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# Business must stay tuned to terror risks, meeting told

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**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
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Canada may be an unlikely target for a terror attack, but business managers who evaluate risk for companies still need to stay on top of world conflicts, says the co–chairman of a risk management conference.

Bruce Langille, attending the national event in Halifax, said the economic fallout of terror attacks aren't limited to the countries in which they occur. There are global repercussions that can be felt through stock markets, investments and business attitudes, he said. The new security measures Canadian businesses must undertake to export to the United States are just one example of the spinoff costs associated with terrorism that need to be understood and mitigated by risk managers.

He said that is why it is important risk managers get together annually to learn from one another about the best ways to mitigate those risks.

Other topics that the risk managers will look at include the challenges of dealing with pandemics, the new complexities of corporate governance and larger losses associated with more storms, floods and tornadoes resulting from climate change.

Charlie Parker, the conference's other co–chairman, said he doesn't believe the withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan would ease the terror threat in Canada. He said the people intent on creating mayhem don't make a distinction between Canada and the U.S. "It's all North America and it's all bad in their eyes."

# Suicide attack targeting police kills 8 in southern Afghanistan

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**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
**WORD COUNT:** 416

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KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) \_ A suicide bomber on foot entered a government office and blew himself up Monday in the volatile south, killing eight people, including four policemen, officials said.

The district police chief was among the seven people wounded in the attack on the Nad Ali district centre in Helmand province, said district chief Mehbob Khan.

Four civilians were among the dead, Khan said. The seven wounded included policemen and civilians.

Helmand has been the front line in the battle between the Taliban and international forces in recent months and has seen some of the bloodiest fighting in the past two years. It is also the largest opium-producing area in the world.

More than 4,300 people \_ mostly militants \_ have died in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an Associated Press tally of figures from Western and Afghan officials.

Among the latest casualties are 120 insurgents who were killed over the past 20 days in a joint U.S. coalition and Afghan operation in central Ghazni province, the Interior Ministry said Monday.

Last month, the Afghan army had dropped leaflets warning of impending military action in Ghazni \_ the province where 23 South Koreans were kidnapped in July \_ though the army said the operation had been long-planned and was not linked to the kidnappings.

``In the past 20 days of operations in Ghazni province, 120 enemies of the peace and stability of Afghanistan have been killed," said Interior Ministry spokesman Zemerai Bashary. ``Five commanders of the enemy have been captured."

It was not possible to confirm the figures independently.

Officials have reported at least four Taliban commanders involved in the July 19 abduction of the South Koreans have been killed in Afghan security operations this month, but it is not clear if they were included in the death toll announced Monday.

The South Koreans were kidnapped while driving by bus from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar.

Two of the hostages were slain soon after the kidnapping. Two women were released during Taliban negotiations with South Korea, and the remaining 19 were freed late last month.

Meanwhile, NATO and Afghan army troops came under fire Sunday morning in Surobi district, about 40 kilometres east of Kabul, and called in airstrikes, killing at least one suspected insurgent, said Maj. Charles Anthony, spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

There were no reports of NATO, Afghan army or civilian casualties.

Suicide attack targeting police kills 8 in southern Afghanistan

Surobi police chief Gen. Yardil Nizami said the bombardment destroyed one house in the village of Gazbala, killing two men and wounding two others.

Nizami did not know if the casualties \_ all from the same family \_ were militants or civilians, but noted many villagers in the area support insurgents. He added that many Arab, Chechen and Taliban insurgents had recently been in the area.

The Interior Ministry has sent a delegation to investigate the incident, Bashary said.

# NATO airstrikes kill suspected insurgent near Afghan capital of Kabul

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**DATE:** 2007.09.17

**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 216

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KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) \_ NATO and Afghan army troops came under fire east of Kabul and then called in airstrikes, killing at least one suspected insurgent, officials said Monday.

The joint forces were attacked Sunday morning in Surobi district, about 40 kilometres east of the capital, said Maj. Charles Anthony, spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

“They had come under attack from insurgents, returned fire, and then called in close air support,” Anthony said. “This is clearly going after a Taliban insurgent target, but we just don't have a whole lot of information on what the results were.”

One insurgent was killed in the battle and one weapons cache was destroyed, he said. There were no reports of NATO, Afghan army or civilian casualties.

Surobi police chief Gen. Yardil Nizami said the bombardment destroyed one house in the village of Gazbala, killing two men and wounding two others.

Nizami did not know if the casualties \_ all from the same family \_ were militants or civilians, but noted many villagers in the area support insurgents.

“They are not good people. The local people are even facilitating opportunities for the enemy,” he said, adding many Arab, Chechen and Taliban insurgents had recently been in the area.

The Interior Ministry said it has sent a delegation to investigate the incident.

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# NATO–Afghanistan

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**DATE:** 2007.09.17  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS  
**PUBLICATION:** bnw  
**WORD COUNT:** 111

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BRUSSELS, Belgium — NATO is being asked to urgently step up the teaching of English to Afghan army officers so they can work alongside international forces there.

It comes from the Brigadier General (Ryszard Wisniewski) in charge of co–ordinating allied training efforts.

He says the Afghan National Army has a lot of needs, starting with the basic language skills to communicate with the allies.

He says the language problem is an obstacle to efforts to forge an efficient Afghan force which NATO commanders hope will eventually be able to replace some of the 40–thousand troops deployed under the alliance's stabilization mission.

Canada has about 25–hundred soldiers in southern Afghanistan.

NATO commanders see the drive to train Afghan soldiers and police as key to an eventual exit strategy for international troops there.

(AP,BN)

RMo

# In Kabul, the biggest fear is crime; Competition is fierce, business is poor in a city where threat of thieves overshadows Taliban

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**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** World And Comment  
**PAGE:** AA01  
**ILLUSTRATION:** RAFIQ MAQBOOL AP Kamal, 46, right, an Afghan vendor, weighssweetmeats known locally as "jalebi" in Kabul yesterday. ;  
**BYLINE:** Bruce Campion-Smith  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 543

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Strolling past the carpet and jewellery stores along Chicken St., the fighting and bombings in Kandahar seem like a distant problem.

Indeed, ask a few shopkeepers who work this favoured haunt of visitors what worries them most, the Taliban and insurgents aren't mentioned.

Instead, their talk turns to everyday problems that could just as easily be heard on Yonge St. – crime and worries about the economy.

"The last year has not been good. We are afraid," said Hamid Noori, who runs the Bamyán Gallery Carpet Centre.

He complains that crime is on the upswing, especially roaming thieves who shake down people for their cash.

"It's a big problem, groups searching people for money," he said.

In his darkened shop, the accomplished salesman is quick to unfold colourful wool and silk carpets, one after another until they're stacked on the floor, all in hopes of enticing a buyer. But competition is fierce on this strip, a popular stop for visitors to Kabul, and business has not been good lately, he said.

Yet Noori blames the crime in part on the economic disparity on stark display on every street corner in the Afghan capital.

This is a city of sharp contrasts, where money pouring in from the international community has given birth to some good restaurants and one swank hotel, the Serena.

But it's like a gated community, with foreign dignitaries and diplomats emerging from their enclaves in armoured SUVs, carving through the chaotic traffic with machine-gun-toting guards hanging out the back.

But they rush past scenes of desperate poverty, small storefronts where residents try to eke out a living, past beggars on the street, many missing a limb, a testament to this country's legacy of land mines. Women in

In Kabul, the biggest fear is crime; Competition is fierce, business is poor in a city where threat of thieves overshadows Taliban

burqas holding small children stop visitors and implore, "Please sir, food for baby."

"Economic problems make that (crime) problem. People are poor," Noori tells a visitor.

But while crime and economy are their everyday concerns, shopkeepers also have a view on the insurgency in southern Afghanistan. And President Hamid Karzai's proposed solution – negotiations with the Taliban – is a response endorsed by some on the street.

"It is good. Peace is good. If government want to speak with the Taliban, we prefer that over the fighting," Noori said.

Across the street, at Enfield and Tower Guns House, Abdul Hadi and his son Hamid Fahim watch the pedestrian traffic outside their dusty shop window and express support for negotiating with insurgents.

"If they speak with the Taliban, the country not have any problem," said Fahim, 19.

But he expresses caution about the Taliban's one chief demand – the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

"I will not trust Taliban. If (foreign troops) are not here, everyone will have troubles," Fahim said.

His father says he's happy his six children are not growing up under the strict Taliban rule. But he expresses a certain nostalgia for the firm justice of that era that helped keep crime in check.

"I don't like the Taliban times. But if a person kill a guy, the Taliban would kill him," Hadi said.

Kabul has not been immune to terror attacks. But it has seen nothing on the scale of suicide bombings or roadside blasts that have terrorized Kandahar. But even here, diplomats and aid organization workers are restricted in their movements, fearing attack or kidnap attempts.

Wander a little farther and a visitor finds dissent in the carpet store operated by Muktar Subir, 19.

"That's not a good idea," he says of Karzai's overture for talks. "I don't like the Taliban."

Subir says he became friends with two Canadian soldiers during the time they were based in Kabul. Foreign troops have helped Afghanistan, he says. He doesn't want to see them gone, especially under pressure from the Taliban.

But ask Ahmed Samir about the talks with the Taliban and he shrugs. Not a care for today, said Samir, a clothing store owner who stands behind his counter framed by the bright colours of shirts for women and children.

"Business is not good," he tells a visitor.

On this day, he's more interested in making a sale than talking about insurgents.

In Kabul, the biggest fear is crime; Competition is fierce, business is poor in a city where threat of thieves ov



# TTC to allow troop–support pins

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**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A12  
**BYLINE:** Tess Kalinowski  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
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**WORD COUNT:** 206

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A week after unanimously agreeing to raise fares, TTC commissioners are preparing to tie a bow on another emotionally charged issue – allowing drivers to show support for Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

At tomorrow's TTC meeting, commissioners are expected to decide whether to cover half of the \$6,500 cost of pins that unionized transit workers can wear on their uniforms to indicate their support for troops abroad.

The union that represents about 8,000 TTC workers has agreed to pay the other half of the bill.

It's a compromise that suits everyone, said TTC chair Adam Giambrone.

"(The pin) puts the choice back in the individual's hands, whether they choose to wear it to show their support or they choose not to wear it. You can feel very strongly in support of the mission but feel you don't want to wear it on your uniform," he said.

"It's certainly cheaper than producing the stickers and attaching them to all the vehicles," Giambrone added.

In July, the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union Local 113 sent a letter to the TTC requesting that decals supporting the troops be permitted on transit vehicles. Commissioners referred the matter to the city to see if it aligned with the city's controversial decision to allow troop–support decals on its emergency vehicles. Then, the pin idea emerged, Giambrone said.

# Canadians 'on top of our game' in Afghanistan: official

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**PUBLICATION:** The Leader-Post (Regina)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** B10  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 747

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KABUL — Reports that NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Canadian military are not faring well in their war against the Taliban are wrong, says the Canadian officer who oversees military intelligence in Afghanistan.

In fact, says Brig.-Gen. Jim Ferron, the battlefield successes of Canada and other NATO armies could spur peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

"I don't accept that NATO is on its back foot," Ferron said Monday in his first interview with a Canadian journalist since becoming NATO's chief of intelligence in Afghanistan eight months ago.

"If the statistics are properly analyzed, we are on top of our game right now."

The Taliban are by no means subdued, Ferron acknowledged. But, he insisted, "we are taking the conflict to the insurgents and forcing the issue."

Combat operations have successfully targeted the Taliban's middle and high leadership, said the general, who is also director general of military intelligence in Ottawa.

"It is one of the catalysts that could bring negotiations between the government and moderates in the Taliban."

Canada's battle group in the southern province of Kandahar has played a significant role in creating the circumstances that have caused both the Taliban and Afghan President Hamid Karzai to broach the prospect of peace talks for the first time since the Taliban launched an insurgency campaign after being deposed by U.S. forces in 2001.

"The Canadians have the initiative in Zahri/Panjwaii (districts) and always have," Ferron said in an interview in his office in NATO's fortress-like headquarters in Kabul. "Unfortunately, Operation Medusa there last year cost Canadian lives. But it led to real advances in security."

Ferron said Canadian and other NATO forces must repeatedly fight to secure areas where they have fought and won previous battles because there are not enough troops to always hold ground.

"I do not only mean NATO. I mean the Afghan National Army and Afghan police, too. We want the Afghans to be first, but the Afghan forces are not yet mature in numbers or in their level of training. This is especially

true of the police."

"This will take time. In Afghanistan it is always about time."

While responsible for gathering military intelligence inside Afghanistan, Ferron said it was equally important for him and his multinational staff to keep a close watch on neighbouring countries when preparing a picture for battlefield commanders of the likely challenges ahead.

"You cannot just look at Afghanistan as if it is an island. This is a regional conflict and we cannot ignore the impact or the influence of the northern "-stans" (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and Iran and Pakistan," Ferron said, waving his hand towards several large maps on his office walls.

"We are always concerned about the flow of weapons and armaments from Iran, although this should not be taken out of context. Weapons are being fed into Afghanistan from Iran but we have no indication that the government of Iran is involved in this.

"Do weapons flow in from Pakistan? Of course, they do. So do insurgents. The tribes in the border areas do not recognize specific boundary lines."

That Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf acknowledged the problems during a recent visit to Kabul and explained some of the initiatives his government was taking to counter them was "a positive development," Ferron said.

While unwilling to be drawn into the heated political debate now taking place in Canada about whether the Canadian battle group in the Afghan south should have its current mandate extended past the spring of 2009, Ferron said: "We view Canadian support as vital and we understand that if we do not have that support the mission cannot continue."

Placing on his desk a compact disc entitled Fifty Bridges, which is a tribute to Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan whose bodies have been taken along Highway 401 from the Trenton, Ont., air base to Toronto for post-mortems, the general said, "Things such as this show that Canadians still support the mission and this is heartening."

The general, who joined the army in Windsor, Ont., in 1975 and has served as a tank commander in Germany and on UN peacekeeping missions in Cyprus and Bosnia, described what Canadian forces are doing in Afghanistan as "an honourable and just cause."

One of the reasons Canadians are sometimes unsure about Canada's role over here is that the Taliban have become adept at what Ferron calls "miscommunication" because, unlike NATO, it is under no obligation to tell the truth and often makes false claims that are picked up uncritically by the media.

"What we are hoping for is an honest assessment by the media that is based on knowledge and not on rumours," he said. "Canadians must be realistic. We cannot be successful overnight ... It is all about the Canadian people understanding what we are doing here."

# Officer disputes reports NATO losing war against Taliban

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**IDNUMBER** 200709180035  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A13  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Colour Photo: Cpl Dan Pop, DND; Combat Camera / A Canadian soldier serving in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force greets an Afghan child while on patrol in Kandahar City. ;  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; TERRORISM  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 625

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# NATO doing its job in Afghanistan, Canadian officer says

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**PAGE:** C9  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
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# Troops caught in Taliban trap

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**SOURCETAG** 0709180310  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** Editorial/Opinion  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** RICHARD LATENDRESSE  
**WORD COUNT:** 482

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I was hoping it would never happen to me. But it did. And I'm alive to tell the tale.

It was an ambush with the works: machine gun fire, grenade launchers, mortars and smoke bombs, along with back-up fire. And of course, an improvised explosive device, or IED, which sparked the whole thing.

But the more it sinks in, the more I realize that the fear, the brutality, and the lack of respect for human life in those moments truly epitomize the things I've seen here in Afghanistan over the past few weeks.

Here's a blow-by-blow of how it went down.

Canadian soldiers were heading for the tiny villages near enemy lines to explain to the locals that military attacks on the Taliban and extremists are to help villagers.

Crushing the extremists would help them live in a safer place, with thriving villages and better lives.

To achieve this improved protection, Canadians were teaming up with a convoy of American militia and Afghan police. The Americans are burdened with the task of training the local police, who are seen as corrupt and incompetent.

About half-way there, the head of the Afghan police, Colonel Aka, informed us that a few hundred metres ahead of us, the Taliban were waiting. He's in the know, this Aka guy. But that's par for the course in Afghanistan, where people know more about their enemy than they do about their friends.

In keeping with the Canadian mission here, it was an IED holding us back. On a daily basis, IEDs are the biggest threat to our troops, and today was no different.

## HOVERING NEARBY

We figured the Taliban were hovering somewhere nearby. And yet, when they attacked, it was a shocker.

Knee-jerk reaction: the Afghan police -- Aka leading the bunch -- opened fire so wildly that no one knew where the bullets were coming from.

When the firing subsided, and we were all under cover, the top American there approached the Canadians with a proposal.

Let's assault the enemy. Without knowing how many of them there are, how they're armed, without being able to bring in back-up tanks... without even knowing whether we were prepared for such an attack. You know, a cowboy approach.



Well, I guess there's no Canadian tactic known as the "Cowboy" offensive, so the Canadians promptly nixed the idea. The Americans and their Afghan understudies headed back, leaving the Canadians alone to finish the job.

The job was to clear that IED away, not only so that remote villages could be accessible, but also to prevent the Taliban from plucking it and using it elsewhere.

Tossed hand grenades literally created a smokescreen while experts snuck up to the IED and tried to diffuse it. All this as the Taliban sat within firing range.

The Canadians patiently waited as their bomb disposal experts did their thing. But Taliban fighters are just as patient, and when the smoke cleared, they fired relentlessly on the mine-clearing team.

The Canadians responded until there wasn't a peep out of the enemy. Then it was time to retreat.

This ambush was symbolic for me. It is my impression of this mission in a nutshell.

#### DETERMINED

The Canadians are armed with good intentions, partnered with people less dependable, and determined to carry out a task till the bitter end. Indeed, they win the battle, but ultimately, sapped of energy and time, at the end of the day, they've probably left the region to the Taliban. And tomorrow, they head out to do it all again.

Our troops are oozing with courage and good will. But it's as if, despite their attributes, once on the ground, there's nothing much to show for them.

# School's out on reserve, or is it?

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**SOURCETAG** 0709180305  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.18  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** handout photo School buses couldn't travel in dangerous conditions, said Kemp.  
**BYLINE:** PAUL TURENNE, SUN MEDIA  
**WORD COUNT:** 250

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Muddy, washed-out roads have shut down school buses in Berens River.

About 400 children attend the Berens River School, an early years to Grade 9 facility on Berens River First Nation, located on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Many have been unable to take the bus there the past few days.

"Because of heavy rain our school buses couldn't travel. They were going in the ditch," said Berens River Chief George Kemp. "It's about the safety of the kids." Kemp told reporters in Winnipeg yesterday that the school was forced to close last Thursday and remained closed until the road conditions improved.

But an employee at the school told Sun Media it was open yesterday, a fact confirmed by the provincial government. It did not close last week and doesn't appear to be in any danger of closing this week either, said the employee.

'OFFICIALLY OPEN'

"Our doors were officially open but we haven't had busing," said the employee, who noted a "good number" of students made it to school on their own yesterday.

The school is run by Frontier School Division. Gordon Shead, the division's chief superintendent, was travelling to Churchill yesterday and unavailable for comment.

Berens River, a fly-in community, has more than 40 km of road, mostly mud roads.

Bus service may pick up later this week if the roads can be graded, but more rain could scuttle the plan.

Kemp said he has been frustrated by political football for years, with neither the feds or the province seeming too interested in fixing the roads.

He is now appealing to Foreign Affairs to redirect some of the money it has earmarked for infrastructure in Afghanistan, hoping the federal government will look to address problems at home first.

A spokeswoman for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada said Berens River gets \$100,000 a year for road repair and in the last five years has received an additional \$570,000. **KEYWORDS=WINNIPEG**

# Troops caught in Taliban trap

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I was hoping it would never happen to me. But it did. And I'm alive to tell the tale.

It was an ambush with the works: machine gun fire, grenade launchers, mortars and smoke bombs, along with back-up fire. And of course, an improvised explosive device, or IED, which sparked the whole thing.

But the more it sinks in, the more I realize that the fear, the brutality, and the lack of respect for human life in those moments truly epitomize the things I've seen here in Afghanistan over the past few weeks.

Here's a blow-by-blow of how it went down.

Canadian soldiers were heading for the tiny villages near enemy lines to explain to the locals that military attacks on the Taliban and extremists are to help villagers.

Crushing the extremists would help them live in a safer place, with thriving villages and better lives.

To achieve this improved protection, Canadians were teaming up with a convoy of American militia and Afghan police. The Americans are burdened with the task of training the local police, who are seen as corrupt and incompetent.

About half-way there, the head of the Afghan police, Colonel Aka, informed us that a few hundred metres ahead of us, the Taliban were waiting. He's in the know, this Aka guy. But that's par for the course in Afghanistan, where people know more about their enemy than they do about their friends.

In keeping with the Canadian mission here, it was an IED holding us back. On a daily basis, IEDs are the biggest threat to our troops, and today was no different.

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When the firing subsided, and we were all under cover, the top American there approached the Canadians with a proposal.

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The Canadians responded until there wasn't a peep out of the enemy. Then it was time to retreat.

This ambush was symbolic for me. It is my impression of this mission in a nutshell.

#### DETERMINED

The Canadians are armed with good intentions, partnered with people less dependable, and determined to carry out a task till the bitter end. Indeed, they win the battle, but ultimately, sapped of energy and time, at the end of the day, they've probably left the region to the Taliban. And tomorrow, they head out to do it all again.

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# Yellow ribbons going on city vehicles

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**BYLINE:** JONATHAN SHER, SUN MEDIA  
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London city council voted narrowly yesterday to place yellow ribbons on city vehicles after an emotional debate about patriotism, civil liberties and the controversial politics of war in Afghanistan.

By a count of 11–8, council voted for the measure, the closeness of the outcome matched by the passion of the participants.

Coun. Steven Orser's voice quivered as he apologized for claiming earlier opponents to the ribbons were all NDP, saying he was overly emotional because his dad had been a prisoner of war.

"I loved my dad dearly," Orser said before casting his vote for the ribbons.

Just as passionate — but opposed to ribbons — was Controller Gina Barber, who recalled how her family was liberated from Nazis by Canadian soldiers who fought in the Netherlands.

"There is no doubt about the depth of gratitude that is felt by the Dutch . . . My first doll was a replica of a Canadian soldier," Barber said.

Many Canadians oppose the Afghan war and those of them who drive city vehicles shouldn't be forced to display yellow decals that read "Support Our Troops," she said.

"This issue is being brought forward to silence the critics," Barber said.

The ribbon proposal was brought by deputy mayor Tom Gosnell, who said it had nothing to do with politics.

"I'm not so sure if I was minister of defence I'd vote for (the troops) to stay one minute longer," Gosnell said.

But others on both sides defended their position on political grounds. Canada had to come to the defence of the U.S. after it was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, because both are NATO members, said Coun. Roger Caranci.

After voting unanimously to declare support of Canadian soldiers, city council split over whether to pay to place on city vehicles yellow decals that read "Support our Troops." Here's how they voted:

Yes: (11) Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco–Best, controllers Tom Gosnell, Bud Polhill and Gord Hume and councillors Paul Van Meerbergen, Bernie MacDonald, Roger Caranci, Steven Orser, Walter Lonc, Paul Hubert and Cheryl Miller

No: (8) Controller Gina Barber and councillors Bill Armstrong, Susan Eagle, David Winninger, Nancy Branscombe, Judy Bryant, Joni Baechler and Harold Usher.

Though the war effort hasn't been perfect, Canada should stay the course, Caranci said.

"To get to a better place, you've got to go to hell before you go to heaven."

Taking aim at his comments was Coun. David Winninger, who said Canada had abdicated its role as peacekeepers.

"They're not peacekeepers, they're waging war."

After Caranci called for a unanimous vote for the ribbons, Winninger replied, "If you're not with us you're against us . . . .That reminds me of a certain president in the United States."

It's clear some council members struggled with the choice.

"I'm an army brat. My dad was in the army. As a young lady I polished his boots and brass buttons," Coun. Nancy Branscombe said. "(But) I think it's unfair for someone who detests the war to be forced to put a decal on their vehicle."

Without naming Gosnell, Branscombe criticized him for a proposal that was sure to divide council, and in so doing, casting doubt where there should just be support for Canadian soldiers.

Others who opposed the decals appeared to agree, and pushed for a second motion that simply declared support for the troops — a measure passed unanimously.

Those supporting the ribbons came with props, with Coun. Cheryl Miller holding a folded cheque she said would cover the city share — \$1,000 — with the proceeds going to the families of soldiers.

She was followed by Controller Bud Polhill, who brought 19 ribbons and challenged each council member to place it on their vehicle.

"The troops will find out. They need this reinforcement," Polhill said.

His challenge angered Coun. Susan Eagle.

"There's this undercurrent that those who don't want to stick a decal on our vehicles are less Canadian," she said. "I find it reprehensible."

#### HOW THEY VOTED

"Yes" (11): Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco–Best, controllers Tom Gosnell, Bud Polhill and Gord Hume and councillors Paul Van Meerbergen, Bernie MacDonald, Roger Caranci, Steven Orser, Walter Lonc, Paul Hubert and Cheryl Miller

"No" (8): Controller Gina Barber and councillors Bill Armstrong, Susan Eagle, David Winninger, Nancy Branscombe, Judy Bryant, Joni Baechler and Harold Usher KEYWORDS=LOCAL

# Troops caught in Taliban trap

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**BYLINE:** RICHARD LATENDRESSE  
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# Troops caught in Taliban trap Richard Latendresse

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# THE AFGHAN MISSION: FORMER MILITIA MEMBERS PROVE LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC A swift shift toward police training

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**SECTION:** International News  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:** SANGISAR, AFGHANISTAN  
**WORDS:** 883  
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GRAEME SMITH SANGISAR, AFGHANISTAN The night before the launch of Canada's police mentorship program, Captain Marc–Andre Langelier picked his way through a darkened outpost toward his students.

The young officer from Royal 22nd Regiment had been assigned to teach 10 Afghan police officers how to survive and defend their new checkpoint.

The wooden beams of the guard posts smelled of freshly cut lumber, and the Canadian troops who built the fortification watched carefully for signs of the Taliban they had chased away only days before from this cluster of villages known as Sangisar, about 40 kilometres west of Kandahar city.

Capt. Langelier ducked into the metal shipping container that serves as the local police station, a small box cramped with shadowy men and Kalashnikov rifles, silhouetted in the glow of a penlight dangling on a wall. The Afghans ushered him to a place of honour in the room, on a cushion beside the police commander, and poured him a cup of tea.

He sipped the brackish liquid hesitantly, obviously trying to be polite, doing his bit to foster a relationship that is crucial for any hope of a successful outcome in Afghanistan. Turning the ragtag police into a professional and effective force is the cornerstone of Canada's strategy.

Canadians captured this terrain last year and set up checkpoints to keep the insurgents away, but the Taliban destroyed the outposts after the Canadians handed them over to Afghan authorities. Capt.

Langelier's comrades reoccupied the same ground earlier this month, and plan to stay until he and the other trainers from the Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team have prepared the local officers to fend for themselves.

Sitting the dark, with his legs crossed awkwardly, Capt. Langelier started a conversation that would reveal how difficult that task will be.

"We will start tomorrow morning," he said. "What do you want to learn?" The police commander, Raz Mohammed, paused before replying. Only in his mid–20s, the leathery man said he has already fought more battles than any of the Canadians. He served in a militia for a tribal warlord who ruled this part of the district before the Taliban rose to power, and for a short period after their defeat. The international community poured

millions of dollars into disarming such warlords, then rearmed many of the same gunmen with the creation of the Afghan National Auxiliary Police.

"I don't know what you could teach us," Mr. Mohammed told his foreign guest.

In fact, Capt. Langelier had not prepared to teach police as he trained for Afghanistan. The creation of the POMLT was a last-minute decision, amid rising concerns about the local police, and soldiers who had been scheduled to teach the Afghan army were redirected to the new program.

Still, much of the training will be similar for police and army, Capt. Langelier said, because in southern Afghanistan the police function as paramilitary units, fighting some of the most pitched battles.

"Will this program involve running?" the police commander asked, skeptically. He reminded the Canadian that his officers are observing the daylight fasts required during the holy month of Ramadan, which means they're weak for most of the day.

"That's a point," the captain replied. "I didn't really see that." They agreed that the training would be limited to two hours, starting at 6 a.m., when the soldiers are still digesting their pre-dawn meals.

The lessons would be tactical, Capt. Langelier said, suggesting the Afghans could learn how to ration their bullets, how to move under covering fire, and how to pin down their enemies with machine guns.

"These battles are a piece of cake for us. We've been doing this for 20 years," Mr. Mohammed observed.

The truth is that Afghan police desperately need to get stronger.

Hundreds of officers have died this year as the Taliban increasingly targets them as symbols of government rule who are more easily killed than the foreign troops.

The local commander said the real problem is a lack of equipment and money. "My men won't work unless they are paid properly," he said. "Two months, three months, we don't get paid." Mr. Mohammed accused the district police chief of taking the money intended for his salaries. The police are often more circumspect about directly accusing their superiors of corruption, but news had already reached the outpost that the district chief had been fired earlier in the day. A senior Canadian military official said that whoever replaces the chief, "he can't be worse than the previous guy, let me tell you." The next morning at 6 a.m., Capt. Langelier stood in a field near the outpost and waited for his students. They straggled in a half-hour late and showed little enthusiasm for his description of hand signals they could use to communicate in battle.

"Sir, I don't think they care about these things," said an interpreter.

"It will come," Capt. Langelier said.

A babble of arguing voices erupted.

"They're saying we've been doing this for years," the interpreter said. "I try to tell them, 'You suffer so many casualties, you must learn so you do not die.'" "Good, good," the captain said. "Did they understand?" The interpreter looked uncertain. "I think so," he said.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; foreign policy; foreign relations; police; defence; training

PERSONAL NAME: Marc–Andre Langelier

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

# THE AFGHAN MISSION Don't rush to the negotiating table First, you need the right conditions for achieving a political settlement

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**SECTION:** Comment  
**EDITION:** Metro  
**DATELINE:**  
**WORDS:** 936  
**WORD COUNT:** 999

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FEN OSLER HAMPSON Director of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University A growing chorus of commentators has called for a negotiated settlement between Taliban insurgents and the Karzai government, arguing that only a political solution will solve Afghanistan's problems and pave the way for a speedy exit of Canadian (and NATO) forces. President Hamid Karzai, meanwhile, has also signalled that he is prepared to negotiate. Taliban leaders have said they are prepared to talk – but only if foreign forces leave the country and Mr. Karzai agrees to an Islamic-style democracy.

A wealth of social-science research on ending civil wars suggests that although negotiated political transitions are the pathway to defusing tensions and promoting peace, several key conditions have to be met if negotiations are to succeed. Many of these conditions do not yet obtain in Afghanistan. And there is a real risk that a premature or ill-conceived negotiating strategy could worsen the situation by raising expectations prematurely while compromising future talks.

Most civil wars do not burn themselves out. Short wars, those lasting fewer than five years, usually end in a decisive military victory by the government or rebel forces. But the longer a civil war lasts, the less likely it is to end in a decisive victory. Conflicts that continue past the five-year mark generally end with a negotiated settlement. The reason? Long civil wars are characterized by a so-called "mutually hurting stalemate." In other words, if the parties cannot win because they are deadlocked on the battlefield, they may be more receptive to a negotiated political solution.

The latest chapter in the Afghan conflict has just passed the five-year mark. And yet there is precious little evidence the war has reached such a mutually painful stalemate. The Taliban have been emboldened in recent months to increase the pace and frequency of their attacks. The insurgency also appears to be expanding from the south to the other parts of the country. Much of the available evidence points to a troubling, escalatory dynamic despite some recent tactical successes by North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces. If rebel groups feel that their own military strength is growing, and Afghanistan's security forces remain weak, the prospects of a political settlement will recede, notwithstanding the Taliban's recently professed desire for negotiations.

Research also suggests that duration is not the only factor affecting the prospects for a negotiated settlement. Military interventions by external actors that support government or opposition forces in a conflict will generally tend to prolong a conflict, not shorten it. Historically, external powers have generally been less successful at fighting insurgencies than local, national authorities.

This finding points to the uncomfortable conclusion that the longer NATO forces remain in Afghanistan and fight the government's battles, the more likely the conflict will continue – unless, of course, Afghanistan's security forces are strengthened to the point where they can take "ownership" of the security situation and do the dirty work themselves.

But NATO is obviously not the only "external" actor in Afghanistan.

The direct and indirect assistance that different rebel and political groups in the country are receiving from a large number of external actors – the pro-Taliban Pashtun tribes in Pakistan among them – does not bode well for the emergence of a military stalemate that would force rival factions to seriously entertain their political options even if NATO withdrew from the country.

Also, even if a conflict is "ripe for resolution," a negotiated settlement depends on other crucial ingredients: a third-party mediator who is willing to hold the ring and broker a settlement; and reasonably unified coalitions on all sides of the negotiating table. If the parties are faction-ridden, spoilers can easily defeat a settlement by reigniting the conflict. And settlements that result in a political power-sharing arrangement must be accompanied by military power-sharing arrangements that disarm and demobilize rebel forces or include them in an integrated national army.

Right now, there is no "third party" mediator with the leverage, credibility, resources, political relationships, political clout and staying power that would be willing to step up to broker a political settlement between the various factions of the Taliban – as well as other groups – and the Karzai government. (And Canadians should not imagine we can play this role: We are partisans in this struggle, and our diplomatic assets and leverage are weak.) Even if a mediator could be found, the Taliban have yet to prove themselves a unified force. Although the negotiated release of South Korean hostages suggests something of an emerging political leadership, the Taliban remain too faction-ridden to be a reliable negotiating partner.

Peeling off moderates may hold out some hope for serious negotiations, but the presence of so many factions means there are also many potential spoilers who could easily wreck a nascent peace process.

And any power-sharing agreement would also have to see the integration of military forces into a common Afghan army, something that even the government and its allies have been unable to do.

Finally, a decade of research suggests there is no magic formula to ending Afghanistan's civil war. Even if a negotiated settlement is the only viable option, it is likely to remain elusive until the Afghan government is able to fight its own war. The good piece of news is that it would not have to win the war by defeating the Taliban. If it could fight the Taliban to a draw or "hurting stalemate," this might create the conditions for a negotiated political settlement.

Fen Osler Hampson is a member of the American Political Science Association's Task Force on Political Violence and Terrorism.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: strife; foreign policy; foreign relations; internal security; government

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban; Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization

# Afghanistan consensus

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**BYLINE:** Douglas Bland  
**SOURCE:** For The Calgary Herald  
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The Conservative government is committed to finding a political consensus to continue Canada's commitment to the Afghan people beyond 2009.

If the opposition's rhetoric is to be believed, the government would need to construct a parliamentary majority to support that, if the Conservatives are to survive the coming debate on the mission.

The prime minister's dilemma is that abandoning military operations in 2009 might contribute to the collapse of the elected Afghan government, and stain Canada's reputation in international affairs generally.

Yet, holding on will certainly result in Canadian casualties and may erode public support for the mission entirely.

But, a close survey of statements by Liberal and Bloc leaders in the House of Commons defence and foreign policy committees suggests, despite their public rhetoric, they might be open to a consensus building effort.

Arguably, given the parties' close agreement on the most important factors that have underpinned Canada's policies in Afghanistan for the past five years, a Conservative–Liberal–Bloc consensus strategy ought to be within reach if the party leaders decided first to act together in the national interest.

They agree that the state, especially in the south, is insecure and threatened continuously by the Taliban radicals and their foreign allies.

But informed politicians know that if the Afghan government is to overcome these serious difficulties, it will depend on NATO's military capabilities beyond 2009.

Moreover, they surely understand Canada must contribute to this effort if only to protect and enhance Canada's significant investments in aid.

The parties agree also the insurgency is not a "war of national liberation" being fought to free the people from foreign occupation. They acknowledge the Taliban is a murderous tribal faction waging a war on the most basic freedoms: Defeating such atrocities is fully consistent with Canadian foreign policy traditions.

This brief narrative suggests parliamentary consensus might rest on a few ideas.

First, it is imperative to Canada's interests to be seen in the UN, NATO, and the U.S. Congress and by future U.S. administrations as a reliable ally.



Second, MPs even voting on party lines could agree stability in Afghanistan requires from Canada a continuing commitment of military capabilities, aids, and diplomatic and public administration assistance over several years, and that the practical balance between these efforts should be decided from time-to-time by the demands of the situation.

If, as seems likely, public support for the mission demands Canadian military casualties be minimized soon, then finding a three-party consensus to guide Canada's military operations could be the major element in any Canadian consensus strategy for Afghanistan. Yet, even here, the hurdle may not be as formidable as partisan rhetoric might suggest.

Party leaders use different language, but all agree on the need to reconfigure Canada's deployment by early 2009. Except for Jack Layton, none is suggesting a complete withdrawal from all military operations in the country, even then. Reasonable leaders ought to be able to find common cause in a phased plan to redirect most of Canada's military and police assistance programs to building and training the Afghan National Army and local police.

The "foreseeable future" is, of course, unforeseeable. A consensus strategy would, therefore, require some type of parliamentary agreement on managing a parliamentary consensus as circumstances change.

The suggestion the Conservative government and the opposition construct a political consensus to serve Canada's national interests is usually dismissed by politicians and the media as an impossible quest. "The Liberals are not," the pundits say, "going to let the government off the hook, especially if they can find some election time advantage in making the commitment look impossible and the government incompetent."

Others believe the Tories would never allow Dion to share credit for redirecting and saving the mission. Canadians however, mostly see this as Canada's commitment, not that of a party.

Canadians' support for the commitment fluctuates mainly because they sense no political leader has any credible idea about how to manage Canada's commitment. Canadians seem frustrated when they perceive Canada's reputation and the lives of Canadians serving the nation in dangerous places are captured by "Ottawa politics as usual" or left in the hands of leaders who seem to seek political advantage from this national undertaking that has cost the country so much already.

Canada's national interests and aspiration to be a people of "pride and influence in the world," and the well-being of Canadians serving these objectives in Afghanistan today deserve some sacrifice of partisan political interests. Let us hope some politician will see the partisan advantage that might be his if he were first to wrap himself in the flag and lead Parliament to a consensus on Canada's future in Afghanistan.

Dr. Douglas Bland is professor and Chair of the Defence Studies Program at Queen's University at Kingston, Ont.

# Mission could spur peace talks: general; Canadian says NATO efforts taking toll on Taliban

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Reports that NATO's International Security Assistance Force and the Canadian military are not faring well in their war against the Taliban are wrong, says the Canadian officer who oversees military intelligence in Afghanistan.

In fact, says Brig.-Gen. Jim Ferron, the battlefield successes of Canada and other NATO armies could spur peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

"I don't accept that NATO is on its back foot," Ferron said Monday in his first interview with a Canadian journalist since becoming NATO's chief of intelligence in Afghanistan eight months ago.

"If the statistics are properly analyzed, we are on top of our game right now."

The Taliban are by no means subdued, Ferron acknowledged. But, he insisted, "we are taking the conflict to the insurgents and forcing the issue."

Combat operations have successfully targeted the Taliban's middle and high leadership, said the general, who is also director general of military intelligence in Ottawa.

"It is one of the catalysts that could bring negotiations between the government and moderates in the Taliban."

Canada's battle group in the southern province of Kandahar has played a significant role in creating the circumstances that have caused both the Taliban and Afghan President Hamid Karzai to broach the prospect of peace talks for the first time since the Taliban launched an insurgency campaign after being deposed by U.S. forces in 2001.

Ferron said Canadian and other NATO forces must repeatedly fight to secure areas where they have fought and won previous battles because there are not enough troops to always hold ground.

"I do not only mean NATO. I mean the Afghan National Army and Afghan police, too. We want the Afghans to be first, but the Afghan forces are not yet mature in numbers or in their level of training. This is especially true of the police.

"This will take time. In Afghanistan it is always about time."

While unwilling to be drawn into the heated debate now taking place in Canada about whether the Canadian battle group in the Afghan south should have its current mandate extended past the spring of 2009, Ferron said: "We view Canadian support as vital and we understand that if we do not have that support the mission cannot continue.

"Canadians must be realistic. We cannot be successful overnight . . . It is all about the Canadian people understanding what we are doing here."

## EDITORIAL – Good news from France

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Editorial Staff How exactly the French got their reputation as the "surrender monkeys" of the Western alliance after 9/11 is not entirely clear, but they did and it stuck. Having surrendered early in two world wars didn't help, even though it was perhaps unavoidable, and playing it safe in Afghanistan and steering clear of Iraq perhaps contributed.

The policies of the government of former president Jacques Chirac, which appeared solely bent on confounding American interests internationally, did not help either, particularly when it meant accommodating renegade states such as Iraq and Iran — despite the latter's obvious nuclear ambitions — but it was a reputation that was never really deserved.

The French are actually pretty fierce when it comes to defending their own interests. It is just that only occasionally do their interests coincide with the interests of other members of the Western alliance, such as Canada and the United States.

Apparently, in the mind of the new government of President Nicolas Sarkozy, today those interests do coincide. In the last few days, the French have promised to send Mirage warplanes to the Kandahar region of southern Afghanistan where they can support Canadian combat troops. The French also have hinted they might agree to deploy actual fighting soldiers to the hot zone of the south where they could assume part of the burden of the war that Canadians are now disproportionately bearing.

This is good news for Canada, for NATO and for Afghanistan. It is also a remarkable about-face on the part of France, changing from "surrender monkeys" to "les gorilles de guerre" — the chest-beating gorillas of war.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner's comments in Washington about Iran on Sunday were particularly redolent of the new breeze from Paris. Mr. Kouchner said the world should prepare itself for war with Iran if that country's government will not abandon its nuclear program that seems, despite Tehran's denials, designed to produce nuclear weapons. Although stressing the importance of negotiations, he said the world should be ready "for the worst... which is war." His comments echoed a statement from Washington on the same weekend that warned the Iranian government that "all options were on the table" in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions. They also reinforced an earlier warning from Mr. Sarkozy that the West needs to prepare itself for a choice between "an Iranian bomb or the bombing of Iran." That's tough talk, coming from France, which had been the chief appeaser of Iran among the Western allies. But it is also the kind of talk that is consistent with French traditional foreign policy.

Far from a being a surrender monkey, France has been consistently interventionist in pursuing its own interests, in a military way in its former colonial empire in Africa where French troops are routinely at work, and in a very hardball diplomatic way in its relations with its European neighbours. There is no doubt in the European Union about who are the major players — France and Germany — and it is clear now that France is about to step up to the plate on the broader international scene as well. This time, however, it seems that Paris will play with the rest of the West, rather than against us.

# \$15,000 better spent

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Re: Councillors back 'support our troops' stickers on city vehicles, Sept. 13.

Shame on our Ottawa councillors who voted to spend \$15,000 of our hard-earned taxpayer dollars on such a petty, trivial and partisan item as decals on all city-owned vehicles, including buses, to play cheerleader for a federal defence policy.

The issue is not whether we support our soldiers in Afghanistan, but rather that municipal tax money should be spent on programs to solve local problems and provide good quality of life in our communities. The \$15,000 could have paid half the annual salary of an addiction counsellor; for 75 to 100 new books for our cash-strapped libraries or 750 meals for the homeless in our city.

It is time some of our well-paid councillors tried living in the real world.

Lise Eaman,

Ottawa

# We're not losing Afghan war: general; Intelligence chief says NATO success could bring early peace talks

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KABUL – Reports that NATO's International Security Assistance Force and the Canadian military are not faring well in their war against the Taliban are wrong, the Canadian officer who oversees military intelligence in Afghanistan says.

In fact, Brig.–Gen. Jim Ferron said, the battlefield successes of Canada and other NATO armies could spur peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

"I don't accept that NATO is on its back foot," Brig.–Gen. Ferron said yesterday in his first interview with a Canadian journalist since becoming NATO's chief of intelligence in Afghanistan eight months ago.

"If the statistics are properly analysed, we are on top of our game right now."

The Taliban are by no means subdued, Brig.–Gen. Ferron acknowledged. But, he insisted, "we are taking the conflict to the insurgents and forcing the issue."

Combat operations have successfully targeted the Taliban's middle and high leadership, the general, who is also Canada's director general of military intelligence, said.

"It is one of the catalysts that could bring negotiations between the government and moderates in the Taliban."

Canada's battle group in the southern province of Kandahar has played a significant role in creating circumstances that have caused the Taliban and Afghan President Hamid Karzai to broach the prospect of peace talks for the first time since the Taliban launched its insurgency campaign in 2001.

Brig.–Gen. Ferron said Canadian and other NATO forces must repeatedly fight to secure areas where they have fought and won previous battles because there are not enough troops to always hold ground.

"I do not only mean NATO. I mean the Afghan National Army and Afghan police, too. We want the Afghans to be first, but the Afghan forces are not yet mature in numbers or in their level of training. This is especially true of the police."

While responsible for gathering military intelligence inside Afghanistan, Brig.–Gen. Ferron said it was equally important for him and his multinational staff to keep a close watch on neighbouring countries when

We're not losing Afghan war: general; Intelligence chief says NATO success could bring early peace talks

advising battlefield commanders.

"You cannot just look at Afghanistan as if it is an island. This is a regional conflict and we cannot ignore the impact or the influence of the northern '-stans' (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and Iran and Pakistan," Brig.-Gen. Ferron said. "We are always concerned about the flow of weapons and armaments from Iran, although this should not be taken out of context. Weapons are being fed into Afghanistan from Iran, but we have no indication that the government of Iran is involved in this. Do weapons flow in from Pakistan? Of course they do. So do insurgents."

While unwilling to be drawn into the heated political debate in Canada about whether the Canadian battle group in the Afghan south should have its current mandate extended past the spring of 2009, Brig.-Gen. Ferron said: "We view Canadian support as vital and we understand that if we do not have that support, the mission cannot continue.

"What we are hoping for is an honest assessment by the media that is based on knowledge and not on rumours," he said. "Canadians must be realistic. We cannot be successful overnight. ... It is all about the Canadian people understanding what we are doing here."

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a government compound in southern Afghanistan yesterday, killing four police officers and four civilians and wounding seven. The attack took place in the Naadali district of Helmand province.