper himself stated at a support-our-troops rally: "You cannot say you are for our military and then not stand behind them in the great things they do."

The yellow ribbon decals are produced and sold by Canex, an agency of the Department of National Defence.

It is unacceptable for public vehicles to carry any political message. In Regina, it is against the law.

We are told that Canadian troops are in Afghanistan to help the Afghan people. Since the war began in 2001, over 7,000 Afghan civilians have been killed. In the south alone, where Canadians are fighting, 200,000 Afghans have been displaced from their homes and are in refugee camps. Of the estimated \$6 billion Canada has spent on the war, less than 10 per cent has been allocated to aid and reconstruction.

Canada is now in its sixth year as part of the U.S.-led NATO occupation of Afghanistan. Seventy-one Canadians have already been killed. Hundreds more have been injured, many of them seriously. In Afghanistan, there is also the risk of exposure to depleted uranium, a chemically toxic and radioactive dust that is known to cause cancer, kidney damage, immune system failings and congenital abnormalities. Between 10 and 15 per cent of soldiers in combat zones suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

The best way to support our troops is to bring them home.

Florence Stratton

Regina

bc-CCN-ON-RED-HOL

DATE: 2007.10.15

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 184

^Red Fridays-Send a Greeting Card to the Troops With Operation Santa @<

October 15, 2007

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - Oct. 15, 2007) - Canadian supporters of the troops are welcomed to send a greeting card to the troops this holiday season. Send you own or download a printable greeting card at www.redfridays.ca and write in a personal message of support. Cards are sent to Red Fridays Foundation of Canada, Operation Santa Claus Greeting Cards, PO Box 31063 Westney Heights RPO, Ajax, ON Canada L1T 3V2. The greetings cards will be distributed randomly to the men and woman currently serving in Afghanistan. Deadline for sending in a greeting card is to be received no later than October 26, 2007. No money or gifts are allowed in the cards, only the card in non standard envelope can be sent for security. Visit www.redfridays.ca and click on holiday greetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Red Fridays Foundation of Canada

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Website: www.redfridays.ca

INDUSTRY: Professional Services - Non Profits

SUBJECT: HOL

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

Bloc Quebecois leader looking for his demands to be met in Throne Speech

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 145

MONTREAL _ Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe appears ready for a federal election, but says it's Prime Minister Stephen Harper who is pressing the issue.

The sovereigntist leader met today in Montreal with the Bloc's election committee to discuss plans for a possible campaign and the state of the party's finances.

Duceppe is repeating that the minority Conservative government has to agree to five conditions if it wants the Bloc's support.

They include limiting federal spending power, respecting the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan in February 2009, and help for Quebec regions hit by the forestry crisis.

The Bloc leader also points out that it's Harper who is seeking the confidence of Parliament by tabling a Throne Speech on Tuesday.

Duceppe says he hasn't had any indication Harper would support the conditions, adding only that both men met at the end of August and the prime minister knows where the Bloc stands.

CBC National News, Monday, October 15

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 426

TORONTO_William Mullins-Johnson has been acquitted by the Ontario Court of Appeal; he spent more than 12 years in prison after being convicted of killing his four-year-old niece; the Sault Ste. Marie man was convicted in 1994 of first-degree murder, partly on the now-questionable testimony of pathologist Dr. Charles Smith. CVD

OTTAWA_RCMP colleagues, relatives and federal politicians paid their respects to slain Const. Christopher Worden; the 30-year-old died Oct. 6 after responding to a call for assistance in Hay River, south of Yellowknife. CVD

OTTAWA_A key witness in the Air India Inquiry is too scared to tell authorities what she knows, according to former CSIS officer William Laurie; the woman, identified only as E, says a key suspect in the bombing, Ajaib Singh Bagri, asked her to use her car to drive some bags to the airport; she says he threatened to kill her if she told anyone. CVD

OTTAWA_The Conservative minority government will lay out its new priorities Tuesday with its speech from the throne, a speech some say could trigger an election; announcements on tax cuts, crime-fighting measures and environmental plans are anticipated. CVD

OTTAWA_The memoirs of former prime minister Jean Chretien have been released, in which he says indecision on the part of his successor Paul Martin led to Canada being on the front lines in Kandahar. CVD

MONTREAL_Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says former prime minister Jean Chretien lied to Quebecers just a few days before the 1995 sovereignty referendum; he says Chretien told Quebecers 12 years ago the referendum question was clear and that voting Yes meant they'd be leaving Canada. CVD

UNDATED_Canadian veterans now have an ombudsman to whom they can take their concerns and complaints;

Col. Pat Stogran served as commander of the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Afghanistan in 2002 and will take up his new post on Remembrance Day. CVD

VICTORIA_Tsawwassen Chief Kim Baird addressed politicians from the B.C. legislature to mark the ratification of the first urban aboriginal land-claims treaty in the province's history; she was the second non-government affiliated person in B.C. history to speak from the chamber. CVD

UNDATED_Interpol has identified an English teacher teaching in South Korea as the main suspect in a pedophilia case; the agency obtained about 200 pictures that show 12 boys being sexually abused in Vietnam and Cambodia. CVD

CHINA_China's President Hu Jintao says contemporary China must stave off rampant corruption and pollution as it undergoes its rapid economic transformation; he addressed 2,200 delegates Monday at the 17th Communist Party congress. CVD

Harper aims to turn up political heat on Dion with throne speech

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: ENVIRONMENT JUSTICE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 632

OTTAWA _ With his chief opponent down, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appears set to use Tuesday's throne speech to deliver a few swift kicks to the Liberal party in places that hurt.

Government insiders suggest the speech _ which reopens Parliament and lays out the Conservatives' plans _ is designed to embarrass and neutralize the Liberals on key issues they hope to campaign on eventually, such as Kyoto and Afghanistan.

They say Harper has put on paper what has been saying since he was elected: that the government will not meet its climate-change commitments under the Kyoto accord, but it will take action to cut greenhouse gases.

Harper will also remain committed to the Afghanistan mission, while restating that there will be a parliamentary debate on the issue after his hand-picked panel reports back with its recommendation on the future of the deployment.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will oppose the speech if it's too extreme _ a move that would bring down the minority Conservative government, given that the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois have already suggested they'll vote against it.

But with the Tories well ahead in the polls and the Liberals struggling in public opinion and fundraising, Dion's troops admit privately that they will glumly accept the political beating and almost certainly allow the speech to pass.

One senior Liberal said the most likely option for Dion is having some front-bench MPs vote against the throne speech while backbench MPs abstain.

"It would have to be completely disgusting (for us to oppose it)," said the senior Liberal.

"I mean, it would pretty much have to say, 'We're staying in Afghanistan until 2020.' "

The Tories hope to pressure Dion into either rushing into an election or risk losing credibility on his party's dearest issues.

The Liberals counter that the throne speech is only a blueprint, and they'll make their stand when it comes to legislation.

Conservatives dangled the election option in front of Dion on Monday, repeating Harper's suggestion that even if the current Parliament survives the throne speech vote, the Tories plan to keep calling the shots.

The Conservatives would rather talk about major tax cuts and get-tough-on-crime initiatives, which the throne speech will also signal.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said Monday that the speech herald tax cuts and fewer internal trade barriers.

And Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has said he will crack down on gun crimes and juvenile offenders.

“The Dion Liberals can either support those priorities by endorsing the government's mandate to continue getting things done, or alternatively trigger an election,” Industry Minister Jim Prentice wrote in an e-mail.

“Continued Liberal obstruction in the Parliament of Canada will not be an alternative and support for the throne speech will be taken as support for the government's agenda.”

That sort of majority-government talk from a minority government means Dion might find himself in the untenable position of having to rescue Harper on every confidence vote while the NDP and Bloc oppose him.

The first test could occur as early as Thursday, in a vote on a Bloc Quebecois sub-amendment to the throne speech.

While that motion is only a matter of confidence if Harper declares it to be so, a vote next week on the full throne speech is necessarily a make-or-break affair for the government.

As for Afghanistan, Harper has already demonstrated publicly how he intends to insulate himself against the thorny issue in the event of a fall election campaign.

Last week, he named former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley to lead a panel that will spend the next few months examining Canada's future options in the war-torn country.

The throne speech is expected to refer to that process and promise a parliamentary debate on Canada's options beyond 2009.

The Liberals and Bloc are calling for a pullout by 2009 from Canada's current combat role in Kandahar, and the NDP wants an immediate end to the deployment

The House of Commons order paper served notice Monday of other potential headaches ahead for Dion.

It declared that the first item of business in the new Parliament will be the security certificates used to detain and deport non-citizens suspected of terrorism.

The Supreme Court of Canada struck them down earlier this year as a violation of fundamental rights _ and the government appears set to bring in a modified version.

The NDP and the Bloc will almost certainly vote against the new measures and, if Harper declares them a matter of confidence, Dion may find himself stuck quickly with yet another dilemma.

An editorial from the Winnipeg Free Press, published Oct. 15

DATE: 2007.10.15

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 589

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 StOphane Dion wanting a throne speech promise to the Taliban that Canadian forces will quit the Kandahar war zone no later that 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 be 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.

U.S. military judge says Khadr trial should go ahead next month

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 406

WASHINGTON _ A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay.

Judge Col. Peter Brownback cited the need for the case to proceed in a "judicious manner."

The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15.

Brownback says he has a duty to proceed with the case when the appeals court has not issued a stay of proceedings.

Omar's lawyers say they may seek just such a stay of proceedings from the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Khadr's lead military lawyer Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler says the practical effect of the judge's order is to deny Khadr's right to seek a meaningful review of a decision by a special military appeals court allowing the trial to resume.

In his e-mail order, Brownback agrees it would be "unprecedented" to hold court sessions while an appeal was pending at the Court of Appeals. "Unprecedented, however, does not mean improper or unlawful," Brownback says.

The judge says the military commission trying Khadr disagrees with the defence "that the commission has some duty to stay its proceedings while waiting for the Court of Appeals to act on the appeal."

"To the contrary, the commission finds that it has a duty to proceed with the case in a judicious manner, absent a stay imposed by the Court of Appeals (or another body)."

Kuebler calls the whole process "Alice in Wonderland."

The U.S. Defence Department, he said, "is so desperate to validate this broken process that they will disregard just about any concern of judicial economy or fairness to the accused."

"They write a rule giving Omar a right to appeal, they tell Omar he has a right to appeal, and when he appeals, they claim he doesn't have a right to appeal," Kuebler says in a news release.

"The U.S. would never tolerate this kind of treatment for an American, yet the Canadian government continues to agree with the U.S. view that it's good enough for a Canadian."

Kuebler has made similar comments about Canada before.

He has argued that the special military appeals court was wrong last month when it said the case could go ahead.

At issue is the fact that Khadr hasn't been designated an "unlawful" enemy combatant, as required by Congress. Kuebler argues that the murder trial at the U.S. naval base in Cuba wouldn't allow him to raise key issues of international and constitutional law.

It was Brownback himself who dismissed the case in June, saying he lacked jurisdiction to try Khadr because the accused hadn't been declared an "unlawful" enemy combatant.

But the military review panel later decided Brownback has the authority after all to try Khadr.

The U.S. military is seeking a life sentence against the accused.

Don't 'wobble' on commitment to NATO force in Afghanistan: UN envoy

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 775

UNITED NATIONS _ The top UN envoy in Afghanistan on Monday urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force in Afghanistan not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight the Taliban.

Tom Koenigs said that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, "numbers are not a measure of capability."

NATO remains the most capable force to defend the Kabul government against a tough insurgency, he said.

Insurgent violence in Afghanistan is at its highest level since U.S.-led forces invaded the country in 2001 to oust the hard-line Islamic Taliban rulers, who harboured al-Qaida leaders blamed for planning the attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

The focus of the violence has been in Afghanistan's southern and eastern provinces, but the insurgents are increasingly using Iraq-style tactics, such as roadside bombs, suicide attacks and kidnappings, to hit foreign and Afghan targets around the country.

Even though levels of violence have subsided in the past two months, Koenigs said, the number of violent incidents has increased by approximately 30 per cent from last year.

The United Nations has recorded the detonation of 606 improvised explosive devices and 133 suicide attacks compared to 88 by this time last year, Koenigs said.

"The sad result is a significant increase in the numbers of civilian casualties _ at least 1,200 have been killed since January this year," he told the UN Security Council.

Koenigs told reporters afterward that better co-ordination among international and Afghan military forces and the UN mission he heads has led to improvements in the rules of engagement, "and we hope by that we can prevent civilian casualties to a certain degree."

This includes orders to all regional commands to adjust tactics where possible to increase protection of civilians, he said.

"It is imperative that the protection of civilians remains at the forefront of everyone's efforts in Afghanistan, for a failure to secure the population's support will not only protract the conflict causing further devastation, but also hold the country's development hostage to violence, and undermine the legitimacy of our efforts," he told the council.

Koenigs stressed that NATO's International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, remains essential to fight the insurgency.

"Because of this, nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment: now is not the time to wobble," he said.

NATO troops _ mostly from Britain, Canada, the United States and the Netherlands _ have been on the front lines of the fight. Several other NATO countries including Spain, Turkey and Germany refuse to send troops to the southern battlefields.

Rising casualties and public disenchantment have triggered calls for a withdrawal among some countries on the front line _ notably Canada and the Netherlands.

About 2,300 Canadian troops are in Kandahar province where the Taliban have long been active. Seventy-one Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

The mandate for the Canadian mission expires in February 2009. The Conservative government in Ottawa has indicated it will decide by April next year whether the current mission will be extended.

The NATO-led alliance raised its troop level to almost 40,000 in the face of an emboldened insurgency, which has demonstrated the fragility of Afghanistan's fledgling western-style democracy. But the increase was largely because several thousand U.S. troops already in Afghanistan were transferred to NATO command. The United States maintains about 13,000 troops in a separate counterinsurgency force.

Koenigs told reporters the UN has received reports from the military and its intelligence operatives that "the Taliban have lost quite a number of mid-level and even lower high-level leaders" who have been replaced by non-Afghans.

"So apparently the Taliban forces are short of commanders and trained leaders," he said.

"On the other hand, we have heard from Afghan sources that this hasn't gone down very well with the locals," he said, adding that he had no further details.

Koenigs, a German human rights expert who announced he will step down as Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's special representative at the end of the year, stressed that "the successes of recent months deserve to be translated into visible durable results for all Afghans."

He emphasized the importance of NATO working with the government and the UN mission in Afghanistan to co-ordinate security and political-military strategy.

"Although amid the violence in Afghanistan, suicide attacks receive the most publicity, perhaps the biggest threat to the civilian population (and overall stability) is the ongoing campaign of intimidation, abduction and execution being carried out by anti-government elements against all those seen to have a connection with the Afghan government or the international community," Koenigs said.

Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai said last month his government is working hard on peace talks to bring Taliban supporters "back to the fold."

But Koenigs told the Security Council that "the Taliban as an organization remains at least in part determined to continue its military campaign (and) negotiations with the top leadership of the Taliban are not now in prospect."

- With files from The Canadian Press.

Forces plan to recruit more civilian contractors to back-fill army jobs

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE FINANCE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 470

OTTAWA _ Canada's military plans to expand the role of civilian contractors at the main coalition base in Kandahar to ease the strain on the heavily taxed army.

Senior defence officials say they hope soon to replace some uniformed medical staff, such X-ray technicians and health clerks, with civilian contract employees in Afghanistan.

They would be part of a growing workforce of contractors, which has so far included vehicle mechanics and computer maintainers.

“Certainly the demand is there for them,” said Maj. Gwen Walsh, the manager of operational contracts.

Finding bunk space at Kandahar Airfield, NATO's principal base in the region, is the biggest impediment to adding more civilian technicians, she said.

But the growth of contractors doing what have been military jobs a few years ago has some experts concerned.

Dave Perry, at Dalhousie University's conflict studies centre in Halifax, says deep budget cuts of the past have left the Forces with no alternative but to turn to civilian contractors.

“If it wants to deploy overseas, the Forces has no choice _ no choice whatsoever _ but to employ civilian support,” Perry said in a recent interview.

And it is a costly option, according to a research paper last spring by Perry, who looked at the advantages and pitfalls of contractors.

“For the short term, based upon some initial estimates for the deployment in Kandahar, it's up to 10 times more expensive” than employing military staff, he said.

But Perry said that initial outlay may be balanced over time when the costs of recruiting, training and long-term benefits for soldiers are factored in.

Last fall, the army examined increasing the number of contractors as it struggled to keep troop rotations going until February 2009, when the country's current mission expires.

At the time, the military also looked at using existing air force and navy members to fill support jobs outside of the heavy fortified airfield, such as convoy drivers.

But documents obtained under the Access to Information Act show the idea of so-called “re-rolling” doesn't have much support among military planners and may not even be necessary.

Since Canadian troops deployed to southern Afghanistan in the spring of 2006, the number of contractors working in support and logistics roles has more than doubled to nearly 200.

The privatized support dates back to Canada's multiple deployments in the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s. Anticipating more overseas mission in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the federal government turned to defence–engineering giant SNC Lavalin, which won a five–year, \$500–million contract that has renewal options running until 2012.

The federal government has already quietly opted to renew the contract, which has set renewal dates of 2007, 2009 and 2011.

Phase 1 was set to expire this fall, but officials say a two–year extension was granted late last year as the army spun various deployment scenarios.

The latest renewal has the potential of being worth an extra \$200 million on paper, but officials say the hiatus the army took from operations in Afghanistan _ between 2004 and 2006 _ means not all of the money set aside for Phase 1 has been spent.

Unlike controversial U.S. corporations, such as Blackwater, Canadian contractors are not allowed to carry weapons and do not venture outside the heavily fortified confines of the base.

Corrective to story on soldier fatally shot

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 116

FREDERICTON _ The Canadian Press erroneously reported Oct. 12 that the father of Master Cpl. Jeff Walsh, a Canadian soldier who was fatally shot in Afghanistan on Aug. 6, 2006, did not want to see one of Walsh's fellow soldiers "prosecuted" in the case. In fact, Ben Walsh said he is looking for accountability, but he didn't want to see anyone "persecuted" in the case. Family members say they were told Jeff Walsh was seated beside the driver of a cramped, G-wagon armoured vehicle patrolling a bumpy road near Kandahar when another soldier's gun discharged inside the vehicle.

With BC–Throne–Speech, Bgt

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: POLITICS BUSINESS FINANCE JUSTICE INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 97

OTTAWA _ Some of the highlights expected in the federal Conservative government's throne speech Tuesday:

_ The government will not meet Canada's commitments under the Kyoto climate–change protocol, but will work on ways to reduce greenhouse gases.

_ Tax cuts are coming, both for individuals and businesses.

_ Canada's role in Afghanistan beyond 2009 will be debated in Parliament following the delivery of a report by an expert committee appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

_ The federal government will move to limit its own ability to spend tax dollars in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

_ New get–tough–on–crime measures will be introduced in Parliament, including proposed stiffer penalties for gun crimes and juvenile offenders.

_ Ottawa will push the provinces to reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

DATE: 2007.10.15

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 281

^Canada's First Veterans Ombudsman Appointed@<

October 15, 2007

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire – Oct. 15, 2007) – The Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, announced today that Canada's New Government has fulfilled its promise to better meet the needs of Veterans by appointing a Veterans Ombudsman. The appointment follows Prime Minister Stephen Harper's announcement last April to create a Veterans Bill of Rights and the Veterans Ombudsman Office. Following a public selection process, Colonel Patrick B. Stogran has been named Canada's first Veterans Ombudsman.

"Our Veterans have always been willing to stand up for Canada and we are proud to stand by them now by appointing a Veterans Ombudsman," said Minister Thompson. "With the appointment of Colonel Stogran, we are ensuring that the needs and concerns of our Veterans continue to be treated with the respect they deserve. Our Veterans have earned that."

Colonel Stogran is currently the Associate Director General of Science and Technology Operations at Defence Research and Development Canada. He has a long and distinguished career in the military. Among his many accomplishments, Colonel Stogran was Commanding Officer of troops in Afghanistan and also served in Bosnia.

"The contributions and sacrifices made by our Veterans have helped to make Canada such a great country. As the Veterans Ombudsman, I look forward to addressing the concerns of these brave men and women," said Colonel Stogran.

The Veterans Ombudsman Office is located in the National Capital Region.

For more information on the Veterans Ombudsman, visit www.vac-acc.gc.ca or call, toll free, 1-866-522-2122.

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INDUSTRY: Government – International, Government – Local,
Government – National, Government – Security (law enforcement,
homeland etc), Government – State

SUBJECT: COF

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

U.S. denies Afghan allegations that soldiers desecrated Qur'an

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE RELIGION JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 223

KABUL, Afghanistan _ The U.S. military says it's found no evidence that soldiers defaced the Qur'an during a raid on an Afghan home.

The allegations sparked an outcry among villagers in the eastern province of Kunar, who met with the governor, provincial leaders and U.S. military commanders on Sunday over the issue.

Kunar deputy provincial governor Noor Mohammad Khan says American soldiers raided the home of Mullah Zarbaz on Saturday morning, arresting him and three others.

Villagers alleged that soldiers ripped, knifed and burned a Muslim holy book during the raid, which khan says sparked an angry demonstration on Saturday.

Two Afghan officials had been assigned to investigate the allegations, and a U.S. commander at the meeting Sunday said the military would punish anyone who had defaced the Qur'an.

But Maj. Chris Belcher, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition, which oversees Special Forces soldiers who usually carry out nighttime raids, said Monday that the allegations had been investigated and were found to be baseless.

``We looked into it. There was no desecration of the Qur'an or any religious symbol by U.S. forces," Belcher said. ``Had a soldier desecrated it, we would take action."

Khan said that elders on Sunday told the U.S. commander attending the meeting of Afghan leaders that U.S. soldiers should tell Afghan officials before searching a house, a complaint frequently voiced by Afghans. He also said U.S. officials should tell Afghan leaders when they arrest someone.

Would-be Afghan suicide bomber accidentally kills mother, 3 siblings

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS RELIGION

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 549

KABUL, Afghanistan _ A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings, police said Monday.

The bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan. When he returned to the family home in Uruzgan province on the weekend he announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack, Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the man gave his family the equivalent of C\$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

Bashary said the explosion happened Sunday, but Himat said it occurred Monday morning. It was not clear why the two accounts differed.

In a second accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province, Bashary said.

He said the man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque. The bomb vest he was wearing exploded when he tried to take it off.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, said it had looked into allegations that soldiers had desecrated the Qur'an during a raid on a home in the eastern province of Kunar and found no evidence of wrongdoing. The allegations outraged villagers, who met with the governor, provincial leaders and U.S. military commanders on Sunday.

Deputy Gov. Noor Mohammad Khan of Kunar province said American soldiers raided the home of Mullah Zarbaz on Saturday, arresting him and three others.

Villagers said the soldiers ripped, knifed and burned a Qur'an during the raid, allegations that led to an angry demonstration, Khan said.

But Maj. Chris Belcher, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition which oversees Special Forces soldiers who usually carry out nighttime raids, said the allegations had been investigated and were found to be baseless.

``We looked into it. There was no desecration of the Qur'an or any religious symbol by U.S. forces," Belcher said. ``Had a soldier desecrated it, we would take action."

In the latest violence, the Taliban ambushed a NATO patrol in central Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving about a dozen soldiers wounded, a NATO official said. The troops called for an air strike on the insurgents in Wardak province, but there were no reports of casualties, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the matter.

The official did not identify the nationality of the wounded troops. Most of the troops in Wardak province, which borders the capital of Kabul, are Turkish.

In an interview with Australian Broadcasting Corp., President Hamid Karzai said Afghanistan has suffered "the law of unintended consequences" because of the war in Iraq.

"We did suffer by movements of people, by movements of extremist ideology, by transfer of knowledge by extremists to one another," Karzai said in the interview, which was broadcast Monday. "There is no doubt that al-Qaida is linked all across the world."

Karzai said he knew "with confidence" that al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and Taliban chief Mullah Omar were not in Afghanistan. But he said he did not have "precise information" on where they were. Afghan officials say the two are hiding in Pakistan.

bc-CCN-ON-CIDA-FNC

DATE: 2007.10.15

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 474

^Canada's New Government Increases its Commitment to Enhancing Girls'@<

October 15, 2007

OTTAWA, ONTARIO---(Marketwire – Oct. 15, 2007) – The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, accompanied by Mr. Khalil Shariff, CEO of Aga Khan Foundation Canada, today increased Canada's commitment to improving Afghanistan's education system through the Foundation's Girls' Education Support Program (GESP). The contribution will directly benefit more than 100,000 girls and 4,600 teachers. The Minister made this announcement while participating in a student forum at Ottawa's Joan of Arc Academy.

"After years of conflict and insecurity, Afghanistan's education system is one of the weakest in the world. This has deeply affected the country's ability to rebuild and sustain itself," said Minister Oda. "But progress is being made, and Canada continues to reinforce its role as a leader for education in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls."

"This program will build on the Aga Khan Foundation's many years of experience and expertise strengthening access to and the quality of education in some of the most impoverished parts of Africa and Asia, often in partnership with Canada and Canadian institutions," said Khalil Z. Shariff, Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Foundation Canada. "At the same time, our objective is to strengthen the ability of Afghans, from parents and children to government and institutions of civil society, to rebuild the education sector at all levels."

The GESP will help address many of the needs identified in the Government of Afghanistan's Five-Year National Education Strategic Plan. These include early childhood education, investing in improved teacher training for women, distance education, secondary education for girls, and improvements to school facilities. The GESP will be implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation Canada – a trusted partner with a proven track record in Afghanistan.

Canada's New Government will invest \$8 million in this initiative, which complements a commitment of \$60 million to the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP), Afghanistan's largest education initiative. Minister Oda announced EQUIP funding on October 4 with visiting Afghan Minister of Education, His Excellency Haneef Atmar. Canada's commitment to the initiative is the largest made to the program by any donor to date.

Today's announcement is part of Canada's total contribution of \$1.2 billion over 10 years aimed at governance, security and development in Afghanistan. It builds on the commitment made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper last February, when he announced substantive funds to accelerate the reconstruction and development process.

For more information on Canada's programming in Afghanistan, please refer to CIDA's website at www.cida.gc.ca/afghanistan-e.

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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: FNC

NEWS RELEASE TRANSMITTED BY Marketwire

Families of troops killed in Afghanistan lash out at Chretien's memoirs

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 236

TORONTO _ Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are angry that former prime minister Jean Chretien is blaming his successor for their deaths.

Chretien says 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 Chretien writes that when Paul Martin took over, he couldn't decide whether to extend Canada's presence in Afghanistan.

Chretien contends that allowed other NATO countries to take up the less dangerous missions and forcing Canada to ``the killing fields around Kandahar."

In a Globe and Mail report from Winnipeg, Wanda Watkins, whose 20-year-old son Lane was killed by a roadside bomb in July, says she's tired of political games being played over Afghanistan.

Warrant Officer Frank Mellish, 38, was killed by Taliban fire in Afghanistan last year. His dad, Barry, says he wasn't impressed when he saw Chretien's comments in the local newspaper.

He says Chretien is just trying to get attention with his memoirs and that most Canadians will realize he's trying to cover up his own failings.

``As far as I'm concerned, the memoirs of Chretien and (former prime minister Brian) Mulroney, they're just baloney most of the time. Hot air. They're trying to get attention," Mellish told the Globe.

``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 put much stock in it. ... I think most Canadians realize they're trying to cover up their own failings by blaming other people."

(Globe)

Cda–Afghan–Civilians

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE FINANCE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 154

OTTAWA -- Canada's military plans to expand the role of civilian contractors at the main coalition base in Kandahar to ease the strain on the heavily taxed army.

Senior defence officials say they hope soon to replace some uniformed medical staff, such X-ray technicians and health clerks, with civilian contract employees in Afghanistan.

They would be part of a growing workforce of contractors, which has so far included vehicle mechanics and computer maintainers.

Major Gwen Walsh, the manager of operational contracts, says there is a demand for civilian contractors.

But the growth of contractors doing what have been military jobs a few years ago has some experts concerned.

Dave Perry, at Dalhousie University's conflict studies centre in Halifax, says deep budget cuts of the past have left the Forces with no alternative but to turn to civilian contractors.

And it is a costly option, according to a research paper last spring by Perry.

On short-term basis it is 10 times more costly to hire a civilian contractor, but Perry says that figure goes down over time when factors such as training and pension are taken into account.

(The Canadian Press)

INDEX:Defence, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 140

TORONTO – Families of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are angry that former prime minister Jean Chretien is blaming his successor for their deaths.

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(The Canadian Press)(Globe)

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.10.15
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 169

NEW YORK _ The top U-N envoy in Afghanistan is urging countries contributing troops to the NATO force in Afghanistan not "to wobble" in their commitments to fight the Taliban.

Tom Koenigs says they must help counter a campaign of intimidation, abduction and execution by government opponents.

Koenigs told the U-N Security Council today the Afghan national army will have 47-thousand troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70-thousand by the end of 2008.

But he says numbers are not a measure of capability and NATO remains the most capable force to defend the Afghan government against a tough insurgency.

Insurgent violence in Afghanistan is at its highest level since U-S forces invaded the country in 2001 to oust the Taliban.

NATO troops -- mostly from Britain, Canada, the U-S and the Netherlands -- have been on the front lines of the fight.

Several other NATO nations including Spain, Turkey and Germany refuse to send troops to the southern battlefields where Canadian troops face the heaviest fighting.

Rising casualties and public disenchantment have triggered calls for a withdrawal among some countries on the front line -- notably Canada and the Netherlands.

(The Associated Press)

PTH

U.S. military judge says Khadr trial should go ahead next month

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 102

WASHINGTON – A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay.

Judge Col. Peter Brownback cited the need for the case to proceed in a `judicious manner.'

The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a fire in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15.

Brownback says he has a duty to proceed with the case when the appeals court has not issued a stay of proceedings.

Omar's lawyers say they may seek just such a stay of proceedings from the U.S. Court of Appeals.

(The Canadian Press)

U.S. denies Afghan allegations that soldiers desecrated Qur'an

DATE: 2007.10.15

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE RELIGION JUSTICE

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 157

KABUL, Afghanistan – The U.S. military says it's found no evidence that soldiers defaced the Qur'an during a raid on an Afghan home.

The allegations sparked an outcry among villagers in the eastern province of Kunar, who met with the governor, provincial leaders and U.S. military commanders on Sunday over the issue.

Kunar deputy provincial governor Noor Mohammad Khan says American soldiers raided the home of Mullah Zarbaz on Saturday morning, arresting him and three others.

Villagers alleged that soldiers ripped, knifed and burned a Muslim holy book during the raid, which khan says sparked an angry demonstration on Saturday.

Two Afghan officials had been assigned to investigate the allegations, and a U.S. commander at the meeting Sunday said the military would punish anyone who had defaced the Qur'an.

But Maj. Chris Belcher, a spokesman for the U.S.–led coalition, which oversees Special Forces soldiers who usually carry out nighttime raids, said Monday that the allegations had been investigated and were found to be baseless.

(The Associated Press)

Clever ploy to extend the war

IDNUMBER 200710160124
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: AA08
BYLINE: linda mcquaig
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 533

The opposition parties had Stephen Harper pretty much over a barrel when it came to Afghanistan, refusing to give him parliamentary support to continue the unpopular war beyond 2009.

That was before John Manley came to Harper's rescue last week. By agreeing to head up a bipartisan advisory panel on Canada's involvement in Afghanistan, the former deputy Liberal prime minister has given the Harper government a fresh shot at winning that elusive parliamentary support for the war.

Harper has shown more enthusiasm about this war than any issue he's dealt with as Prime Minister.

As opposition leader, Harper attacked the Chretien government's decision not to join the U.S. invasion of Iraq. So when he became Prime Minister, Harper was delighted to inherit the mission in Afghanistan, where Canadians are playing a significant junior partner role in the U.S. "war on terror."

But while Harper is extremely keen on the Afghan combat mission, polls indicate most Canadians aren't. Indeed, Canadians have shown a strong attachment to Canada's role as a leader in UN peacekeeping – an attachment Harper and the Canadian military would love to wean us off.

Realizing that the Afghan mission threatened to become a contentious election issue, Harper pledged last June not to extend it without parliamentary support.

The Manley panel may help deliver that – by putting pressure on Liberal Leader Stephane Dion, who has vowed to end the combat mission in 2009.

The Manley team will likely recommend continuing the mission. Manley himself is a pro-American hawk who, as foreign affairs minister in the wake of 9/11, famously struck a combative tone when he stressed the country's war-fighting past, telling reporters "Canada does not have a history as a pacifist or a neutralist country."

The rest of the panel, including former Washington ambassador Derek Burney and former New York consul-general Pamela Wallin, have been involved in efforts to convince Washington that Canada isn't soft on terror, the Star's Thomas Walkom noted.

This could leave Dion in the difficult position of having to reject the advice of a bipartisan panel – headed by a respected Liberal – that had spent months investigating the issue, with ostensibly nothing but the public interest in mind.

This promises to highlight and accentuate the rift inside the Liberal party over Canada's role in Afghanistan and, more broadly, over our relationship with Washington.

In recent years, the powerful business wing of the party has favoured deeper integration with the U.S., economically and militarily. Dion's own deputy leader, the ambitious Michael Ignatieff, has shown a pro-Washington bent, publicly equating Bush's "war on terror" with the championing of human rights and democracy.

Dion, on the other hand, has followed more in the footsteps of his mentor Jean Chretien, who kept more distance from Washington.

So, yes, the appointment of the Manley panel is a clever ploy by a prime minister determined to find a way to continue an unpopular war without losing his job.

It also lays the groundwork for the re-emergence of an elite consensus in favour of more robust Canadian co-operation with Washington's aggressive military stance in the world (something that shows little sign of abating, as even Democratic leadership contenders voice their support for a possible attack on Iran).

Sadly, Dion's attempt to create a little distance between Canada and the U.S. "war on terror" seems about to get a good stomping from the staunchly pro-Washington forces in both the Conservative and Liberal parties.

lmcquaig @ sympatico.ca

Chretien's book revives spectre of house divided; Pollster says former prime minister's memoir could undermine Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion

IDNUMBER 200710160114
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Met
SECTION: News
PAGE: A04
ILLUSTRATION: TOM HANSON the canadian press Ex–prime minister Jean Chretien, recovering from heart surgery 10 days ago, relaxes at home in Ottawa yesterday. ;
BYLINE: Susan Delacourt
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 497

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion could find that his old boss, Jean Chretien, is more trouble than any Conservative attack ads, according to pollster Nik Nanos.

By reigniting his old feud with Paul Martin, his successor, in his new book, Chretien could do some serious damage to the Liberals, Nanos says.

"The Liberal brand has been able to effectively weather the image storm outside of Quebec," Nanos said yesterday. "Even with Stéphane Dion's rough ride, the Grits are still very competitive in Ontario and urban Canada. However, if a narrative emerges that the Liberals are a house divided, that would be potentially more damaging than any attack ad on Dion."

Chretien describes Dion in glowing terms in his book, titled *My Years as Prime Minister*. Chretien says that while he tried not to play favourites with cabinet, "Dion proved an exception" and the two ended up spending a lot of time together. Chretien's book, laced with multiple attacks on Martin, exploded into the news this weekend, just as Liberals are bracing to have their mettle tested with today's throne speech in Parliament.

Chretien lashes out in the book at Martin's disloyalty, his supporters – called "self-serving goons" – and says he regrets that he didn't fire him in 2000.

One of the most damning accusations is Chretien's charge that Martin is to blame for Canadian soldiers being sent to the more dangerous area of Afghanistan – Kandahar – in 2004, because Martin took too long to make a decision on where they'd be assigned.

Senator Jim Munson, a former communications director for Chretien who was fielding questions on his behalf yesterday, said Chretien isn't backing away from any of it.

"He just feels as far as history is concerned, this is the way it was and he wants to make sure it's in black and white," Munson said.

Martin has indicated, through a spokesperson, that he won't be responding beyond calling it unfortunate that old divisions are being dredged up again.

Chretien's book revives spectre of house divided; Pollster says former prime minister's memoir could under

No one in Dion's circle wanted to talk on the record yesterday about the book.

"You've got to be kidding," said Bob Rae, former leadership contender and now the newly named foreign affairs critic for the Liberals, when asked if he wanted to wade into the debate.

But in informal chatter yesterday, several Liberals were saying that the Afghanistan attack on Martin was probably below the belt.

At a breakfast meeting yesterday of Liberal staffers, it was suggested that it was fair game for Chretien to talk about how he saw things while he was prime minister, but not appropriate for him to attack the way the decision— making unfolded after he'd retired and Martin took over.

Indeed, by coincidence, there's another new book out on the shelves this month that is at odds with Chretien's reading of how Canadian troops ended up in Kandahar. Co-written by Eugene Lang, a former chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, and University of Toronto academic Janice Gross Stein, *The Unexpected War* recounts how Kandahar was chosen on the recommendation of several experts – including chief of defence staff Rick Hillier and Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan at the time, Chris Alexander.

Khadr murder trial to resume; Pentagon denies lawyers' request for delay despite pending appeal; Ottawa won't interfere

IDNUMBER 200710160081
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA02
BYLINE: michelle shephard
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 409

Guantanamo detaineeThe Pentagon is preparing for the trial of Guantanamo detainee Omar Khadr after a military judge refused to postpone the case.

Col. Peter Brownback sent an email yesterday to Khadr's lawyers denying their request for a delay until the U.S. federal appellate court for the District of Columbia, known as the "D.C. Circuit," considers whether the military commission can legally try Khadr.

Brownback had dismissed charges against Khadr in June, saying he lacked jurisdiction to hear the case. But a military appeals court overturned his ruling in a decision that Khadr's lawyers are now appealing to Washington's federal court.

Despite mounting pressure to speak out against the military commissions, Canada's government says it won't interfere in the case.

"We're now at a critical stage where Omar Khadr is being forced to participate in a process widely condemned throughout the world and yet the Canadian government refuses to assert the rule of law and criticize the process," Khadr's Canadian lawyer, Dennis Edney, said yesterday.

Khadr's lawyers argue that the military commissions as signed into law by U. S. President George W. Bush last year are designed to ensure convictions. Lt.- Cmdr. Bill Kuebler said yesterday he's "shocked" that Brownback would push ahead before the issue of the commission's legality is decided.

"The defence department is so desperate to validate this broken process that they will disregard just about any concern of judicial economy or fairness to the accused," Kuebler said.

Brownback's decision is one of dozens of legal twists in Washington's attempt to bring Guantanamo detainees to trial. Khadr is one of four detainees before the military commissions and is scheduled to appear Nov. 8. He is charged with murder, attempted murder, conspiracy, spying and providing material support for terrorism.

The 21-year-old Toronto native was captured in Afghanistan on July 27, 2002, when he was 15. The Pentagon accuses him of throwing a grenade during a firefight that killed Sgt. First Class Christopher Speer.

Khadr murder trial to resume; Pentagon denies lawyers' request for delay despite pending appeal; Ottawa won't interfere

If the case proceeds, it will be the first U.S. war crimes trial since Nazi commanders were prosecuted at the end of World War II. Brownback has already ruled Khadr's defence lawyers will not be able to raise questions about the constitutionality of the process or the fact Khadr was a minor when captured.

"Clearly, whether an alleged former child soldier can be legally hauled before a military commission is the most embarrassing, awkward and controversial part of the process and the government's bending over backwards to not have to consider that issue," Kuebler said.

Planned suicide bomb kills would-be attacker, mother and siblings

IDNUMBER 200710160034
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
KEYWORDS: BOMBINGS; SUICIDE; WAR
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
SOURCE: Agence France-Presse
WORD COUNT: 123

A would-be suicide bomber killed himself and five members of his family as his mother tried to stop him from carrying out a Taliban-inspired attack in Afghanistan, police said Monday.

The 22-year-old man's bomb-filled vest blew up as his mother made desperate attempts to stop him carrying out his deadly mission in the southern province of Uruzgan on Sunday.

"His mother grabbed his vest and said, 'Take this off, we don't want you to do this,'" Uruzgan police chief Juma Gul Himat told Agence France-Presse, citing the bomber's father who was wounded in the blast. "This was when the explosives went off. Two of his brothers, two of his sisters, his mother and the Abdul Samad (the bomber) -- they all died."

Canadians praised as 'treasures in uniform'

IDNUMBER 200710160033
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Rick Hillier;
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=OTTAWA
BYLINE: Bruce Ward
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 211

There are moments of levity for Canadian troops, even in combat situations, Canada's top soldier said Monday.

Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier described how soldiers downwind of a burning marijuana field in Afghanistan suddenly found themselves craving snacks.

"They couldn't keep up with the orders for munchies," Hillier said Monday in a breakfast speech to the Canadian Medical Association's annual leadership forum.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Afghanistan.

Hillier, who is admired by his troops partly for his puckish sense of humour, also praised the country's armed forces personnel as "treasures in uniform."

He spoke of other surreal but inspirational moments in Afghanistan, such as seeing a Leopard tank pull up to the drive-through window of a Tim Hortons restaurant set up in Kandahar.

"There's nothing more Canadian than a double-double," he said. Afghanistan is "an enthralling country" filled with children "who are

absolutely exquisite," said Hillier.

"But two of every five children die before age five because basic medical care is not there."

He said Canadian troops are making a difference in Afghanistan by overseeing the building of more than 1,000 wells in the country.

Such projects give young Afghans "hope for the future," added Hillier.

But the mission is also a flashpoint for many Canadians, especially those who would like to see the Forces combat mission end early next year.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper last week named a five-member panel to advise Ottawa on Canada's future involvement in Afghanistan.

The group will submit recommendations on a course of action for when Canada's NATO commitment in Afghanistan expires in February 2009.

The CMA's leaders forum is intended to help doctors build their leadership and management skills.

Warrior stays out of political fights; General focused on Canada's war in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710160032
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A11
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: CanWest News Service Archive / Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier heads the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command in Afghanistan. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 497

The senior general directing Canada's war in Afghanistan says the political furor at home over the future of the mission has not changed how he does his work.

"All of these discussions do not really impact my job. It does not affect planning," Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, said in an exclusive interview on Monday. "Our focus is on the mandate period. The horizon that I look at is 12 to 18 months. There is not much need at my level to look beyond that."

As Parliament prepared to hear today's speech from the throne, in which Afghanistan could be a central theme, the commander of all Canadian Forces overseas added that he welcomes the involvement of a blue-ribbon panel struck by the Harper government last week to recommend what Canada should do here after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

"It provides an opportunity to generate a better understanding of the full scope of Canadian operations," Gauthier told CanWest News Service, referring also to the presence here of officials from the departments of Foreign Affairs and Corrections, as well as the Canadian International Development Agency and the RCMP.

"I hope that it will lead to a better understanding for Canadians, beyond 15-second sound bites, of all that needs to be done here and the role that we ought to play."

Moments before he boarded an aircraft for Canada at the end of his 18th visit to Afghanistan since 2002, Gauthier quietly outlined the successes and failures of the mission so far and the long, slow road ahead.

The three-leaf general, who seldom speaks at length with journalists, had "observed a sense of confidence that is palpable up and down the chain of command," during his most recent visit. "We have the initiative. From our perspective, the insurgents are in disarray. The leadership has been seriously interrupted. We are getting indications that they are losing their willingness to fight."

But, at the same time, he added, "I don't want to sound too rosy."

"The Taliban are continuing to fight. They will still launch attacks and plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices). From time to time they will mount an offensive. But they are outmatched and they know it."

It has been a steep learning curve with some miscalculations along the way, Gauthier acknowledged, particularly involving the Afghan National Police.

Part of the plan had been for Afghan police to take over some of the security responsibilities after last year's battlefield successes, "but as we came into (this) summer, and the height of the fighting season, we were not able to hold the checkpoints," Gauthier said. As the checkpoints failed, Canadian forces pulled back.

"This was a conscious retraction. It was not a retreat. It was a consolidation," Gauthier said. "We gave up some ground because of the support that was available to us at the time."

As part of NATO's mentoring plan, the Afghan National Army, which is generally held in high regard by the Canadians, has been deploying with Canadian help into new areas over the past two months. But the police, who also have Canadian mentors, have not yet inspired similar confidence.

Don't extended Afghan mission: poll

IDNUMBER 200710160016
PUBLICATION: Calgary Herald
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
KEYWORDS: OPINION POLLS; POLITICAL PARTIES;
STATISTICS
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 189

A slight majority of Canadians, 54 per cent, want Canada's troops to stay in Afghanistan, but few want to extend their current combat mission past the February 2009 scheduled date of withdrawal, shows a poll released Monday.

Forty-four per cent of Canadians want a full withdrawal, while 40 per cent would like to see troops redeployed to "do something like train Afghan soldiers or police officers."

Just 14 per cent believe the government should "extend our current role and mission," says the poll of 1,001 adults conducted by Ipsos Reid. The results are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The poll was conducted Oct. 9 to 14.

Residents of Quebec are most likely (51 per cent) to support withdrawal of troops, while residents of Alberta are most likely to support redeployment (45 per cent) or an extension of the mission (22 per cent).

Women (51 per cent) are more likely than men (36 per cent) to support withdrawal of troops, as are younger Canadians aged 18 to 34 (49 per cent) compared to older generations.

Last Friday Stephen Harper announced a five-member panel to recommend what the military should do after the mission in Kandahar expires.

Global National takes Gemini

IDNUMBER 200710160110
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Arts
PAGE: D1 / FRONT
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Newman and Ormiston: News Gemini Winners.;
DATELINE: TORONTO
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 349

TORONTO -- Global National has won a Gemini Award for best newscast, while CBC's The Fifth Estate took the prize for best news information series and Susan Ormiston won for best reportage for her reports from Afghanistan for CBC News: The National.

The programs were among 29 Gemini winners honoured by the the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television in the documentary, news and sports categories at a ceremony in Toronto yesterday.

Global National is anchored by two-time Gemini winner Kevin Newman, who also hosts Global Currents, recognized as the best documentary series. Now in its third season, Global Currents showcases the work of independent producers and explores social issues such as the disappearance of Aboriginal women in Western Canada, the battle for fathers' rights and the plight of immigrant doctors.

Former CBC head of news Tony Burman, winner of the Gordon Sinclair Award for Broadcast Journalism (announced earlier this month), also received his award.

The awards were presented at the first of three industry evenings. The Gemini Lifestyle, Children's and Youth winners will be announced today, followed by the Gemini Drama, Variety and Comedy Awards tomorrow.

The 22nd annual Gemini Awards will culminate with the Gala Awards Oct. 28 in Regina.

OTHER MAJOR GEMINI WINNERS

The 2007 winners of the Gemini Documentary, News and Sports Awards are:

Best Biography Documentary Program: Dangerous When Provoked: The Life & Times of Terry Mosher; (Kaos Productions Inc.), John Curtin

Best Documentary Series: Global Currents

Best Game Analyst: Pierre McGuire -- NHL on TSN

Best History Documentary Program: The Secret History of 9/11 (CBC)

Best Host or Interviewer in a News Information Program or Series: Gillian Findlay — The Fifth Estate — Luck of the Draw

Best Live Sporting Event: Hockey Night in Canada: Stanley Cup Finals: Carolina – Edmonton Game 3

Best News Magazine Segment: CBC News: The National — The Enemy Within

Best News Special Event Coverage: CBC News: Sunday Grandmothers' Gathering

Best Performing Arts Program or Series or Arts Documentary Program or Series: Lovesick; Cirque du Soleil, Galafilms Productions, Creations Musca

Best Photography in a Documentary Program or Series: Michael Grippo — Martyr Street

Best Photography in an Information Program or Series: Henry Less — Made to Order Three — Dim Sum

Best Science, Technology, Nature, Environment or Adventure Documentary Program: Gamer Revolution, Red Apple Entertainment

Best Sports Analysis or Commentary Program, Series or Segment: NHL on TSN

Best Sports Feature Segment: Peter Jordan's Grey Cup Adventure, Frantic Films

Best Sports Play-by-Play Announcer: Bob Cole — Hockey Night in Canada: Stanley Cup Finals: Carolina – Edmonton Game 3

Best Studio Analyst: Kelly Hrudey — Hockey Night in Canada

Best Writing in a Documentary Program or Series: Scot McFadyen, Sam Dunn — Metal: A Headbanger's Journey

Best Writing in an Information Program or Series: Donna Gall — Recreating Eden — Gardens in the Sky

Once an exporter, Afghanistan's heroin problem is coming home; The country produces 93 per cent of the world's supply of opium

IDNUMBER 200710160104

PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)

DATE: 2007.10.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: C12

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Ahmad Masood, Reuters / An Afghan drug addict smokes heroin in an abandoned building in Kabul earlier this month. Afghanistan is the world's largest heroin producer, and it is struggling to cope with a massive drug problem within its borders. ;

DATELINE: KABUL

BYLINE: Hamid Shalizi

SOURCE: Reuters

WORD COUNT: 691

KABUL — Afghanistan, the world's biggest heroin producer, is struggling to cope with a drug problem as thousands of Afghans — trying to cope with the traumas of war, displacement and poverty — are becoming addicted to narcotics.

On the outskirts of Kabul, a sprawling bombed-out building that was once a centre for culture and science is home to more than 100 squatters whose main concern is feeding their heroin habit.

Ghulam Ahmad, a 17-year-old addict, has been injecting heroin for almost two years now. Like many living in the squalid, filthy building, he started using drugs in neighbouring Iran.

"I used to work nights in a factory in Iran, and the factory owner, an Iranian man, was addicted to opium himself," he said.

Later, Ahmad moved onto heroin, before being deported back to his native Afghanistan. He now spends his days begging on the streets of Kabul to feed his habit.

Afghanistan produced some 8,200 tonnes of opium in 2007, or 93 per cent of the world's supply. More land is used to cultivate drugs in Afghanistan than Bolivia, Colombia and Peru combined, the United Nations says.

In the past, opium was smuggled abroad from Afghanistan and then processed into heroin before it hit the streets of Europe, the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East.

But now the problem is coming home.

In recent years, Afghan drug lords have sought to maximize profits by processing opium into heroin at home before sending it abroad.

Some drugs inevitably remain inside the country, where there is a ready market for heroin due to the high rate of drug use among the hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees returning or deported from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.

Once an exporter, Afghanistan's heroin problem is coming home; The country produces 93 per cent of the world's supply of opium

The rates of addiction in Afghanistan have increased sharply since 2003 to nearly four per cent of the population, the UN says. There are now roughly 150,000 opium users, 50,000 heroin addicts and 520,000 cannabis smokers. Of those 120,000 are women and 60,000 are children.

"Decades of war, poverty, unemployment, post-war trauma and the availability of a variety of drugs in Afghanistan have created tens of thousands of young Afghan drug addicts," said Jehanzeb Khan, of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, or UNODC, in Afghanistan.

"Most of them are deportees from neighbouring countries — Iran and Pakistan," he said.

Mohammad Bashir, 24, who also lives in the Russian-built former cultural centre has been addicted to heroin for more than seven years. He was recently deported from Iran.

"I was a good tailor, I used to work very hard. In order to [get] relief from my load of work, I used to either smoke or eat opium as a pain killer every day," he said scratching his face with both hands. "I don't know if I can get out this misery."

"My daily spending on heroin is about 200 afghanis [\$4]. I have to manage to find it by all means," he said. "If I don't get the money, my entire body will be in severe pain."

According to Afghan drug analysts, 98 per cent of Afghan drug addicts do not have jobs and find money for drugs through begging or loading and unloading goods from trucks in nearby markets.

Most Afghans, struggling to make a living themselves, look down on drug addicts and refuse to give them money, thinking it will fuel their addiction.

"People usually don't give us jobs, money or food, because drug addiction is one of the worst habits the normal people can think of," Bashir said.

"This evil habit will never let me work until I die."

There is some help for available addicts in Afghanistan, but in a country ravaged by 30 years of war, there are many other demands on the government's small budget and limited amounts of international aid.

Around 39 foreign-supported centres are treating drug addicts in Afghanistan.

Zendagi Naween — or New Life — is a British-funded Afghan organization that has been helping Afghan drug addicts since 2003 in three provinces through community and drug demand-reduction centres.

But its treatment centre in Kabul has only 10 beds despite a long waiting list of drug addicts, especially heroin users, the centre's director Dr. Naseemullah Bawar explained.

"[To] rid the [patients] of the drug needs from their body, we need to keep them in the bed for 28 days," he said.

"The number of drugs users is rising dramatically everyday," he added. "We need more assistance to build more centres to help these people."

Ekhtiar Gul, an Afghan heroin addict, is one of the lucky ones as he is receiving treatment in Zendagi Naween.

"I can feel a big difference in me and after my treatment is complete, I will start a new life ... drug free," he

Once an exporter, Afghanistan's heroin problem is coming home; The country produces 93 per cent of the world's

said.

But Gul's optimism may be misplaced.

"Some 70 per cent of treated drug users go back to drugs due to joblessness, stress and having no proper family or community support," said Khan, of the UNODC. "When someone is a heroin addict he is cursed for his whole life."

West must keep up fight in Afghanistan, UN envoy says

IDNUMBER 200710160061
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A14
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
BYLINE: Steven Edwards
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 216

UNITED NATIONS — Echoing former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the United Nations' Afghan envoy has warned Canada and other countries with troops in Afghanistan that "Now is not the time to wobble."

Tom Koenigs, who heads the UN's 1,000-strong political mission in Afghanistan, said yesterday that the Afghan government remains dependent on international forces for its survival.

Though levels of violence have fallen in the past two months, they're still up 30 per cent over last year.

"Nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment," Koenigs told a special meeting of the UN Security Council.

Thatcher gave similar advice to then-president George H.W. Bush as he appeared to hesitate about the need for resolute U.S. action in the run-up to the first Gulf War, telling him: "This is no time to wobble, George."

Koenigs' warning was most poignant for Canada, where opposition parties want to see no extension of Canada's 2,500-troop deployment in Afghanistan beyond its current expiry date of February 2009.

He said the Afghan National Army is expected to field up to 70,000 soldiers by the end of next year, but added "numbers are not a measure of capability."

He also signalled that much more time is needed to develop a well-functioning Afghan police force, and said only the continued presence of international forces could keep the insurgency at bay and allow efforts to combat corruption and drug production within the country to continue.

Deaths raise troubling questions

IDNUMBER 200710160050
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Letters
PAGE: A13
BYLINE: J. Graeme Gardiner
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 85

I read with interest Rob Shaw's story from Afghanistan. In it he states that more than 40 of 71 Canadians who have died there have been killed in ground convoys by IEDs and suicide bombers.

The Canadian battle group was deployed to the most dangerous area of Afghanistan without vital cargo-capable helicopters, with which troops and supplies could safely be transported, far out of reach of the deadly IEDs which are killing our troops. Why was this done?

J. Graeme Gardiner,

Sidney.

Afghan panel has an opportunity to surprise us all

IDNUMBER 200710160043
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: Susan Riley
BYLINE: Susan Riley
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 789

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.

Manley's return is welcome

IDNUMBER 200710160040
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Comment
PAGE: A12
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 369

Regardless of where you stand on Canada's role in the Afghan conflict, Stephen Harper's appointment of John Manley to lead a blue-ribbon study group into our options there is brilliant political theatre. It also stands a good chance of actually achieving its objective.

By choosing the former Liberal minister to head the panel, Harper has not only dodged the Afghan question as he edges closer to a possible fall election, but tapped into possibly the single best-qualified politician in Ottawa to lead the group: As deputy prime minister, Manley was in government when the original Afghan mission was launched, and he has visited the country twice since.

The panel will report back to Parliament before the end of January, advising on how to proceed after the current deployment ends in February 2009. Its mandate appears to confirm that a continuation of the present mission in Afghanistan is no longer in the cards. The panel has been asked to focus on four options, none of which includes a long-term combat mission.

Manley deserves credit for taking on the lead role on the panel. He has already faced criticism from fellow Liberals for helping the Conservatives by accepting the appointment; with the possibility of a fall election that criticism can only increase. By choosing the non-partisan path in accepting Harper's offer, Manley has shown he is a true statesman.

But this announcement was Harper's show all the way. Coming as it does on the heels of last week's ultimatum to the opposition over today's throne speech, the prime minister is demonstrating considerable political adroitness.

Admittedly, the government is appallingly late in getting around to tackling the Afghan question. It appears that only the possibility of a nearing election could galvanize the Conservatives into finding a way to decide what Canada will do after February 2009.

But that they finally did so, and with a panel led by someone of Manley's stature and cross-party credibility, is noteworthy. It should provide a useful basis for what will be a vital decision. And, as critics have noted, it's at least more decisive than the way we've drifted into the war so far.

Our military deserves answers on how we plan to proceed in Afghanistan. Now, at least, we've started that discussion.

Hillier's humour earns troops' praise

IDNUMBER 200710160031
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Gen. Rick Hillier: By building wells, we're making a difference in Afghanistan. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Bruce Ward
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 237

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The group will submit recommendations on a course of action for when Canada's NATO commitment in Afghanistan expires in February 2009.

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"Leadership trumps management," Hillier told CMA members attending the forum's plenary session at a downtown Ottawa hotel.

Afghan mission's top general shrugs at politics; Debate of mission not a factor in his work

IDNUMBER 200710160030
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CanWest News Service file / Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, commander of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, second from right, speaks with Afghan army officers last summer on the eve of Canada's largest military operation in Kandahar province. ;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 581

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — The senior general directing Canada's war in Afghanistan says the political furor at home over the future of the mission has not changed how he does his work.

"All of these discussions do not really impact my job. It does not affect planning," Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command, said in an exclusive interview yesterday. "Our focus is on the mandate period. The horizon that I look at is 12 to 18 months. There is not much need at my level to look beyond that."

As Parliament prepared to hear today's speech from the throne, in which Afghanistan could be a central theme, the commander of all Canadian Forces overseas added that he welcomes the involvement of a blue-ribbon panel struck by the Harper government last week to recommend what Canada should do here after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

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As part of NATO's mentoring plan, the Afghan National Army, which is generally held in high regard by the Canadians, has been deploying with Canadian help into new areas over the past two months. But the police, who also have Canadian mentors, have not yet inspired similar confidence.

Recalling a conversation he had in June with Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, who was about to deploy from Quebec as the commander of the incoming Royal 22nd Regiment battle group, Gauthier said that a holding operation was planned through the summer fighting season. But the regiment, dubbed the Van Doos, exceeded expectations by quickly establishing new checkpoints and building police substations across the Zhari and Panjwahi districts.

A battle of good vs. evil For soldiers in Afghanistan, war's reality is stark

SOURCETAG 0710160455

PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun

DATE: 2007.10.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 14

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Michael Den Tandt, Sun Media With a derelict Soviet tank in the foreground, a Canadian soldier guards the perimeter outside Kabul. 2. Natalie Simard is the first woman to help in training the Afghan National Army.

BYLINE: MICHAEL DEN TANDT

WORD COUNT: 822

Coming home to Canada from a Third World country, let alone a Third World country at war, is bittersweet. It's sweet because, frankly, you're safe and sound. The comforts seem more comfortable. The hot shower in the morning feels hotter, the cold beer tastes better.

Luxuries you normally take for granted — watching television in the evening, relaxing on the porch early in the morning while the birds come awake — seem sweet and precious.

It's bitter, at least a little bit, because no matter how hard you try, you can never fully convey the experience to someone who hasn't been there. For a writer, that's hard. I could write a dozen more newspaper columns about Kandahar and still not completely convey the look and feel and smell of the place. The waft of sewage and jet exhaust at Kandahar Airfield; the constant sense of activity, everyone moving with purpose, even if just to reach the mess for dinner. The sun rising like a molten ball, with a penumbra of grit, over the desert. The 24/7 roar of trucks, armoured vehicles, aircraft taking off and landing in endless rotation.

I didn't realize until my first day home how quiet it is in Owen Sound, in the morning before the sun comes up.

HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS

As a newspaper writer you have to focus on the snap-shot, the precise moment, much as a photographer does. You write about the highlights and the lowlights and everything else flows downstream. Maybe you dredge it up later, in a column or a feature, or maybe it just becomes part of your experience. Writing these pieces is a process of sifting, sorting and letting go.

They say that 80% of human communication is visual, through body language. I believe that. I could read 50 transcribed interviews with Canadian soldiers about the Afghan mission and still not truly grasp how bombardier Natalie Simard felt, as we sat over coffee two weeks ago in Kabul, and she told me about why she loves her work.

Now I understand: I saw the conviction in her face and heard the depth of feeling in her voice. She teared up when she spoke of home, but not because she wanted to leave Kabul. She wanted people here to understand why she went and why she wants to stay.

You write about that conversation or recount it in passing and someone will invariably say it's not that simple: It's never black and white. We don't live in a world of good guys and bad guys. The Afghan mission is complex, the politics are complex. You mustn't get lost in a patriotic fog in which everything our troops do is somehow sacrosanct, simply because they're ours. If you do that, you're playing into a political agenda, whether you like it or not. And that's all true. But here's the thing: Critics of the mission have their own moral absolutes too.

My generation's perceptions of soldiering were formed mainly by Hollywood. Films such as *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Apocalypse Now*, or TV shows such as *M*A*S*H* — all made by American directors in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. In those works the military is mostly portrayed as a blunt instrument, a tool of chaos. There are clear dividing lines between good and evil but, as often as not, the military itself is portrayed as evil.

Those films were a natural cultural outgrowth of America's revulsion with that war, which it lost.

Canadian soldiers do not resemble the ones we've seen in film and on television, not even slightly.

On two different trips to Afghanistan I've met and exchanged views with dozens of soldiers of all ranks and from every part of Canada.

The vast majority have been respectful, thoughtful and, for lack of a better term, kind. If a soldier doesn't have these qualities when she joins, I suspect they're drummed into her. And because I've spoken to Natalie, and many others, I can say beyond any shadow of doubt that our soldiers' purpose over there is crystal-clear.

HELP THE AFGHANS

The analysts and strategists and politicians have their complex arguments about the Afghan mission, pro and con. Some make sense, others don't. For rank-and-file soldiers it's simpler. They're there to help the Afghans and to help each other. The rest is noise.

The relativist argument suggests that no cause is every truly good and none truly evil. Taken in that light, every conflict and every justification for conflict can be dismissed as spin. There's no such thing as a just war.

But there's a point where abstraction ends and sharp reality begins.

For our grandparents' generation that point was the Nazi invasion of Europe. For ours, I think, it's on the ground in Kandahar, just outside the wire.

No sane person can argue that burning medical clinics and beheading teachers is good. No sane person can say that blowing up a crowd of women and children in a marketplace is good. No sane person can say that the deliberate veneration of ignorance, or forced ignorance through barbarity, are good. They're not good. They're bad. Here, always and everywhere.

By my lights, such acts are as close to evil as we can find in this world.

And the fact that the very term "evil" has been discredited by George W. Bush does not make the Taliban any more than what they are, or our soldiers any less. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Suicide attack backfires Afghanistan conflict hits home as mom killed trying to stop son

SOURCETAG 0710160450
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 321

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings.

The would-be bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan, and when he returned to his home in Uruzgan province over the weekend announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack, interior ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the would-be bomber gave his family \$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

Bashary said the explosion happened on Sunday, but Himat said it occurred yesterday morning. It was not clear why the two accounts differed.

In another accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province when he tried to take off the bomb vest he was wearing and it exploded, Bashary said. The man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque.

In the latest violence, Taliban militants ambushed a NATO patrol in central Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving about a dozen soldiers wounded, a NATO official said. The troops called for an airstrike on the militants in Wardak province, but there were no reports of casualties.

Most of the troops in Wardak province, which borders the capital of Kabul, are Turkish.

The top UN envoy in Afghanistan, meanwhile, urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight a campaign of intimidation, abduction and killing by government opponents.

Tom Koenigs said at the United Nations that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, NATO remains the most capable force to defend the government against a tough insurgency. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Letters to the Editor Column

SOURCETAG 0710160445
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: 10
WORD COUNT: 426

'BREEDING ISLAMIC TERRORISM'

Re: It's really all about us, Tom Brodbeck, Oct. 13.

Mr. Brodbeck suggests we are in Afghanistan to protect the lives of Canadian residents against future death by violence. But our army is not in the countries that threaten the future security of Canadians.

Fourteen of the 19 9/11 hijackers and 100% of the planners came from Saudi Arabia. There are now far more al-Qaida fighters in Pakistan than Afghanistan. Al-Qaida now does almost all its training in Pakistan. But our army is not fighting in those countries, just Afghanistan.

We went to Afghanistan because our NATO treaty obligations required us to go, and because the government of the day understood that.

Anger with U.S.-supported dictators in Islamic countries is breeding Islamic terrorism. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are the heart of the Islamic terrorist problem.

Unless the U.S.-supported dictators in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are replaced by full democracies, we are wasting the lives of our troops in Afghanistan.

The No. 1 thing the Government of Canada can do to safeguard Canadian residents against Islamic terrorism is to distance itself from U.S.-friendly dictators.

KEITH TERRANCE

WINNIPEG

No easy answers here, unfortunately.

LIVE WITH DECISION

Re: A political power play, Paul Turenne, Oct. 13.

I think the CEO of Manitoba Hydro said it best when he said, "I'm just glad a decision has been made."

Even after favouring an east side hydro line originally, he (or the corporation) made a choice to go down the west side.

Reaching an agreement with all the First Nations involved would take years, if not decades. There's a significant number of First Nations that don't even want the line down the east side. For the others, it's a huge

bargaining chip. Imagine if Chief Bushie from Hollow Water could block a billion dollar transmission line rather than a few highways.

Mention Heritage or UNESCO and you get rabid environmentalists foaming at the mouth as they come out of the woodwork.

Perhaps the east side line makes economic sense, but I think the ensuing costs that would be incurred trying to build a line down the east side would be more than the added costs to the decision to build down the west.

Maybe we should just be happy any decision was made.

GLENN REIVE

WINNIPEG

Sad to settle for mediocrity.

EXTINGUISHER FOR EVERY CAR

After having witnessed the results of a three-vehicle accident Friday evening, and the ensuing vehicle fires, is it not time for vehicle owners to be mandated by law to carry a fire extinguisher?

The fire extinguisher you have may not be used on your vehicle, but someone else's.

JIM SEGGIE

WINNIPEG

How would police enforce it?

CLUB YOUR VEHICLE

I have been a vehicle owner in Winnipeg for more than 10 years. I have parked overnight in every area of the city numerous times. I park in back lanes, at malls and even more horrifying: downtown.

Guess what? My car has never been broken into. I use an ingenious invention called The Club. It is highly visible and if you actually use it instead of leaving it in your backseat, it is surprisingly effective.

Of course, The Club is not the only reason people don't break into my car, I also never leave anything valuable in there.

I also believe Autopac should add a surcharge on vehicles with aftermarket wheels as it is often a catalyst in car theft.

LANNY NAVITKA

ST. VITAL

Clubs are an inexpensive defence.

Throne out a trap Speech to dangle tax cuts for us, 'poison pill' for Dion

SOURCETAG 0710160436
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 8
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU
WORD COUNT: 471

Tonight's speech from the throne will dangle a grab bag of goodies, including big tax breaks, and set the foundation for a Conservative campaign platform, observers predict.

The federal government blueprint is expected to boost the economy, wave the Canadian flag in the north, beef up crime-busting measures and map out a way ahead for Canada's military in Afghanistan.

University of Calgary political scientist David Taras expects the speech will be laden with golden promises, but also sees a "trap" being laid for the Liberals.

"Harper will be Captain Canada and tax-cutter, but somewhere in there is going to be the poison pill that, theoretically at least, Stephane Dion will have to swallow," he said.

While Harper maintains his aim is to continue governing the country, Taras believes the PM recognizes the time is ripe for a campaign with a rising tide of Tory support in vote-rich Quebec.

"It seems for the Liberals in Quebec there's nowhere to go but down, so the road is open for Harper -- not in the cities but in rural Quebec," Taras said. "He can see the promised land. We don't know what will happen in six months, but ultimately the future is unpredictable and the now is certain."

'BOUTIQUE' BREAKS

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty confirmed that tax relief is on the way, boasting that Canadians will be hearing a "positive message going forward."

John Williamson, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, hopes that means a pledge for broad-based tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses.

"The last two budgets have focused far too much on boutique tax breaks that benefit some but not all taxpayers," he said. "It has complicated the tax code and meant not all taxpayers have benefited from lower taxes."

WAIT TIME BEEFS

While some see the tax-cut pledge as a vote-grabbing ploy on the eve of an election, Williamson said the rationale is irrelevant.

"I'll take a tax cut for any reason. If the government wants to introduce a tax cut because they think it produces a better economy, great. If they want to introduce tax cuts to win votes I'll take that as well."

As the Conservatives prepare to roll out a fresh round of promises, an Angus Reid poll shows many Canadians are disappointed with how the Conservative government has delivered on its old promises.

While 64% are pleased with the one-point GST cut, 59% think the Tories haven't done enough to make streets and communities safe and 57% are dissatisfied with progress on the patient wait-times guarantee, according to the online survey of 1,179 Canadians.

"They are really giving the Conservatives mixed reviews on their promise-keeping," said Angus Reid VP Craig Worden.

The poll, conducted Oct. 8-9 with a margin of error of three percentage points 19 times out of 20, comes as a study finds wait times at a record high for surgery and therapeutic treatments.

The Fraser Institute report found the average Canadian waits 18.3 weeks for treatment, up from 17.8 weeks last year and nearly double the 9.3-week wait 14 years ago.

WHAT TO EXPECT TONIGHT

- The government will not meet Canada's commitments under the Kyoto Accord, but will work to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Tax cuts for individuals and businesses.
- Role in Afghanistan beyond 2009 will be debated in Parliament following a report by a committee appointed by Harper.
- The government will move to limit its ability to spend tax dollars in areas of provincial jurisdiction.
- New get-tough-on-crime measures will be introduced in Parliament, including proposed stiffer penalties for gun crimes and juvenile offenders.
- Pushing the provinces to reduce trade barriers. KEYWORDS=CANADA

A battle of good vs. evil For soldiers in Afghanistan, war's reality is stark

SOURCETAG 0710160558

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 28

ILLUSTRATION: 2 photos 1. photo by Michael Den Tandt, Sun Media With a derelict Soviet tank in the foreground, a Canadian soldier guards the perimeter outside Kabul. 2. Natalie Simard is the first woman to help in training the Afghan National Army.

BYLINE: MICHAEL DEN TANDT

WORD COUNT: 822

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And the fact that the very term "evil" has been discredited by George W. Bush does not make the Taliban any more than what they are, or our soldiers any less. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

Khadr trial gets green light U.S. judge gives OK to case of Canuck in Gitmo on murder charges

SOURCETAG: 0710160554
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 22
ILLUSTRATION: photo of OMAR KHADR Allegedly killed a U.S. medic in 2002
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
WORD COUNT: 306

A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay.

The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15.

Judge Col. Peter Brownback said he has a duty to proceed with the case when the appeals court has not issued a stay of proceedings.

Omar's lawyers say they may seek just such a stay of proceedings from the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Khadr's lead military lawyer, Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, says the practical effect of the judge's order is to deny Khadr's right to seek a meaningful review of a decision by a special military appeals court allowing the trial to resume.

In his e-mail order, Brownback agrees it would be "unprecedented" to hold court sessions while an appeal was pending at the Court of Appeals. "Unprecedented, however, does not mean improper or unlawful," Brownback says.

The judge says the military commission trying Khadr disagrees with the defence "that the commission has some duty to stay its proceedings while waiting for the Court of Appeals to act on the appeal."

"To the contrary, the commission finds that it has a duty to proceed with the case in a judicious manner, absent a stay imposed by the Court of Appeals (or another body)."

Kuebler calls the whole process "Alice in Wonderland."

The U.S. Defence Department, he said, "is so desperate to validate this broken process that they will disregard just about any concern of judicial economy or fairness to the accused."

"They write a rule giving Omar a right to appeal, they tell Omar he has a right to appeal, and when he appeals, they claim he doesn't have a right to appeal," Kuebler says in a news release.

"The U.S. would never tolerate this kind of treatment for an American, yet the Canadian government continues to agree with the U.S. view that it's good enough for a Canadian."

Kuebler has made similar comments about Canada before.

He has argued that the special military appeals court was wrong last month when it said the case could go ahead.

But the military review panel later decided Brownback has the authority after all to try Khadr.

KEYWORDS=WORLD

Harper high on the Throne 'Captain Canada' expected to dangle a grab-bag of goodies during today's Speech

SOURCETAG: 0710160541

PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun

DATE: 2007.10.16

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: 12

ILLUSTRATION: file photo by Reuters Prime Minister Stephen Harper, seen last week on Parliament Hill, delivers his Throne Speech today.

BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 371

Today's Speech from the Throne will dangle a grab-bag of goodies, including big tax breaks, and set the foundation for a Conservative campaign platform, observers predict.

The federal government blueprint is expected to boost the economy, wave the Canadian flag in the North, beef up crime-busting measures and map out a way ahead for Canada's military in Afghanistan.

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"They are really giving the Conservatives mixed reviews on their promise-keeping," said Angus Reid vice-president Craig Worden. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Suicide attack backfires Afghanistan conflict hits home as mom killed trying to stop son

SOURCETAG 0710160540
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 321

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings.

The would-be bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan, and when he returned to his home in Uruzgan province over the weekend announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack, interior ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the would-be bomber gave his family \$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

Bashary said the explosion happened on Sunday, but Himat said it occurred yesterday morning. It was not clear why the two accounts differed.

In another accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province when he tried to take off the bomb vest he was wearing and it exploded, Bashary said. The man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque.

In the latest violence, Taliban militants ambushed a NATO patrol in central Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving about a dozen soldiers wounded, a NATO official said. The troops called for an airstrike on the militants in Wardak province, but there were no reports of casualties.

Most of the troops in Wardak province, which borders the capital of Kabul, are Turkish.

The top UN envoy in Afghanistan, meanwhile, urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight a campaign of intimidation, abduction and killing by government opponents.

Tom Koenigs said at the United Nations that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, NATO remains the most capable force to defend the government against a tough insurgency. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

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SOURCETAG 0710160040
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 19
BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
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WORD COUNT: 321

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Afghan mother dies stopping bomber son

SOURCETAG 0710160343
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
WORD COUNT: 308

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings, police said yesterday.

The bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan. When he returned to the family home in Uruzgan province on the weekend he announced he planned to carry out a suicide attack, Interior Ministry spokesperson Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the man gave his family the equivalent of C\$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

In a second accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province, Bashary said.

He said the man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque. The bomb vest he was wearing exploded when he tried to take it off.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, said it had looked into allegations that soldiers had desecrated the Qur'an during a raid on a home in the eastern province of Kunar and found no evidence of wrongdoing. The allegations outraged villagers, who met with the governor, provincial leaders and U.S. military commanders on Sunday.

Deputy Gov. Noor Mohammad Khan of Kunar province said American soldiers raided the home of Mullah Zarbaz, arresting him and three others.

Villagers said the soldiers ripped, knifed and burned a Qur'an during the raid, allegations that led to an angry demonstration, Khan said.

But a spokesperson for the U.S.-led coalition, which oversees special forces soldiers who usually carry out nighttime raids, said the allegations had been investigated and were found to be baseless. "We looked into it. There was no desecration of the Qur'an or any religious symbol," he said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Khadr trial to go ahead

SOURCETAG 0710160341
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: SUN MEDIA NEWS SERVICES
DATELINE: WASHINGTON
COLUMN: News Digest
WORD COUNT: 174

A U.S. military judge has ordered the trial of Canadian detainee Omar Khadr to go ahead as planned on Nov. 8 in Guantanamo Bay. Judge Col. Peter Brownback cited the need for the case to proceed in a "judicious manner." The decision comes even though Khadr's lawyers have taken the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals. The 21-year-old Khadr is facing murder and terrorism charges for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. medic in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002, when he was 15. Brownback says he has a duty to proceed with the case when the appeals court has not issued a stay of proceedings. Khadr's lead military lawyer says the practical effect of the judge's order is to deny Khadr's right to seek a meaningful review of a decision by a special military appeals court allowing the trial to resume. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Throne speech goodies forecast It's expected to set the foundation for a Conservative campaign platform.

SOURCETAG 0710160339
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, SUN MEDIA NATIONAL BUREAU
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 289

Tonight's speech from the throne will dangle a grab bag of goodies, including big tax breaks, and set the foundation for a Conservative campaign platform, observers predict.

The federal government blueprint is expected to boost the economy, wave the Canadian flag in the north, beef up crime-busting measures and map out a way ahead for Canada's military in Afghanistan.

University of Calgary political scientist David Taras expects the speech will be laden with golden promises, but also sees a "trap" being laid for the Liberals. "Harper will be Captain Canada and tax-cutter, but somewhere in there is going to be the poison pill that, theoretically at least, Stephane Dion will have to swallow," he said.

While Harper maintains his aim is to continue governing the country, Taras believes the PM recognizes the time is ripe for a campaign with a rising tide of Tory support in vote-rich Quebec. "It seems for the Liberals in Quebec there's nowhere to go but down, so the road is open for Harper — not in the cities but in rural Quebec. He can see the promised land."

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty confirmed tax relief is on the way, noting Canadians will be hearing a "positive message going forward."

John Williamson, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, hopes that means a pledge for broad-based tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses. "The last two budgets have focused far too much on boutique tax breaks that benefit some but not all taxpayers," he said.

While some see the tax-cut pledge as a vote-grabbing ploy, Williamson said the rationale is irrelevant. "I'll take a tax cut for any reason."

Meanwhile, an Angus Reid poll shows many Canadians are disappointed with how the Tory government has delivered on promises, with 59 per cent thinking the Tories haven't done enough to make streets and communities safe. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Suicide attack backfires Afghanistan conflict hits home as mom killed trying to stop son

SOURCETAG 0710160769
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 18
BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 321

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings.

The would-be bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan, and when he returned to his home in Uruzgan province over the weekend announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack, interior ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the would-be bomber gave his family \$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

Bashary said the explosion happened on Sunday, but Himat said it occurred yesterday morning. It was not clear why the two accounts differed.

In another accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province when he tried to take off the bomb vest he was wearing and it exploded, Bashary said. The man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque.

In the latest violence, Taliban militants ambushed a NATO patrol in central Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving about a dozen soldiers wounded, a NATO official said. The troops called for an airstrike on the militants in Wardak province, but there were no reports of casualties.

Most of the troops in Wardak province, which borders the capital of Kabul, are Turkish.

The top UN envoy in Afghanistan, meanwhile, urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight a campaign of intimidation, abduction and killing by government opponents.

Tom Koenigs said at the United Nations that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, NATO remains the most capable force to defend the government against a tough insurgency. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Throne out a trap Speech to dangle tax cuts for us, 'poison pill' for Dion

SOURCETAG 0710160763
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NATIONAL BUREAU
WORD COUNT: 471

Tonight's speech from the throne will dangle a grab bag of goodies, including big tax breaks, and set the foundation for a Conservative campaign platform, observers predict.

The federal government blueprint is expected to boost the economy, wave the Canadian flag in the north, beef up crime-busting measures and map out a way ahead for Canada's military in Afghanistan.

University of Calgary political scientist David Taras expects the speech will be laden with golden promises, but also sees a "trap" being laid for the Liberals.

"Harper will be Captain Canada and tax-cutter, but somewhere in there is going to be the poison pill that, theoretically at least, Stephane Dion will have to swallow," he said.

While Harper maintains his aim is to continue governing the country, Taras believes the PM recognizes the time is ripe for a campaign with a rising tide of Tory support in vote-rich Quebec.

"It seems for the Liberals in Quebec there's nowhere to go but down, so the road is open for Harper -- not in the cities but in rural Quebec," Taras said. "He can see the promised land. We don't know what will happen in six months, but ultimately the future is unpredictable and the now is certain."

'BOUTIQUE' BREAKS

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty confirmed that tax relief is on the way, boasting that Canadians will be hearing a "positive message going forward."

John Williamson, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, hopes that means a pledge for broad-based tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses.

"The last two budgets have focused far too much on boutique tax breaks that benefit some but not all taxpayers," he said. "It has complicated the tax code and meant not all taxpayers have benefited from lower taxes."

WAIT TIME BEEFS

While some see the tax-cut pledge as a vote-grabbing ploy on the eve of an election, Williamson said the rationale is irrelevant.

"I'll take a tax cut for any reason. If the government wants to introduce a tax cut because they think it produces a better economy, great. If they want to introduce tax cuts to win votes I'll take that as well."

As the Conservatives prepare to roll out a fresh round of promises, an Angus Reid poll shows many Canadians are disappointed with how the Conservative government has delivered on its old promises.

While 64% are pleased with the one-point GST cut, 59% think the Tories haven't done enough to make streets and communities safe and 57% are dissatisfied with progress on the patient wait-times guarantee, according to the online survey of 1,179 Canadians.

"They are really giving the Conservatives mixed reviews on their promise-keeping," said Angus Reid VP Craig Worden.

The poll, conducted Oct. 8-9 with a margin of error of three percentage points 19 times out of 20, comes as a study finds wait times at a record high for surgery and therapeutic treatments.

The Fraser Institute report found the average Canadian waits 18.3 weeks for treatment, up from 17.8 weeks last year and nearly double the 9.3-week wait 14 years ago.

WHAT TO EXPECT TONIGHT

- The government will not meet Canada's commitments under the Kyoto Accord, but will work to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Tax cuts for individuals and businesses.
- Role in Afghanistan beyond 2009 will be debated in Parliament following a report by a committee appointed by Harper.
- The government will move to limit its ability to spend tax dollars in areas of provincial jurisdiction.
- New get-tough-on-crime measures will be introduced in Parliament, including proposed stiffer penalties for gun crimes and juvenile offenders.
- Pushing the provinces to reduce trade barriers. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Opposition is in no position to topple the Tories over throne speech

IDNUMBER 200710160033
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial
PAGE: A14
KEYWORDS: ELECTIONS; POLITICAL PARTIES; POLITICIANS;
CANDIDATES; GOVERNMENT; UNITED STATES; VOTING
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 519

Prime Minister Stephen Harper already owes much to the feud between his two predecessors. If not for the animosity between former prime ministers Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, Harper might still be in opposition.

So the release of Chretien's memoirs, which poured more salt into Liberal wounds, is an added bonus on the eve of a throne speech that will either be a launching pad for an election or the foundation for a minority government with the heart of a majority.

No doubt many Conservative strategists see this as the moment to strike with a speech that the opposition parties simply cannot swallow, forcing an election that the Liberals in particular don't want.

The latest poll from Ipsos-Reid shows Harper's Conservatives breaking out into a 12-point lead over the Liberals nationally, after being mired for months in a virtual dead heat.

Harper's strength is growing while his opponents continue to falter. Liberal leader Stéphane Dion has failed to inspire Canadians in either English Canada or his home province of Quebec. The Liberals are now running third in that province following their humiliating defeat in three recent by-elections.

The Bloc Québécois is still suffering from the collateral damage suffered earlier this year when the Parti Québécois was so soundly trounced in the provincial election as support for its *raison d'être* continues to ebb.

The New Democrats are feeling good after a rare victory in a Quebec byelection, but there is little sign that success will be repeated elsewhere.

Adding to the pressure on Harper to force an election now is the financial and organizational advantage the Conservatives have over the Liberals.

Throw in Harper's clever appointment of an all-party committee to deal with one of his biggest negatives -- the growing unease with Canada's role in Afghanistan -- and a strong case can be made for consolidating his gains with an election.

But there are also compelling reasons for Harper to hold back his hawks and use his growing strength to show that he can govern effectively rather than forcing an election now.

First, the date for the next election is already set. Harper needs a better reason than pure partisan advantage for abandoning the fixed election date (2009) he brought in as part of his promise of restoring accountability to

Ottawa.

Second, Canadians simply don't need another election now. Given all of the advantages that Harper and the Conservatives have amassed, it would be rightly seen as a significant failure of leadership if he were unable to pilot legislation through such a weak opposition in Parliament. With the two largest opposition parties in various stages of disarray, it would take a concerted effort on the part of the Conservatives to provoke a trip to the polls.

The Liberals have already signaled they would prefer to allow the confidence motion on the throne speech itself to pass, even if it contains elements they find unpalatable.

So unless the speech contains the kind of issue that full funding for religious schools turned out to be in the Ontario election, the Conservative government will be able to move on to the specific legislation needed to flesh out and enact the promises we will hear later today.

That legislation should be the record voters can use in the next election to decide whether Harper's government deserves a second mandate.

Book exonerates Martin's handling of Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710160031
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 349

OTTAWA — It's not true that Canadian soldiers are deployed to the volatile province of Kandahar, rather than Afghanistan's safer capital of Kabul, because of dithering by former prime minister Paul Martin, a new insider examination of the mission says.

A book by two experts argues that lobbying by Canada's top general, Rick Hillier, helped overcome Martin's reservations about the mission.

In *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, authors Eugene Lang, a chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, and academic Janice Gross Stein, counter charges by Martin's predecessor, Jean Chretien.

Chretien writes he sent soldiers to Afghanistan, but after the Taliban fell, arranged for them to be stationed near the safer area of Kabul. "Later, unfortunately, when my successor (Martin) 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.

Martin has refused to comment on Chretien's suggestion. But interviewed by Lang and Gross Stein, Martin reveals he was unenthusiastic about Hillier's proposal to deploy forces to Kandahar to repair Canada's relationship with the U.S. and had other priorities.

"Afghanistan was not a priority for me the way Darfur, Haiti and the Middle East were," Martin said. "Afghanistan had become our biggest aid commitment, and it shouldn't have been."

Martin was one of the few members of the government to openly challenge Hillier's proposal, doubting it would bring the political and military benefits Hillier had promised.

"I made four demands of Hillier before I agreed to the mission," Martin said, adding he told the general: "I want in, but I (also) want out. We do peacemaking and reconstruction and win hearts and minds. I am going to make a big demand on Darfur soon and you have to tell me I have have all the troops I need. And you must have the capacity for Haiti if that blows up again.' I told him none of this could be constrained by Afghanistan or I wouldn't agree to the mission."

Stay course in Afghanistan, UN security council told

IDNUMBER 200710160029
PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A13
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Omar Sobhani, Reuters / QUIETLY LIVING LIFE: Afghangirl sits outside her shelter in Kabul, capital of the war-torn country. ;
KEYWORDS: WAR; IRAQ; ARMED FORCES; UNITED STATES
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
BYLINE: Steven Edwards
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 364

UNITED NATIONS -- Echoing former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the United Nations' Afghan envoy has warned Canada and other countries with troops in Afghanistan that "Now is not the time to wobble."

Tom Koenigs, who heads the UN's 1,000-strong political mission in Afghanistan, said Monday that the Afghan government remains dependent on international forces for its survival.

Though levels of violence have fallen in the past two months, they're still up 30 per cent over last year.

"Nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment," Koenigs told a special meeting of the UN Security Council.

Thatcher gave similar advice to then-president George H.W. Bush as he appeared to hesitate about the need for resolute U.S. action in the run-up to the first Gulf War, telling him: "This is no time to wobble, George."

Koenigs's warning was most poignant for Canada, where opposition parties want to see no extension of Canada's 2,500-troop deployment in Afghanistan beyond its expiry date of February 2009.

He said the Afghan National Army is expected to field up to 70,000 soldiers by the end of next year, but added "numbers are not a measure of capability." He also signalled that much more time is needed to develop a well-functioning Afghan police force, and said only the continued presence of international forces could keep the insurgency at bay and allow efforts to combat corruption and drug production within the country to continue.

"The successes of recent months deserve to be translated into visible, durable results for all Afghans," he said.

Koenigs said 1,200 civilians have lost their lives since January as insurgents have increasingly adopted Iraq-style tactics such as suicide attacks or detonations of improvised explosive devices.

But he added that despite publicity surrounding such bombings, overall stability is most threatened by insurgent campaigns of "intimidation, abduction and execution" against people seen to be working with international forces.

He praised efforts by international and Afghan forces to rewrite rules of engagement aimed at minimizing civilian casualties that might result from their operations.

Speaking later with reporters, Koenigs also reacted to the call this month by Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier for the UN to raise the profile of its Afghan mission by appointing a "high-level" envoy to head it — much like former British prime minister Tony Blair was appointed special envoy to the Middle East peace process.

Suicide attack backfires Afghanistan conflict hits home as mom killed trying to stop son

SOURCETAG 0710160665
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: AMIR SHAH, AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 321

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home in southern Afghanistan that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings.

The would-be bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan, and when he returned to his home in Uruzgan province over the weekend announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack, interior ministry spokesman Zemer Bashary said.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's police chief. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the would-be bomber gave his family \$3,600 before telling them he intended to carry out the attack, Himat said.

Bashary said the explosion happened on Sunday, but Himat said it occurred yesterday morning. It was not clear why the two accounts differed.

In another accidental explosion, another would-be bomber killed himself Friday in Paktika province when he tried to take off the bomb vest he was wearing and it exploded, Bashary said. The man told authorities he had been instructed by his handlers in Pakistan to launch a suicide attack, but changed his mind when he saw people praying in a mosque.

In the latest violence, Taliban militants ambushed a NATO patrol in central Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving about a dozen soldiers wounded, a NATO official said. The troops called for an airstrike on the militants in Wardak province, but there were no reports of casualties.

Most of the troops in Wardak province, which borders the capital of Kabul, are Turkish.

The top UN envoy in Afghanistan, meanwhile, urged countries contributing troops to the NATO force not to "wobble" in their commitments to fight a campaign of intimidation, abduction and killing by government opponents.

Tom Koenigs said at the United Nations that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, NATO remains the most capable force to defend the government against a tough insurgency. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

POST-TALIBAN Afghanistan 'a success story,' World Bank says

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072890245

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A6

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 422

WORD COUNT: 372

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Economic and social conditions in Afghanistan have improved dramatically since the fall of the Taliban, despite continuing problems with security, corruption and the drug trade, according to the World Bank's top official responsible for the country.

"This is a success story," Alastair McKechnie, country director for Afghanistan at the World Bank, said in an interview yesterday.

"Afghanistan has defied predictions and has achieved a lot in a short period of time." Mr. McKechnie, in Canada for meetings with officials in Ottawa and a speech in Toronto, pointed to a series of positive indicators, including double-digit economic growth, an expanding road network, a surge in school attendance – particularly by girls – and a drop in infant mortality from 165 per 1,000 live births to 135 in 4 1/2 years.

He said it is easy to get a negative view of Afghanistan if one focuses on the south and east of the country, where the insurgency is strongest. In two-thirds of the country, there is no insurgency and conditions are improving more quickly.

Some of the credit goes to the World Bank, which has committed \$1.5-billion (U.S.) of its own money to the country and set up the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund, which has so far gathered \$2.4-billion in pledges from two dozen countries.

This year's single top donor to the fund is Canada, with \$211-million.

Britain is second, with \$145-million.

The Canadian money goes to a variety of projects and uses and is a major source of funding for the daily operations of the Afghan government, which still does not generate enough tax revenues to fund these activities on its own.

"Otherwise, teachers and health workers don't get paid," Mr. McKechnie said.

He conceded that much remains to be done in reducing corruption in the police and improving the functioning of the justice system.

Another challenge is to reduce the influence of the poppy trade.

Afghanistan is estimated to furnish 93 per cent of the world's illegal opium supply, used in the manufacture of heroin, and opium production accounts for one-third of economic activity.

Even there, Mr. McKechnie said, the picture is not as bad as it seems, with only 4 per cent of the country's total arable land being cultivated with poppies and more provinces becoming poppy free.

To battle the opium trade, the most effective methods include the interdiction of traffickers, encouraging alternative cash crops such as grapes and appealing to the religious values of Afghans, he said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; economy; foreign policy; foreign aid; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Alastair McKechnie

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban; World Bank

CHRETIEN ACCUSATION Ex-minister denies Martin to blame for Kandahar mission

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072890202
DATE: 2007.10.16
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN AND MICHAEL VALPY
SECTION: National News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: OTTAWA and TORONTO
WORDS: 849
WORD COUNT: 814

ALAN FREEMAN AND MICHAEL VALPY OTTAWA and TORONTO Bill Graham denied yesterday that indecisiveness by former prime minister Paul Martin led to Canada deploying troops in Afghanistan's bloody Kandahar province, but he conceded that lengthy discussions within the government meant other NATO partners succeeded in being posted to less dangerous parts of the country.

Mr. Graham, foreign affairs minister and later defence minister, refused to take sides in the dispute touched off by former prime minister Jean Chretien, who accused his successor Mr. Martin of putting the lives of Canadian soldiers in danger by taking too long to decide where the troops should be positioned in 2004–2005.

Mr. Graham pointed out that it was Mr. Chretien himself who committed Canadian troops to Kabul and committed soldiers through NATO to the support and rebuilding of Afghanistan.

But he also said he believed Mr. Chretien would not have agreed to send troops to Kandahar if he had remained prime minister. "Mr.

Chretien was very careful that way." In the second volume of his memoirs appearing over the weekend, Mr. Chretien said that because Mr. Martin took so long to make a decision, Canadian troops wound up being sent south to fight the Taliban "in the killing fields around Kandahar." Mr. Graham said in an interview: "I wouldn't describe it as dithering.

There was certainly a lot of discussions that went on at the lower levels about where Canada should be committed for a PRT [provincial reconstruction team to assist in rebuilding Afghanistan].

"And you can make the case for saying that because it took so long other people took other places that were more attractive from a security perspective and therefore there were fewer choices available when it came time for Canada to say yes." Kenneth Calder, at the time the assistant deputy minister of defence for policy, who is now retired, put the case more strongly, saying in an interview yesterday that there was no delay in decision-making either by Mr. Martin or defence and foreign affairs officials.

The issue, he said, moved forward rapidly.

Mr. Graham said the PRT choice at the end was between Herat in the western part of Afghanistan, where Canada would have served with Italy, and Kandahar province in the south.

Kandahar has showed itself to be much bloodier than Herat, but Mr. Graham said that was not the way it looked when the decision was taken in the spring of 2005.

"Kandahar didn't have anywhere near the violence it does today," he said, noting that "somebody had to be in the south." Nonetheless, the various accounts of what lay behind the Kandahar deployment pose major questions.

Mr. Chretien in his memoirs writes that what led to troops being sent to Kandahar was Mr. Martin taking too long to make up his mind about whether Canada should extend its term with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) positioned in Kabul and its environs.

Yet the book *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, co-authored by University of Toronto scholar Janice Gross Stein and former top Liberal aide Eugene Lang, makes clear that Canada was only committed to ISAF for one year ending in the summer of 2004, a decision made when Mr. Chretien was prime minister.

Prof. Stein, director of the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies, said in an interview yesterday that at no time was a significant extension of Canada's commitment to ISAF under consideration.

Moreover, after Mr. Martin became prime minister in December of 2003, ISAF was being absorbed into NATO with Canada's support.

The second question is how Mr. Martin could not have known for a whole year that his government's delay in deciding where to locate its PRT was inevitably leading to Canadian troops being sent to Kandahar.

Prof. Stein says the issue of committing combat troops was not on the agenda during the year that officials in the departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence debated where to put the PRT (although one senior defence official says it was always on the agenda). And the location of a PRT was not high on anyone's priority list – either for officials dealing with the Afghanistan file (there were far more important issues, such as bringing NATO into the country) or for the prime minister's team preoccupied, among other things, with the Quebec sponsorship scandal.

The issue of combat troops in Kandahar went to the prime minister for decision only after General Rick Hillier became Chief of the Defence Staff in February, 2005, and recommended a Canadian commitment to Afghanistan much broader than a PRT.

He placed his proposal before Mr. Martin in March and the prime minister gave his approval in May.

Mr. Graham said Gen. Hillier was a keen backer of the Kandahar deployment, contingent on the Canadians being accompanied into the south by the British and the Dutch, who now serve in neighbouring provinces.

He also said that Afghan President Hamid Karzai had been pressing for a broader NATO presence in the south that was not simply American.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; books; statements; my years as prime minister; foreign policy; defence

PERSONAL NAME: Bill Graham; Paul Martin; Jean Chretien

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party; Armed Forces

Our statesmen pay off scores

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072890190
DATE: 2007.10.16
PAGE: A18
BYLINE: CANDIDA PUGH
SECTION: Letter to the Edit
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Toronto ONT
WORDS: 99
WORD COUNT: 122

Candida Pugh Toronto Re Families Of Fallen Soldiers Blast Chretien For Politicizing Their Losses (Oct. 15): Have we grown so irony-deficient that this headline makes sense to us? These soldiers fell at the behest of their politically spawned government. Bereaved families cannot reasonably demand that Canada tactfully blind itself to the possibility that bad decisions lay behind their terrible losses.

Politics means far more than parties and voting. The future of this nation (and of Afghanistan) depends on open discourse about the possible mistakes made. Mr. Chretien may be vindictive, but in this arena no one should be silenced.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: defence; deaths; foreign policy; political

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

CORRECTION

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072890185

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A2

BYLINE:

SECTION: News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 79

WORD COUNT: 99

Ben Walsh, the father of Master Corporal Jeff Walsh, a Canadian soldier who was fatally shot in Afghanistan on Aug. 6, has said he is looking for accountability, but does not want to see anyone "persecuted" in an apparent case of friendly fire. A story from The Canadian Press in some editions of Saturday's paper incorrectly quoted Mr. Walsh as saying he did not want to see one of his son's fellow soldiers "prosecuted" in the case.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

SUBJECT TERM:corrections

ORGANIZATION NAME: Globe and Mail

It wouldn't kill us to wait for the Manley panel's Afghan verdict

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072890183

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A19

BYLINE: JEFFREY SIMPSON

SECTION: Comment Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 738

WORD COUNT: 773

JEFFREY SIMPSON When the U.S. Congress, with a Democratic majority, wanted fresh eyes and clear heads to examine the Iraq quagmire, it asked a group of eminent Americans for advice.

Under the leadership of former Republican secretary of state James Baker and former Democratic congressman Lee Hamilton, the group delivered a bipartisan report that, if followed, would have led to a different policy than the one being pursued by the Bush administration.

The same sort of model is now being followed by the Harper government.

It has just appointed a five-person panel, led by former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley, to investigate Canada's options in Afghanistan.

Predictably, an avalanche of bilge descended on the idea. Opposition MPs cried that Parliament is the proper place to debate Afghanistan, as though the issue would not continue to be discussed in the new session that starts today. Congress didn't stop talking about Iraq while the Baker-Hamilton group did its work; Parliament won't stop talking about Afghanistan during the Manley group's work.

It's doubtful, but always possible, that parliamentarians might learn from the Manley group, which is, after all, made up of some very eminent people. But the group won't do anyone a service if it doesn't put facts squarely in front of Canadians. Skip the honey-coated speeches of Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier before the United Nations. Cut the rah-rah defence lobby's stuff about finishing the job. Instead, ask the hard questions about the goals of the entire North Atlantic Treaty Organization mission, Canada's role in achieving those goals, and whether those goals are achievable, given NATO's available resources and the facts on the Afghan ground.

Including: Afghanistan is a narco-state. Its people earn more from poppy growing and production than any other source of income.

Some of that money fuels the insurgency. NATO's policy has succeeded in lowering production in some provinces, but total production is up. How can a mission succeed when the adversary has ready supplies of cash for weapons and bribery? Afghanistan is corrupt, as we define corruption. Government officials, tribal leaders and warlords take in public funds and distribute them to followers or to buy protection and favouritism. The fact that Canadian forces in Kandahar have taken to giving money directly to local policemen, rather than letting their bosses distribute the cash, underlines the corruption. Can any mission

succeed when the Afghan forces supposedly on "our" side are corrupt? How do you "drain the swamp" of local support when people don't trust our friends? The first chapter on counterinsurgency warfare says: Seal the borders. Don't let insurgents get reinforcements and don't let them rest up outside the area of conflict. Which means: Can this mission succeed with such a porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan? Afghanistan is a patchwork of ethnicities with a low sense of overarching national ambitions. The duly elected President is widely known as "the mayor of Kabul," so limited is the sway of his government across the country. Can any mission succeed and, if so, how, with this kind of government in such a country? Afghanistan is also one of the world's poorest countries, with social practices and economic structures that we might call postmedieval.

It's an obvious truism that development and security go together, but is there enough of either now or on the horizon? And if not, what can be done? No matter what Canada does, however success is defined, it cannot be achieved in isolation from the entire NATO mission. Is that mission on the right track, just needing more resources and resolve? Or are there some serious flaws that need correcting, as in anti-drug policy, military missions, use of air power, relations with the Kabul government? It's too early to make a call on what Canada should do in Afghanistan, although that hasn't stopped the NDP from taking its knee-jerk position to pull out, or for the Liberals to declare that Canada should get out by February of 2009.

Too many things are in play for decisions to be made now. They must be made, in fairness to our NATO allies, in mid-2008. Until then, we should ask hard questions, adjust tactics where necessary, and listen to sound advice of the kind that, perhaps, the Manley group will provide.

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ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; foreign policy; defence

PERSONAL NAME: John Manley

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

THIS COUNTRY: A MOUNTIE FUNERAL 'He was all smiles, all smiles, all the time'

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072890134

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A9 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: ROY MACGREGOR

SECTION: Column

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 1174

WORD COUNT: 1045

ROY MacGREGOR OTTAWA It was a day in which the entire country could use a soother.

Overcast and chilly, former prime ministers still knifing each other, talk of the government falling, or wanting to fall – and eight-month-old Alexis Marie Worden, contentedly sucking on her blue soother, completely oblivious to it all.

The news reports would say she was at Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica, but she knew she was really only in her mother's arms as they stood on the curb of Sussex Drive, waiting. Had she looked up, she would have seen a box of red geraniums, still in bloom in a fall that has yet to see first frost.

It was cold enough, however, that strange men in red uniforms – adult versions of the small serge and gold-braided suit she was wearing – were hurrying about in search of tissues to wipe her nose and blankets to cover her little shoulders.

She heard the motorcycles and watched, fascinated, the flashing red lights as they pulled up. She heard the pipers and the heavy, heartbeat march of polished boots.

Her own new black shoes would easily pass inspection.

She saw the red-coated men on horses ride slowly by but would not have noticed that one rider was missing – or known why.

She saw the pallbearers form at the back of the long black station wagon but would not have understood why one man was carrying a lone Stetson on a pillow.

It was a hat like her father wore, but at 6 foot 3 he couldn't possibly be under it.

She herself was often much higher than her father's head, a squealing, screeching baby being tossed in the air by a big man who never seemed to stop smiling in their backyard far away in Hay River, NWT.

Now there was no one to toss her. And no one she could see was smiling this day.

They came by the thousands to Ottawa to bury RCMP Constable Christopher Worden, little Alexis's father. He was only 30 years old. He and wife Jodie Lamers Worden planned, he told friends, to have so many

children after Alexis that one day they would fill a bus and be enough, boys and girls, to form a football team.

He had so many plans. A trip in the new motorhome. Fishing trips.

Snowmobiling trips. Winter campfires in the backyard while he showed Alexis the Northern Lights that sometimes flicker like fluorescent sheets over the Hay River sky.

But all those plans crashed to the ground Oct. 6 outside a suspected drug house at the edge of a tough section of Hay River sadly known as Disneyland. He was alone. It was just before dawn. Bullets were fired. And not much else is known apart from the fact that a little girl lost her father before they even really got to know each other.

One man has been arrested. Another man has been charged as an accessory. And while that may one day bring justice, it cannot bring the big, smiling father back.

The tragedy brought thousands of uniformed men and women to Ottawa for the funeral. There were so many police and soldiers about, and so many ordinary citizens, that they overflowed the basilica and filled the basement and, still, hundreds had to watch the service on a giant screen set up against the National Art Gallery across the street.

The Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day, came, as did new RCMP Commissioner William Elliott and recently resigned commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli.

It was not a day for talking about government or policing problems.

It was a day, rather, for understanding why this country, perhaps alone in the world, proudly holds up its police force as its symbol to the world.

"It's put aside," said Sergeant-Major Bob Gallup of Fredericton, who met the Worden and Lamers families on the steps and led them into the huge church. "Everything else can wait. This is a healing period." Former deputy prime minister Herb Gray came because Chris Worden's sister, Cathy, once worked in Gray's office. "It's just so sad," he said.

Ottawa police Constable Tim Murray was there to direct traffic, but also to pay his respects to "a fallen brother.

"He was a new father," Murray said. "He had his whole life ahead of him." Captain Jeremy Pressnell of the Kingston garrison came and walked despite a bad limp from an injury after his second tour of Afghanistan.

"So many ramp ceremonies," he said, the emotion beyond covering up. "Too many." Pressnell wasn't the only one thinking that the world feels increasingly violent. Wayne and Pat Adams came from their home in Ottawa because this was about the Mounties and the North. Wayne spent 35 years in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the best years, both agreed, were in places very much like Hay River.

"But back then," said Pat Adams, "people were only killed in accidents." Their niece runs a tanning salon in Hay River and had known the big Mountie who seemed the friend of everyone in town – except, of course, the one who gunned him down.

"She said he was all smiles, all smiles, all the time," Adams said.

It was much as he was described in two eulogies, one delivered by his good friend, Constable Mike Carter, the other – in a remarkably clear voice – by sister Cathy flanked by brothers Michael and Peter.

They spoke above a flag-draped casket and a huge photograph of their friend and brother in full RCMP dress – smiling, of course.

Carter spoke of his friend's "contagious smile" and "charisma." To his large circle of friends, he was "a rock." Even those he arrested seemed to like the big Mountie, and Carter choked up as he recalled leaving Hay River late last week and seeing ribbons up on every house in town.

He said his friend had once boasted, over a campfire, that his daughter would look like her beautiful mother – but he got that one wrong.

"Instead," Carter said, trying to smile, "she looks just like her beautiful father." Cathy Worden talked about the big football star who co-captained the team at Wilfrid Laurier University, but who also played the violin and who, when he went off to RCMP Depot in Regina, began playing the glockenspiel in the marching band because, as he told her, it gave you extra privileges in the mess hall.

She spoke, magnificently, not about his passing but about how "he truly continues to live" in everyone he touched and, most importantly, in the little girl he leaves behind.

It was a service that ended perfectly, not with prayer but with a resounding rendition of O Canada – "We stand on guard for thee . . ." And outside, with the sun teasing, Pat Adams thought about all the years she and Wayne had been in the North and how lucky they were.

"It could have been us," she said.

It was on this day.

All of us.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Hay River; Northwest Territories; Ottawa; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: police; deaths; murder; funerals

PERSONAL NAME: Christopher Worden

ORGANIZATION NAME: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

PARLIAMENT No 'poison pill' in Throne Speech, sources say New Tory agenda will not contain measures unpalatable to the opposition, insiders maintain, thereby skirting a fall election

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072890034
DATE: 2007.10.16
PAGE: A4 (ILLUS)
BYLINE: BRIAN LAGHI AND BILL CURRY
SECTION: National News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: Ottawa ONT
WORDS: 749
WORD COUNT: 752

BRIAN LAGHI AND BILL CURRY OTTAWA The Stephen Harper government is expected to unveil a new plan for governing today that sources say will not unnecessarily provoke the opposition to bring it down and force an immediate election.

Sources have told The Globe and Mail that a so-called "poison pill" that would force the opposition to kill the government is not expected to be included in the Speech from the Throne to be delivered by Governor-General Michaëlle Jean.

However, the Liberals, New Democrats and Bloc Québécois could still defeat the government if the bills that flow from the speech later in the legislative sitting don't meet with their approval.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion has already said that he is expecting a speech that is conservative in nature and that he will consider supporting it, providing it is not too strongly ideological. However, sources said that Mr. Dion may keep Canadians in suspense until tomorrow before responding.

The speech will include broad themes that include tax cuts, new crime legislation and a further assertion of Canada's role on the world stage, including an increased presence in the Arctic. The environment is also expected to be addressed, as is Mr. Harper's plan to restrict the federal government's role in creating programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

Members of Parliament arrive on Parliament Hill today for the first time in nearly four months knowing that events in the coming days will dictate whether they must fight a federal election this fall.

Speculation has focused on whether the speech will include measures unpalatable to the opposition. However, several Conservative insiders speaking on condition of anonymity yesterday insisted there will be no such effort. "People have been talking frantically about a poison pill, but I just don't see it," one Conservative told The Globe. "The whole concept of there being a poison pill just to poke Dion in the eye, I think that's just pure speculation." While there will likely be a mention of the fact that targets under the Kyoto accord for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions are no longer attainable, Conservatives said that, in their view, the language will not be antagonistic.

Sources said tonight's speech will be divided into five themes: sovereignty, the economy, the federation, criminal justice and the environment.

Under the heading of reaffirming Canada's sovereignty and demonstrating responsible leadership on the world stage, the speech will make reference to Canada's mission in Afghanistan and continuing efforts to enforce Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The Arctic section will focus on increased Canadian presence in the region through deep-water ports, more ships and an Arctic research station.

Under the economic heading, the speech will promise broad-based tax cuts in the coming spring budget and may repeat Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's call for a national securities regulator. The third theme on strengthening the federation will make reference to respecting the traditional spending jurisdictions of the federal and provincial governments.

Conservative sources told The Globe yesterday the speech will discuss the need to address trade barriers between provinces, an elusive goal that has long frustrated the federal government.

Fourth will be criminal justice, indicating a desire to pass previously announced legislation that has yet to become law. Also on crime, the government gave notice this week that Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day will introduce a law dealing with security certificates.

The measure is likely an attempt to address the opposition's decision earlier this year not to renew certain sections of the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act.

Finally, the environment section will focus on the government's desire to carry through with its climate-change regulations for Canadian industry and to take part in international efforts at the United Nations and other organizations such as the Asia Pacific Partnership.

Liberal MPs began arriving in Ottawa yesterday and quickly began the internal debate over whether to accept a Conservative Throne Speech or force an election.

Speaking on background, several MPs said the notion of voting in favour of the Throne Speech has been ruled out. That leaves three options: voting against it in large numbers and defeating the government, voting against it in small numbers – with the rest abstaining – to avoid an election or abstaining en masse. The NDP is pressing Liberal MPs not to abstain, and some Liberals expressed strong discomfort with the idea yesterday. Two MPs in relatively safe Liberal ridings said they would rather go the polls now than abstain.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; throne speech

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper; Stephane Dion

ORGANIZATION NAME: Conservative Party of Canada; Liberal Party

The Iraq Study Group is not a happy precedent

IDNUMBER 200710160075
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A18
KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 87

In his informative column on the John Manley panel examining Canada's role in Afghanistan, L. Ian MacDonald mentions the Iraq Study Group in the United States.

It is not a happy precedent. George W. Bush and his people appointed the group under co-chairs Republican Jim Baker and Democrat Lee Hamilton. Unfortunately, when the group drafted its report, Bush did not like its recommendations, decided to ignore them and the report has been languishing on the back shelf ever since.

Neil McKenty Westmount

One of the lucky ones

IDNUMBER 200710160064
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: PAULA BRONSTEIN, GETTY IMAGES / POOR HEALTH CARE. A nurse wraps a newborn baby after a cesarean section delivery at the Malalai Maternity Hospital in Kabul yesterday. UNICEF says one in nine Afghan women die during or shortly after pregnancy in Afghanistan, one of the highest rates in the world. At the hospital, 60 to 100 babies are born each day, with many women making long journeys to receive the free medical care. UNICEF said many pregnant women don't have basic health care, with only 11 per cent of deliveries taking place in a health-care facility. In many cases, conservative Afghan culture places the health of women at risk. Forty per cent of Afghan women are married before 18 with one-third having children before reaching adulthood. ;

KEYWORDS: 0
SOURCE: Getty Images
WORD COUNT: 4

NO TEXT

Hillier's highlights; General recalls humour in uniform

IDNUMBER 200710160062
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
KEYWORDS: ARMED FORCES; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: BRUCE WARD
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 107

There are moments of levity for Canadian troops, even in combat situations, Canada's top soldier said yesterday.

Chief of the Defence Staff General Rick Hillier described how soldiers downwind of a burning marijuana field in Afghanistan suddenly found themselves craving snacks.

"They couldn't keep up with the orders for munchies," Hillier said in a breakfast speech to the Canadian Medical Association's annual leadership forum.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Afghanistan.

Hillier, who is admired by his troops partly for his puckish sense of humour, also praised the country's armed forces personnel as "treasures in uniform."

He spoke of other surreal but inspirational moments in Afghanistan, such as seeing a Leopard tank pull up to the drive-through window of a Tim Horton's restaurant set up in Kandahar.

West must stay on Afghan course, UN diplomat warns; Suicide attacks up 50% this year

IDNUMBER 200710160061
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A17
KEYWORDS: WAR; FOREIGN AID
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
SOURCE: CanWest News Service; Bloomberg News and AFP contributed to this report
WORD COUNT: 253

Echoing former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the United Nations' Afghan envoy has warned Canada and other countries with troops in Afghanistan that "Now is not the time to wobble."

Tom Koenigs, who heads the UN's 1,000-strong political mission in Afghanistan, said yesterday that Kabul remains dependent on international forces for its survival.

"Nations should resist the temptation to reduce their commitment," Koenigs told a special meeting of the UN Security Council.

As Parliament prepared to hear today's Throne Speech, in which Afghanistan could be a central theme, the commander of all Canadian Forces overseas said he welcomes the involvement of a blue-ribbon panel struck by the Harper government last week to recommend what Canada should do in Afghanistan after the current mandate ends in February 2009.

"All of these discussions do not really impact my job. It does not affect planning," said Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, head of Canadian Expeditionary Force Command. "Our focus is on the mandate period. The horizon that I look at is 12 to 18 months. There is not much need at my level to look beyond that."

Though levels of violence have fallen in the past two months, they're still up 30 per cent over last year. Suicide attacks in particular have increased – by 50 per cent this year, reinforcing the need for U.S. and NATO troops to stay at current levels in the war-torn country, Koenigs said.

A would-be suicide bomber killed himself and five members of his family as his mother tried to stop him from carrying out a Taliban-inspired attack in Afghanistan, police said.

Small majority want troops to stay in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200710160039
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
KEYWORDS: OPINION POLLS; STATISTICS
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 138

A slight majority of Canadians, 54 per cent, want Canada's troops to stay in Afghanistan but few want to extend their current combat mission past the February 2009 scheduled date of withdrawal, according to a poll released yesterday.

Forty-four per cent of Canadians want a full withdrawal of the troops, while 40 per cent would like to see them redeployed to "do something like train Afghan soldiers or police officers."

Just 14 per cent believe the government should "extend our current role and mission as required," says the poll of 1,001 adults conducted by Ipsos-Reid.

The results are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Residents of Quebec are most likely (51 per cent) to support withdrawal of troops, while residents of Alberta are most likely to support redeployment (45 per cent) or an extension of the mission (22 per cent).

The poll was conducted Oct. 9-14.

Martin didn't dither on Afghanistan: book; Ex-PM unenthusiastic, but decisive. Authors counter Chrétien's claim that successor's hesitation led to soldiers' deaths

IDNUMBER: 200710160037
PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: ELIZABETH THOMPSON
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 482

Canadian soldiers aren't in Kandahar, Afghanistan, instead of the safer Kabul, because of dithering by former prime minister Paul Martin, a new insider examination of the mission says.

Countering charges levelled by Martin's predecessor, Jean Chrétien, in a memoir that hit bookstore shelves yesterday, authors Eugene Lang, a chief of staff to two Liberal defence ministers, and academic Janice Gross Stein argue in their new book that lobbying by General Rick Hillier overcame Martin's reservations about the mission.

However, the authors say, Canadian officials never envisaged when they approved the mission the kind of toll it would take on the lives of Canadian soldiers, or that troops would end up fighting a counterinsurgency rather than rebuilding the country.

The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar calls into question Chrétien's allegation that Canadian soldiers ended up in the "killing fields" around Kandahar because Martin couldn't make up his mind in time.

Chrétien said he sent soldiers to Afghanistan, but after the Taliban fell, carefully arranged that they would be stationed near the safer area of Kabul.

"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," Chrétien writes

Martin has refused to comment on Chrétien's critical assessment of his performance or on Chrétien's suggestion that his indecision was responsible for the loss of Canadian lives in Afghanistan.

However, in interviews with Lang and Gross Stein, Martin reveals he was unenthusiastic about Hillier's proposal to deploy forces to Kandahar to repair Canada's relationship with the U.S. and had other priorities for Canada's resources.

"Afghanistan was not a priority for me the way Darfur, Haiti and the Middle East were," Martin told the authors. "Afghanistan had become our biggest aid commitment, and it shouldn't have been."

In fact, Martin was one of the few members of the government to openly challenge Hillier's proposal and doubted it would bring the political and military benefits Hillier had promised.

"The prime minister responded that he was concerned Afghanistan would consume resources, both military and financial, even though it was not central to the kind of foreign policy Canadians wanted their government to pursue," the authors write.

"He also rejected Hillier's implication that a large Canadian role in Afghanistan would build support for the military. Martin thought the opposite more likely."

"I made four demands of Hillier before I agreed to the mission," Martin recalled.

"I want in, but I want out. We do peacemaking and reconstruction and win hearts and minds. I am going to make a big demand on Darfur soon and you have to tell me I have all the troops I need. And you must have the capacity for Haiti if that blows up again.

"I told him none of this could be constrained by Afghanistan or I wouldn't agree to the mission."

After Hillier gave Martin the assurances he was seeking, cabinet finally approved a mission.

The authors say some of Martin's reluctance to approve the Afghan mission was his perception that it was a legacy of Chrétien's government.

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Mississippi murder film awarded

IDNUMBER 200710160076
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Go
PAGE: G14
DATELINE: TORONTO
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 238

Filmmaker David Ridgen has won a Gemini Award for his documentary Mississippi Cold Case, about the deaths more than 40 years ago of two black teenagers by a reputed member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Ridgen's film is said to have played a key role in convicting James Ford Seale, who was sentenced in August to three life terms for his role in the 1964 abduction and murder of the teens.

The award was part of an industry gala yesterday where Geminis for documentaries, news and sports were handed out.

The prize for best biography documentary was won by Dangerous When Provoked: The Life & Times of Terry Mosher (Kaos Productions).

Broadcaster Pierre McGuire of NHL on TSN, meanwhile, was named best game analyst, while Gillian Findlay was cited as best host or interviewer in a news information program for The Fifth Estate — Luck of the Draw.

The Fifth Estate (David Studer, Sally Reardon) was also named best news information series.

Best live sporting event was CBC's Hockey Night in Canada: Stanley Cup Finals: Carolina at Edmonton Game 3. The production also earned broadcaster Bob Cole the award for best sports play-by-play announcer.

Hockey Night in Canada's Kelly Hruddy was named best studio analyst.

Journalist Susan Ormiston won the best reportage award for CBC News: The National — Reports from Afghanistan while CBC's Global National was named best newscast.

In June 2006, CTV News announced it would no longer participate in the Gemini Awards, saying the time involved in preparing entries for the prizes was not worth the trouble.

The Gemini gala for lifestyle, children's and youth winners will be held today and the gala for drama, variety and comedy will follow tomorrow.

The main Gemini show is to be held in Regina on Oct. 28.

Other voices

IDNUMBER 200710160049
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Opinion
PAGE: A14
SOURCE: The Hamilton Spectator
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 438

Edited excerpts of editorials after Prime Minister Stephen Harper named former Liberal minister John Manley to lead a review on Canada's military future in Afghanistan:

Winnipeg Free Press: 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 the 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.

London Free Press: Parliamentary pundits have been prognosticating that Harper really wants an election, even though he says he doesn't. As is often the case, they are wrong. The establishment of this panel proves that Harper wants to remain as PM of this minority government as long as possible.

By striking this panel, Harper has diminished the chance of a fall election and improved the chance for reasonable debate on this vital issue.

The Record (Kitchener–Waterloo): The prime minister's critics might suggest that he is using Manley, a Liberal, as a pawn in the government's attempt to plan an Afghan strategy that is acceptable to Canadians. But surely Manley was entitled to say he accepted the position because he feels a personal duty to both Canada and Afghanistan. Harper would certainly be criticized much more vigorously if he appointed a panel with only Conservatives on it.

Saskatoon StarPhoenix: 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 Afghanistan has more to do with politics than security.

John Manley was a powerful member of Jean Chr tien'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.

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.

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.

Tories name soldier as first veterans' ombudsman

IDNUMBER 200710160028
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A7
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Canadian Press File Photo / Colonel Pat Stogran will start his new duties on Remembrance Day. ;
DATELINE: OTTAWA
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 94

A seasoned soldier has been appointed as Canada's first veterans ombudsman.

Colonel Pat Stogran, who served as a battle group commander in Afghanistan in 2002, is retiring from the military and will take up his new post on Remembrance Day.

Last spring's federal budget set out \$20 million annually to create the ombudsman's office and address concerns raised by former soldiers.

The office will operate at arm's length from the government and report annually to the minister of veterans affairs and to Parliament.

The Tories promised to create the position to address complaints from soldiers' groups and individuals who often perceive Veterans Affairs Canada as indifferent and overly bureaucratic.

Mom, three siblings killed thwarting suicide bomber

IDNUMBER 200710160022
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A6
DATELINE: KABUL, Afghanistan
SOURCE: Hamilton Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 281

A mother who tried to stop her son from carrying out a suicide bomb attack triggered an explosion in the family's home that killed the would-be bomber, his mother and three siblings, police say.

The bomber had been studying at a madrassa, or religious school, in Pakistan. When he returned home on the weekend, he announced that he planned to carry out a suicide attack.

Surviving family members told police that the suicide vest exploded during a struggle between the mother and her son. The man's brother and two sisters were also killed.

Family members said the man gave his family the equivalent of \$3,600 Cdn before telling them he intended to carry out the attack.

Meanwhile, the top UN envoy in Afghanistan has urged countries like Canada who are contributing troops to NATO's security force not to "wobble" in their commitments.

In an address yesterday to the UN Security Council, Tom Koenigs said that while the Afghan national army will have 47,000 troops at the end of the year, and hopefully 70,000 by the end of 2008, "numbers are not a measure of capability."

NATO remains the most capable force to defend the Kabul government against a tough insurgency, he said.

Insurgent violence in Afghanistan is at its highest level since U.S.-led forces invaded the country in 2001 to oust the hard-line Islamic Taliban rulers, who harboured al-Qaeda leaders blamed for planning the attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

NATO troops -- mostly from Canada, Britain, the United States and the Netherlands -- have been on the front lines of the fight. Several other NATO countries including Spain, Turkey and Germany refuse to send troops to the southern battlefields.

Rising casualties have triggered calls for a withdrawal among some countries on the front line -- notably Canada and the Netherlands. The mandate for the Canadian mission expires in February 2009.

Throne speech sets stage for early vote of confidence

IDNUMBER 200710160002
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.10.16
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Local
PAGE: A1
DATELINE: Ottawa
BYLINE: Les Whittington
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 417

Promises of income tax cuts and measures to help Canada's job-creating industries are expected to stand out as priorities when the Harper government sets its sights on a stronger economy in tonight's throne speech.

The agenda-setting address to Parliament -- which will be measured by opposition parties as a possible trigger for defeating Prime Minister Stephen Harper's minority government -- is being televised nationally, beginning at 6:35 p.m.

The speech, which will be delivered by Governor General Micha lle Jean, is also expected to update the Conservatives' approach to the environment.

While saying Canada cannot meet pollution-reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the government will preview initiatives to cut greenhouse gases.

Also expected are a pledge to debate Canada's role in Afghanistan after Ottawa receives recommendations from a blue-ribbon panel in a few months, measures to crack down on crime and a renewed focus on Arctic sovereignty. The speech will touch on the prime minister's plan to outlaw federal spending in areas of provincial jurisdiction such as education and cities -- a move that worries mayors in Ontario and elsewhere.

The speech will also set the stage for an early vote of confidence that could topple the Tories and force an election. But despite sabre-rattling on all sides, it appears the Liberals are likely to manipulate their 96 swing votes to keep the government from being defeated in the 308-member House of Commons.

Yesterday, Bloc Qu b cois Leader Gilles Duceppe met with his party's election committee in Montreal to discuss plans for a possible campaign.

Duceppe repeated that the government has to agree to five conditions if it wants the Bloc's support. Those conditions include measures unpalatable to the Tories -- such as respecting the Kyoto accord, the withdrawal of Canadian troops from the Kandahar mission in February 2009, and help for Quebec regions hit by the forestry crisis.

Assuming the government survives, the throne speech will form the basis of Harper's legislative program in coming months.

Fresh from running up a \$14-billion budget surplus, the federal Conservatives are expected to signal their intention to lower the tax burden on individual taxpayers.

The actual reductions aren't likely to be announced until next spring's budget, but Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is said to be considering broad-based cuts in personal income taxes rather than the targeted reductions — for tradespeople, transit users, kids' sports costs and so forth — that were prominent in his first two budgets. The government is also expected tonight to signal upcoming corporate tax cuts, possibly for small business.

RELATED STORY: A15

Burning pot gives soldiers the munchies

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A8

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 182

CNS Bruce Ward OTTAWA — There are moments of levity for Canadian troops, even in combat situations, Canada's top soldier said Monday.

Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier described how soldiers downwind of a burning marijuana field in Afghanistan suddenly found themselves craving snacks.

"They couldn't keep up with the orders for munchies," Hillier said Monday in a breakfast speech to the Canadian Medical Association's annual leadership forum.

Canada has about 2,300 troops in Afghanistan.

Hillier, who is admired by his troops partly for his puckish sense of humour, also praised the country's armed forces personnel as "treasures in uniform." He spoke of other surreal but inspirational moments in Afghanistan, such as seeing a Leopard tank pull up to the drive-through window of a Tim Hortons restaurant set up in Kandahar.

"There's nothing more Canadian than a double-double," he said.

Afghanistan is "an enthralling country" filled with children "who are absolutely exquisite," said Hillier.

"But two of every five children die before age five because basic medical care is not there." He said Canadian troops are making a difference in Afghanistan by measures such as overseeing the building of more than 1,000 wells in the country.

— CanWest News Service

Throne speech expected to pass Designed to embarrass, neutralize Liberals on key campaign issues

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A1

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 510

CP Wire Alexander Panetta OTTAWA — With his chief opponent down, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appears set to use Tuesday's throne speech to deliver a few swift kicks to the Liberal party in places that hurt.

Government insiders suggest the speech — which reopens Parliament and lays out the Conservatives' plans — is designed to embarrass and neutralize the Liberals on key issues they hope to campaign on eventually, such as Kyoto and Afghanistan.

They say Harper has put on paper what he has been saying since he was elected: that the government will not meet its climate-change commitments under the Kyoto accord, but it will take action to cut greenhouse gases.

Harper will also remain committed to the Afghanistan mission, while restating that there will be a parliamentary debate on the issue after his hand-picked panel reports back with its recommendation on the future of the deployment.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he will oppose the speech if it's too extreme — a move that would bring down the minority Conservative government, given that the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois have already suggested they'll vote against it.

But with the Tories well ahead in the polls and the Liberals struggling in public opinion and fundraising, Dion's troops admit privately they will glumly accept the political beating and almost certainly let the speech pass.

Harper swamps Dion, in the leadership ratings, a new national poll says.

The poll also says Harper is giving Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe a run for his money in Quebec, where residents view the two men as almost equal in their leadership qualities and skills.

The poll, based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults over the past week, was conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global National by Ipsos-Reid.

Nationally, it says 63 per cent of Canadians gave Harper "great" or "good" leadership marks, compared with only 36 per cent for Dion.

NDP Leader Jack Layton scored 57 per cent, and Duceppe 15 per cent.

In Quebec, however, Duceppe's leadership rating (63 per cent) was in a virtual tie with Layton's (64 per cent), and only slightly above Harper's at 61 per cent. Dion was dead last in his home province, with 33 per cent of support in the province. The poll is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

Throne speech expected to pass Designed to embarrass, neutralize Liberals on key campaign issues ~~154s~~

One senior Liberal said the most likely option for Dion is having some front-bench MPs vote against the throne speech while backbench MPs abstain.

"It would have to be completely disgusting (for us to oppose it)," said the senior Liberal.

"I mean, it would pretty much have to say, 'We're staying in Afghanistan until 2020.' " The Tories hope to pressure Dion into either rushing into an election or risk losing credibility on his party's dearest issues. The Liberals counter that the throne speech is only a blueprint, and they'll make their stand when it comes to legislation.

Conservatives dangled the election option in front of Dion on Monday, repeating Harper's suggestion that even if the current Parliament survives the throne speech vote, the Tories plan to keep calling the shots.

The Conservatives would rather talk about major tax cuts and get-tough-on-crime initiatives, which the throne speech will also signal.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said Monday that the speech heralds tax cuts and fewer internal trade barriers.

And Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has said he will crack down on gun crimes and juvenile offenders.

— The Canadian Press, with files from CanWest News Service

Letter of the day

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: A10

SECTION: Editorial Leaders

WORD COUNT: 120

None Good work in Afghanistan Congratulations to Lindsey Wiebe for her articles on Afghanistan depicting the human aspects of life in that war-torn country. It's easy for the media to cover the sensationalism of the deaths and the controversy of the politics involved, but finally someone dares to tell the other side of the story: the aid, the help, the true reason that our troops are there. By reporting only the politics and the deaths, the media have influenced the attitudes of Canadians.

I challenge you to continue to let Canadians know the good the provincial reconstruction team is doing in Afghanistan.

Jeannine Faucher Winnipeg

Dead soldier to get degree U of M decides on posthumous award

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.10.16

PAGE: B3

SECTION: Life

WORD COUNT: 429

Nick Martin Nick Martin The University of Manitoba is awarding an unprecedented posthumous degree Thursday to Cpl. Jordan Anderson — killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in July.

Anderson's widow, Amanda Anderson, will come from Alberta to receive his bachelor of arts degree at the fall convocation ceremony, George MacLean, acting head of political studies, said Monday.

Other family members are also likely to attend, he said.

Anderson, 25, was based in Alberta and grew up in the Northwest Territories, but enrolled through U of M's military support office, a program offering distance education courses with the flexibility that serving members of the military need, MacLean said.

MacLean said that U of M has never before awarded a posthumous degree to a serving member of the military killed in wartime, although he believed there may have been a few similar cases elsewhere in Canada during the Second World War.

It was an extremely complicated process, and there were no guarantees that the university senate would approve awarding the degree, he said. Anderson had not entirely completed his studies.

When Anderson was killed, "A few members of his unit brought it to my attention" that they thought he had completed his studies and was about to graduate, MacLean said.

"It was clear there were very many people in his camp. We now have two scholarships in his name," thanks to members of his unit raising \$10,000 in a few days, MacLean said.

When MacLean reviewed Anderson's transcripts, "There were a few credits still outstanding, (but), all his political science courses were done.

"Jordan was a very good student. He took several courses I designed, in international relations and foreign policy. Jordan had done more than he needed, to be deserving of this degree," MacLean said.

Convocation has been moved to Church of the Rock, 1397 Buffalo Place, at 3:30 p.m. both days, because of an ongoing support workers' strike.

Environmentalist Louis Fortier and educator Don Robertson will receive honorary degrees as 1,271 students graduate Wednesday and Thursday.

Fortier holds the Canada Research Chair in polar marine ecosystems at Laval University, and is a global expert in climate change in Canada's Arctic, U of M said.

Robertson has played major roles in aboriginal education in Manitoba for more than three decades, and is an ordained United Church minister.

He has been executive director of the council on postsecondary education, and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Education Centre.

The Dr. John M. Bowman Memorial Winnipeg Rh Institute Foundation Award will go to Prof. Robert D. Hill, of the faculty of agricultural and food sciences. Hill is a leading researcher in plant biochemistry and molecular biology.

The Distinguished Alumni Award goes to chemical physicist Dr.

Ian Smith, director general of the National Research Council Institute for Biodiagnostics in Winnipeg.

U of M Students Union will present the Robert Charles Armatage Award for exceptional involvement in student affairs to Raed Joundi, a science grad last spring who is now in medical school at Queen's University in Ontario.

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