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Rosy reports don't match reality

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: CANADIAN PRESS / Afghan police inspect their vehicle after it was struck by a controlled bomb while they were on patrol east of Kabul last week. ;
BYLINE: JOHN KIRIAKOU, AND RICHARD KLEIN
SOURCE: Los Angeles Times
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 739

Former U.S. defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld says in the current edition of GQ magazine that the war in Afghanistan has been "a big success," with people living in freedom and life "improved on the streets."

To anyone working in the country, there is only one possible, informed response: What Afghanistan is this man talking about?

In reality, Afghanistan — former Taliban stronghold, al-Qaida haven and warlord-cum-heroin-smuggler finishing school — feels more and more like Sept. 10, 2001, than a victory in the U.S. war on terrorism.

The country is, plain and simple, a mess. Al-Qaida and its Taliban allies have quietly regained territory, rendering wide swaths of the country off-limits to U.S., Afghan and allied forces, international aid workers and even journalists. Violent attacks against Western interests are routine.

Even in Kabul, which the White House has held up as a postcard for what is possible in Afghanistan, has become so dangerous that foreign embassies are in states of lockdown, diplomats do not leave their offices and venturing beyond security perimeters requires daylight-only travel, armoured vehicles, Kevlar and armed escorts.

Fear reigns among average Afghans in Kabul. Street crime, virtually unheard of in Afghan culture, has increased dramatically over the past three years as angry, unemployed and often radicalized young men settle scores with members of other tribes and clans, steal and rob to feed their families and vent their frustration with a government that appears powerless to help them. Taking a chance by eating in one of Kabul's handful of restaurants or going shopping in one of the few markets left is a new version of Russian roulette.

For U.S. officials and diplomats, Kabul is simply a prison. Embassies are completely closed to vehicular and even foot traffic. Indeed, at the American Embassy, the consular section issues visas only to Afghan government officials. If an average Afghan wants a visa to the U.S., he or she must travel to Islamabad, Pakistan, to apply. To allow Afghans to stand in line for visas at the embassy in Kabul would invite terrorist attacks or attract suicide bombers.

Consider that an American Embassy staffer going to the U.S. Agency for International Development office across the street is required to use an underground tunnel that links the two compounds. Even though the street is closed to all traffic other than official U.S. or United Nations vehicles and is patrolled and guarded by armoured personnel carriers, tanks and Kalashnikov-carrying security personnel with a safety perimeter of

several blocks, the risk from snipers, mortars or grenades is ever present.

Working in Supermax Afghanistan makes the USAID's performance all the more heroic. Since 2003, the agency has overseen the investment of more than \$4 billion in Afghanistan, has built more than 500 schools and an equal number of clinics and has paved more than 1,000 miles of roads, all while suffering about 130 casualties at the hands of the Taliban and al-Qaida.

By some measures, Afghanistan should be a feel-good story by now -- the Taliban is, officially at least, out of power, al-Qaida has been chased to the wilds of the Afghan-Pakistani border and U.S. forces are on hand to consolidate and solidify a peaceful new order.

But the truth is very different. By any measure, this remains a "hot" war with a well-armed, motivated and organized enemy. Village by village, tribe by tribe and province by province, al-Qaida is coming back, enforcing a form of Islamic life and faith rooted in the 12th century, intimidating reformers, exacting revenge and funding itself with dollars from massive poppy cultivation and heroin smuggling.

As al-Qaida re-establishes itself, Osama bin Laden remains free to send video messages and serve as an ideological beacon to jihadis worldwide. The country's president, Hamid Karzai, meanwhile, is in effect little more than the mayor of Kabul.

The war in Afghanistan is a political and military one-step-forward-two-steps-back exercise. The work there isn't just unfinished, it is more dangerous and less certain than policy-makers in Washington and talking heads in New York studios can imagine. Those suggesting otherwise are either naive or flacking a political agenda.

John Kiriakou, now in the private sector, served as a CIA counterterrorism official from 1998 to 2004 and recently returned from Afghanistan. Richard Klein, a former U.S. State Department official, is managing director for the Middle East and Arabian Gulf at Kissinger McLarty Associates in Washington.

Naval leader names pirates, terrorists as new threats

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The Royal Canadian Navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive."

In an interview, Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call.

Most of the 80 crew members of the Israeli corvette Ahi-Hanit were having dinner below deck on a sweltering, sleepy Friday evening 14 months ago when — seemingly out of nowhere — a Chinese-designed sea-hugging missile slammed into the warship's helicopter deck.

The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

It was the nightmare scenario that had kept commanders in established navies all over the world awake at nights.

"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with mach-(speed), sea-skimming missiles," said Robertson. "A year ago, no one had foreseen the idea that weapons of that kind could have proliferated to a non-state actor."

Sophisticated armaments in the hands of violent militias and even terrorist organizations represent the biggest emerging threat not only to 21st century navies, but to merchant shipping as well, say experts in maritime warfare.

Hezbollah fired three radar-guided shore-to-sea C-802 missiles that day. One exploded just after takeoff, the second struck the Ahi-Hanit and the third exploded and sank a Cambodian-flagged cargo ship. The high-tech weapons, with a range of 120 kilometres, were apparently supplied by Iran.

In case anyone believed the July 14, 2006, missile strike was a fluke, or even a lucky shot in the dark, U.S. intelligence agencies recently reported that the Shiite militia in Lebanon was boasting openly that it had tripled its store of Iranian-built C-802 missiles. The threat of seaborne terrorism came brutally into focus in October 2000 with the al-Qaida attack on the USS Cole as it sat in berth in the port of Aden, Yemen.

Just as pressing a concern is a perceived increase in high-seas piracy, especially in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

A series of well-timed precise attacks on container ships in crowded shipping lanes could lead to economic chaos in countries, such as Canada, that depend on maritime trade.

A month ago pirates seized a vessel chartered by the United Nations World Food Program in waters off eastern Africa.

"Piracy is enabled by the current state of the government in Somalia," said Robertson. "You've got pirates operating in a relatively unsophisticated manner in those calm waters of the tropics (and) they've been able to have quite an effect."

He said NATO recognized the menace a few years ago and recently dispatched a multinational task force to cruise the waters off the Horn of Africa, the first time the ships of the North Atlantic alliance have ventured there as a group. Halifax-based HMCS Toronto is part of that fleet.

We've been 'in harm's way' before

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BYLINE: Scott Taylor
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GIVEN THE STEADY flow of media reports out of Afghanistan, many Canadians have expressed serious reservations about deploying our troops "in harm's way." One of the common myths put forward is the collective desire to return to the good old days when our soldiers wore blue helmets and exercised "peacekeeping" skills rather than engaging in combat operations.

The fact is that while our troops were deployed in the civil war–ravaged Balkans in the early 1990s, they were often required to use deadly force and were involved in several major skirmishes with various belligerents. At the time, it was considered politically expedient to downplay the level of risk our soldiers were exposed to and to under–report the casualties they suffered.

In the post–Cold War strategic vacuum, our Armed Forces needed to justify their continued existence, and peacekeeping polled through the roof in nationwide surveys as the best use of our standing army, so this became the new battle cry. Even armed with a solid UN mandate, when our soldiers were forced to engage hostile elements, either in self–defence or to save innocent civilians, the political leaders and military brass played down these events.

One of the best examples of this was the September 1993 battle of the Medak Pocket. In a series of firefights and skirmishes lasting over four days, the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, in conjunction with a French battalion, engaged Croatian army units. The goal of the Croats had been to seize and ethnically cleanse four Serbian villages. In this they succeeded, but in the face of the Canadian and French UN troops, they were eventually forced out of the plundered villages.

As well as experiencing vicious firefights and enduring concentrated artillery bombardments, the men of 2PPCLI were forced to witness the grotesque aftermath of one of the worst atrocities committed during the vicious civil war. Some 200 ethnic Serbian inhabitants "disappeared" in the wake of the Croatian offensive, while the raped and burned bodies of teenage girls and elderly women bore testimony to the Croatian brutality.

The Canadian force suffered four wounded in this battle and claimed 26 Croats killed. The unseen psychological wounds our troops suffered as they witnessed and recorded the slaughter of civilians has yet to be fully determined.

At the time, 2PPCLI commander Jim Calvin told his battalion that justice would be served and the perpetrators punished for their crimes. But it was not until 1996 that Canada first learned of this battle, when David Pugliese broke the story in the Ottawa Citizen. After a parliamentary committee toured the bases in 1998 and learned more about the Medak Pocket, Calvin and a delegation of witnesses were brought to Ottawa to give a formal presentation – including the tabling of photographic and forensic evidence.

Since then, this particular incident has been the subject of a number of books, and in 2002, 2PPCLI was awarded a Governor General's commendation for its heroism.

Amazingly, no Croatian commander was ever brought before The Hague Tribunal for these crimes. In fact, no formal legal action was undertaken until last June, when generals Rahim Ademi and Mirko Norac were finally put on trial in Zagreb, at a specially convened Croatian war crimes tribunal.

Testifying this month in defence of his accused colleagues, Croatian Gen. Davor Domazet–Loso told the panel of judges that the whole affair simply never happened and accused the Canadians of committing the atrocities against the Serbian victims.

While two Croatian commanders have been charged in the Medak massacre, one of the principal participants remains unindicted. Agim Ceku, an ethnic Albanian, has thus far managed to avoid any responsibility for the criminal actions of his troops in September 1993. He is presently the prime minister of Kosovo.

One can only hope that Canada puts forward the evidence and witnesses necessary to convict Ademi, Norac and Ceku of the heinous crimes their troops committed. Otherwise, those Governor General's commendations are meaningless and our soldiers' sacrifice will have been in vain.()

Scott Taylor is editor–in–chief of *Espirit De Corps*.

Navy has high-seas mayhem in sights; Commander sees terrorism, modern-day piracy on the rise

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald
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SECTION: Front
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SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Murray Brewster
WORD COUNT: 625

OTTAWA – The Canadian navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are what-ever your imagination can conceive."

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call.

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"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with Mach-(speed), sea-skimming missiles," said Robertson.

"A year ago, no one had foreseen the idea that weapons of that kind could have proliferated to a non-state actor."

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Navy has high-seas mayhem in sights; Commander sees terrorism, modern-day piracy on the rise7

The threat of seaborne terrorism came brutally into focus in October 2000 with the al-Qaida attack on the USS Cole as it sat in berth in the port of Aden, Yemen.

The suicide bombing killed 17 American sailors, but it was carried out with a relatively unsophisticated speed boat packed with explosives.

Rob Huebert, a defence analyst, says Hezbollah's landmark attack heralded a new and more dangerous age of maritime warfare.

"Most of the anti-missile capability our frigates and destroyers have is predicated on shots being taken at them by enemies who are over the horizon. But what happens when you get small vessels within sight – or even disguised?" he said.

"I'm thinking of a scenario where you've got all of these little Iranian speedboats and all of a sudden everyone on cue stands up and lets loose with small, cheap missiles. Can you overwhelm the system with numbers?"

Huebert said defence planners will have to pay more attention to so-called close-in weapons systems.

"It's going to be challenging to meet that kind of threat," said Huebert, a University of Calgary conflict studies professor.

Robertson said that from a planning point of view the navy can do that by setting to sea with the "right mixture of surface ships and submarines."

Beyond the hardware, said Dan Middlemiss of Dalhousie University, improvements in naval intelligence will be needed.

"You work with your allies to know where this stuff is and where it's going."

There is already a strong network to track weapons of mass destruction, but Middlemiss said NATO and other Western allies may need to extend those intelligence-gathering efforts to "lesser weapons."

In the Ahi-Hanit incident, Israeli commanders blamed the crew for not being vigilant. But there were lingering questions about why the country's extensive and high-tech intelligence network didn't pick up the existence of the missiles beforehand.

Just as pressing a concern is a perceived increase in high-seas piracy, especially in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

A series of well-timed precise attacks on container ships in crowded shipping lanes could lead to economic chaos in countries, such as Canada, that depend on maritime trade.

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"Piracy is enabled by the current state of the government in Somalia," said Robertson. "You've got pirates operating in a relatively unsophisticated manner in those calm waters of the tropics (and) they've been able to have quite an effect."

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Navy has high-seas mayhem in sights; Commander sees terrorism, modern-day piracy on the rise⁸

Harper must come clean on Afghan mission

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COLUMN: National Affairs

BYLINE: Travers, James

DATELINE: Ottawa

WORD COUNT: 554

Usually clever Stephen Harper is occasionally too clever by half. At those moments the prime minister's best policy thinking trips over his worst political instincts and national interest, along with public confidence in his leadership, suffers.

That happened last year when Harper decided against building a parliamentary consensus on extending the Afghanistan mission in favour of driving a wedge between Liberals. Now the spectre of a repeat is rising in the foreplay leading up to next month's throne speech and, perhaps, a late fall election.

For the moment, the prime minister is keeping options open with fluid musing about what, if any, role Canada will play in Afghanistan when the current Kandahar mission ends. Ranging freely across the spectrum from staying to finish the job to an orderly retreat, the Conservative position is as confused and confusing as the Liberal response.

But sooner rather than later Ottawa must reveal its post-February 2009 intentions to its allies. And that means Harper faces two decisions: One reframing Canada's commitment to Afghanistan, NATO and the United Nations, another on the wisdom of forcing an election over something as contentious, and uncontrollable, as war.

History makes the second more tempting to forecast than the first. The last time Harper chose between policy consensus and political conflict he threatened an early election if the opposition didn't support keeping troops longer in Afghanistan's violent south.

That confrontation wasn't necessary or prudent. Then interim Liberal leader Bill Graham, a former foreign and defence minister who firmly believed in the mission, was an available partner for a bipartisan agreement. But Harper opted for short-term political advantage that in the longer term perched the Afghanistan albatross squarely on his shoulders.

Once a responsibility inherited from Liberals, the war became Harper's own. Now, with a fall campaign possible, he must neutralize casualties as a ballot-box issue or find a way to torque the mission to Conservative advantage.

Either way, a prime time for Harper to show his hand is Oct. 16, when the government will start a new parliamentary session with fresh and refreshed priorities. Each one will be parsed; none will be as painstakingly decoded as the Tory Afghanistan message.

What needs to be found in and between the lines are some answers and some resolve. Instead of rhetoric and jingoism, parties and the people deserve a full explanation of why Afghanistan is important to Canada, along with honest assessments of how the mission is progressing, what can reasonably be achieved and at what cost.

Harper is as capable of making a credible case for prolonging the effort – presumably in a less combative mode in a less dangerous zone – as he has been eager to accuse his rivals of being willing to cut and run. He can and should argue that Canada doesn't abandon international obligations no matter how onerous, that rebuilding failed states is tough, time-consuming work and that packing up now diminishes the sacrifice of those wounded and killed.

But Harper also needs to be more candid about Canadian and allied failings, as well as less willing to hide multi-layered local and regional complexities in the simplistic notions of a struggle between good and evil.

All are prerequisites to better understanding the war. All are necessary if Harper is to choose wisely between inclusive policy and divisive politics.

James Travers is a national affairs columnist. Copyright 2007 Torstar Syndication Services.

PM should make the options clear on Afghanistan

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PAGE: A6

SOURCE: Calgary Herald editorial

ILLUSTRATION: Harper

WORD COUNT: 279

Prime Minister Stephen Harper picked a good time to demand a debate on Afghanistan policy, rather than when to pull Canadian troops out of the country.

Even as he was making those comments in Australia, a Taliban spokesman was laying down the basic prerequisites for negotiations to the government in Kabul that the NATO mission is supposed to be propping up – at the invitation of Afghan president Hamid Karzai.

Not that the Taliban preconditions are likely to lead to negotiations. Karzai could not possibly agree to demands such as the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops, and an Islamic democracy – however the Taliban understands that.

Still, Afghans are understandably weary of the war, and despite the western allies' considerable battlefield success, the Taliban are still capable of denying them peace.

Many of them wonder how the war can be brought to an end, and what kind of accommodation Kabul will ultimately be obliged to make with the Taliban.

As the Taliban are generally loathed outside the Pashtun areas of the country where Canadian forces are now confronting them, Karzai need not give them much – if he can hang on.

However, neither the Afghan National Army, nor the Afghan police, are yet able to provide his government adequate security against the kind of attacks the Taliban are capable of mounting.

This is changing, but more time – certainly longer than February 2009 when Canada's current commitment comes to an end – will be needed.

Harper should make it clear there are other options beyond staying or withdrawing, especially continuing to train units of the Afghan National Army to take over the country's essential security functions now handled by NATO forces.

Taliban conditions for peace talks should be seen for what they are – a propaganda ploy by a terrorist force that is trying to parlay bombings, kidnapping and murder into political power.

Navies facing new threats

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The Canadian Navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal war in Afghanistan, Vice- Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive."

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call.

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The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with mach-(speed), sea- skimming missiles," said Robertson. "A year ago, no one had foreseen the idea that weapons of that kind could have proliferated to a non-state actor."

Another concern is an increase in high-seas piracy. A month ago, pirates seized a UN vessel off eastern Africa.

"You've got pirates operating in a relatively unsophisticated manner ... (and) they've been able to have quite an effect," says Robertson.

Canadian Press

Quebec results could shape Afghan mission

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BYLINE: Chantal Hebert
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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Today's three by-elections will only determine who returns to the House of Commons with the psychological edge next month. But that, in turn, will resonate in the Oct. 16 Speech from the Throne.

If Stephen Harper's candidates take a beating today, the government will be under immense pressure to ensure its survival by spelling out a 2009 exit strategy from Canada's mission in Afghanistan as soon as Parliament reopens.

But if the polls are right and the Conservatives do reasonably well in one or more of the three Quebec seats at stake, the emphasis will likely be on bolder language and a possible challenge to the opposition to give a fuller range of Canadian options for the post-2009 period a comprehensive look.

Government strategists are already taking solace from the fact that even with an ongoing Quebec deployment in Afghanistan, the issue was not as front and centre in the campaign as they had feared.

That may not be enough for the Bloc Quebecois to retreat from the brink of a vote against the throne speech. Gilles Duceppe, who has been criticized on the hustings for being too supportive of the Tories, might yet conclude he would only make matters worse for his party by continuing to prop them up.

But short of securing Bloc support, the Tories could have cause to hope that the Liberals – for whom the campaign has turned into a confidence-shattering exercise – would want to lay down their sabres rather than fall on their sword in an election later this year.

When all is said and done, the best outcome for the Prime Minister today would be that the results spook at least one opposition party into keeping his government alive. While the campaign has confirmed Harper's growth potential in Quebec, it continues to fall well short of a one-way ticket to a majority.

The Conservatives are still only cherry-picking seats in Quebec. Their hopes today in Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean rest largely on the notoriety of their local candidate, Roberval Mayor Denis Lebel, rather than on a return on their many overtures to the province. A Conservative win in Roberval-Lac-Saint-Jean would still leave the party shut out of urban Quebec. And, overall, the by-elections have highlighted the ongoing absence of a strong Conservative organization in the province.

In spite of that, Harper is in much better shape than his main federalist opponent. Even before the votes are counted, the campaign has shown that, at least in Quebec, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion is not election-ready. More than ever, his party is on the defensive and his leadership is not lifting its fortunes.

That's ominous news for the Liberals and, in a roundabout way, for the Bloc, for whom a split in the federalist vote is immensely better than a one-on-one battle against the Conservatives.

As for Harper, who might relish the chance to take on a wounded Liberal leader in a snap general election, he will have to balance that temptation in the weeks to come against the quasi-certain knowledge that he will only get one shot at campaigning for a majority against Dion.

As of tomorrow, the future of the minority Parliament may rest with Dion's survival instincts. He is headed back to Parliament next month with the greatest need for more time.

Chantal Hebert's national affairs column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Afghan leader woos Canadians; Karzai set to meet journalists in bid to push support for unpopular mission

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BYLINE: Bruce Campion-Smith
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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WORD COUNT: 622

As Canadians work to win the hearts of Afghans, President Hamid Karzai is making his own play to win over Canadians skeptical about their country's military mission in Afghanistan.

In an extraordinary move, Canadian journalists embedded with the Canadian military in Kandahar province were flown to Kabul yesterday in anticipation of audience with the Afghan president that could happen today.

The proposed meeting shows Karzai is sensitive to the growing debate in Canada to scale back its Afghan mission and withdraw the 2,300 Canadian troops from the frontline in Kandahar.

But with few other NATO nations signalling their willingness to take Canada's place, there's growing concern here that a decision to pull back troops to safer duties elsewhere could spell trouble for the restive southern region.

About a dozen Canadian media representatives boarded a Canadian Forces Hercules transport yesterday for the flight to Kabul, where they awaited confirmation of a meeting with Karzai.

In the past, he has warned rebuilding Afghanistan is a long-term task and implored Canada to stick around, a message he's likely to repeat.

The message is also timed to be delivered in advance of a "high-level" United Nations meeting later this month in New York, focused on Afghanistan. Karzai is scheduled to meet UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to seek a renewed commitment from the international community to aiding Afghanistan.

But there's also pressure here to ensure the Canadian military remains in place past February 2009, when Afghan elections are scheduled.

When Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Kabul last May, Karzai heaped praise on the work of Canadian soldiers while cautioning the work of rebuilding his troubled country will take time.

Since then, there's been growing pressure within Canada to withdraw troops. Now, even Harper himself says the current military mission won't continue without political consensus past February 2009, when the current commitment is due to run out.

But a pullout from the south would be a mistake, warns Asif Rahimi, a Canadian who serves as deputy minister of programs for the Afghan ministry of rural rehabilitation and development.

"Cutting loose, running away without having definite results from all the investments made in Afghanistan, both on the security as well as development," would be a mistake, Rahimi said.

"I think the international community has both a moral obligation plus a very pragmatic responsibility. Packing up prematurely will not necessarily contribute to the security of the Canadians," he said last night in an interview.

The deputy minister cautioned that Canadians, with their attention focused on the troubled southern region, are missing the success stories elsewhere in the country.

"When you travel you do see signs of success. You do see new life, businesses, you see the government presence," Rahimi said, citing a recent trip through northern Afghanistan where he opened new schools, bridges, roads and irrigation projects.

"Afghanistan is not all going down the tube," he said, adding that such progress is making it difficult for the Taliban to spread their insurgency.

Still, Rahimi cautioned, if Afghan government officials are to win the insurgency, "they must be able to protect the rest of this country and pay attention to the welfare of the people, employment and infrastructure," in order to show an example.

"If security comes, this is what is going to happen to your area."

Even in Kandahar, he said there were improvements with ministry planners, finance officers and procurement experts based in the province to help spur development.

"I think these stories too have to be communicated to the Canadians," Rahimi added.

While the insurgency is on the upswing, the Taliban is not a strong force, he said. "They're filling a gap in the south created by a weak government rather than a strong insurgency."

Earlier this month, Karzai called for negotiations with the Taliban.

While Canada has rejected negotiations with insurgents, diplomats caution that peace talks might work to get softer elements of the insurgency to halt the violence.

But Rahimi is not optimistic that talks with the Taliban are the solution.

"It's always black and white. There's no grey in the Taliban world," he said. "Their position will always be to impose their values on the rest of the world. "

The Afghan civil servant was born and educated in Afghanistan but moved to Canada after the Soviet invasion in 1979. He moved back in 2005 but still has a home in an Ottawa suburb.

Antiwar activist faces hearing

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PAGE: A7
KEYWORDS: CUSTOMS & DUTIES
DATELINE: VANCOUVER
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 105

VANCOUVER – An American antiwar activist, who was jailed overnight last week in Surrey, faces a hearing today which could ban her from Canada for two years.

Alison Bodine, 22, believes she was arrested by the Canada Border Services Agency because she was carrying publications opposing Canadian military actions in Afghanistan.

"(Canadian border guards) identified me as a political activist," she said Sunday. "I haven't done anything illegal. I've been a student at UBC for four years and crossed the border dozens of times."

Bodine was released Friday night after a radio interview with her was broadcast from jail earlier in the day and a demonstration held on her behalf.

Khadr's lawyer to speak about case at UVic

IDNUMBER 200709170054
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: B2
COLUMN: Capital Briefing
SOURCE: Times Colonist
WORD COUNT: 109

The lawyer for Omar Khadr, a Canadian man in prison at Guantanamo Bay, will talk about his client tomorrow at the University of Victoria.

Lt.-Cmdr. William Kuebler, who serves in the U.S. navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps, will speak at 3:30 p.m. in UVic's Murray and Anne Fraser Building. Khadr was detained by American forces in Afghanistan in 2002 when he was 15 years old. He was accused of throwing a grenade that killed an American medic, and was sent to the Guantanamo Bay detention centre in Cuba as an "enemy combatant."

The charges against Khadr were dropped in June, but he's in custody with an unclear legal status.

Anti-war activist could be barred from Canada

IDNUMBER 200709170010
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: VANCOUVER
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 87

VANCOUVER — An American anti-war activist, who was jailed overnight last week in Surrey, faces a hearing today that could bar her from re-entering Canada for two years.

Alison Bodine, 22, said she was arrested by the Canada Border Services Agency because she was carrying publications opposing Canadian military actions in Afghanistan.

"[Canadian border guards] identified me as a political activist," she said yesterday. "I haven't done anything illegal. I've been a student at UBC for four years and crossed the border dozens of times."

The Canada Border Service Agency refused to comment yesterday.

A sad sign of uncertain times

IDNUMBER 200709170036
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A10
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 526

In 2000, the Citizen's editorial board thought it was too late for a national military cemetery. While it would be an "appealing symbol of respect," the board wrote, the cemetery "will not work if it remains nearly empty, as it will."

The peace dividend of the post-Cold War era was still being enjoyed that summer. An innocent time, perhaps. Who knew that the next year, the continental United States would be attacked by the forces of a new totalitarianism, and that Canadians would die in that attack? We did not know that Canada would be fighting a long and deadly war in Afghanistan, part of a larger global conflict against the new enemy.

And we now know that we cannot say, as we did then, that "our soldiers, sailors and pilots are volunteers, peacekeepers more often than combatants." Peacekeeping, in the 21st century, looks likely to be almost as combative as war. If we are going to take the responsibility to protect seriously, Canadians will die. And no one knows what security crises lie ahead.

Of course, Canadians were right to say in 2000 that this country was not likely to lose soldiers on anything approaching the scale of the two world wars; that hold true today. But we have woken up, as a nation, to the continuing demands on our military. We are now all too familiar with the awful sight of a coffin coming home. People line highway overpasses to pay their respect to the passing remains of fallen heroes. We are, once again, a country looking for ways to externalize our grief and memorialize our losses. Whatever our politics, we're united in that.

Ottawa's Beechwood Cemetery has been home to Canada's national military cemetery since 2001. At first, that was distinct from the older sections of Beechwood that held more than 2,500 graves of veterans; two sections were administered by Veterans Affairs and one by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Last week, the National Military Cemetery annexed those older veterans' sections of Beechwood. Practically speaking, this isn't much more than the combining of several cemeteries into one entity, with new landscaping that helps unify the sections. Symbolically, it's a link between the soldiers of today and of the past.

The larger National Military Cemetery is a partnership that includes the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, the Department of National Defence, Veterans Affairs Canada, and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

It was natural, as recently as a few years ago, to think of a military cemetery as a monument to the past. The sad truth is that Canada's National Military Cemetery will continue to be a living, changing site. Fresh earth will appear there from time to time.

Not all soldiers and veterans will be buried there, and that's fine. The choice should be theirs, and that of their families. The National Military Cemetery needn't include all soldiers' and veterans' graves to be significant. It

can be the heart of a worldwide network of memorials. There is no more fitting place for that than the capital, and in particular the beautiful and historic grounds at Beechwood.

Troops need choppers

IDNUMBER 200709170033
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: R.B. Macdonald
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 200

Re: Support the troops by challenging our leaders, Sept. 13.

I believe I can answer one of letter-writer Marjorie Robertson's questions. She is wondering why Canadian soldiers are getting killed at more than three times the rate of those from other countries.

This one is simple: the majority of Canadian soldiers killed are struck by improvised explosive devices while traveling along roads, from their bases to the theatre of operation in the field, because they do not have helicopters. The other countries do.

In 1992, the Tories announced they would spend \$4.8 billion to buy 50 EH-101 helicopters that the Canadian Forces desperately needed. Then came the 1993 federal election and when voters chose the Liberals and Jean Chrétien became prime minister, one of his first acts was to scrap the Tory deal, an act that cost the Canadian government nearly \$500 million in cancellation fees.

Consequently, our troops, today, are without helicopters in Afghanistan.

So those who voted Liberal in 1993, wanting the helicopter deal to be cancelled, now see the consequences of neglecting the Forces.

The letter writer cannot live in a world as she wishes it; rather, she must live in the world as it is.

Ms. Robertson writes that she wants to "work for peace, not war." I wish to point out that without war, there can be no peace, and freedom is not free.

R.B. Macdonald,

Ottawa

Canada's Afghans salute soldiers' efforts

SOURCETAG 0709170325
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 7
BYLINE: BRIAN GRAY, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 232

Khoja Tamim Sediqui wants everyone to know his birthplace is better off because of Canada.

Sediqui is the president of the Canadian Afghan Council, which hosted a rally in support of this country's mission in the middle east.

"Six years ago women couldn't go to school, men were forced to grow beards and women were forced to wear a veil," Sediqui said yesterday before the rally at the True Oasis Restaurant on Finch Ave. W. "The Taliban were in control and the people of Afghanistan were hostages in their own homes."

Today. Afghanistan is much better off with new schools, bridges, roads and dams, he said, with Canada a large part of a NATO mission to provide security that is necessary for the rebuilding of the infrastructure of the country.

The people are thankful for Canada's contributions and share in the pain when a member of our military is killed in Afghanistan, Sediqui said.

TERRORISM FEAR

But he's also concerned that without the NATO force and Canada's contribution, the Taliban will regain control and terrorism will spread.

"The terrorists have no borders," he said. "We are fighting a group of people that are against all of us."

Canada's military commitment in Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009 unless it is renewed by Parliament. There have been 70 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

Jason Kenney, the secretary of state of multiculturalism and Canadian identity, said the federal government wants the Afghan community in Canada to be more vocal about their support.

"These are folks that know their families are better off thanks to Canada and the other NATO troops," Kenney said, adding the government has more than doubled aid money. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Sea change in terror Navy boss says sailors must brace for attacks

SOURCETAG: 0709161323
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 13
ILLUSTRATION: photo of DREW ROBERTSON Wakeup call
BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP
WORD COUNT: 177

The Canadian navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive."

Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call. Most of the 80 crew members of the Israeli corvette Ahi-Hanit were having dinner below deck 14 months ago when a Chinese-designed sea-hugging missile slammed into the warship's helicopter deck.

The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with mach-(speed), sea-skimming missiles," said Robertson.

Sophisticated armaments in the hands of violent militias and even terrorist organizations represent the biggest emerging threat not only to 21st-century navies, but to merchant shipping as well, say experts in maritime warfare.

Rob Huebert, a defence analyst, says defence planners will have to pay more attention to so-called close-in weapons systems.

Robertson said the navy can do that by setting to sea with the "right mixture of surface ships and submarines."

Dan Middlemiss of Nova Scotia's Dalhousie University said improvements in naval intelligence will be needed.

"You work with your allies to know where this stuff is and where it's going." **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

Aid worker kidnapped in Afghanistan

SOURCETAG 0709170416
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A6
BYLINE: SUN MEDIA NEWS SERVICES
DATELINE: KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
COLUMN: News Digest
WORD COUNT: 245

Unknown gunmen have abducted a Bangladeshi aid worker in Afghanistan, a provincial governor said yesterday, the latest in a spate of kidnappings of foreigners by Taliban insurgents and criminal gangs. The man was taken from his office in Logar province, south of the capital Kabul, where he worked for the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). "He was kidnapped . . . at noon by armed men, they also took 30,000 afghanis (US\$600)," Logar Gov. Abdullah Wardak told Reuters. "We told them to have security guards, but they did not." He said it was not clear whether the kidnappers were Taliban insurgents or criminals seeking a ransom. "We can't deny it was the work of the Taliban, but there are also bandits and thieves operating with the Taliban insurgents. Our forces have been searching for the missing BRAC staff member, but so far we have no clues," Wardak said. Taliban rebels have stepped up their campaign of kidnapping Afghans and foreigners this year, seizing 23 South Koreans in July and killing two of them before releasing the rest after more than a month. A German man kidnapped in July is still being held by the insurgents who killed his German colleague after he suffered a heart attack. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Ribbon ruckus returns to council 'Support our troops' ribbons could appear on city vehicles.

SOURCETAG 0709170401
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A1
ILLUSTRATION: photo of BUD POLHILL
BYLINE: PATRICK MALONEY, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 303

The yellow ribbon ruckus is about to flare up again at city hall.

Council will vote tonight on a recommendation to put magnetic yellow "Support our troops" ribbons on all city vehicles, an issue that sparked controversy this year.

"All the people in this country support our troops. And that's all we're saying," Controller Bud Polhill said yesterday of the ribbons that already adorn London police cruisers and fire trucks. "You can read things into (it) or you can just look at it and (see it says) support our troops, period."

But some consider the ribbons an implicit approval of the controversial Afghanistan mission and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Some Londoners spoke out when the decals were put on emergency vehicles.

This latest move — board of control wants council to approve \$1,000 to buy the ribbons — has drawn protest from the local chapter of the Council of Canadians.

In a letter to council, chapter president Cory Morningstar wrote that although the group does support Canadian soldiers, such a decal "represents the militarization of our society."

Her resistance to the motion won't go unmatched on council tonight.

"I won't be supporting it. It's a partisan political statement, and why do we need it on our service vehicles?" Coun. Susan Eagle said.

"Bud Polhill's right — no one in this country doesn't support our troops," Eagle said. "(But) sticking yellow magnets on our service vehicles is about as far from supporting our troops as I can think of."

In past wars, Eagle said, Canadians would buy war bonds or take part in some other active show of support.

"This (the ribbons) is not about patriotism. This is about a public relations exercise to try and change the opinions of a public that's starting to ask serious questions (about) how our troops are deployed."

When the emergency vehicle decals were debated in June, Ward 11 Coun. David Winninger said the decision to use them failed to "reflect the diversity of belief" in London.

"You know, if people are pulling Christmas trees out of city hall lobbies or courthouses, why should ribbons be on public vehicles?" he asked at the time.

Polhill said the decals show soldiers that they have the backing of Canadians, or at least Londoners.

"You have to express how you feel," he said.

"If you think somebody does a good job, then you have to tell them. You can't assume they know it."

KEYWORDS=LOCAL

New threats confront navy

SOURCETAG 0709170613
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 33
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 163

The Canadian navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive."

Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call. Most of the 80 crew members of the Israeli corvette Ahi-Hanit were having dinner below deck 14 months ago when a Chinese-designed sea-hugging missile slammed into the warship's helicopter deck.

The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with mach-(speed), sea-skimming missiles," said Robertson.

Sophisticated armaments in the hands of violent militias and even terrorist organizations represent the biggest emerging threat not only to 21st-century navies, but to merchant shipping as well, say experts in maritime warfare.

Rob Huebert, a defence analyst, says defence planners will have to pay more attention to so-called close-in weapons systems.

Robertson said the navy can do that by setting to sea with the "right mixture of surface ships and submarines."
KEYWORDS=CANADA

Rally backs Afghan mission

SOURCETAG 0709170612
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 33
BYLINE: SUN MEDIA
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 181

Khoja Tamim Sediqui wants everyone to know his birthplace is better off because of Canada.

Sediqui is the president of the Canadian Afghan Council which hosted a rally yesterday in Toronto in support of this country's mission in the Middle East.

"Six years ago women couldn't go to school, men were forced to grow beards and women were forced to wear a veil," Sediqui said before the rally. "The Taliban were in control and the people ... were hostages in their own homes."

Today Afghanistan is much better off with new schools, bridges, roads and dams, he said, with Canada a large part of a UN mission to provide security that is necessary for the rebuilding of the infrastructure of the country.

The people are thankful for Canada's contributions and share in the pain when a member of our military is killed in Afghanistan, Sediqui said.

But he is also concerned that without the UN force and Canada's contribution, the Taliban will regain control and terrorism will spread into North America.

"The terrorists have no borders," he said. "We are fighting a group of people that are against all of us."

Canada's military commitment in Afghanistan is scheduled to end in February 2009 unless it is renewed by Parliament. There have been 70 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2002. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Karzai tries to ease Canadian worries over mission

IDNUMBER 200709170014
PUBLICATION: The Hamilton Spectator
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Canada/World
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: Hamilton Spectator wire services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 136

As Canadians work to win the hearts of his people, Afghan President Hamid Karzai is making his own play to win over Canadians skeptical about their country's military mission in Afghanistan.

In an extraordinary move, journalists embedded with the Canadian military were flown to Kabul yesterday in anticipation of an audience with Karzai that could happen today.

The proposed meeting shows that Karzai is sensitive to the growing debate in Canada to scale back its Afghan mission and withdraw the 2,300 Canadian troops off the front line in Kandahar after February 2009, when the current mission is slated to end.

But with few other NATO nations signalling their willingness to take Canada's place, there's growing concern in Afghanistan that a Canadian decision to pull troops back to safer duties elsewhere could spell trouble in the restless southern region.

THE AFGHAN MISSION If Canada withdraws from Kandahar, Taliban will run rampant, mullah says

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072600165
DATE: 2007.09.17
PAGE: A1
BYLINE: GRAEME SMITH
SECTION: Column
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 718
WORD COUNT: 707

GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Canada must not be scared away from Kandahar because Afghan forces wouldn't be capable of stopping the Taliban from overwhelming government towns, one of the region's most prominent tribal elders says.

Mullah Naqib is not the first Afghan leader who has pleaded for Canadian troops to stay, but his emotional words are the most pointed example so far of the deep worry among local allies about what will happen after the Canadian commitment expires in 18 months.

"They should not be scared," Mr. Naqib said in an interview.

The elder's opinions carry weight in Kandahar, where he rose to prominence during the fight against Soviet occupation and later served as provincial governor. Mr. Naqib's band of Alokozai tribesmen has been a pillar of support for every regime in Kandahar for the past 15 years, including the Taliban and the current Afghan government.

The fact that Canada has lost 70 soldiers in Afghanistan is a sad reality, Mr. Naqib said, but it's a small sacrifice when compared to the daily casualties among Afghan security forces, and the bloody consequences of withdrawal.

"You're talking about 70 dead," Mr. Naqib said. "How many [Afghan] police have been killed in the last month? Two hundred, probably." The grey-bearded former warlord has risked his own life for the sake of President Hamid Karzai's government. His tribe holds informal control of Arghandab, a fertile district north of Kandahar, and the insurgents are pushing hard to open up Arghandab as a route for attacking the city. Mr. Naqib says the Taliban have launched two serious thrusts at his turf this year, and a researcher for CTV News visiting a neighbouring district last week found Taliban fighters threatening another attack.

Mr. Naqib has resisted the Taliban so far, as he has generally done since breaking his alliance with them in 2001. Rumours spread in recent years that Mr. Naqib appeases the insurgents by allowing them safe houses in his district, where they receive medical treatment, but Canadian officials shrug off the whispers and say he has been an important bulwark against the insurgents. His district stands as a rare success story in the south, a patch of relative peace and prosperity.

The Taliban apparently showed their displeasure with Mr. Naqib in early March, when a roadside bomb targeted his vehicle. He survived, but one of his sons and an assistant were killed and two other sons suffered

serious injuries. He remained in India for months of treatment, and still needs a cane to walk.

"The Canadians should not leave," he said. "If they leave after 18 months, why did they come here anyway? We need their help." Canadian military leaders have expressed hope that they can train and equip the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police to take over the lead role in counterinsurgency operations before February, 2009.

Mr. Naqib scoffed at the idea.

"The locations the government holds now will be captured by the Taliban," he said. "They can't train the ANA and ANP in 18 months." He emphasized how grateful Afghans feel for Canada's assistance so far, but added that people feel puzzled about the prospect of them leaving so quickly after arriving. If the Canadians thought it was worth risking their lives to help Afghanistan last year, he asked, what has changed? Is the cause less worthy now? "It's like they just came here for joking," he said.

The old warrior paused and looked down at the prayer beads in his powerful hands.

"Before they came to Afghanistan, they knew some soldiers would die. You cannot control this land without losing people. It's sad, but you have to sacrifice. This is fighting." The timing of Canada's exit should depend on whether Afghan forces are ready to hold their ground against the Taliban, Mr. Naqib said.

That not only requires funding, training and equipment for the Afghans, he said, but also requires Canada to speed up its development assistance in the south, winning support from locals and undermining the insurgents.

"The most important thing is to help the 95 per cent of people here who are poor, give them food and help with agriculture. Right now, civilians are helping the Taliban because they can't feed themselves."
gsmith@globeandmail.com

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; strife; defence; policy

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban

MARITIME DEFENCE Navy must be prepared to fight terrorism at sea, admiral warns

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL
IDN: 072600064
DATE: 2007.09.17
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER
SECTION: National News
SOURCE: CP
EDITION: National
DATELINE: Ottawa ONT
WORDS: 610
WORD COUNT: 559

MURRAY BREWSTER Canadian Press OTTAWA The Canadian navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive." In an interview, Vice-Adm. Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call.

Most of the 80 crew members of the Israeli corvette Ahi-Hanit were having dinner below deck on a sweltering, sleepy Friday evening 14 months ago when a Chinese-designed sea-hugging missile slammed into the warship's helicopter deck.

The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

It was the nightmare scenario that had kept commanders in established navies all over the world awake at nights.

"Here we have a group that's not a nation, armed with Mach-[speed], sea-skimming missiles," said Vice-Adm. Robertson. "A year ago, no one had foreseen the idea that weapons of that kind could have proliferated to a non-state actor." Sophisticated armaments in the hands of violent militias and even terrorist organizations represent the biggest emerging threat, not only to 21st-century navies, but to merchant shipping as well, say experts in maritime warfare.

The threat of seaborne terrorism came brutally into focus in October, 2000, with the al-Qaeda attack on the USS Cole as it sat in berth in the port of Aden, Yemen. The suicide bombing killed 17 American sailors, but it was carried out with a relatively unsophisticated speed boat packed with explosives.

Rob Huebert, a defence analyst, says Hezbollah's landmark attack heralded a new and more dangerous age of maritime warfare.

"Most of the anti-missile capability our frigates and destroyers have is predicated on shots being taken at them by enemies who are over the horizon. But what happens when you get small vessels within sight – or

even disguised?" he said.

"I'm thinking of a scenario where you've got all of these little Iranian speedboats and all of a sudden everyone on cue stands up and lets loose with small, cheap missiles. Can you overwhelm the system with numbers?" Prof. Huebert said defence planners will have to pay more attention to so-called close-in weapons systems.

"It's going to be challenging to meet that kind of threat," said Prof. Huebert, who teaches conflict studies at the University of Calgary.

Vice-Adm. Robertson said that from a planning point of view the navy can do that by setting to sea with the "right mixture of surface ships and submarines." In the Ahi-Hanit incident, Israeli commanders blamed the crew for not being vigilant. But there were also lingering questions about why the country's extensive and high-tech intelligence network didn't pick up the existence of the missiles beforehand.

Just as pressing a concern is a perceived increase in high-seas piracy, especially in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

A series of well-timed precise attacks on container ships in crowded shipping lanes could lead to economic chaos in countries, such as Canada, that depend on maritime trade.

A month ago pirates seized a vessel chartered by the United Nations World Food Program in waters off eastern Africa.

"Piracy is enabled by the current state of the government in Somalia," Vice-Adm. Robertson said. "You've got pirates operating in a relatively unsophisticated manner in those calm waters of the tropics [and] they've been able to have quite an effect."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; terrorism; strife

ORGANIZATION NAME: Navy; Hezbollah

Navy must learn how to fight terror: admiral Attack on Israeli ship last year served as a wakeup call

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.17

PAGE: A7

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 685

CP Wire Murray Brewster OTTAWA -- The Canadian navy needs to learn how to fight terrorists and pirates, says the top commander.

As the army has been forced to fight a brutal counter-insurgency war in Afghanistan, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson says the navy must prepare itself for conflicts where "threats are whatever your imagination can conceive." In an interview with The Canadian Press, Robertson said an attack on an Israeli warship last year was the wake-up call.

Most of the 80 crew members of the Israeli corvette Ahi-Hanit were having dinner below deck on a sweltering, sleepy Friday evening 14 months ago when -- seemingly out of nowhere -- a Chinese-designed sea-hugging missile slammed into the warship's helicopter deck.

The explosion and fire killed four sailors, but the shock waves of the surprise attack by Hezbollah could be felt well beyond the waters of Lebanon.

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Hezbollah fired three radar-guided shore-to-sea C-802 missiles that day. One exploded just after takeoff, the second struck the Ahi-Hanit and the third exploded and sank a Cambodian-flagged cargo ship. The high-tech weapons, with a range of 120 kilometres, were apparently supplied by Iran.

In case anyone believed the July 14, 2006, missile strike was a fluke, or even a lucky shot in the dark, U.S. intelligence agencies recently reported that the Shiite militia in Lebanon was boasting openly that it had tripled its store of Iranian-built C-802 missiles.

The threat of seaborne terrorism came brutally into focus in October 2000 with the al-Qaida attack on the USS Cole as it sat in berth in the port of Aden, Yemen.

The suicide bombing killed 17 American sailors, but it was carried out with a relatively unsophisticated speed boat packed with explosives.

Navy must learn how to fight terror: admiral Attack on Israeli ship last year served as a wakeup call 5

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"It's going to be challenging to meet that kind of threat," said Huebert, a University of Calgary conflict studies professor.

Robertson said that from a planning point of view the navy can do that by setting to sea with the "right mixture of surface ships and submarines." Beyond the hardware, said Dan Middlemiss of Nova Scotia's Dalhousie University, improvements in naval intelligence will be needed.

"You work with your allies to know where this stuff is and where it's going." There is already a strong network to track weapons of mass destruction, but Middlemiss said NATO and other Western allies may need to extend those intelligence-gathering efforts to "lesser weapons." In the Ahi-Hanit incident, Israeli commanders blamed the crew for not being vigilant. But there were also lingering questions about why the country's extensive and high-tech intelligence network didn't pick up the existence of the missiles beforehand.

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French dispatching jets boon to Harper

IDNUMBER 200709170028
PUBLICATION: National Post
DATE: 2007.09.17
EDITION: National
SECTION: World
PAGE: A11
COLUMN: Matthew
Fisher
DATELINE: KANDAHAR
BYLINE: Matthew
Fisher
SOURCE: National Post
WORD COUNT: 750

KANDAHAR –Will France help Prime Minister Stephen Harper and give fresh impetus to NATO's mission in southern Afghanistan by sending combat troops to fight alongside the Canadian battle group here?

In a clear signal that a French government is willing for the first time in years to play a part in joint western combat operations, President Nicolas Sarkozy has ordered Mirage fighter jets to Kandahar to help protect American, British and Canadian ground forces. The French warplanes are to be operational by the end of the month.

Because so much has been made of how Sarkozy is keen to improve frail relations with Washington, and as other countries that have had fighter jets at the Kandahar airfield — the Americans, British and Dutch — also have combat troops here, it is not too much of a stretch to imagine France sending an infantry battalion or even a brigade to join the fight.

With Germany, Spain and Italy having repeatedly refused NATO's request to join combat operations and with the Dutch parliament split over whether its forces should stay next door in Uruzgan province, the French decision to dispatch warplanes to southern Afghanistan should be a boon to Harper, who has been puzzling over what Canada's contribution to NATO's mission in southern Afghanistan should be after the current mandate expires in early 2009.

France signing on would help Harper because it would undermine opposition claims that Canada should join the Germans in refusing a combat role or get out altogether, which is what is being debated in the Netherlands.

As you might expect, Canada's future role in Afghanistan is of consuming interest to its nearly 2,500 troops in the region and senior NATO officers in Kandahar and Kabul. NATO does not want Canada to cut and run, and sees no sense in Canada switching to a largely humanitarian effort, as the New Democrats and some Liberals advocate, because such efforts will never succeed unless the operating environment is much more secure.

Although they are understandably reluctant to say so baldly in public, the overwhelming opinion of the Canadians now in Kandahar and those that have rotated out after serving tours here, is that they are making a difference. They want the current mandate extended although they acknowledge the number of troops will have to be scaled back because there are not enough fresh forces at home to maintain present troop levels

beyond 2009.

Jack Layton and Stephane Dion would not want to hear it, but what Canada actually needs is more, not fewer, combat troops in Afghanistan, if only more were to be had.

To be honest, Canada's grandly named battle group in Kandahar is an enhanced infantry battalion.

What has always really been required in Canada's enormous area of responsibility has been three infantry battalions — effectively a brigade to hold Taliban strongholds to the west of Kandahar, watch over the city and secure the province's porous eastern border with Pakistan, where the enemy rests and re-supplies every winter. As it is, the battle group has to race around a lot trying to keep as much as possible in check. If Harper elects to keep Canada's current mission more or less intact, it will undoubtedly be leaner, losing some of its robust combat capability and some of its logistical tail.

But there are other options worth contemplating, particularly if France, which has several fresh brigades available, commits to sending ground troops to the south. One possibility being actively considered is to continue with the Provincial Reconstruction (PRT) and the infantry company that now guards it, greatly increase the few Canadian soldiers now mentoring the Afghan army and, perhaps, leave Canada's new Leopard tanks — NATO's only tanks in Afghanistan — in theatre. Such a force, numbering perhaps 1,300, would give infantry, combat engineering and support elements the break from overseas tours they badly need.

Another option is to just keep the PRT and the infantry that are with it, increase the number of mentors and deploy CF-18 Hornet fighter jets to Kandahar. However, aside from the high cost of operating warplanes so far from home, there would probably be severe political fallout the first time a Canadian air strike killed Afghan civilians.

The ideal solution would be to maintain as many elements of the current mission as possible and hope the French will help out in Kandahar or in one of the equally restive neighbouring provinces.

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War – Re: "PM urges continued fight against terrorism," Sept. 11.

I think it would be good if Canada withdraws its troops from Afghanistan as soon as reasonably possible.

Canadian troops have been in Afghanistan for over five years. There seems to be little progress made in improving the lives of people in Afghanistan. Therefore, logic suggests Canadian troops ought to be withdrawn.

Shawn M. Blitz,

Calgary

U.S. antiwar activist faces two-year ban

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An American antiwar activist, who was jailed overnight last week in Surrey, B.C., faces a hearing today that could ban her from Canada for two years.

Alison Bodine, 22, believes she was arrested by the Canada Border Services Agency because she was carrying publications opposing Canadian military actions in Afghanistan.

"(The border guards) identified me as a political activist. . . . I haven't done anything illegal," she said Sunday.

Bodine was released Friday night after a radio interview with her was broadcast from jail earlier in the day and a demonstration held on her behalf.