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Coalition says Taliban used children as human shields

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PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: D11
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: Associated Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 435

The U.S.-led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan yesterday, while NATO said it was investigating a shipment of weapons intercepted near the border with Iran this month.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol yesterday morning, the coalition said in a statement.

As a coalition aircraft prepared to bomb the site, "coalition forces as well as the aircraft identified several insurgents in one compound using children as human shields," it said. Ground forces and the aircraft withheld fire to avoid injuring the children. It was impossible to independently verify the coalition's allegations.

The troops fought Taliban trying to flee the compound, and more than a dozen suspected militants were killed, the coalition said. There were no reports of casualties to troops or civilians.

International forces have come under heavy criticism for causing civilian casualties during air strikes on suspected militant locations. President Hamid Karzai has pleaded with foreign troops to co-ordinate more closely with their Afghan counterparts to prevent villagers from being hurt, and the number of civilian casualties has dropped recently.

Also yesterday, a NATO spokesperson said the coalition was investigating a weapons shipment recently intercepted by troops in Farah province near the Iranian border.

"Although we know that it came from the geographic area of Iran, there is no definitive indication that it came from the Iranian government. We're still evaluating what is contained in that shipment," spokesperson Maj. Charles Anthony said.

A Washington Post report Sunday said the shipment seized Sept. 6 was being sent to the Taliban and included armour-piercing bombs similar to those that have been used in against foreign troops in Iraq. International troops intercepted two other shipments said to be from Iran earlier in the year.

NATO's top general in Afghanistan, Gen. Dan McNeill, has said there is no evidence linking the Iranian government to the shipments.

Last month, U.S. President George W. Bush accused Iran of playing a destabilizing role in Afghanistan. But Karzai has said Iran's role is helpful.

During a visit to Kabul last month, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said he has "serious doubts" that his country is supplying weapons to Taliban insurgents. He called Afghanistan a "brotherly country" whose stability is paramount for the region.

Meanwhile, about 2,500 Afghan and NATO troops launched a new military operation yesterday in Afghanistan's most violent southern province. The operation is in the Gereshk region of Helmand province, the site of the fiercest battles this year and the world's largest opium-producing region.

The NATO force said the troops would conduct "security and stabilization" operations in the upper Gereshk Valley, but provided no other details.

Canada risks credibility if it leaves Afghanistan: Bernier

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PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: MONTREAL
SOURCE: Record news services
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 87

Canada risks losing "all credibility" in the eyes of the world if it withdraws from the NATO mission in Afghanistan, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier said last night. Speaking at the opening of a conference looking at the country's involvement in Afghanistan, the rookie foreign minister said pulling out would amount to Canada going "back on its word" to the Afghan people and to its NATO allies.

When Parliament resumes next month, Afghanistan is expected to dominate discussion.

Dion wants Khadr's release from Guantanamo; Liberal leader suggests Canadian held by U.S. could be tried in Canada

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PUBLICATION: The Record (Kitchener, Cambridge And Waterloo)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Front
PAGE: A3
DATELINE: TORONTO
SOURCE: Canadian Press
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 460

Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said yesterday — and, failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada.

Dion met for more than an hour with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers yesterday at a downtown Toronto hotel, using the occasion of the Guantanamo Bay detainee's 21st birthday to repeat a call for his release.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said. "He needs to be in a civilian court in the United States. It's what we're asking for . . . and if it's not something that the U.S. authorities are willing to accept, then we will ask for the repatriation of this citizen."

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight at an alleged al-Qaida compound when he was 15. He has been held ever since at the notorious detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, at the southeastern end of Cuba.

Newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was travelling yesterday and unavailable for comment. Spokesperson Neil Hrab acknowledged Khadr faces "serious charges," but said it's too early to wade into the debate over where the trial should take place. "Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing," Hrab said.

Canada is the only western country which has yet to secure the release of its citizens from Guantanamo Bay, Dion said. Other nations, such as Denmark, France, Germany and Spain, have secured the release of their citizens, while the U.K. has gone as far as winning the release from Guantanamo of non-citizen permanent residents.

A military judge dismissed the case against Khadr in June, saying he had no legal jurisdiction to try him. But the U.S. administration wants Khadr to face a military tribunal immediately, despite the fact he hasn't been declared an "unlawful" enemy combatant as required by Congress.

Meanwhile, in Washington yesterday, a bid to give terror suspects like Khadr the right to challenge their detentions in a U.S. federal court failed in the Senate, although most legislators supported it. The 56–43 vote fell short of the 60 senators needed to cut off debate and proceed to a final vote on the measure for

Dion wants Khadr's release from Guantanamo; Liberal leader suggests Canadian held by U.S. could be tried

Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

Still, the narrow loss cheered American rights groups who said the tide could be turning on the issue, which will be taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court in the next few months.

Supporters said they'd try again to reverse the ban on the right of habeas corpus, designed to protect prisoners from being locked up indefinitely.

Pressure U.S. to try Khadr in civilian court; Failing that, Liberal leader wants terror suspect repatriated and tried in Canadian courts

IDNUMBER: 200709200102
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DATE: 2007.09.20
SECTION: News
PAGE: C4
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Times & Transcript (Moncton)
WORD COUNT: 371

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NATO troops in Afghanistan get renewed UN mandate

IDNUMBER 200709200040
PUBLICATION: Times Colonist (Victoria)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A12
COLUMN: World Briefing
DATELINE: UNITED NATIONS
SOURCE: Reuters
WORD COUNT: 87

UNITED NATIONS – The UN Security Council authorized NATO–led troops to stay in Afghanistan for another year yesterday and gave the Japanese government support in its domestic dispute over refuelling U.S. and other ships in the Indian Ocean.

The vote was 14–0, with Russia abstaining in the resolution that emphasized "the increased violent and terrorist activities by the Taliban, al–Qaeda, illegally armed groups and those involved in the narcotics trade."

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has close to 40,000 soldiers, including a Canadian contingent, in Afghanistan.

Prison has left Khadr like young boy, lawyer says; Canadian terror suspect turns 21, but is not a 'functional adult'

IDNUMBER 200709200155
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: G8
ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuters file / Police escort a detainee to his cell in the military prison at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 349

OTTAWA – Canadian terrorist suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba has stunted Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military in June to defend Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Kuebler said in an interview Wednesday.

"He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Kuebler is in Canada on a tour aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Khadr's release, from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

The military commission system, designed and approved by the U.S. Congress to deal with foreign terrorist suspects, is meant to convict people of crimes based on evidence that would not be admissible in a regular court of law, Kuebler argued.

"What we're talking about is statements obtained through interrogation methods that are coercive and, in some cases, arguably amount to torture," he said.

Moreover, Kuebler added, Khadr is being prosecuted and potentially could be sentenced to life in prison as an adult, even though he was a juvenile when his alleged crime was committed. Instead, Khadr should be treated as a child soldier who could be rehabilitated, the lawyer said.

Khadr is among about 375 people who have been detained at Guantanamo Bay as alleged al-Qaida and Taliban terrorists following the 2001 attacks by al-Qaida operatives in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Prison has left Khadr like young boy, lawyer says; Canadian terror suspect turns 21, but is not a functional adult

He is accused of killing an army medic in a battle between U.S. troops and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002. He was 15 at the time. The charges against Khadr were dismissed in a court proceeding but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision due soon.

Kuebler met Liberal Leader Stephane Dion earlier in the day in Toronto. Dion repeated last month's call for the Conservative government to demand Khadr's repatriation to Canada.

Kuebler persuaded the Canadian Bar Association last month to lobby for Khadr's release.

Afghanistan speech heckled

IDNUMBER 200709200024
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
COLUMN: Canada Digest
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=MONTREAL
SOURCE: The Edmonton Journal
WORD COUNT: 154

Maxime Bernier had a baptism of fire as Canada's new foreign minister on Wednesday as nearly a dozen angry protesters shouted him down as he tried to sell his government's military involvement in Afghanistan.

Bernier, however, rolled with the chaotic scene that unfolded before a dinner audience at an upscale downtown Montreal hotel ballroom, calling the interruptions "an expression of democracy."

The aim of the speech was to try to persuade fellow Quebecers to stay the course and "finish the job" in Afghanistan, even though opposition parties have called for a withdrawal of troops somewhere between now and February 2009.

Bernier eventually finished his job — but not before almost a dozen young men and women were removed from the dinner after rising individually to fire off a series of verbal volleys.

The minister said Canada cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate and that to do so would jeopardize gains in development and security that have been made on the ground.

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IDNUMBER 200709200019
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
COLUMN: Canada Digest
KEYWORDS: !@DATELINE=MONTREAL
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 156

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NATO, Afghan army launch anti-Taliban action

IDNUMBER 200709200011
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
COLUMN: World Digest
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; ORGANIZATIONS; DEFENCE; AFGHANISTAN;
GREATBRITAIN
DATELINE: KABUL
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 94

KABUL – NATO and Afghan forces launched what officials called a "major military operation" against the Taliban in the southern province of Helmand, a haven for opium poppy cultivation and an insurgent stronghold that is considered Afghanistan's most violent territory.

About 2,500 NATO and Afghan army troops under British command are participating in the operation, which aims "to target and clear Taliban" from the Upper Gereshk Valley and "provide an enduring security presence in the area," a NATO statement said.

A key objective of the operation is to help the local government exert its authority.

Release detainee, Dion says; Canadian shouldn't be tried in Gitmo

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig–Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.09.20

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: B1

SOURCE: CP

BYLINE: Steve Rennie

DATELINE: TORONTO

WORD COUNT: 537

Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said yesterday – and, failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada. Dion met for more than an hour with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers yesterday at a downtown Toronto hotel, using the occasion of the Guantanamo Bay detainee's 21st birthday to repeat a call for his release.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said.

"He needs to be in a civilian court in the United States. It's what we're asking for ... and if it's not something that the U.S. authorities are willing to accept, then we will ask for the repatriation of this citizen."

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A bid to give terror suspects like Khadr the right to challenge their detentions in a U.S. federal court failed yesterday in the Senate, although most legislators supported it.

The 56–43 vote fell short of the 60 senators needed to cut off debate and proceed to a final vote on the measure for Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

Newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was travelling yesterday and unavailable for comment. Spokesman Neil Hrab acknowledged Khadr faces "serious charges," but said it's too early to wade into the debate over where the trial should take place.

"Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing," Hrab said.

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"When you have the last Western citizen in Guantanamo and the government is not intervening, then the question comes into our minds: why other countries did and not Canada?" Dion said.

A military judge dismissed the case against Khadr in June, saying he had no legal jurisdiction to try him. But the U.S. administration wants Khadr to face a military tribunal immediately, despite the fact he hasn't been declared an "unlawful" enemy combatant as required by Congress.

One of Khadr's American military lawyers said if his client is to receive a "just result," it will be because of political pressure from Canada.

"What we're asking for is for a process to go forward, not a predetermined result, which is what people seem to want. And that's what Gitmo provides, and it's why it's such an unjust and unfair process," said Lt.-Cmdr. William Kuebler.

The Canadian government last publicly raised concerns about Khadr's transfer to Guantanamo shortly after his arrest in 2002, asking the U.S. government not to send him to the base. At the time, the Foreign Affairs department issued a news release underlining it was concerned about his age.

High-profile politicians, human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Khadr's lawyers have called on Canada to speak out on the treatment of Khadr.

Show of support hits the road; Trucker pays homage to soldiers with mural on tractor-trailer

PUBLICATION: Kingston Whig-Standard (ON)

DATE: 2007.09.20

SECTION: Local news

PAGE: 2

BYLINE: Luke Hendry

PHOTO: Luke Hendry/Osprey News Network Luke Hendry/Osprey NewsNetwork

DATELINE: CFB TRENTON

ILLUSTRATION: You might see trucker Larry Josie of Cobourg and his transport trailer, which is decked out in support of Canadian troops, passing through Kingston on Highway 401.; Airmen at CFB Trenton admire Larry Josie's mural-covered transport trailer.

WORD COUNT: 342

When Larry Josie wanted to create a moving message of support for Canadian soldiers, he meant it literally.

Now that message – a transport truck and trailer covered in troop-boosting artwork – travels from his home in Cobourg to Montreal and back nearly every day.

Josie and his travelling mural rolled into CFB Trenton for an hour-long public display this week.

From 1965 to 1968, Josie served in Canada's Royal Canadian Dragoons regiment. His grandfather served in the Second World War.

So in 2005, Canada's official Year of the Veteran, Josie commissioned an artist to paint his cab with messages and images related to the theme. There are large poppies and yellow ribbons, plus pictures of soldiers from the last century's three major wars. This year, Josie was thinking bigger. He hired Whitby artist Chris MacGregor to cover the right and left sides of his trailer, as well as its rear doors, in vinyl murals reflecting the modern Canadian Forces.

"I just thought it'd be cool," he said. "It was a big blank space, so why not?"

He said he gets the occasional honk of approval from other motorists on the road, though a few people have objected to what they perceive as his support of the Afghanistan war.

"It's not about that," Josie said. "People don't understand."

He said it's intended as a morale booster for people in the military, not a sign of approval for the war's politics.

Dozens of base staff and others walked around the trailer this week, murmuring their approval, touching the images, and gathering in front of it for group photos, many of them including Josie.

"You really are our hero," said Maj. Verna Wirth as she shook Josie's hand.

"It means a lot to everybody.

"Canadians stand behind Canadians and always have," she added.

Maj. Aaron Spott commands Trenton's 2 Air Movements Squadron, which has staff stationed around the world. Spott himself just returned from Sudan.

"It's very impressive," he said of the mural. "We always know the public supports you, but it's not so often you see a sign like this. "Any time someone went out of their way it means that much more," he said, adding he and fellow troops are "very appreciative" of public support.

Asked how he felt about such comments, Josie smiled.

"It's great. I'm very proud."

He said he spent about \$6,000 on the trailer art alone; by the time he adds finishing touches such as chrome wheels, he said, it could hit \$10,000.

He said he's also working on ordering small replicas of his trailer, and presented base staff with one.

Kids used as shields in battle with Taliban, coalition says

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle-Herald
DATE: 2007.09.20
SECTION: World
PAGE: A12
BYLINE: Rahim Faiez
WORD COUNT: 378

KABUL – The U.S.–led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan on Wednesday, while NATO said it was investigating a shipment of weapons intercepted near the border with Iran this month.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol Wednesday morning, the coalition said in a statement.

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Dion presses for trial for Khadr

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.20
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: Steve Rennie
WORD COUNT: 283

TORONTO – Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said Wednesday – and, failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada.

Dion met for more than an hour with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers Wednesday at a downtown Toronto hotel, using the occasion of the Guantanamo Bay detainee's 21st birthday to repeat a call for his release.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said.

"He needs to be in a civilian court in the United States. It's what we're asking for . . . and if it's not something that the U.S. authorities are willing to accept, then we will ask for the repatriation of this citizen."

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight at an alleged al–Qaida compound when he was 15. He has been held ever since at the notorious detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, at the southeastern end of Cuba.

Newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was travelling Wednesday and unavailable for comment. Spokesman Neil Hrab acknowledged Khadr faces "serious charges," but said it's too early to wade into the debate over where the trial should take place.

"Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing," Hrab said.

Canada is the only western country which has yet to secure the release of its citizens from Guantanamo Bay, Dion said.

Other nations, such as Denmark, France, Germany and Spain have secured the release of their citizens, while the United Kingdom has gone as far as winning the release from Guantanamo of non–citizen permanent residents.

Canadian man in U.S. jail should be given trial: Dion

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)
DATE: 2007.09.20
SECTION: Canada
PAGE: A9
BYLINE: THE CANADIAN PRESS
DATELINE: TORONTO
ILLUSTRATION: Dion
WORD COUNT: 164

Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said Wednesday – and, failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada.

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Bernier speech interrupted by antiwar activists

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.20

SECTION: National

PAGE: A8

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: Montreal

WORD COUNT: 89

A speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was interrupted several times Wednesday night when protesters shouted their opposition to Canada's military presence in Afghanistan.

Bernier was speaking about the mission in Afghanistan at a dinner organized by the Universite de Montreal. A series of activists rose at different intervals during Bernier's speech, drowning him out by shouting their denunciations.

Although he was forced to pause repeatedly, Bernier managed to finish his speech.

The demonstrators were escorted outside by security officials, and then became involved in a melee with police officers.

A handful of protesters were seen being led away in handcuffs.

U.S.-led coalition accuses Taliban of using children as human shields

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.20

SECTION: National/World

PAGE: A7

SOURCE: The Associated Press

DATELINE: Kabul

WORD COUNT: 306

The U.S.-led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan on Wednesday, while NATO said it was investigating a shipment of weapons intercepted near the border with Iran this month.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol Wednesday morning, the coalition said in a statement.

As a coalition aircraft prepared to bomb the site, "coalition forces as well as the aircraft identified several insurgents in one compound using children as human shields," it said. Ground forces and the aircraft withheld fire to avoid injuring the children. It was impossible to independently verify the coalition allegations.

The troops fought Taliban trying to flee the compound, and more than a dozen suspected militants were killed, the coalition said. There were no reports of casualties to troops or civilians.

International forces have come under heavy criticism for causing civilian casualties during air strikes on suspected militant locations. President Hamid Karzai has pleaded with foreign troops to co-ordinate more closely with their Afghan counterparts to prevent villagers from being hurt, and the number of civilian casualties has dropped recently.

Also Wednesday, a NATO spokesman said the coalition was investigating a weapons shipment recently intercepted by troops in Farah province near the Iranian border.

"Although we know that it came from the geographic area of Iran, there is no definitive indication that it came from the Iranian government. We're still evaluating what is contained in that shipment," spokesman Maj. Charles Anthony said.

A Washington Post report Sunday said the shipment seized Sept. 6 was being sent to the Taliban and included armour-piercing bombs similar to those that have been used in against foreign troops in Iraq. International troops intercepted two other shipments said to be from Iran earlier in the year.

Harper walking a dangerous tightrope

IDNUMBER 200709200055
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Viewpoints
PAGE: B6
SOURCE: Vancouver Sun
WORD COUNT: 406

Conventional wisdom suggests it is dangerous to read too much into byelections, but the three held Monday in Quebec may have a clear message for political leaders willing to listen.

Liberal leader Stephane Dion does not appear to be among them and his reaction to the byelection results on Tuesday morning suggests that under his leadership the Liberals may be in for a sound thumping in the next federal election.

That election may now be held sooner than anticipated as a result of the confidence-building Conservative victory in one traditional Bloc Quebecois stronghold and a strong showing in the second. The Liberals were the big losers, handing over their traditional bastion of Outremont to a New Democrat.

Not surprisingly, Dion was trying to make the best of a bad situation. Dion partly blamed the Outremont loss on the party's stance on the Afghanistan war. The Liberals support staying until Canada's military commitment ends in 2009, but the NDP is calling for an immediate withdrawal. Polls have repeatedly shown that support for the mission is lowest in Quebec.

But if Dion believes on any level that the byelection was somehow a referendum on Canadian participation in the war in Afghanistan, he is driving at full speed down a blind alley.

Unfortunately, Dion's failure to excite voters in his home province of Quebec, mirrored for different reasons by his failure in the rest of the country, may mean that Prime Minister Stephen Harper now feels emboldened to provoke an election with the Speech from the Throne to Parliament this fall.

Ironically, the same success that gives the Conservatives such hope may also hold them back. It is hard to imagine that Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe will be in any hurry to rush back to the polls in the wake of the collapse of support for his party.

The alliance between the BQ and the Tories will be enough to keep Harper in power, but it also poses a danger for the rest of the country. If Harper continues to perceive that the only road to a majority government runs through Quebec, we may well see the kind of pandering to that province at the expense of the rest of Canada that we have already seen too much of.

We hope Harper can take a longer view.

But, if not, he should know that while the West spawned the reform movement that first sent him to Ottawa, continuing support depends on his ability to continue to put the interests of the country ahead of his personal ambition.

– This editorial was originally published in the Vancouver Sun.

Demoted deputy tapped to head National Defence

IDNUMBER 200709200025
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: Kathryn May
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 589

A senior bureaucrat earlier sidelined by the Harper government has been appointed to become the civilian head of National Defence, the department many say has become too powerful under charismatic Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Rick Hillier.

The appointment of Robert Fonberg as the deputy minister of National Defence was part of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's latest shakeup of the top ranks of the public service. Mr. Fonberg replaces Ward Elcock, a longtime deputy minister and former head of CSIS, who becomes a special adviser to the Privy Council Office while awaiting another posting.

Some speculate Mr. Elcock would be an ideal candidate for the foreign intelligence agency the Conservatives promised in the 2006 election.

Mr. Fonberg's appointment stunned many senior officials who say his "in-your-face" management style will shake up National Defence, which many argue is largely being directed by Gen. Hillier, whose charisma and highly effective marketing campaign of the military is reshaping the Canadian forces and the mission in Afghanistan.

Mr. Fonberg, the former deputy minister at International Trade, was essentially demoted and sidelined to Treasury Board as a senior associate secretary in April 2006 after the Conservatives undid the painful and botched separation of of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Observers say his appointment is a "highly risky gamble" for the government and Mr. Fonberg personally. It is very unusual for a senior bureaucrat in the penalty box to be promoted to the top job in the government's most important portfolios without specific marching orders.

Some say he's being put in the job to "toe-the-line," and that the Afghan mission, like all other government priorities, will be managed by the Prime Minister's Office and officials at the Privy Council Office. But the more pervasive view is that Mr. Fonberg is being sent to rein in the power of the military and the popular Gen. Hillier.

One senior official said the Conservatives want a counterweight to Gen. Hillier to at least tone down the media coverage of the Afghanistan mission so it doesn't overshadow all other issues during the pre-election period.

Alan Williams, a former assistant deputy minister of procurement at Defence, said the department has historically run into problems when the power balance between the civilian and military sides of the department gets out of whack.

"There seems to be just one voice coming out of the military right now," he said. "It's critical for running that military and civilian balance that each understand their areas and accountabilities and each ensure they are being adhered to."

The deputy minister of defence is supposed to oversee the budget and policy, procurement and the management of the non-uniformed public servants working in the department. The chief of defence staff is in charge of the military and its operations and is supposed to execute the government's defence policy.

In other moves, the Harper government brought in Stephen Richardson, the director and chief executive officer of the Canadian Tax Foundation, to become the associate deputy minister of Finance in charge of tax policy.

Yesterday, the government also appointed Canada's first independent procurement ombudsman, a position created by the Federal Accountability Act. Shahid Minto, a career bureaucrat who spent 15 years as an assistant auditor-general overlooking contracting, was named to the post.

Other moves included:

- John Knubley, associate deputy minister at Natural Resources, becomes associate deputy minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.
- Diane Vincent, executive vice-president of Canadian International Development Agency, becomes vice-chairwoman of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal.
- John McBride, president of the Canadian Commercial Corp., becomes executive vice-president of CIDA.
- Myles Kirvan, assistant deputy minister at Justice, becomes associate deputy minister of Public Safety.

Hecklers shout down minister's pro-Afghan speech; Police oust protesters; Bernier touts mission

IDNUMBER 200709200019
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen
WORD COUNT: 407

MONTREAL – It was a baptism by fire for Canada's new foreign minister, Maxime Bernier, with almost a dozen angry protesters shouting him down as he tried to sell his government's military involvement in Afghanistan.

Mr. Bernier, however, rolled with the chaotic scene that unfolded in an upscale downtown hotel at a dinner at which he was the keynote speaker, calling the interruptions "an expression of democracy."

The aim of last night's speech was to try to persuade fellow Quebecers to stay the course and "finish the job" in Afghanistan, even though opposition parties have called for a withdrawal of troops between now and February 2009.

Mr. Bernier eventually finished his job — but not before almost a dozen men and women were removed from the dinner after rising individually to fire off a series of verbal volleys.

"Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena, simply go back on its word and abandon such a crucial mission," Mr. Bernier eventually told the international symposium of Afghanistan experts, academics and diplomats.

"I know that you are proud and responsible people, people of your word," the cabinet minister from Quebec's Beauce riding said in the English text of his first address on the issue that is expected to dominate his portfolio. "Quebecers finish the job they have started."

Mr. Bernier said Canada cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate and that to do so would jeopardize gains in development and security that have been made on the ground.

But it was a message he struggled to get across over the voices of almost a dozen university-age hecklers, at least some of whom had paid \$35 to get into the event. Several had to be forcibly removed by Montreal police — including one man who crossed the ballroom unhindered to stand across from the head table and shout at the minister.

Outside the hotel, a little more than a dozen demonstrators shouted insults at police. At least three men and one woman were handcuffed.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper promoted 44-year-old Mr. Bernier to foreign affairs last month in a cabinet

shuffle designed in large measure to help the government bolster its message about the Afghan mission among reluctant Quebecers.

Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment now forms the backbone of Canada's 2,500 soldiers stationed in Kandahar, and has suffered three fatalities since being deployed there last month.

Fearing a domino effect of NATO countries withdrawing, Afghan President Hamid Karzai has implored Canada to keep its soldiers in Afghanistan after its February 2009 commitment expires, warning his country would be plunged into anarchy if foreign troops leave.

Prison stunts Khadr mentally: lawyer; Canadian terror suspect turns 21 in Guantanamo Bay as advocate seeks allies

IDNUMBER 200709200018
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Citizen
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Early
SECTION: News
PAGE: A4
BYLINE: Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: The Ottawa Citizen; with files from McClatchy Newspapers
WORD COUNT: 531

Canadian terror suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay yesterday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba have stunted Mr. Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military last June to defend Mr. Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler said in an interview yesterday. "He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler is on a tour of Canada aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Mr. Khadr's release from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

The military commission system, designed and approved by the U.S. Congress to deal with foreign terror suspects, is meant to convict people of crimes using evidence that would not be admissible in a regular court of law, Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler argued.

"What we're talking about is statements obtained through interrogation methods that are coercive and, in some cases, arguably amount to torture," he said.

Moreover, Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler added, Mr. Khadr is being prosecuted and potentially sentenced to life in prison as an adult, even though he was a juvenile when his alleged crime was committed. Instead, Mr. Khadr should be treated as a child soldier who could be rehabilitated, he said.

Mr. Khadr is accused of killing an army medic in a battle between U.S. troops and al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002 when he was 15. The charges against him were dismissed in a court proceeding, but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision, which is due soon.

"I would say generally he understands what's happening, to the extent that any of us do," Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler said. "But it's very clear he doesn't have the same grasp as a normal 21-year-old man would."

Earlier in the day, Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler met Stéphane Dion in Toronto, where the Liberal leader repeated last month's call for the Conservative government to demand Mr. Khadr's repatriation to Canada.

"Canada is alone among western nations in not having secured the release from Guantanamo of one of its nationals," Mr. Dion said in a prepared statement.

Lt.-Cmdr. Kuebler, who persuaded the Canadian Bar Association last month to lobby for Mr. Khadr's release, said the young man's hopes lie in a political, rather than judicial, solution.

He acknowledged that Mr. Khadr's cause is unpopular in Canada because of his late father's alleged terrorist activities and controversial statements made by other members of his family, but enough is enough.

"Really, what you have is the U.S. government attempting to punish Omar for the alleged sins of his father and the Canadian government punishing him for the sins of his family."

In Washington yesterday, the U.S. Senate rejected legislation that would have given Guantanamo Bay detainees the right of habeas corpus and allowed them to petition federal courts claiming that they're being held in error. The Bush administration opposes the measure, which dates from before the Magna Carta of 1215 and serves as a check on arbitrary government power.

Fathers of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan commend Karzi for comments

DATE: 2007.09.19

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 125

TORONTO (CP) _ The fathers of two Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are lauding Afghan President Hamid Karzai for urging Canadians to stay in his country, despite controversy over the war.

Dr. Tim Goddard, whose daughter, Capt. Nichola Goddard, died in a Taliban ambush in the Panjwai district, says Karzai's message is something Canadians needed to hear.

Goddard told CTV's "Canada AM" the work Canadian soldiers are trying to do is important, and it's important to everybody in Afghanistan.

Jim Davis, whose son, Cpl. Paul Davis, died in the Kandahar area, says he too supports Karzai's decision.

Davis says ordinary Canadians need to know more about the Afghan mission.

He says to call the situation in Afghanistan a quagmire and then to say the Canadian public is asking for a change in the mission is unfair because Canadians can't make that decision without information. (CTV)

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.19
KEYWORDS: POLITICS JUSTICE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 81

MONTREAL _ A speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was interrupted several times Wednesday night when protesters shouted their opposition to Canada's military presence in Afghanistan.

Bernier was speaking about the mission in Afghanistan at a dinner organized by the Universite de Montreal.

A series of activists rose at different intervals during Bernier's speech, drowning him out by shouting their denunciations.

Though he was forced to pause repeatedly, Bernier managed to finish his speech.

The demonstrators were escorted outside by security officials, and then became involved in a melee with police officers.

A handful of protesters were seen being lead away in handcuffs.

U.S.–led coalition accuses Taliban of using children as human shields

DATE: 2007.09.19

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE SOCIAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 444

KABUL (AP) _ The U.S.–led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan on Wednesday, while NATO said it was investigating a shipment of weapons intercepted near the border with Iran this month.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine–guns, rocket–propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol Wednesday morning, the coalition said in a statement.

As a coalition aircraft prepared to bomb the site, ``coalition forces as well as the aircraft identified several insurgents in one compound using children as human shields," it said. Ground forces and the aircraft withheld fire to avoid injuring the children. It was impossible to independently verify the coalition allegations.

The troops fought Taliban trying to flee the compound, and more than a dozen suspected militants were killed, the coalition said. There were no reports of casualties to troops or civilians.

International forces have come under heavy criticism for causing civilian casualties during air strikes on suspected militant locations. President Hamid Karzai has pleaded with foreign troops to co–ordinate more closely with their Afghan counterparts to prevent villagers from being hurt, and the number of civilian casualties has dropped recently.

Also Wednesday, a NATO spokesman said the coalition was investigating a weapons shipment recently intercepted by troops in Farah province near the Iranian border.

``Although we know that it came from the geographic area of Iran, there is no definitive indication that it came from the Iranian government. We're still evaluating what is contained in that shipment," spokesman Maj. Charles Anthony said.

A Washington Post report Sunday said the shipment seized Sept. 6 was being sent to the Taliban and included armour–piercing bombs similar to those that have been used in against foreign troops in Iraq. International troops intercepted two other shipments said to be from Iran earlier in the year.

NATO's top general in Afghanistan, Gen. Dan McNeill, has said there is no evidence linking the Iranian government to the shipments.

Last month, U.S. President George W. Bush accused Iran of playing a destabilizing role in Afghanistan. But Karzai has said Iran's role is helpful.

During a visit to Kabul last month, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said he has ``serious doubts" that his country is supplying weapons to Taliban insurgents. He called Afghanistan a ``brotherly country" whose stability is paramount for the region.

Meanwhile, about 2,500 Afghan and NATO troops launched a new military operation Wednesday in Afghanistan's most violent southern province. The operation is in the Gereshk region of Helmand province, the site of the fiercest battles this year and the world's largest opium-producing region.

The NATO force said the troops would conduct "security and stabilization" operations in the upper Gereshk Valley, but provided no other details.

Suicide bomber wounds 8 police in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province

DATE: 2007.09.19

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE JUSTICE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 152

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) _ A suicide bomber on foot blew himself up next to a police vehicle Wednesday in southern Afghanistan, wounding eight policemen, an official said.

The attack in the Garmsir district of Helmand province left three of the wounded officers in critical condition, said provincial police chief Mohammad Hussein Andiwal.

Helmand has been the frontline of battles between international forces and the Taliban in recent months and has seen some of the deadliest fighting in the last two years. It is also the world's largest opium-producing area.

More than 4,300 people _ mostly militants _ have died in insurgency-related violence this year.

In central Wardak province, a joint operation between Afghan forces and their intelligence service left three militants dead, including a senior member of the militant group Hezb-i Islami, said a statement from the Defence Ministry. Three other insurgents were wounded and four were arrested in the operation in Nirkh district, it said.

Try Khadr in Canada if U.S. won't give him his day in court: Dion

DATE: 2007.09.19

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 135

TORONTO – Federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion is repeating his call for a Canadian man being held in a U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay to be tried in an American court and, failing that, a trial in Canada.

Dion met Wednesday with U.S. military lawyers representing Omar Khadr, 21, and later spoke at a hotel in downtown Toronto.

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight at an alleged al Qaida compound when he was 15.

A military judge dismissed the case against Khadr in June, saying he had no legal jurisdiction to try him.

But the U.S. administration wants Khadr to face a military tribunal immediately despite the fact he hasn't been declared an 'unlawful' enemy combatant as required by Congress.

High-profile politicians, human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Khadr's lawyers have called on Canada to speak out on the treatment of Khadr.

INDEX:Politics, International, Defence

DATE: 2007.09.19
KEYWORDS: POLITICS INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 90

The hour-long chat at the Pentagon will be the first time MacKay sits down with Gates in his new role.

He was shuffled into the portfolio last month after serving as foreign affairs minister.

Afghanistan is sure to be uppermost on the agenda.

In Amsterdam today, MacKay said NATO must do more to find partners for the Afghanistan mission.

He'll be lobbying NATO members to become more active in the dangerous southern part of Aghanistan at informal talks in the Netherlands next month.

After meeting with Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop at the military air base Soesterberg, MacKay said Canada and the Netherlands will co-ordinate decisions about the future of their missions.

INDEX:Politics, Justice

DATE: 2007.09.19
KEYWORDS: POLITICS JUSTICE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 81

MONTREAL – A speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was interrupted several times Wednesday night when protesters shouted their opposition to Canada's military presence in Afghanistan.

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A handful of protesters were seen being lead away in handcuffs.

Bernier drums up support; Canada's 'credibility' is at stake if Ottawa ends Afghan mission in 2009, foreign minister says

IDNUMBER: 200709200149
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA04
ILLUSTRATION: Maxime Bernier says Canada "cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate." SHAH MARAI AFP GETTY IMAGES An Afghan police officer walks his beat yesterday in Kabul. President Hamid Karzai says Afghanistan will descend into chaos if Canadian troops leave. Maxime Bernier says Canada "cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate." ;
BYLINE: Allan Woods
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 551

Canada risks losing "all credibility" in the eyes of the world if it withdraws from the NATO mission in Afghanistan, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier said last night.

Speaking at the opening of a conference looking at the country's involvement in Afghanistan, Bernier said pulling out would amount to Canada going "back on its word" to the Afghan people and to its NATO allies.

When Parliament resumes next month, Afghanistan is expected to dominate discussion.

The Conservative government has promised to let MPs vote before deciding to extend the combat mission and Bernier's speech last night was part of a public relations push to win support for continuing the fight against the Taliban in Kandahar province.

"Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena ... abandon such a crucial mission," he said in a speech. "We also cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate. To do so would jeopardize all the development work and security building that has been done on the ground."

Canada has about 2,500 troops in Afghanistan.

Speaking to Quebecers, whose interest has been heightened since the arrival in Kandahar of the francophone Vandoos, Bernier said "Quebecers finish the job they started" and the job in Afghanistan is not yet done.

The speech appears to be part of a two-pronged strategy that has the Conservative government trying to build support within Canada while also pressuring the international community to take some of the burden off Canada's shoulders.

In The Hague yesterday, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and his Dutch counterpart, Eimert van Middelkoop, said the NATO military alliance must do a better job of convincing other countries to move into southern Afghanistan. In the Netherlands, as in Canada, there is tremendous pressure on the government to pull its

Bernier drums up support; Canada's 'credibility' is at stake if Ottawa ends Afghan mission in 2009, foreign m

2,000 troops out of Uruzgan province once the country's mission mandate expires next year. In both cases, critics cite the high casualty rates and varied progress being made on the ground.

"NATO should do more to prevail on member states and partners to be active in southern Afghanistan," MacKay was quoted as saying in a statement by the Dutch defence ministry.

In an interview published yesterday, NATO head Jaap de Hoop Scheffer insisted that no country fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan would leave until the job is finished.

"There are 40 countries participating in the NATO mission in Afghanistan," he told the NCR Handelsblad newspaper. "And nobody can leave, nobody will leave. "

He was speaking specifically about the impending decision by the Dutch government concerning the future of its 2,000 troops in Afghanistan. But the same pressures apply to Canada.

When the alliance meets in Noordwijk, Netherlands next month, the Canadian and Dutch governments plan to redouble their efforts to have NATO countries offer to step into Kandahar and Uruzgan when their respective missions expire. But similar efforts over the past year by Canada, the U.S. and senior NATO officials have fallen flat. Just last week, the German government decided to keep its troops in the safer northern parts of Afghanistan despite calls for more help in the south.

"We are showing a lot of effort and have a great responsibility in the south of Afghanistan but within NATO the responsibility must be shared better, a Dutch news agency quoted Middelkoop as saying.

In a meeting about the future of the mission, Afghan President Hamid Karzai made a direct appeal to the Canadian public, saying that if Canada pulls out of Afghanistan in February 2009, his country will descend into chaos.

3 arrested after protesters act to sabotage speech

IDNUMBER 200709200116
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA04
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 143

A dozen protesters sabotaged a speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier in which he sought to justify Canada's continued presence in Afghanistan.

The protesters, who were seated at a dinner on the opening night of a conference looking at the future of the war-torn country, stood up one by one to interrupt Maxime Bernier as he delivered a keynote speech, his first since taking over the foreign affairs portfolio this summer.

Most of the protesters spoke out to condemnation of Canada's reasons for being in Afghanistan, the deaths of civilians in NATO bombing runs and corruption in the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Montreal police were called in and escorted six out of the downtown hotel. A number of them got into a shouting and shoving match with police on the street outside.

Three people were arrested.

Bernier appeared rattled by the disruption, but tried to brush it off.

"It's the expression of democracy," he told a crowd of academics, politicians and aid workers.

Allan Woods

Gitmo prisoners' court bid thwarted; Republican senators rebuff Democrats' effort to let Khadrr and others challenge indefinite detentions

IDNUMBER 200709200106
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: World And Comment
PAGE: AA02
BYLINE: Tim Harper
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 398

Republican senators have blocked an effort to allow terrorism suspects to challenge their detention in U.S. federal courts, ignoring Democratic pleas to return the country to its core values.

In an often emotional debate, Democrats yesterday fell four votes short of the 60 needed to continue debate on a measure which would have given basic legal rights to Canadian Omar Khadr and some 340 other detainees at Guantanamo Bay, many of whom have been held without charge for five years.

The razor-thin Democratic majority in the Senate was seeking to overturn the 2006 Military Commissions Act which established the military-run tribunal system which has so far been unable to prosecute any Guantanamo detainees.

Khadr was one of two detainees whose case was thrown out by the newly established tribunal earlier this summer, a decision being appealed by the Pentagon.

Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, a Democrat, told his colleagues that the enemies of the U.S. have scored a victory they could never have won on the battlefield, forcing this country to move further away from its core values and whittling away at its civil liberties. The 2006 bill was a mistake based on fear and was another "brazen" attempt by the Bush administration to consolidate its power, he said.

Leahy argued a policy denying detainees basic legal rights will make it much more difficult for the U.S. to demand fair treatment for its nationals captured in other countries.

Under the existing law, Leahy said, a mere accusation is enough to keep someone in custody indefinitely, even if the wrong person has been apprehended.

"All they want is the chance to say 'I'm not the person named here,'" said Leahy, who co-sponsored the bill with Pennsylvania Republican Arlen Specter. "This is America?"

Republicans countered by arguing that no country at war can essentially set up a system in which its combatants can sue their captors.

"These are dangerous, dangerous killers," said Arizona Republican John Kyl. "This is not some law school exercise . . . "

Human rights groups expressed disappointment at the 56–43 vote, but heartened that a majority of senators voted to overturn the law.

In Toronto, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion used the occasion of Khadr's 21st birthday to urge Ottawa to increase pressure on Washington to try him on U.S. soil or allow him to be tried in Canada.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said after meeting with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers, The Canadian Press reports.

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight at an alleged Al Qaeda compound when he was 15.

Images of misery and joy in Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200709200071
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Star
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Ont
SECTION: Entertainment
PAGE: E01
ILLUSTRATION: Ashley Hutcheson Toronto Star Lana Slezig at Image Works, where herAfghanistan photos are on display.Lana Slezig Photos Gulsuma, above, was 4 when she was sold into marriage. She was beaten and enslaved for 7 years until she escaped. Malalai, below, a Kandahar police officer, is pictured wearing a burqa and gripping her service revolver. ;
BYLINE: Vit Wagner
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 537

Canadian photojournalist Lana Slezig's book Forsaken includes nearly 60 images of Afghan women – some disturbing, others beautiful, almost all evocative in one way or another.

None, however, is more heartbreaking than the picture of Gulsuma, an 11-year-old girl who was sold into marriage at the age of 4 for the equivalent of \$60. In the photo, Gulsuma stands with her back to the camera, her exposed flesh covered in the many scars accumulated from repeated beatings endured at the hands of her in-laws.

Gulsuma's is not a particularly atypical story. Nor is it necessarily about life under the Taliban, compared with the Afghanistan of today.

"When the Taliban regime was ousted in 2001, we were all fed these huge media reports that Afghan women had been freed and liberated, the burqa had been thrown off, girls were back at school, women were back at work and this whole, heavy blanket of repression had been lifted," Slezig says. "That just isn't the case."

Not that she thinks Canada's Afghan mission is a wasted effort.

"I don't know that the military, whether it's Canadian, American or anyone else, is having any direct impact on the lives of Afghan women, per se," she explains. "But I do believe that if Afghanistan is going to become a peaceful and stable country, it has to be secure. That's absolutely the first priority.

"It's not secure at the moment. And that's why we're there. If we pull out or anyone else pulls out, it is just going to be a disaster. If we are interested in keeping that region of the world stable – or at least contributing to its stability – we have to be there."

It was the disparity between public perception and daily reality in the lives of Afghan women that drove Slezig's commitment to the project that eventually became her first book. Forsaken has been published in five countries, with more to come, its Canadian recent release accompanied by an exhibition of photographs running until Oct. 27 at Toronto Image Works Gallery (80 Spadina Ave.).

Slezig, a Port Credit-raised graduate of Loyalist College who cut her teeth as an intern at the Star, went to Afghanistan in March 2004 on assignment for Canadian Geographic. The parameters of the job involved

being embedded with Canadian troops and returning home after six weeks.

Slezic stayed for two years, living with a group of fellow foreigners and moving relatively freely through Afghan society.

She was able to do this largely thanks to her translator, Farzana Wahidy, a freelance photographer who, with Slezic's help, now has a scholarship to study at Loyalist College in Belleville.

"My experience was that Afghan women loved to be photographed. They are so feminine and so beautiful. The makeup and the jewellery, if they can afford it, is so exquisite. Once I got through the door, they often wouldn't let me go. They wanted to be photographed. The only times they didn't is when they felt they had to ask permission first."

Not all of the photos are sad or sorrowful. Some show women in moments of celebratory joy. And then there is the image of Malalai, a Kandahar police officer shrouded in a burqa, her extended, nail-polished fingers gripping a service revolver.

"She was my heroine," Slezic says. "She was one of the only women I met in Afghanistan who worked among men in a very traditional male role and commanded authority."

Guantanamo Bay stunting Khadr, lawyer

IDNUMBER 200709200048
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: National
PAGE: A16
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 353

OTTAWA — Canadian terrorist suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba has stunted Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military last June to defend Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Kuebler said in an interview Wednesday. "He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Kuebler is on a tour of Canada aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Khadr's release from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

The military commission system, designed and approved by the U.S. Congress to deal with foreign terrorist suspects, is meant to convict people of crimes based on evidence that would not be admissible in a regular court of law, Kuebler argued.

"What we're talking about is statements obtained through interrogation methods that are coercive and, in some cases, arguably amount to torture," he said.

Moreover, Kuebler added, Khadr is being prosecuted and potentially sentenced to life in prison as an adult, even though he was a juvenile when his alleged crime was committed. Instead, Khadr should be treated as a child soldier who could be rehabilitated, the lawyer said.

Khadr was among about 375 people who have been detained at Guantanamo Bay as alleged al-Qaida and Taliban terrorists following the 9-11 attacks by al-Qaida operatives in New York City and Washington, D.C.

He is accused of killing an army medic in a battle between U.S. troops and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002. He was 15 at the time.

The charges against Khadr were dismissed in a court proceeding but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision due soon.

"I would say generally he understands what's happening, to the extent that any of us do," Kuebler said of his client. "But it's very clear he doesn't have the same grasp as a normal 21-year-old man would."

Mideast tension requires Canada to rethink plans

IDNUMBER 200709200033
PUBLICATION: The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Forum
PAGE: A14
SOURCE: The StarPhoenix
WORD COUNT: 763

While the federal Liberals and New Democrats debate the merits of their respective Afghan policies -- whether it is nobler to surrender victims to their fate at quitting time, or give up immediately for fear of getting hurt -- the war that has Canadians preoccupied threatens to become a mere sideshow to a major conflagration.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay this week met with his Dutch counterpart to hammer out a strategy to convince NATO allies to take responsibility for doing some of the dangerous combat work in the southern region of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Afghan President Hamid Karzai arranged for an unprecedented meeting with Canadian journalists to spell out the horrors that would confront his country should Canada's military withdraw from Kandahar before the job of suppressing the Taliban and al-Qaida insurgents is complete.

"Afghanistan will fall back into anarchy," he said. "Anarchy will bring back safe havens to terrorists, among other things, and terrorists will then hurt you back there in Canada and the United States. Simple as that."

But there is increasing concern that Karzai's doomsday predictions might be the best-case scenario unless the world doesn't quickly address a growing crisis in the region.

Unlike the lead-up to the war in Iraq, which was presented as a likely strategy when President George Bush was running for office in 2000 -- well before the al-Qaida attacks of Sept. 11 -- a measure of the seriousness of the current crisis can be seen in the silence that has surrounded it.

Israel launched a series of attacks on Syria on Sept. 6. While preemptive attacks aren't rare in the Middle East, what's unusual is Israel's reluctance to talk about its reasons and Syria's even stranger reluctance to allow others to come in to see the damage.

This has left the media and some government officials to guess about the Israeli targets. Days before the attack, a North Korean ship was in Syria, leading to some speculation nuclear material may have been offloaded either for a direct attack on Israel or to help Iran, one of Syria's few friends, to advance its nuclear program.

There is also speculation the attack was meant to cut off a route being used to bring weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas. Another theory is that the raid was a signal to Iran that Israel has the wherewithal and willingness to shut down the Islamic country's dreams of nuclear hegemony and terror.

This notion was given credence after two detachable aircraft fuel tanks, thought to be from a Raam F15I, a new long-range bomber sold to Israel by the United States specifically to give it the capability to strike at Iran, were found in a field in Turkey near the Syrian border.

The raid also included a number of F-16s, Maverick missiles, 500-pound bombs and even a sophisticated electronic intelligence-gathering aircraft that flew high over the site to collect data.

Whatever reason the Israelis had for the raid, it has been the reaction of its enemies that have been most interesting. Syria complained to the UN Security Council but insisted the damage was minor and refused access.

China, meanwhile, shut down planned six-nation disarmament talks designed to establish a shutdown schedule for North Korea's nuclear program. Russia, too, has increased its presence in the region, announcing this summer its intention to reactivate a naval base it has sitting dormant in Syria.

And early this week, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner warned his allies that the world must prepare for war with Iran because of Iran's determination to become a nuclear power. Although Kouchner softened his rhetoric after being chastised by IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei, Iran responded to the heightened tension by threatening to strike American forces in Iraq and foreign forces in Afghanistan.

Iran has test fired, over the past number of months, cruise missiles and long-range missiles that could easily strike Israel or deep inside Europe, much less hitting Kandahar. It has also been caught supplying high-level weapons to insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan and to Hezbollah, which is replenishing supplies depleted during last-year's war with Israel.

Meanwhile, as recently as Wednesday, an unchastened Syria launched another attack against a Christian rival in Lebanon.

Unless the West is prepared to show a united front against the current dangers it is facing, the idea of a foolish retreat of Canadian forces from the Afghan front in February 2009 will soon seem quaint indeed.

Although generals typically lament that armies are prone to falling into the trap of fighting the last battle instead of the current one, Canadian politicians seem to be ignoring the winds of war blowing around their ears as they plan a retreat.

Taliban using kids as shields: NATO Coalition says forces spotted children ahead of airstrike

SOURCETAG 0709200591
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 47
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 239

The U.S.-led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan yesterday.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol yesterday morning, the coalition said in a statement.

As the coalition aircraft prepared to bomb the site, "coalition forces as well as the aircraft identified several insurgents in one compound using children as human shields," it said. Ground forces and the aircraft withheld fire to avoid injuring the children.

The troops fought Taliban trying to flee the compound, and more than a dozen suspected militants were killed, the coalition said. There were no reports of casualties to troops or civilians.

International forces have come under heavy criticism for causing civilian casualties during air strikes on suspected militant locations. President Hamid Karzai has pleaded with foreign troops to co-ordinate more closely with their Afghan counterparts to prevent villagers from being hurt, and the number of civilian casualties has dropped recently.

Meanwhile, about 2,500 Afghan and NATO troops launched a new military operation yesterday in the most violent southern province, Helmand, the site of the fiercest battles this year and the world's largest opium-producing region.

Also yesterday, a NATO spokesman said the coalition was investigating a weapons shipment intercepted Sept. 6 by troops in Farah province near the Iranian border.

"Although we know that it came from the geographic area of Iran, there is no definitive indication that it came from the Iranian government," spokesman Maj. Charles Anthony said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

TTC OKs pins to support troops Peace signs next?

SOURCETAG 0709200585
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 38
BYLINE: ZEN RURYK, CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF
WORD COUNT: 237

TTC drivers may soon have the option of wearing a peace sign -- as well as a yellow ribbon pin.

Transit commissioners yesterday decided -- without debate -- to allow their employees to sport pins to show support for Canada's troops. They also approved TTC chairman Adam Giambrone's call to direct transit officials to look into giving employees the opportunity to sport peace signs.

"The main issue --- and this has been clear whether it's in Calgary or Toronto --- is the notion that there are two issues. There is the support for the men and women in the Canadian armed forces and then there's the relatively large perception out there that some of the issues around the ribbons has also been a sign of support for actions in Afghanistan and Iraq," Giambrone said.

UNION TO FOOT \$6,000 BILL

"What this allows us to do is make sure employees feel comfortable expressing their support for one or the other. I suppose people could wear both."

Giambrone said in this case, he would interpret the wearing of a peace sign as a symbol of opposition to the conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The city councillor has said he supports Canada's soldiers, but not the action in Afghanistan.

Bob Kinnear, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), local 113 -- which represents transit drivers and maintenance workers -- said his union will pick up the \$6,000 tab for providing the yellow ribbon pins.

"Our union is not endorsing the Afghanistan mission," he said in a prepared statement. "Every ATU member has the right to his or her own opinion on that, as does every citizen." **KEYWORDS=TORONTO AND GTA**

Troops, war different

SOURCETAG 0709200299
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial/Opinion
PAGE: A13
BYLINE: MATT DUMAS, LONDON
COLUMN: Letters to the Editor
WORD COUNT: 129

In response to the yellow ribbons on city vehicles, I agree with Controller Bud Polhill. The yellow ribbons are meant as a sign of support for our troops, nothing more, nothing less.

I don't understand why some people think that if you are in favour of showing that you care about our soldiers and their families, you are automatically supporting Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.

It would be different if the ribbons said "Support our Troops and the War." Then I could understand the opposing argument, but it simply isn't the case.

I'm sure that some of the soldiers who are currently serving in the Armed Forces do not agree with the government's decision to enter Afghanistan, but it's their job to follow orders given by our government.

It is important to let everyone know that we as a city do support the individual soldiers. We need to keep in mind that the war is a completely separate issue.

Dion presses for Khadr trial The Canadian, who turned 21 yesterday, is languishing in prison at Guantanamo Bay.

SOURCETAG 0709200285
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A8
ILLUSTRATION: 1. photo of STEPHANE DION 2. photo of OMAR KHADR
BYLINE: STEVE RENNIE, CP
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 338

Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said yesterday — and failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada.

Dion met for more than an hour with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers yesterday at a downtown Toronto hotel, using the occasion of the Guantanamo Bay detainee's 21st birthday to repeat a call for his release.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said.

"He needs to be in a civilian court in the United States. It's what we're asking for . . . and if it's not something that the U.S. authorities are willing to accept, then we will ask for the repatriation of this citizen."

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight at an alleged al Qaida compound when he was 15. He has been held since at the notorious detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, at the southeastern end of Cuba.

Newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was travelling yesterday and unavailable for comment. Spokesperson Neil Hrab acknowledged Khadr faces "serious charges," but said it's too early to wade into the debate over where the trial should take place.

"Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing."

Canada is the only western country that has yet to secure the release of its citizens from Guantanamo Bay, Dion said. Other nations such as Denmark, France, Germany and Spain have secured the release of their citizens, while the United Kingdom has gone as far as winning the release from Guantanamo of non-citizen permanent residents.

"When you have the last western citizen in Guantanamo and the government is not intervening, then the question comes into our minds: why other countries did and not Canada?" Dion said.

A military judge dismissed the case against Khadr in June, saying he had no legal jurisdiction to try him. But the U.S. administration wants Khadr to face a military tribunal, despite the fact he hasn't been declared an

Dion presses for Khadr trial The Canadian, who turned 21 yesterday, is languishing in prison at Guantanamo Bay

"unlawful" enemy combatant as required by Congress. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Afghan president's message rings true with soldiers' dads

SOURCETAG 0709200278
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 98

The fathers of two Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan are lauding Afghan President Hamid Karzai for urging Canadians to stay in his country, despite controversy over the war.

Tim Goddard, whose daughter, Capt. Nichola Goddard, died in a Taliban ambush in the Panjwai district, says Canadians needed to hear Karzai's message.

Goddard told CTV's Canada AM the work Canadian soldiers are trying to do is important and it's important to everybody in Afghanistan.

Jim Davis, whose son, Cpl. Paul Davis, died in the Kandahar area, says he also supports Karzai's decision.

Davis says ordinary Canadians need to know more about the Afghan mission.

He says to call the situation a quagmire and then say the Canadian public is asking for a change in the mission is unfair because Canadians can't make that decision without information.

Germany extends Afghan stay

SOURCETAG 0709200277
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: BERLIN
WORD COUNT: 85

The German government has approved a one-year extension of its peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan.

The decision will still need parliament's approval.

Germany has nearly 3,000 troops serving in NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, largely in the relatively peaceful north.

The decision to extend the mandate comes with polls showing growing skepticism among the German public.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council voted late yesterday to extend the authorization of the NATO-led force in Afghanistan for another year. The NATO-led alliance has raised its troop level to almost 40,000 in the face of an emboldened Taliban insurgency. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Coalition accuses Taliban of using children as shields

SOURCETAG: 0709200275

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.09.20

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A5

ILLUSTRATION: photo by AP HOLY READING An Afghan boy reads the holy Quran in a "madrasa" or Islamic school in Kabul yesterday.

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: KABUL

WORD COUNT: 239

The U.S.-led coalition accused the Taliban of using children as human shields during a battle in southern Afghanistan yesterday, while NATO said it was investigating a shipment of weapons intercepted near the border with Iran this month.

The fighting in Uruzgan province began when more than 20 insurgents armed with machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol, yesterday morning the coalition said in a statement.

As a coalition aircraft prepared to bomb the site, "coalition forces as well as the aircraft identified several insurgents in one compound using children as human shields," it said.

Ground forces and the aircraft withheld fire to avoid injuring the children. It was impossible to independently verify the coalition allegations.

The troops fought Taliban trying to flee the compound, and more than a dozen suspected militants were killed, the coalition said. There were no reports of casualties to troops or civilians.

International forces have come under heavy criticism for causing civilian casualties during air strikes on suspected militant locations. President Hamid Karzai has pleaded with foreign troops to co-ordinate more closely with their Afghan counterparts to prevent villagers from being hurt and the number of civilian casualties has dropped.

A NATO spokesperson said yesterday the coalition was investigating a weapons shipment recently intercepted by troops in Farah province near the Iranian border.

"Although we know that it came from the geographic area of Iran, there is no definitive indication that it came from the Iranian government. We're still evaluating what is contained in that shipment," spokesperson Maj. Charles Anthony said. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Taliban accused of using children as shields

SOURCETAG 0709200483
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 46
BYLINE: AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 240

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Dion calls for release of Guantanamo detainee

SOURCETAG 0709200879
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 23
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: TORONTO
WORD COUNT: 187

Ottawa should step up its efforts to pressure Washington to try a Canadian man languishing in a U.S. military prison on American soil, federal Liberal Leader Stephane Dion said yesterday -- and, failing that, Omar Khadr should be tried in Canada.

Dion met for more than an hour with two of Khadr's U.S. military lawyers yesterday at a downtown Toronto hotel, using the occasion of the Guantanamo Bay detainee's 21st birthday to repeat a call for his release.

"We cannot accept that this Canadian citizen will be prosecuted in Guantanamo," Dion said.

"He needs to be in a civilian court in the United States. It's what we're asking for . . . and if it's not something that the U.S. authorities are willing to accept, then we will ask for the repatriation of this citizen."

Khadr is accused of murdering a U.S. officer in Afghanistan in a 2002 firefight when he was 15. He has been held ever since at the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier was travelling yesterday and unavailable for comment. Spokesman Neil Hrab acknowledged Khadr faces "serious charges," but said it's too early to wade into the debate over where the trial should take place. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

THE AFGHAN MISSION: A SHAKY COALITION

Opening the floodgates to an exodus? Countries whose troops are battling and dying in the war-ravaged south are feeling pressure to withdraw, threatening NATO's mission

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072630260

DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A17 (MAP)

BYLINE: PAUL KORING

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 1096

WORD COUNT: 1121

PAUL KORING It's not just Canadians scanning the exits looking for an out from Afghanistan.

In other countries where troops are fighting and dying – notably the Netherlands – the public is embroiled in divisive national debate that echoes Canada's over whether to withdraw from the bloody counterinsurgency against a resurgent Taliban.

Getting out or perhaps even better – swapping the bloody killing fields of southern Afghanistan for a quieter patch in the north where a nation can still proudly claim it is standing shoulder to shoulder with its allies – is fast becoming a recurring theme.

If the Dutch, whose soldiers are battling to hold Uruzgan province, adjacent to Kandahar where Canada's battle group is deployed, leave when their current commitment ends next August, they could open the floodgates to a bigger exodus.

Australia, whose troops are deployed alongside the Dutch, has warned it will pull out if the Dutch go. The Harper government says it won't extend Canada's commitment without the consensus of all political parties.

The entire NATO effort in Afghanistan – once billed as proof that the Atlantic Alliance is relevant in the 21st century and not just a Cold War relic – will seem a chimera if both Canada and the Netherlands bail out at the end of their current commitments.

"It will be a mark of shame on all of us if an alliance built on the foundation of democratic values were to falter at the very moment that it tries to lay that foundation for democracy elsewhere – especially in a mission that is crucial to our own security," U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates said this week.

The urgency of begging those bearing the burden to stay and warning of even greater bloodshed if they leave – as Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai did this week – is matched by increasingly shrill and mostly ignored pleas from top alliance generals for member governments to match their rhetoric with boots on the ground.

A senior officer at NATO headquarters, closely familiar with the failed efforts to get major alliance nations – notably Germany, Spain, Italy and France – to contribute more, voiced what is now a widespread frustration. "The political declarations are robust.

But when you count up the number of boots and helicopters, there's a glaring absence," he said, speaking on condition that he not be identified by name or nationality.

Getting the Germans, Spanish, Italians and French to lift the caveats that preclude their troops being usefully deployed to where the fighting is remains the most vexing of NATO's problems.

"Many allies are reluctant to provide the necessary resources and put their men and women in the line of fire," Mr. Gates said.

Britain and the United States have significantly increased the number of soldiers they have sent to the war-torn south as it became evident that a raging insurgency was under way. Washington has also increased the duration of its combat tours to 15 months, compared with deployments of six months for Canadian soldiers. Britain has sent an extra 2,000 troops to Helmand province, adjacent to Kandahar.

Yesterday, Poland extended its commitment for a year to the fall of 2008.

Meanwhile, public support for waging war in Afghanistan is weakening across much of Western Europe and in Canada.

Solid majorities in other major European countries believe the war in Afghanistan has been "a failure," making it all but impossible for their governments to shift troops into combat zones to relieve the Canadians or the Dutch. More than 60 per cent of German, Italian, British and French respondents – as well as about half of Canadians polled by Angus Reid last month – believe the military effort in Afghanistan has been a failure so far.

"We are going to lose some" European contingents, the senior NATO officer predicted glumly.

Italy, with 2,500 soldiers in the northwestern corner of Afghanistan, far from the fighting but in a critical zone adjacent to Iran and headquartered in the city of Herat, is also wavering.

If the Dutch quit, it will leave an even bigger hole than if the Canadians pull out. Like Canada, the Netherlands has deployed a combat-capable battle group but it has also sent warplanes and helicopters to southern Afghanistan.

Replacing ground troops would be difficult if the Canadians and the Dutch pull out; replacing the Dutch Chinook helicopters and F-16 fighter-bombers would be even harder, the senior NATO officer said.

In Holland, as in Canada, major political parties are positioning themselves as mainstream public opinion shifts on the Afghanistan mission.

"People are feeling deceived by the government," said Marico Peters, defence spokesman for the opposition GreenLeft party in Holland.

"What they initially thought of as a reconstruction mission is in fact a fighting mission," he told Dutch radio.

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who is Dutch, doubts his countrymen will pull out. "I honestly cannot imagine that the Netherlands would pull out single-handedly," he said yesterday.

But a frantic effort is under way to persuade other medium-sized NATO nations – perhaps Norway – to either take the lead in Uruzgan or send sufficient troops to relieve the pressure on the Dutch.

What seems far less likely is convincing Germany, Italy or Spain that it's their turn to have their soldiers in the front lines in the south. For instance, while top German officials have been urging Canada to remain in Afghanistan, Chancellor Angela Merkel has ruled out any fighting role for German soldiers.

Even German Tornado aircraft are limited solely to reconnaissance and are not allowed to drop bombs.

"Not all the allies, and some major allies included, want to go to the places where the fighting is – although they also suffer from improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks," Mr. de Hoop Scheffer said.

International effort The coalition of nations supporting the war in Afghanistan is broad, with 48,000 troops from 37 countries taking part. But it's not deep, because only the United States, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia are engaged in heavy fighting.

Country Troops U.S. 23,000 Britain 7,500 Germany 3,000 Canada 2,500 Italy 2,500 Netherlands 1,300 Turkey 1,200 Poland 1,050 France 800 Australia 700 Spain 650 Norway 500 Romania 500 Bulgaria 400 Denmark 400 Belgium 295 Sweden 260 Czech Republic 220 Hungary 180 Croatia 175 New Zealand 150 Portugal 150 Greece 145 Lithuania 130 Macedonia 120 Estonia 110 Finland 70 Slovakia 60 Slovenia 50 Latvia 35 Albania 30 Azerbaijan 20 Luxembourg 10 Iceland 9 Ireland 5 Switzerland 2 Austria 2

SOURCE: ISAF |ADDED SEARCH TERMS: |GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Netherlands |SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; strife; defence; statistics; table |ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Taliban

THE AFGHAN MISSION: ARE NATO COUNTRIES DOING ENOUGH? MacKay twists arms on troop strength Defence Minister hits the road to drum up support among allies

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072630259

DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 645

WORD COUNT: 620

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Defence Minister Peter MacKay dived into the thick of NATO's looming crisis over troop strength in Afghanistan yesterday, with a rapid tour of Canada's allies in the Netherlands, Britain and Norway, culminating in a meeting today with U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates in Washington.

The unannounced trip is the first by Mr. MacKay since he took on the Defence portfolio last month, as a new opinion poll showed two-thirds of Canadians are opposed to an extension of the country's combat mission in Kandahar beyond February, 2009.

With politicians in the Netherlands also mulling an end to that country's mission as soon as next summer, Mr. MacKay joined his Dutch counterpart yesterday in calling on their NATO allies to better share the burden in fighting the Taliban by sending more troops.

Both Mr. MacKay and Dutch Defence Minister Eimert van Middelkoop made it clear they think their partners are not all playing their part.

(The military alliance comprises in the 26 countries. Another 11 non-NATO nations are also contributing troops.) "We expect countries to play a larger role militarily and a larger role in the cause and the overall effort to stabilize and rebuild and reconstruct parts of the country," Mr. MacKay told journalists in Amsterdam, particularly in the south where "the Netherlands and Canada and a handful of other countries are carrying the majority of the load." Mr. van Middelkoop agreed. "We are showing a lot of effort and have a great responsibility in the south of Afghanistan. But within NATO, the responsibility must be shared better." He added, "There is great agreement between the Netherlands and Canada." The Dutch cabinet is expected to decide by early October whether to extend the mission in Uruzgan province, which is now due to end in August, 2008.

There are 1,300 Dutch troops involved. Australia, which is sharing the burden in Uruzgan, says it will pull out if the Dutch go home, although a complete withdrawal is unlikely.

Mr. MacKay travelled from Amsterdam to Oslo, and then to London, where he met British Defence Minister Des Browne, another key ally in southern Afghanistan.

Norway is being pressed to move some of its 500 troops, currently in the safer northern part of the country, to help out in the south – but the issue is politically divisive there as well.

An aide to the minister called the trip to European capitals a familiarization visit after Mr. MacKay's appointment to the Defence job in the Aug. 14 cabinet shuffle. "NATO, Afghanistan and NORAD will be the three major items" on the agenda of today's Pentagon meeting, the spokesman said.

In an interview with a Dutch newspaper, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer weighed in on the prospect of a Netherlands pullout, arguing that "nobody can leave" Afghanistan.

"I can't imagine the Netherlands by themselves will leave Afghanistan," the former Dutch foreign minister said in the interview.

Canada and the Netherlands are expected to press the issue at an informal meeting of NATO ministers in the Dutch town of Noordwijk on Oct 25.

Last week, Germany, one of almost 40 countries in the 40,000-strong International Security Assistance Force, said it had no plans to change its Afghan mandate, which confines its soldiers to the more stable north.

According to an Ipsos Reid poll, 68 per cent of Canadians questioned in an online survey said that they do not believe the Afghan mission should continue beyond its current end date of February, 2009. That compares with 63 per cent in July.

In addition, 56 per cent of those surveyed believe Canadian troops should leave early, including 64 per cent of Quebecers.

Sixty-seven per cent of those surveyed across the country believe that Canada is shouldering too much of the burden in the NATO mission, according to the poll.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan; Netherlands

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; strife; defence; visits; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Peter MacKay

ORGANIZATION NAME: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

THE AFGHAN MISSION BRITISH-LED OFFENSIVE

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PAGE: A17

BYLINE:

SECTION: International News

SOURCE: REUT AP

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 278

WORD COUNT: 258

Reuters, AP British-led forces launched a major operation in southern Afghanistan yesterday, aiming to clear Taliban insurgents from a valley in violence-racked Helmand province.

Some 2,500 troops from the NATO-led force began the operation with infantry backed by Warrior armoured vehicles, guided rocket systems, attack helicopters and fighter jets.

"The purpose of the operation is to continue to remove the Taliban from the area north of Gereshk, to set the conditions whereby the people who live there can start to enjoy security and the government . . . can begin to apply governance and development," Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Eaton said.

The operation is under British command and most of the troops are British, but the force also includes Afghan soldiers and contingents from the Czech Republic, Estonia and the United States.

"This is an operation that has been several weeks, several months in the planning," U.S. Major Charles Anthony said.

Helmand has been Afghanistan's most violent region recently, with daily clashes between Taliban insurgents, who control large parts of the province.

British troops are attempting to steadily extend Afghan government control of towns and villages along the Helmand River valley – a lush fertile strip of land flanked by desert known as the green zone. Most of the world's heroin is grown in the valley.

Meanwhile in a battle in Uruzgan province, Taliban fighters carrying machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades used children as human shields during a battle forcing U.S.-led coalition soldiers to hold their fire for a time, the coalition said yesterday.

The clash began when more than 20 insurgents attacked a joint Afghan and coalition patrol, the coalition said in a statement.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Great Britain

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Taliban

FEDERAL POLITICS Dion takes up Khadr's cause Critics question decision to defend rights of 'gentleman' held at Guantanamo

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072630186

DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A1

BYLINE: CAMPBELL CLARK AND COLIN FREEZE

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: OTTAWA, TORONTO

WORDS: 922

WORD COUNT: 827

CAMPBELL CLARK AND COLIN FREEZE With reports from Daniel Leblanc and Brian Laghi in Ottawa OTTAWA, TORONTO Stephane Dion took the politically risky move of championing the rights of terrorism suspect Omar Khadr in a personal meeting with the young Canadian's lawyers yesterday, as he soldiered on after a blow in Quebec by-elections.

Conservatives, who have already charged that Mr. Dion is soft on terrorism, immediately questioned the Liberal Leader's judgment for standing beside Mr. Khadr's U.S. military lawyers and calling for Canada to demand that the United States try the detainee in a civilian court.

In a week in which Mr. Dion's leadership and Liberal fortunes were hit by a weak performance in three Quebec by-elections, including the loss of the party's Outremont bastion, the Opposition Leader has stuck to his agenda of daily public events instead of licking his wounds in private.

And at the same time, several Liberal MPs and strategists close to Mr. Dion insisted that despite the blow, the party cannot support Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Throne Speech next month, even if it means a general election.

But Mr. Dion's decision to personally wade into the case of Mr.

Khadr is likely to be used by the Conservatives against him. The Liberal Leader insisted that the politics cannot come first.

"We're talking about a gentleman that was 15 years old," Mr. Dion told reporters after the meeting with the lawyers, referring to Mr. Khadr's age at the time of his arrest. "It's not a matter of polls, it's not a matter of public opinion, it's a matter of rights." Asked why he would walk into a political minefield, Mr. Dion said: "I'm the leader of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party is the party of the Charter of Rights. I have a job to do as a leader." The Conservatives blasted Mr. Dion in February when he used similar arguments as the Liberals torpedoed two controversial special-powers provisions in Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act, a law passed by a Liberal government.

Yesterday, Conservative MP Art Hanger, chairman of the Commons justice committee, said Mr. Dion's appearance with Mr. Khadr's lawyers indicates that he has failed to grasp the threat of terrorism.

"He struggles with a lot of things when it comes to setting priorities, and I see this as another aspect where he just doesn't have it together.

I don't know who is advising him, but I think his priorities are all messed up," he said.

Mr. Khadr, who turned 21 yesterday, was captured by U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2002 while fighting on the al-Qaeda front lines as a 15-year-old youth at the behest of his father, Ahmed Said Khadr, reportedly a key associate of Osama bin Laden.

The younger Khadr has been detained in the controversial U.S.

detention centre in Guantanamo Bay since then, but has yet to face trial as the U.S. legal case against him has repeatedly stalled.

The Pentagon is appealing a military judge's decision this summer to dismiss all charges against him, and his lawyers say they are certain the charges will be revived.

"Omar's best hope will come from Canadian intervention to protect his rights," Lieutenant-Commander William Kuebler said.

Mr. Dion said Ottawa should lobby Washington to ensure Mr. Khadr is tried in a civilian U.S. court, or, failing that, one in Canada.

"The Prime Minister himself must demand that Omar Khadr be removed from Guantanamo Bay detention facility to be transferred to the United States to be tried in a legitimate court," Mr. Dion said.

A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, Neil Hrab, said in an e-mail that Mr. Khadr faces serious charges and that Mr. Dion's demand for Canada to intervene was premature while the Pentagon is appealing his release.

The case of Mr. Khadr, accused of "murdering" a U.S. soldier in combat, has not sparked much public sympathy – and interventions for his family have embarrassed a Liberal leader before.

Then-prime minister Jean Chretien intervened with Pakistan's prime minister during a 1996 trade mission to press for due process for Mr. Khadr's father. The elder Khadr was released soon after, and later listed by the UN as a key Osama bin Laden associate and killed as an al-Qaeda suspect in Pakistan.

Mr. Dion's move to advocate for Mr. Khadr's rights comes as MPs from his own party insist that the party cannot act gun-shy in the wake of this week's by-election defeats.

The Liberal Leader has faced criticism and many MPs believe their party has been weakened – and that could tempt Mr. Harper to engineer his own defeat via the Throne Speech, triggering an election.

All three opposition parties have threatened to vote against the government by setting strict conditions for their support – which could leave Mr. Dion to decide between backing down or going into an unwanted vote.

Yesterday, one senior Dion strategist said it is still extremely unlikely the Liberals could vote for the Tory agenda. And several MPs said that caving in on what the party has described as crucial matters of principle on issues such as Afghanistan and the environment in order to avoid an election will only cause more damage with voters.

"Come on – we can't do it," Montreal Liberal MP Massimo Pacetti said. "It's based on principle, not politics.

We are the Official Opposition and we have to act accordingly."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; United States; Guantanamo Bay

SUBJECT TERM:prisoners of war; terrorism; suspects; canadians; human rights; civil rights; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Stephane Dion; Omar Khadr

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberal Party

Canadian's lawyer says suspect 'stunted' by Guantanamo; At 21, Omar Khadr 'functions as a boy of 13 or 14'

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KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 390

OTTAWA — Canadian terrorist suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba has stunted Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military last June to defend Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Kuebler said in an interview Wednesday. "He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Kuebler is on a tour of Canada aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Khadr's release from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

The military commission system, designed and approved by the U.S. Congress to deal with foreign terrorist suspects, is meant to convict people of crimes based on evidence that would not be admissible in a regular court of law, Kuebler argued.

"What we're talking about is statements obtained through interrogation methods that are coercive and, in some cases, arguably amount to torture," he said.

Moreover, Kuebler added, Khadr is being prosecuted and potentially sentenced to life in prison as an adult, even though he was a juvenile when his alleged crime was committed. Instead, Khadr should be treated as a child soldier who could be rehabilitated, the lawyer said.

Khadr was among about 375 people who have been detained at Guantanamo Bay as alleged al-Qaida and Taliban terrorists following the 9/11 attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.

He is accused of killing an army medic in a battle between U.S. troops and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002. He was 15 at the time.

The charges against Khadr were dismissed in a court proceeding but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision due soon.

"I would say generally he understands what's happening, to the extent that any of us do," Kuebler said of his client. "But it's very clear he doesn't have the same grasp as a normal 21-year-old man would."

Kuebler met Liberal leader Stephane Dion earlier in the day in Toronto. Dion repeated last month's call for the Conservative government to demand Khadr's repatriation to Canada.

"Canada is alone among western nations in not having secured the release from Guantanamo of one of its nationals," Dion said in a prepared statement.

Afghan mission PR heats up

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SECTION: Canada/World
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ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Fred Chartrand, the Canadian Press /;
DATELINE: MONTREAL
SOURCE: Toronto Star
COPYRIGHT: © 2007 Torstar Corporation
WORD COUNT: 305

Canada risks losing "all credibility" in the eyes of the world if it withdraws from the NATO mission in Afghanistan, Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier said last night.

Speaking at the opening of a conference looking at the country's involvement in Afghanistan, the rookie foreign minister, left, said pulling out would amount to Canada going "back on its word" to the Afghan people and to its NATO allies.

When Parliament resumes next month, Afghanistan is expected to dominate discussion. The government has promised to let MPs vote before deciding to extend the combat mission in Kandahar, and Bernier's speech last night was part of a public relations push to win support for continuing the fight against the Taliban.

"Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena ... abandon such a crucial mission," he said. "We also cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate. To do so would jeopardize all the development work and security building that has been done on the ground."

Canada has about 2,500 troops in Afghanistan.

The speech appears to be part of a two-pronged strategy that has the Conservative government trying to build support within Canada while also pressuring the international community to take some of the burden off of Canada's shoulders.

In The Hague yesterday, Defence Minister Peter MacKay and his Dutch counterpart, Eimert van Middelkoop, said the NATO military alliance must do a better job of convincing other countries to move into southern Afghanistan. In the Netherlands, as in Canada, there is tremendous pressure on the government to pull its 2,000 troops out of Uruzgan province once the country's mission mandate expires next year. In both cases, critics cite the high casualty rates and varied progress being made on the ground.

"NATO should do more to prevail on member states and partners to be active in southern Afghanistan," MacKay was quoted as saying.

Khadr functions like boy, 13, terror suspect's lawyer says

PUBLICATION: WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A11

SECTION: Canada Wire

WORD COUNT: 486

CNS Juliet O'Neill OTTAWA — Canadian terrorist suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

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military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law." Kuebler met Liberal leader Stephane Dion earlier in the day in Toronto. Dion repeated last month's call for the Conservative government to demand Khadr's repatriation to Canada.

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troops and al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002.

He was 15 at the time.

The charges against Khadr were dismissed in a court proceeding but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision due soon.

"I would say generally he understands what's happening, to the extent that any of us do," Kuebler said of his client. "But it's very clear he doesn't have the same grasp as a normal 21-year-old man would." Kuebler, who persuaded the Canadian Bar Association last month to lobby for Khadr's release, said the young man's hopes lie in a political, rather than judicial, solution.

He acknowledged that Khadr's cause is unpopular in Canada because of his late father's alleged terrorist activities and controversial statements made by other members of his family. But enough is enough, Kuebler said.

"Really, what you have is the U.S. government attempting to punish Omar for the alleged sins of his father and the Canadian government punishing him for the sins of his family." -- CanWest News Service

EDITORIAL – Karzai's reminder

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DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A14

SECTION: Editorial Leaders

WORD COUNT: 422

Editorial Staff Sometime within the next year, Canadians will have to make a decision about what they will do in Afghanistan. Canada's commitment to a combat role in southern Afghanistan expires in February of 2009, and armies don't usually just pack up and go home on a few weeks' notice; nor can they commit to a continuing war without the resources to do that.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai reminded Canadians of that reality on Tuesday at a press conference that he called with Canadian journalists in Kabul. If Canada goes home, he said, "Afghanistan will fall back into anarchy." It was a grim assessment of the situation, coming from a usually more optimistic president, but it was also accurate and a reminder to Canada that this is not a war likely to end soon.

Plans need to be made for the longer term.

In theory, and ideally, the Afghan army and police will assume more and more of the responsibility for the job of fighting the Taliban and keeping order in cities and the countryside, as NATO does now. But in reality, that is proving to be a much slower and more difficult transfer than was hoped. Rather than hectoring Canadians, Mr. Karzai could cultivate his own garden more vigourously.

Until it can be realized, Canadians have only a few options. The easiest is to simply walk away, leave Afghanistan, as Mr. Karzai fears, to collapse back into chaos and Islamist fundamentalism.

That is not a very palatable option for a nation that has invested so much in the Afghan war. Another is to stay beyond 2009 in the role Canada plays now -- bearing a disproportionate share of the hard and deadly work of fighting the war. That is not a very fair option for a nation that has sacrificed so much in the Afghan war.

The third and best option is for the other nations of NATO to step up and assume their share of the burden. Canada, the United States and the Netherlands, whose soldiers do most of the fighting and dying in Afghanistan, are already pressing for this, and there are small signs of progress in moving allies to pick up their guns and put their boots on the ground in actual battlefields.

France, under its new government, has hinted at a new willingness to get involved in southern Afghanistan to aid Canadian efforts; the Dutch are looking to Australia for relief; and the Americans can be expected to increase pressure on a recalcitrant Germany.

In the meantime, as Mr. Karzai said, Canadians need to look ahead.

Detention–challenge bill fails to win U.S. Senate approval

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DATE: 2007.09.20

PAGE: A11

SECTION: World Wire

WORD COUNT: 315

CP Wire Beth Gorham WASHINGTON -- A bid to give terror suspects like Canadian Omar Khadr the right to challenge their detentions in a U.S. federal court failed Wednesday in the Senate, although most legislators supported it.

The 56–43 vote fell short of the 60 senators needed to cut off debate and proceed to a final vote on the measure for Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

Still, the narrow loss cheered American rights groups who said the tide could be turning on the issue, which will be taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court in the next few months.

And supporters said they'd try again to reverse the ban on the right of habeas corpus, designed to protect prisoners from being locked up indefinitely without a court review.

"The truth is that casting aside the time–honoured protection of habeas corpus makes us more vulnerable as a nation because it leads us away from our core American values," said Vermont Democrat Patrick Leahy.

"It calls into question our historic role as a defender of human rights around the world." Critics argued that so-called "enemy combatants" in other conflicts didn't have habeas rights either.

"Never has such an unprecedented legal right been granted to a prisoner of war or detainee," said Republican Jon Kyl of Arizona.

And Republican Lindsey Graham said the measure would lead to chaos in Guantanamo while undermining the anti–terror efforts, allowing prisoners to "go judge shopping and sue our own troops for anything they could think of." In what Leahy now calls a "historic mistake," Congress eliminated the ability of foreign terrorism prisoners, even permanent residents of the United States, to challenge their detentions when it passed the Military Commissions Act last year.

The act revamped President George W. Bush's widely criticized military system for trying prisoners like Khadr, who has been held since he was 15 years old, charged with throwing a grenade that killed a U.S. officer in a 2003 firefight in Afghanistan.

-- The Canadian Press

Foreign Minister rises above hecklers to reaffirm war commitment

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DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 589

MONTREAL – Canada's new Foreign Affairs Minister last night faced a group of angry protesters shouting him down as he tried to sell his government's military involvement in Afghanistan.

Mr. Bernier, however, rolled with the chaotic scene that unfolded before a dinner audience in an upscale downtown hotel ballroom, calling the interruptions "an expression of democracy."

The aim of the speech was to try to persuade fellow Quebecers to stay the course and "finish the job" in Afghanistan, even though opposition parties have called for a withdrawal of troops sometime between now and February, 2009.

Mr. Bernier eventually finished his address — but not before almost a dozen young men and women were removed from the dinner after rising individually to fire off a series of verbal volleys.

"Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena, simply go back on its word and abandon such a crucial mission," Mr. Bernier told the international symposium of Afghanistan experts, academics and diplomats.

"I know that you are proud and responsible people, people of your word," the Cabinet minister from Quebec's Beauce riding said in the English text of his first address on the issue that is expected to dominate his portfolio. "Quebecers finish the job they have started."

Mr. Bernier said Canada cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate and that to do so would jeopardize gains in development and security that have been made on the ground. But it was a message that Mr. Bernier struggled to get out over almost a dozen university-age hecklers, at least several of whom paid \$35 to gain access to a dinner where he was the keynote speaker.

Several hecklers had to be forcibly removed from the room by Montreal police — including one man who was allowed to cross the ballroom unhindered and stand in front of Mr. Bernier's head table shouting at the minister.

The anger spilled into the street as a little more than a dozen demonstrators milled about outside the hotel, shouting insults at police. At least three men and one woman were restrained with handcuffs.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper promoted Mr. Bernier to Foreign Affairs, moving Peter MacKay to Defence,

in a Cabinet shuffle last month that was designed in large measure to help the government bolster its message about the Afghan mission among reluctant Quebecers.

Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment now forms the backbone of the Canada's 2,500 soldiers currently stationed in Kandahar, and has suffered three fatalities since being deployed there last month.

Fearing a domino effect of NATO countries withdrawing, Afghan President Hamid Karzai has implored Canada to keep its soldiers in Afghanistan after its February, 2009, commitment expires, warning his country would be plunged into anarchy if foreign troops leave. The Harper government has proposed an exit strategy under which NATO would train enough army and police officers to take over Afghanistan's security, but Mr. Karzai cast doubt on that scenario.

NDP leader Jack Layton said he does not believe Canadians could be easily sold on the mission simply by changing the government's messengers through a Cabinet shuffle. "I think it's sad that one has to turn to a sales job when we're talking about war," Mr. Layton said in an interview.

Mr. Layton urged the Tories to take the lead in bringing the warring parties to the table and finding a solution to the conflict.

"We clearly cannot continue on with a military focus," he said. "We're suggesting that Canada should play a lead role in the creation of and the pursuit of a comprehensive peace process with a focus on accomplishing a cease-fire, and negotiations, and really assist the Afghan people."

The NDP has called for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan.

KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

Legion sends holiday cheer to Afghanistan

IDNUMBER 200709200173

PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette

DATE: 2007.09.20

EDITION: Final

SECTION: West Island

PAGE: F24

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: JOHN MORSTAD, THE GAZETTE / Jean Bisson urgesthose who are considering helping with the care package project to "forget about the issue and remember the soldiers, male and female, with your hearts at a very difficult time at Christmas." ;

KEYWORDS: VETERANS; WORLD WAR I; WORLD WAR II

BYLINE: PATRICIA ENBORG

SOURCE: Freelance

WORD COUNT: 418

With one son serving in the army in Afghanistan and another who helped to spearhead the project, Jean Bisson has a personal interest in ensuring the success of the Roxboro Legion's care package project for Quebec soldiers serving overseas.

Her son David is in Afghanistan with the Royal Canadian Hussars and is only expected home at the end of January. Another son, Capt. Mike Bisson, also of the Hussars, was a peacekeeper in Bosnia when he received an unexpected care package from a legion branch in Ontario.

He was so moved by the gesture that he suggested to the Roxboro Legion, General Vanier Branch 234, that it do the same for Quebec soldiers.

Members immediately got on board, seeking donations of items that would fill a shoebox. They're aiming to send a package to every Quebec soldier in time for Christmas.

After a quiet summer, supplies of everything from disposable razors to toilet paper are now starting to roll in from community groups, other legion branches, companies and individuals. Bisson said they have enough to assemble about 1,000 packages with 2,000 to go before the end of October.

His brother has also made some suggestions to add to the list: individual packages of tissues and small packages of wet wipes. "When water's at a premium and they need as much of it as possible for drinking, washing becomes very quickly a luxury that they can't afford," Bisson said.

His mother, Jean, is among the many soliciting help. "I haven't had anybody so far, anyone at all who has had any negative reaction, which is wonderful."

She said the project keeps her busy as she worries about David in Afghanistan. "It's very, very challenging. It's your first thought in the morning and your last thought at night." She hears from him sporadically and only for a two- or three-minute phone call when he can manage it.

While the supplies are coming in, the legion is anxious to have French and English handwritten letters of support or Christmas cards for each soldier. Some schools have been approached, but the legion would like to see the school boards become involved as well.

Jean Bisson said it will make a difference to the soldiers, and she has a message for those who may consider helping: "Please, please forget about the issue (the war) and remember the soldiers, male and female, with your hearts at a very difficult time at Christmas."

The Roxboro Legion is at 3 4th Ave. S. in Roxboro. For more information about the project, call Richard at 514-836-5569 or email sarib_1@hotmail.com

To make a financial contribution, make the cheque payable to: Royal Canadian Legion General Vanier Branch 234 and specify that it's for the soldiers' gift package project.

Opposition must answer Karzai

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PUBLICATION: Montreal Gazette
DATE: 2007.09.20
EDITION: Final
SECTION: Editorial / Op-Ed
PAGE: A20
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID; AFGHANISTAN; CANADA
SOURCE: The Gazette
WORD COUNT: 387

In a remarkable feat of long-distance lobbying, Afghanistan's president Hamid Karzai invited Canadian journalists to his palace in Kabul, where he gave them a message for all Canadians: The people of Afghanistan are grateful for Canada's effort and sacrifices, need our help, and implore us not to chain ourselves to any artificial deadlines.

He acknowledged problems of corruption and human rights abuses – but said none of that will get better if Canada abandons Afghans. "If you leave prematurely," he told Canadians, "before we can defend ourselves in terms of our own abilities, government, institutions, and all associated factors, Afghanistan will fall back" to the worst days of Taliban fanaticism. "Leaving Afghanistan alone now will bring back all the evils that were here."

The process of capacity-building will not be completed before Canada's current combat commitment expires in February 2009, he warned. "The presence of Canada is needed until Afghanistan is able to defend itself, and that day is not going to be in 2009," he said.

Was Karzai's message developed in consultation with Canadian officials in the country? No doubt. Aware of where that support for the Canadian mission is lowest, he said "my message to Quebec is that their sons and daughters are accomplishing a very important task."

But political calculation does not disprove his point. Some say the Taliban will master the country despite the combat role of Canada and the few other Western countries with soldiers in harm's way. Without Western troops, Karzai's gloomy warning will surely become reality.

Canadian critics of the mission must now respond to Karzai's message. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, showing the caution befitting a man heading a minority government in a country divided on this issue, has indicated that he will propose no combat extension unless at least one other party supports him.

So what do the Liberals, the Bloc and the New Democrats have to say to Karzai and the millions of Afghans, desperate for peace, who elected him? "We don't care"?

What they should say is that they want his government to become more vigorous, honest and open. If that happens, they should promise, they will agree that the prize – a peaceable and well-governed Afghanistan – is worth the cost and the risk to our much more fortunate country.

Iran outlines war plans; Ready to hit Israel if itself is attacked

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KEYWORDS: NUCLEAR POWER; TERRORISM; URANIUM; NUCLEAR REACTORS;
NUCLEARWEAPONS
DATELINE: DUBAI
BYLINE: BORZOU DARAGAH
SOURCE: Los Angeles Times; The New York Times and Reuterscontributed to this report
WORD COUNT: 269

A senior Iranian military official said yesterday his country had drawn up plans to launch air strikes against Israel in case of war between the two countries, according to an Iranian news agency.

General Mohammed Alavi, a deputy commander in the air force, told the semi-official Fars News Agency that Tehran could attack Israel with long-range missiles as well as fighter planes.

Israeli and U.S. officials have threatened the possibility of pre-emptive attacks on Iran to block it from obtaining the technology that could be used to build atomic weapons. Iran insists its nuclear program is meant to augment civilian energy needs.

Military analysts say Iran could retaliate against any U.S. or Israeli air raids by hitting targets in the Persian Gulf, disrupting oil flows or launching attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Sunday, the French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, heated up the war talk by saying the world must prepare for the worst in dealing with Iran – the "worst" being war.

Kouchner strongly defended his sharp stance on Iran's nuclear program, saying yesterday his remarks against Iran had been misinterpreted and that he was a man of peace.

"I said, 'The worst, it is war,' " Kouchner said. "I did not say, 'The best, it's war.' I did not say, 'My choice, it's war.' I said, 'The worst.' "

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sought to ease concerns by insisting diplomacy with "teeth" was the focus, but Washington has not ruled out military action should such a route fail. "It can't be business as usual with Iran, but our view is that the diplomatic track can work," she told a joint news conference with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

Detention has stunted Khadr: lawyer; Guantanamo Bay. 21-year-old Canadian functions as boy of 14

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SECTION: News
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KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR; INTERNATIONAL LAW; TERRORISM
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Juliet O'Neill
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 348

Canadian terrorist suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay yesterday, but his U.S. lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba has stunted Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military last June to defend Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Kuebler said in an interview yesterday. "He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Kuebler is on a tour of Canada aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Khadr's release from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

The military commission system, designed and approved by the U.S. Congress to deal with foreign terrorist suspects, is meant to convict people of crimes based on evidence that would not be admissible in a regular court of law, Kuebler argued.

"What we're talking about is statements obtained through interrogation methods that are coercive and, in some cases, arguably amount to torture."

Moreover, Kuebler added, Khadr is being prosecuted and potentially sentenced to life in prison as an adult, even though he was a juvenile when his alleged crime was committed. Instead, Khadr should be treated as a child soldier who could be rehabilitated, the lawyer said.

Khadr was among about 375 people who have been detained at Guantanamo Bay as alleged Al-Qa'ida and Taliban terrorists following the 9/11 attacks by Al-Qa'ida operatives in New York City and Washington, D.C.

He is accused of killing an army medic in a battle between U.S. troops and Al-Qa'ida fighters in Afghanistan in the summer of 2002. He was 15 at the time.

The charges against Khadr were dismissed in a court proceeding but prosecution is expected to resume after an appeal decision due soon.

"I would say generally he understands what's happening, to the extent that any of us do," Kuebler said of his client. "But it's very clear he doesn't have the same grasp as a normal 21-year-old man would."

Rage against the mission greets new minister; Tries to sell policy on Afghanistan. Protesters arrested in Montreal as Bernier gives first speech as foreign affairs minister

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: TYREL FEATHERSTONE, THE GAZETTE / Protesters descended on a Sherbrooke St. hotel last night to decry Canada's Afghan mission. ;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
BYLINE: MIKE BLANCHFIELD
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 666

It was a baptism of fire for Canada's new foreign minister, Maxime Bernier, with almost a dozen angry protesters shouting him down as he tried to sell his government's military involvement in Afghanistan.

Bernier, however, rolled with the chaotic scene that unfolded before a dinner audience at an upscale downtown hotel ballroom, calling the interruptions "an expression of democracy."

The aim of yesterday evening's speech was to try to persuade fellow Quebecers to stay the course and "finish the job" in Afghan-

istan, even though opposition parties have called for a withdrawal of troops somewhere between now and February 2009.

Bernier eventually finished his job – but not before almost a dozen young men and women were removed from the dinner after rising individually to fire off a series of verbal volleys.

"Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena, simply go back on its word and abandon such a crucial mission," Bernier said.

"I know that you are proud and responsible people, people of your word," the cabinet minister from the Beauce riding said. "Quebecers finish the job they have started."

Bernier was the keynote speaker at a dinner that kicked off a two-day conference on Canada's mission in Afghan-

istan. The conference is sponsored by an inter-university group formed by nine principal researchers at Université de Montréal and McGill University. The group is part of a Canadian network of university centres working in the field of defence and security and receives most of its funding from the Department of National Defence, according to the group's website.

Bernier said Canada cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate and that to do so would jeopardize gains in development and security that have been made on the ground.

But it was a message Bernier struggled to get out over almost a dozen university-age hecklers, several of whom paid \$30 to gain access to a dinner where he was the keynote speaker.

Several hecklers had to be forcibly removed from the room by Montreal police – including one man who was allowed to cross the ballroom unhindered and stand across Bernier's head table, shouting at the minister.

Outside the hotel, 100 anti-war protesters started picketing about 6 p.m., as Bernier's dinner and speech were getting under way inside. Most of the activists left by about 7, one protester told The Gazette.

When Montreal police escorted at least two activists out of the hotel, the remaining 20 protesters shouted at a line of police officers who blocked the hotel's driveway entrance.

At least three men and one woman were restrained with handcuffs.

One woman and two men, all in their 20s, were arrested, Montreal police Constable Raphaël Bergeron said.

One was cited for mischief, another was arrested for obstructing the duties of a police officer inside the meeting with Bernier, and another was arrested for assaulting a police officer and uttering threats.

All were released on a promise to appear in court later.

"We weren't interested in talking to Bernier," said Patrick Cadorette, 33, a member of the anti-war group Block the Empire.

"We went to disrupt the meeting. He was going on and on about reconstruction (in Afghanistan). But nobody talks about how it's the Americans who destroyed everything there."

Cadorette said he doubted Bernier would be any more effective at selling Canada's Afghan mission to Quebecers than previous cabinet ministers have been. "People here don't know who he is," he said.

It was a small but loud expression of emotion that served as a clear reminder of the unpopularity in this province of Canada's top foreign policy objective in Central Asia.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper promoted 44-year-old Bernier to foreign affairs, moving Peter MacKay over to defence, in a cabinet shuffle last month designed in large measure to help the government bolster its message about the Afghan mission among reluctant Quebecers.

Quebec's Royal 22e Régiment forms the backbone of the Canada's 2,500 soldiers currently stationed in Kandahar, and has suffered three fatalities since being deployed there last month.

Fearing a domino effect of NATO countries withdrawing, Afghan President Hamid Karzai has implored Canada to keep its soldiers in Afghanistan after its February 2009 commitment expires, warning his country would plunge into anarchy if foreign troops leave.

The Harper government has proposed an exit strategy under which NATO would train enough army and police officers to take over Afghanistan's security, but Karzai cast doubt on that scenario.

NDP leader Jack Layton said he does not believe Canadians could be easily sold on the mission, simply by changing the government's messengers through a cabinet shuffle.

Rage against the mission greets new minister; Tries to sell policy on Afghanistan. Protesters arrested in Mon

"I think it's sad that one has to turn to a sales job when we're talking about war," Layton said in an interview.

max harrold of the gazette contributed to this report

Tory's Afghan sales pitch heckled

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ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Maxime Bernier;
KEYWORDS: POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA
DATELINE: MONTREAL
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 337

It was a baptism of fire for Canada's new foreign minister, Maxime Bernier, with almost a dozen angry protesters shouting him down as he tried to sell his government's military involvement in Afghanistan.

Bernier, however, rolled with the chaotic scene, calling the interruptions "an expression of democracy."

The aim of Wednesday evening's speech was to try to persuade fellow Quebecers to stay the course and "finish the job" in Afghanistan, even though opposition parties have called for a withdrawal of troops somewhere between now and February 2009.

"I know that you are proud and responsible people, people of your word," the cabinet minister from Quebec's Beauce riding said in his first address on the issue that is expected to dominate his tenure as Canada's top diplomat.

"Quebecers finish the job they have started when they have made a commitment to do so."

Speaking to an international symposium of Afghanistan experts, Bernier also noted that "Canada cannot, without losing all credibility in the international arena, simply go back on its word and abandon such a crucial mission."

"We cannot simply abandon the Afghan people to their fate; to do so would jeopardize all the development work and security building that has been done on the ground."

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Imprisonment stunting Khadr

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SECTION: News
PAGE: A2
COLUMN: Newsmakers
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Omar Khadr;
KEYWORDS: CANADIANS; PRISONERS OF WAR; INTERNATIONAL LAW; TERRORISM
SOURCE: Herald News Services
WORD COUNT: 158

Canadian terror suspect Omar Khadr turned 21 in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday, but his American lawyer says he functions as a boy of 13 or 14 and does not have a full grasp of his situation.

Five years of incarceration in Cuba has stunted Khadr's development at a late-adolescent level, said Lt.-Cmdr. Bill Kuebler, appointed by the U.S. military last June to defend Khadr.

"He has not received the social interaction," Kuebler said in an interview Wednesday in Ottawa. "He has not received an education. He has not received any of the things that a person would need at that age to become a functional adult."

Kuebler is on a tour of Canada aimed at convincing the public and the Harper government to demand Khadr's release from a U.S. military commission judicial process that he describes as "an affront to the rule of law."

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