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# 6 years on, Taliban still going strong; Some see ray of hope for peace in Afghanistan

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**PUBLICATION:** The Sunday Herald

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**SECTION:** World

**PAGE:** A9

**SOURCE:** The Associated Press

**BYLINE:** Fisnik Abrashi; Jason Straziuso

**ILLUSTRATION:** A French soldier stands guard near the site of a car bomb that struck a convoy of French troops in western Kabul, Afghanistan. (Rafiq Maqbool / AP)

**WORD COUNT:** 591

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KABUL – Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the fighting in Afghanistan is growing more intense – but so is talk of peace.

President Hamid Karzai has signalled increased interest in negotiating with the Taliban, and the United Nations and NATO say a growing number of militants want out of the conflict.

With Taliban leaders demanding a pullout of foreign forces, and the U.S. rejecting all-inclusive negotiations, high-level talks to end the war remain a distant prospect. Still, there appears to be a sliver of hope for peace talks.

One analyst suggested talks with the Taliban could be a way to separate the militia from al-Qaida, like the U.S. has done in western Iraq where a new alliance with Sunni militants has splintered their relationship with al-Qaida.

"The climate for talks is more conducive than it ever has been," Daan Everts, NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, said this week. "We're going to look into this more systematically, although of course this is essentially an intra-Afghan issue."

President Karzai reiterated his long-held willingness to engage the Taliban diplomatically. A Taliban spokesman originally signalled that the hardline militia might consider that. But the group's leadership has since said the U.S. military and NATO must first leave the country and that a harsh brand of Islamic law must prevail in Afghanistan – conditions the West won't accept.

The American military urges fighters to lay down their weapons and seek reconciliation. But the U.S. Embassy says Washington will not negotiate with terrorists.

"They have killed thousands of people, many of them in brutal and horrific ways," said Christopher Dell, the embassy's deputy head of mission. "So there is really no possibility of achieving any settlement with (the Taliban) on any terms other than them giving up the armed struggle . . . and accepting the government."

The country is on course for its bloodiest year since the Taliban's ouster in late 2001. Of 4,300 people killed in insurgency-related violence in 2007, more than 3,100 were militants, according to an Associated Press count based on official figures.

The UN says a growing number of fighters are seeking a way out of the carnage.

"In the last six months, we as the United Nations have had more contacts from the opposition than ever before. I would not say it is dramatic, but it is a trend," said Chris Alexander, the deputy head of the UN mission in Afghanistan.

"They are in many cases tired of fighting, eager to live in their country with their families and be out of danger but not sure how to approach the powers that be to make that happen," he said.

Shutting the doors completely to the Taliban could just delay reconciliation, Alexander said.

Mullah Abdul Hakim, a former Taliban commander from the southern province of Uruzgan, joined the country's reconciliation process two months ago, saying that he had been thinking "God likes peace, and from both sides, innocent people were dying."

"Now I'm working to bring more than 200 Taliban to take part in the reconciliation process," he said.

Mustafa Alani, director of security and terrorism studies at the Dubai-based Gulf Research Centre, said the strategy behind talks with the Taliban would be to splinter the militia's relationship with al-Qaida.

"If that can be achieved, it's similar to what's happening in Iraq," he said. "It's possible the Americans are backing this because they've separated the Iraqi resistance force from al-Qaida, and it's possible they have a similar goal here."

However, the conditions might still not be ripe for any meaningful talks, said Seth Jones, a counterinsurgency expert at the RAND Corp. think-tank.

"Most negotiated settlements have required a military stalemate. This has not happened yet."

Everts said NATO was "very interested" in seeing peace talks take place because a negotiated settlement to hostilities would save lives and money. He said there appeared to be growing interest on the part of the Taliban and fighters from the militant group Hezb-i-Islami.

# Duceppe threat increases chance of fall vote

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**PUBLICATION:** The Sunday Herald

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**SECTION:** Canada

**PAGE:** A8

**SOURCE:** The Canadian Press

**BYLINE:** Joan Bryden

**ILLUSTRATION:** Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says he is prepared to vote against Prime Minister Stephen Harper's throne speech. (Carl Thûriault / CP)

**WORD COUNT:** 407

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OTTAWA – Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken on Saturday, laying down five "non–negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

During a campaign–like speech in Rimouski, Que., on Saturday, Duceppe listed five "non–negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions. A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections – they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless."

But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters following his speech.

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January, 2006.

The Bloc was defeated by the Tories in its onetime bastion of Roberval and barely hung on Saint Hyacinthe–Bagot. Its share of the vote in the former Liberal fortress of Outremont collapsed, enabling the NDP to claim victory.

Since then Bloc MPs have complained that the party has lost relevance with voters because it's seen as doing little other than propping up the Tories.

Montreal Liberal MP Denis Coderre said Duceppe appears to be panicking over the Bloc's "crisis of relevance."

Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

"I guess he's trying to build up his street cred a little bit in Quebec," Mulcair said in an interview.

NDP Leader Jack Layton, emboldened by the byelection results, has warned his party will vote against the throne speech unless it contains a "complete change of direction" on the environment and the Afghanistan mission.

Dion has also spelled out his own conditions for supporting the throne speech – including revival of the Clean Air Act and a commitment to a 2009 exit date from Afghanistan – and has warned Liberals won't hesitate to vote it down if it falls short.

The House of Commons resumes sitting Oct. 16 with a throne speech launching a new session of Parliament.

# Islamic militants try to blow up Buddha statue in Pakistan

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**SECTION:** Religion & Faith

**PAGE:** A11

**COLUMN:** Briefs

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** Peshawar, Pakistan

**WORD COUNT:** 227

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Islamic militants tried to blow up an ancient statue of Buddha carved into a mountainside in northwestern Pakistan, but did not damage the structure, officials and witnesses said recently. The attack echoes the Taliban's destruction of the famous Bamiyan statues in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2001, and comes as that country and Pakistan battle a surge in violence by extremists wanting to impose a harsh version of Islamic law.

The attempt to destroy the monument occurred in the small village of Jehanabad in North West Frontier Province, a stronghold of pro-Taliban militants that lies on the border with Afghanistan, officials said.

A group of armed men arrived in the village Monday saying they were mujahedeen, or Islamic fighters, and told residents they wanted to blow up the seven-metre statue, said villager Amir Khan.

"I told them that there are houses near to the rock and any blast could put our lives in danger, but they pointed their weapons at us," said Khan. "We heard the sound of drilling twice and then early Tuesday morning we heard two blasts."

The statue was undamaged, but some of the rock surrounding it was blown away, officials said.

"Luckily, the actual statue of the Buddha is safe," said Abdul Nasir, assistant curator of the museum in the nearby town of Swat. "Islam teaches us to respect other religions and faiths, but unfortunately some elements are disturbing the peace in the Swat valley."



# Judge rules against pilot in bombing that killed four Canadians in Afghanistan

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**SECTION:** World/Provincial

**PAGE:** A8

**SOURCE:** AP

**DATELINE:** Springfield, Ill.

**WORD COUNT:** 155

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A federal judge has ruled against a U.S. pilot who sued the air force for allegedly ruining his reputation in a friendly fire bombing in Afghanistan that killed four Canadian soldiers.

Maj. Harry Schmidt filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Springfield last year claiming the military violated the Privacy Act by disclosing parts of his military record without his permission.

The suit said military officials should not have released to the public a scathing letter of reprimand.

Schmidt's lawyer, Charles Gittins, has said the disclosure also violated a settlement agreement that prevented Schmidt from being court-martialled for the 2002 bombing.

U.S. District Judge Jeanne Scott ruled in favour of the Air Force, writing that "the competing public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs Schmidt's privacy interest."

On April 17, 2002, Schmidt mistook Canadian soldiers firing weapons on a training range for Taliban forces and dropped a 225-kilogram, laser-guided bomb. The pilot has said his superiors never told him the Canadians would be conducting live-fire exercises that night.

# Mr. Dyer's dire prediction

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**PUBLICATION:** The Telegram (St. John's)

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**SECTION:** Editorial

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This falls marks the sixth anniversary of NATO involvement in Afghanistan – the length of time the Second World War lasted.

Sad to say that victory – or whatever would constitute anything close to it – remains elusive.

Warlords rule the countryside, the Taliban retains its deadly punch and territory gained in one offensive falls away as soon as foreign forces vacate an area.

Things are even worse in Iraq as it suffers through a religious war sparked by the U.S. invasion in 2003.

These are not happy times, and they were foreseen by Newfoundland sage Gwynne Dyer, who wrote a piece back at the turn of the century that today seems downright prophetic.

It was a column in The Telegram, where Dyer offered his take on newly elected U.S. President George W. Bush.

He painted Bush as a little-travelled man who was disinterested in the wider world, incurious about the unknown and concerned mainly about his own backyard.

Which would be OK, Dyer suggested, as long as things continued to tick along quietly.

But he also issued a warning; Bush was ill-equipped to deal with international strife, and if an unforeseen global crisis arose, things could get ugly, fast.

Dyer's words went from punditry to prophecy on 9/11 when crisis appeared in the skies over New York and Washington, lifting the curtain on the worst presidential performance in decades.

It began immediately, when Bush referred to the American response to the 9/11 attacks as a "crusade" against terrorism.

Turns out "crusade" is a loaded term in the Muslim world, stirring up memories of sword-swinging knights, their armour emblazoned with the Christian cross.

Who knew?

So Bush's inner circle rebranded their response to 9/11 as the War Against Terror, giving Osama bin Laden exactly what he craved: a war.

Instead of vowing to hunt down the terrorists and prosecute them as the thuggish criminals they were, Bush gave them the status of warriors in a global struggle.

Then he gave them a battlefield by invading Iraq, a country that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks.

You'd need at least two hands to catalogue the catastrophes bred in that quagmire, from civilian deaths to religious civil war, but high on the list would be the draining of U.S. troops and resources from a legitimate target: Afghanistan.

Imagine what might have happened if the resources squandered in Iraq had been used to stabilize that country. Maybe Afghani President Hamid Karzai wouldn't have to beg Canada to stay in the country beyond February 2009. Maybe Canada's minister of Defence, Peter MacKay, wouldn't have to beg his NATO allies to do their part in the tough fighting.

And maybe Gwynne Dyer would have to rethink his estimation of Bush's inability to deal with international crises.

Sadly, as we enter Year Seven of combat in Afghanistan, it seems there's no need for such a re-evaluation, unless it's to further downgrade Bush's capabilities on the international stage.

# THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE JUSTICE  
**PUBLICATION:** cpw  
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The suit said military officials should not have released to the public a scathing letter of reprimand.

Schmidt's lawyer, Charles Gittins, has said the disclosure also violated a settlement agreement that prevented Schmidt from being court-martialled for the bombing.

On April 18, 2002, Schmidt and another pilot were flying F-16s when they spotted muzzle flashes near Kandahar airport. The Canadians were firing weapons on a training range but Schmidt mistook them for Taliban forces and dropped a 225-kilogram laser-guided bomb, killing Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, Sgt. Marc Leger, Pte. Richard Green and Pte. Nathan Smith.

The four were the first Canadians to die in combat since the Korean War. Eight others were injured.

U.S. District Judge Jeanne Scott ruled in favour of the Air Force on Thursday, writing that "the competing public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs Schmidt's privacy interest."

"The release of Schmidt's reprimand gave the public, in the United States, and around the world, insight into the way in which the United States government was holding its pilot accountable. Thus considering all of the circumstances, the disclosures at issue were clearly warranted," Scott said.

Schmidt has said his superiors never told him the Canadians would be conducting live-fire exercises that night.

The second pilot received a letter of reprimand and was allowed to retire. He is not a party to the lawsuit.

# THE CANADIAN PRESS

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22

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**PUBLICATION:** cpw

**WORD COUNT:** 533

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But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

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He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions. A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections \_ they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless."

But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters following his speech.

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January, 2006.

The Bloc was defeated by the Tories in its onetime bastion of Roberval and barely hung on Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot. Its share of the vote in the former Liberal fortress of Outremont collapsed, enabling the NDP to claim victory.

Since then Bloc MPs have complained that the party has lost relevance with voters because it's seen as doing little other than propping up the Tories.

Montreal Liberal MP Denis Coderre said Duceppe appears to be panicking over the Bloc's "crisis of relevance."

Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

"I guess he's trying to build up his street cred a little bit in Quebec," Mulcair said in an interview.

If he wants to avoid an election, Mulcair said Duceppe will either have to back down or hope the Liberals, who are reeling from a similarly dismal showing in the byelections, will bail him out.

"If he paints himself into that corner . . . he's going to have to walk into some paint or he's going to hope that the Liberals under Mr. (Stephane) Dion are going to be feeling so weak that they won't have any stomach for a fight."

NDP Leader Jack Layton, emboldened by the byelection results, has warned his party will vote against the throne speech unless it contains a "complete change of direction" on the environment and the Afghanistan mission.

Dion has also spelled out his own conditions for supporting the throne speech \_ including revival of the Clean Air Act and a commitment to a 2009 exit date from Afghanistan \_ and has warned Liberals won't hesitate to vote it down if it falls short.

Coderre reiterated Saturday that his party won't support the throne speech just to avoid an election. It will weigh the throne speech carefully and decide whether it merits Liberal support or opposition.

"There's no way that we will take our decision based on the state of panic of Mr. Duceppe or the friskiness of Mr. Layton," he said in an interview.

The House of Commons resumes sitting Oct. 16 with a throne speech launching a new session of Parliament.

# INDEX:Politics

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22

**KEYWORDS:** POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 156

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RIMOUSKI, Que. – Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe says he is prepared to vote against Prime Minister Stephen Harper's throne speech, increasing the chance Canadians could be headed to the polls this fall.

During a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., on Saturday, Duceppe listed five 'non-negotiable' conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

The Bloc is calling for the elimination of all federal spending powers in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

It also wants promises to help Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

Since the Conservatives were elected in January 2006, the Bloc has helped the party survive three confidence votes.

Since the Bloc's crushing byelection loss to the Conservatives last week in the sovereigntist region of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, party officials have pledged to be more 'aggressive' towards Harper's government.

(The Canadian Press)

# Afghan–Peace

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE  
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---

KABUL — Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the fighting in Afghanistan is growing more intense — but so is talk of peace.

President Hamid Karzai has signalled increased interest in negotiating with the Taliban, and the United Nations and NATO say a growing number of militants want out of the conflict.

But with Taliban leaders demanding a pullout of foreign forces, and the U–S rejecting all–inclusive negotiations, high–level talks to end the war remain a distant prospect.

Still, there appears to be a sliver of hope for peace talks.

One analyst suggests talks with the Taliban could be a way to separate the militia from al–Qaida — much like the U–S has done in western Iraq where a new alliance with Sunni militants has splintered its relationship with al–Qaida.

Daan Everts, NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, says “the climate for talks is more conducive than it ever has been.”

However, the Taliban leadership says foreign troops must first leave the country and Islamic law must prevail — conditions the West won't accept.

(The Associated Press)



# THE CANADIAN PRESS

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22

**KEYWORDS:** POLITICS

**PUBLICATION:** bnw

**WORD COUNT:** 178

---

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But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

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# INDEX:International, Politics, Defence

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**DATE:** 2007.09.22  
**KEYWORDS:** INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE  
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TORONTO – Canada still can't account for at least 50 prisoners it captured and turned over to Afghan authorities, the Globe and Mail reports.

The newspaper says Canadian sources are offering a benign explanation for the prisoners' disappearance, blaming the Afghans' shoddy record-keeping.

Prisoners often buy their freedom from Afghanistan's corrupt jails, which may also explain the lack of records. The Canadians say they have not received any indication the missing detainees ran into trouble inside Afghan jails.

After stories of torture surfaced earlier this year, Ottawa asked for a full accounting of the approximately 200 people transferred by Canadian forces into Afghan custody before May 3.

Detainees transferred after May 3 have been monitored under a deal struck in reaction to uproar over the issue.

Months later, however, a quarter of those 200 detainees remain missing, neither listed as released nor still in custody.

(The Canadian Press)(Globe and Mail)

# Counting the casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan

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**SECTION:** Opinion  
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As if proving a widely held view that Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan tend to be trigger happy, Blackwater USA, a private security firm, is embroiled in a controversy over its involvement in a roadside shootout in Baghdad that killed eight Iraqis.

It turns out that the 30,000 American private security personnel in Iraq are among those immune from local prosecution.

That reminded me of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

In October 1964, in the early stages of his anti-Shah agitation, he gave a colourful speech attacking the legal immunity enjoyed by Americans in Iran.

"If an American's servant or cook assassinates your marja (religious leader), the Iranian police do not have the right to apprehend him.

"But if someone runs over a dog belonging to an American, he'd be prosecuted. Even if the Shah himself were to run over a dog belonging to an American, he'd be prosecuted. But if an American cook runs over the Shah, no one would have the right to interfere with him."

Khomeini's words spread like wildfire. Within a month, he was exiled. He returned 15 years later, triumphant, having engineered a revolution that toppled the Shah and ended America's hold on Iran.

The ayatollah remains a reviled figure in the West. But his point is relevant to Iraq and Afghanistan, where the United States and its allies do not even count the local dead.

"Imagine the U.S. not investigating who died on Sept, 11, 2001 – it's unthinkable," says John Sloboda, co-founder of Iraq Body Count, the U.K.-based group that tracks the Iraqi death toll, which as of Friday stood at between 73,390 and 79,999.

Last week, a British polling firm, ORB, estimated the toll at a staggering 1.2 million. Last fall, the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health pegged it at 654,965.

In the case of Afghanistan, Marc Herold, a professor of economics at the University of New Hampshire, has been tracking casualties since 2001 and posting them on a website. In fact, it was his Afghan Victim Memorial Project that inspired Sloboda's.

Herold's "most conservative estimate" of Afghan civilian deaths resulting from American/NATO operations is

between 5,700 and 6,500.

"This is the absolute minimum," he said over the phone. "It's probably a vast underestimate," because it does not include:

The dead among the tens of thousands displaced during the initial military operation in 2001–2002 and who ended up in refugee camps or elsewhere, with little or no supplies for long periods.

The victims of bombing in mountainous areas, which have few or no communications links or which the U.S./NATO forces "cordon off as part of news management."

Herold's figures also do not include the victims of the Taliban. Those are "significantly smaller," even though they are the ones highly publicized.

"If one were to believe the numbers of Taliban killed as reported, I dare say Afghanistan would have been depopulated!"

As in Iraq, there are conflicting estimates in Afghanistan. , for example, reports that more than 7,000 have been killed in the last 19 months alone.

As for the number of Afghans injured, Herold says it's at least double the death toll. That would make it between 11,400 and 13,000.

How many displaced? Between 19,000 and 42,000, at a minimum.

The range of these estimates illustrates the difficulty of working in the official blackout. But Sloboda, Herold and others keep up their heroic efforts on shoestring budgets.

"It's a means of holding our governments accountable," says Sloboda, an internationally renowned professor of psychology at Keele University.

"As citizens, we bear watchdog responsibility. We are doing this so that at some later date, we can hand it over to some international tribunal or those undertaking truth and reconciliation and reparations work."

Herold adds that the more our governments hide the Afghan and Iraqi casualties, the more important it is to expose the grim details of what they have unleashed.

This is the second in a series of articles.

Haroon Siddiqui, the Star's editorial page editor emeritus, appears Thursday in the World & Comment section and Sunday in the A section. [hsiddiq@thestar.ca](mailto:hsiddiq@thestar.ca)

# Folly to continue Afghan mission

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**EDITION:** Ont  
**SECTION:** Editorial  
**PAGE:** A22  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 61

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Nobody is immune from terror

Sept. 21

Our defence minister now says that the Taliban threat will follow Canadians home. Duh!

Ignoring peaceful alternatives, the Canadian government with its macho military mission in Afghanistan has ultimately placed ordinary Canadians in harm's way.

Brainless decisions do not result in logical or convenient outcomes. Peter MacKay now wants our support to continue the folly. The sooner this fiasco is over the better.

Farhan Khokhar, Brampton

# From pizza in Toronto to Pashto in Kandahar; Fourteen years after arriving in Canada, Javid is back in Afghanistan as a translator for our troops

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**IDNUMBER** 200709230018  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Star  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Met  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A17  
**BYLINE:** Bruce Champion–Smith  
**SOURCE:** Toronto Star  
**COPYRIGHT:** © 2007 Torstar Corporation  
**WORD COUNT:** 503

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Javid has come a long way from driving a Toronto cab and managing a pizza parlour in the city's north end.

All the way to the front lines of Afghanistan, where the young man is privy to the most sensitive discussions between senior Canadian commanders and their Afghan counterparts.

In fact, without him, there'd be no discussion at all. Javid is an interpreter, translating English into Pashto and back again.

But more than just interpreting language, he's helping the Canadians decipher the culture here, which arguably is just as important to avoid causing offence.

For example, the Western instinct to quickly get down to business is considered abrupt and pushy by Afghans, who prefer a more leisurely start to any conversation, with inquiries about family coming first.

"It can take 10 minutes just to say hi," Javid notes with a chuckle. "It's not business, business, business."

Javid knows this scene intimately – he was born and grew up in Kandahar before leaving for Toronto at age 19. Now 33, he returned to Afghanistan in June on a six-month contract to help the Canadian Forces learn the lay of the land.

(Because insurgents have been known to target people helping the NATO forces and their families, the Star has agreed not to identify Javid, which is a pseudonym.)

He was motivated in part by reports of problems with other, less-capable translators. In short, things were getting lost in the translation between the Canadians and Afghans.

"If you don't understand the people, the mentality, the way they think, the way they speak, it creates a big gap," he says during a stopover at this Canadian base west of Kandahar.

The Canadian military has been on a campaign to woo people like Javid. Recruiters have been placing ads in community newspapers and attending community functions, trying to enlist people to serve as interpreters.

From pizza in Toronto to Pashto in Kandahar; Fourteen years after arriving in Canada, Javid is back in Afghanistan

Javid says he felt a sense of duty to return to his homeland and help with the Canadian mission.

It sure wasn't the money. He says he's earning about same as he did behind the counter at his pizza outlet. This, even though interpreters are among those in harm's way on the front lines – one was killed in the Aug. 22 roadside bombing that also killed two soldiers and injured two Radio Canada journalists.

"It's a very dangerous job," says Javid. "Someone has to do it, someone has to come forward."

Still, having grown up in Kandahar, he says, the violence is nothing new to him and it still feels strange to don helmet and flak vest when venturing out with the soldiers.

"I still don't feel the danger," he explains. "I grew up in this setting. I've seen hundreds of rocket attacks, firefights, ambushes. It's nothing new."

Javid recently accompanied Col. Christian Juneau, deputy commander of Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, on a two-day tour of operating bases in Zhari district.

He was the go-between when Juneau met with the police chief in Zhari district. And when an Afghan father brought his 2-year-old son, burned in a cooking fire, to a Canadian checkpoint for medical help, Javid was able to comfort the boy and explain to the Canadian medic what had happened.

"He's the best," Juneau says of Javid, adding that a translator can make or break an interaction with a local official. "It's critical to what we're doing here, the translation of what we're saying, not only the words but the context."

"They also make us more aware of the cultural aspect of everything. Guys like him are doing great stuff. It's evident that we wouldn't be able to do our job without translators."

# Duceppe issues ultimatum over throne speech; Bloc tenders list of five key conditions, including Kyoto support, to continue propping up gov't

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**IDNUMBER** 200709230017  
**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA  
**DATELINE:** RIMOUSKI, Que.  
**BYLINE:** Andy Riga  
**SOURCE:** Montreal Gazette  
**WORD COUNT:** 337

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RIMOUSKI, Que. – Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe Saturday laid out five "non-negotiable" conditions for his party's support of next month's throne speech -- demands that could lead to a fall federal election.

Hoping to revive his party's fortunes, Duceppe used a meeting of Bloc faithful in Rimouski to harden the tone and raise the stakes in the leadup to the Oct. 16 throne speech.

That speech, in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper will set out his goals for the next parliamentary session, will be followed by a vote of confidence in which Harper's minority government could be defeated, sparking a November election.

Duceppe said the Bloc will not prop up the Conservatives unless Harper fulfills all Bloc demands, a wish list that includes pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan in 2009, and implementing Kyoto greenhouse gas emission targets.

"For Conservatives, who have got by until now with half-truths and half-fulfilled promises, the throne speech will be a real test," Duceppe told supporters. "That's when Quebecers will see whether the Conservatives' openness (to Quebec demands) is real or just a facade. And if by standing up for Quebec (the Bloc forces) a federal election, so be it."

Duceppe also demanded that Ottawa "eliminate federal power to spend" money in provincial jurisdictions, announce concrete measures to help Quebec's ailing forestry industry and continue supply management in the agricultural sector.

Some of the demands will be difficult for Harper to accede to.

On Afghanistan, Harper has said he's in no rush to put the question of Canada's military involvement before Parliament. Harper has also said Canada won't honour the Kyoto climate-change agreement.

Duceppe's tough stand comes less than a week after his party's disappointing results in three Quebec byelections.

Duceppe issues ultimatum over throne speech; Bloc tenders list of five key conditions, including Kyoto support



The party lost one riding to the Conservatives and saw support drop significantly in two others. Support for the Conservatives rose in two byelections.

The Conservative government needs the backing of at least one other party to get the speech through Parliament.

New Democrat Leader Jack Layton, who wants an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, has said he will wait until he hears the speech before deciding how to vote.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he wants a commitment in the speech that Canada will formally notify NATO of the February 2009 deadline for Canada's Afghan pullout.

With files from Jan Ravensbergen

# NATO banks on Canada staying in Afghanistan; Commander speaks as four Canadian soldiers wounded by roadside bomb

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**PUBLICATION:** Edmonton Journal  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**KEYWORDS:** WAR; ORGANIZATIONS; FOREIGN RELATIONS; DEFENCE; CANADA; AFGHANISTAN; QUEBEC  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 537

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KANDAHAR – Canada's top general in Afghanistan says NATO is making plans based on the assumption that the Netherlands and Canada will extend their combat missions here past their 2008–09 deadlines.

"We do not plan for a reduction of battalions. It is as simple as that," said Brigadier General Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces in the wartorn south.

"We have to remind ourselves why we are here in the first place. After 30 years of war (Afghanistan) was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists, and all nations know that terrorists do not stop at their borders."

The general, who arrived in Kandahar four months ago, was replying to a question about political debates heating up in the Netherlands and Canada over whether to continue with neighbouring combat missions set to expire in 2008 and 2009.

Four Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were wounded early Saturday when their armoured vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device buried in the road.

Two of the Canadians, who were part of a routine supply convoy to a forward base at Masum Ghar, about 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City, were taken by U.S. Army medevac helicopter to the main Canadian base at Kandahar Airfield, where they were listed in stable condition with non-life-threatening injuries.

The other Canadians suffered less serious injuries and remained in the field. The families of all the injured soldiers have been notified of their condition.

A short gunfight involving Canadian and enemy forces followed the explosion.

Elsewhere in Kandahar, fifty detainees captured by Canadian forces and handed over to local authorities have gone missing, media reports Friday said.

Sources told the Globe and Mail that the prisoners could have bought their freedom and returned home, taking advantage of a detention system plagued by corruption and poor organization.

NATO banks on Canada staying in Afghanistan; Commander speaks as four Canadian soldiers wounded by

Two hundred Afghans detained by Canadian soldiers since May 3 have been transferred to regional police with the promise of independent observation.

Earlier this year, it was revealed that prisoners caught by Canadians and passed on to Afghan authorities might have been tortured. The incident caused an uproar in Canada as support for the mission remains split.

Hainse, who spent his career with Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, acknowledged that the issue of future Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is particularly contentious in his home province.

"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers but not necessarily the cause," he said. "This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more. The people of Quebec are rational. They will understand."

NATO's Supreme Commander, General Bantz Craddock, asked NATO countries last week to contribute two additional combat battalions to the south of Afghan, where the Quebec-based Van Doos have responsibility for the province of Kandahar.

"Kandahar could easily take another battalion," Hainse said. "Frankly, so could Helmand, Zabul and even Uruzgan. We could reinforce all of them with one battalion each."

Additional soldiers could also be sent to the two southern provinces where NATO's International Security Assistance Force does not have any presence, he said.

If NATO got the additional ground forces it has long asked for, "we would do the same things we are doing now, but we could it faster," he said.

"We realize progress, loud and clear. ... We have diminished some of their leadership and their re-supply capability."

One reason the future of the mission is so hotly debated at home, Hainse said, is a perception that there is more fighting than a year ago.

"We have double the number of troops now so there has inevitably been more combat in some places. We also have a lot more freedom of movement."

# BQ leader playing chicken

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230551  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 16  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by Carl Theriault, CP Duceppe has set conditions that could force a fall election.  
**BYLINE:** JOAN BRYDEN, CP  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 491

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Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken yesterday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

During a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., yesterday, Duceppe listed five "non-negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions. A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections -- they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless."

But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters following his speech.

## BELLIGERENT TONE

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January, 2006.

The Bloc was defeated by the Tories in its onetime bastion of Roberval and barely hung on Saint Hyacinthe–Bagot. Its share of the vote in the former Liberal fortress of Outremont collapsed, enabling the NDP to claim victory.

Since then Bloc MPs have complained that the party has lost relevance with voters because it's seen as doing little other than propping up the Tories.

Montreal Liberal MP Denis Coderre said Duceppe appears to be panicking over the Bloc's "crisis of relevance."

Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

"I guess he's trying to build up his street cred a little bit in Quebec," Mulcair said in an interview.

If he wants to avoid an election, Mulcair said Duceppe will either have to back down or hope the Liberals, who are reeling from a similarly dismal showing in the byelections, will bail him out.

"If he paints himself into that corner . . . he's going to have to walk into some paint or he's going to hope that the Liberals under Mr. (Stephane) Dion are going to be feeling so weak that they won't have any stomach for a fight."

NDP Leader Jack Layton, emboldened by the byelection results, has warned his party will vote against the throne speech unless it contains a "complete change of direction" on the environment and the Afghanistan mission.

Dion has also spelled out his own conditions for supporting the throne speech — including revival of the Clean Air Act and a commitment to a 2009 exit date from Afghanistan — and has warned Liberals won't hesitate to vote it down if it falls short.

Coderre reiterated Saturday that his party won't support the throne speech just to avoid an election. It will weigh the throne speech carefully and decide whether it merits Liberal support or opposition.

"There's no way that we will take our decision based on the state of panic of Mr. Duceppe or the friskiness of Mr. Layton," he said in an interview.

The House of Commons resumes sitting Oct. 16 with a throne speech launching a new session of Parliament.  
KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# 'Friendly fire' pilot loses lawsuit vs. USAF

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230550  
**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 15  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** SPRINGFIELD, Ill.  
**WORD COUNT:** 71

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A federal judge has ruled against a U.S. pilot who sued the air force for allegedly ruining his reputation in a friendly fire bombing in Afghanistan that killed four Canadian soldiers.

Maj. Harry Schmidt filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Springfield last year claiming the military violated the Privacy Act by disclosing parts of his military record without his permission.

The suit said military officials should not have released to the public a scathing letter of reprimand.

# Dion needs all Liberals under one tent

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230546

**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Comment

**PAGE:** 13

**ILLUSTRATION:** file photo Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and deputy leader Michael Ignatieff could be the new Jean Chretien–Paul Martin unless Ignatieff brings his supporters in line.

**BYLINE:** SHEILA COPPS

**WORD COUNT:** 695

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The Liberal civil war has officially started. With party–inflicted land mines exploding in the face of leader Stephane Dion, history seems to be repeating itself.

The opening salvo came from former Outremont Member of Parliament and key Michael Ignatieff supporter, Jean Lapierre. Lapierre minced no words in blaming Dion and his entourage for all aspects of the defeat, including a haphazard local organization. Lapierre said when his own departure provoked the byelection, the riding bank account was full and more than 1,000 volunteers were ready to go.

Methinks he doth protest too much.

If Dion alone is to blame, why did Lapierre limp to such a tepid victory in the last general election? This time, Liberal star nominee Jocelyn Coulon, with 29% of the popular vote, was trounced while Lapierre eked out victory with 35%.

A better local organization could definitely have bridged a 6% gap. But that would have done nothing to send an Outremont Liberal to Parliament. The unforeseen change since the last election was the absolute collapse of the Bloc and the surge in New Democratic vote.

A precipitous 19–point drop in Bloc support went almost exclusively to the New Democratic Party, which trounced the Liberals by almost 20 points.

Good, bad or indifferent, the local organization would not have changed the outcome. Complaints about when the Grit candidate was nominated were similarly unfounded. When a candidate loses by such a large margin, knocking on doors for three more months won't make any difference.

So why would Lapierre, now a television journalist, even bother to wade into the Liberal war? Lapierre, an astute politician with a keen political nose, has been at the centre of almost every Quebec political battle since he entered politics in 1979. One of the youngest ministers named by former Prime Minister John Turner, Lapierre served only a few days before his leader launched the ill–fated 1984 election. An anti–Trudeau Grit, he aligned himself early with 1990 leadership aspirant Paul Martin and bolted the party to create the Bloc Quebecois when Jean Chretien won.

Martin's ultimate ascendance to the top job in 2003 lured Lapierre back into politics. He left a lucrative media sector career to become Martin's Quebec lieutenant, forcing out popular Outremont MP Martin Cauchon in the process. He hoped to ride the Martin wave to a majority in a relatively safe seat. But the riding fight, like Martin's own battle, was tough, and he ultimately scraped through. Promising to remain in Parliament

whatever the outcome, Lapierre resigned less than two months after the Dion win.

Lapierre opposed Dion, as someone who was out of step with Quebec's nationalist aspirations. He was especially dismissive of Dion's Clarity Act, calling it "useless." Lapierre preferred the Ignatieff proposal for Quebec nationhood. It was that very resolution that plagued the Ignatieff campaign and paved the way for a surprise Dion victory. During the leadership campaign, a group of worried Quebec MPs under Lapierre's leadership threatened to resign en masse in the face of a Dion win, on the grounds he did not understand their province. In the end, some resigned, and others were defeated. Most Ignatieff Quebec backers never rallied to Dion.

Just like Martin, Ignatieff runs the risk of exacerbating Liberal troubles by claiming loyalty while privately getting others to do his dirty work. Such internecine warfare would also be deadly to his own leadership ambitions, consigning the Grits to opposition status in the foreseeable future.

### STAUNCH THE BLEEDING

With a byelection bump for the New Democrats, Dion needs to move quickly before a trend line develops. He must first staunch the bleeding by gathering all good Liberals under one tent. Second, he needs bold moves on liberal policy initiatives. If he cannot out-green the left, he can certainly draw a line in the sand on Afghanistan. Dion foreign policy pronouncements this week were exactly the right approach.

During the rebuilding phase, Ignatieff needs to call off his dogs. Supporters should be told in no uncertain terms they need to get behind their current leader — now.

If they don't, and more voices of criticism and dissent follow, Liberals will be digging their own graves. With the NDP surging on the left and the Tories steady on the right, the last thing the Liberals need is a frontal assault on their own.



# 'Intense' times at UN Climate change, war in Afghanistan will top Harper's agenda in New York

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**SOURCETAG:** 0709230530

**PUBLICATION:** The Winnipeg Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 6

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. file photo Prime Minister Stephen Harper, shown here speaking at UN headquarters in 2006, will be in Manhattan this week -- along with other world leaders -- to open a new session of the United Nations. 2. graphic by Graphic News TOP SCIENTISTS STEP UP CLIMATE WARNING

**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS

**DATELINE:** NEW YORK

**COLUMN:** National Bureau

**WORD COUNT:** 581

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Global warming and the war in Afghanistan will top Prime Minister Stephen Harper's agenda this week as he meets with the planet's most powerful people.

The city that never sleeps will transform into a traffic gridlock nightmare as Harper and other prime ministers, presidents and monarchs from around the world descend on Manhattan to open a new session of the United Nations. Seized by bloodshed, strife and impending climate change disaster, it has been declared an "unprecedented, exceptionally intense" time for member nations.

Tomorrow, Harper takes part in a high-level panel on climate change, followed the next day by a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, a prestigious think tank of America's elite. He is not slated to give a full address to the General Assembly due to a scheduling conflict, according to the PMO.

Prof. Fen Hampson, director of The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, noted Harper is an economist, not a foreign policy wonk, by trade and believes the PM is not a "big fan" of the problem-plagued UN. In his first 19 months in office, Harper has dramatically switched gears on Canada's foreign policy to what Hampson calls the "triple-A" agenda: Afghanistan, the Americas and the Arctic.

"This government is not a great champion of what was, under the previous government, a human security policy that was centred very much on the United Nations," he said.

Former Liberal governments under Jean Chretien and Paul Martin were big on international trade missions to push Canadian exports, but relations with the U.S. soured under the Liberal administrations. One of the hallmarks of Harper's foreign policy to date has been to improve ties and to reach out to Mexico, Hampson said.

While foreign policy was not a major plank in the Conservative campaign platform, the government was quickly "blind-sided" with critical issues like the Lebanon crisis and a military mission that moved from the north to volatile southern Afghanistan.

'ON THE FLY'

"All of that meant that foreign policy was being made in a very reactive way and on the fly. It's only been quite recently that we've seen some real priorities being articulated," Hampson said.

But Liberal MP and foreign affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh said Harper has narrowed Canada's circle of friends to a handful that share his world view.

"Everyone sees Mr. Harper as an echo of Mr. (George W.) Bush and Mr. (John) Howard," he said. "We are not bridge-builders any more. I'm very pessimistic that Mr. Harper doesn't believe in the multi-lateral bridge-building process, where we can be the moderators of the world, to arbitrate disputes and resolve major issues through peace. Mr. Harper has militarized Canada's foreign policies to such a degree that he thinks going in with guns and tanks is the only foreign policy approach."

## GLOBAL PLAN

While Harper is pushing for a global plan to tackle climate change that includes the big emitters, Dosanjh said he arrives at the UN "devoid of credibility" because his government has turned its back on Kyoto.

"We need to have a comprehensive climate change plan. We need to be leaders, but under this government we are leaders in trying to wreck an international agreement and dilute the approach to climate change," he said.

NDP MP Alexa McDonough called Harper a "shameless hypocrite" on the climate change file, and also took aim at his narrow focus on a flawed military endeavour at the expense of other priorities like human rights, lifting world poverty and peacekeeping.

"This shift began under the Liberals, but we've seen an acceleration of it under Harper," she said. "We were already shirking our responsibilities globally under UN commitments and more broadly. But we've gone from being half-hearted and weak-kneed to being a shameless hypocrite." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

## 4 Canucks hurt by bomb Afghan forces kill 2 mullahs

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**SOURCETAG:** 0709230290  
**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 18  
**BYLINE:** DENE MOORE, THE CANADIAN PRESS  
**DATELINE:** MA'SUM GHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 209

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One Canadian soldier was seriously injured and three others slightly hurt by a roadside bomb explosion early yesterday.

A supply convoy was headed to Canadian forward operating bases in Kandahar province from the international base at Kandahar Air Field when the blast occurred at 12:30 a.m. local time.

Two wounded soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were taken to the forward operating base at Ma'sum Ghar, seven kilometres away, and later evacuated by helicopter to the hospital at Kandahar.

Two other Canadian soldiers were treated at the operating base and released.

Military officials said none of the injuries was life-threatening.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the weapon of choice for Taliban insurgents. At least one vehicle a week is hit with a roadside bomb.

Meanwhile, Afghan forces killed a number of Taliban militants and wounded two others during operations in southern Afghanistan, the defence ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Among those killed in Friday's operation were two provincial-level Taliban commanders named Mullah Waseem and Mullah Abdullah, who were involved in "sabotaging activities" in Wardak province, the statement said.

On the same day, government forces detained Mullah Qaderi, leader of 15 insurgents in Nirkh district of Wardak province, it added.

Elsewhere, two Afghan police and three Taliban were killed, and three policemen wounded when the Taliban attacked an Afghan police checkpoint in the Khan Abad district of Kunduz province yesterday, the provincial governor said.

More than 7,000 people have been killed during the past 19 months, the bloodiest period since the Taliban government was overthrown by Afghan and U.S.-led forces in 2001. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

# Bloc plays election game 5 points 'non-negotiable' for throne speech support

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230288

**PUBLICATION:** The Toronto Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 14

**ILLUSTRATION:** photo Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe boosts the chance of a fall federal election.

**BYLINE:** JOAN BRYDEN, THE CANADIAN PRESS

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 198

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Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken yesterday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative's throne speech next month.

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Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

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There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections -- they do not want an election now," Harper's spokesman Dimitri Soudas said.

But Duceppe insisted: "If it means an election, it means an election."

Duceppe's party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes. But in last Monday's by-elections, it was defeated by the Tories in its bastion of Roberval as well as Outremont and barely hung onto Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

# Dion needs all Liberals under one tent

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230458

**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** Comment

**PAGE:** 23

**ILLUSTRATION:** file photo Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and deputy leader Michael Ignatieff could be the new Jean Chretien–Paul Martin unless Ignatieff brings his supporters in line.

**BYLINE:** SHEILA COPPS

**WORD COUNT:** 695

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A precipitous 19–point drop in Bloc support went almost exclusively to the New Democratic Party, which trounced the Liberals by almost 20 points.

Good, bad or indifferent, the local organization would not have changed the outcome. Complaints about when the Grit candidate was nominated were similarly unfounded. When a candidate loses by such a large margin, knocking on doors for three more months won't make any difference.

So why would Lapierre, now a television journalist, even bother to wade into the Liberal war? Lapierre, an astute politician with a keen political nose, has been at the centre of almost every Quebec political battle since he entered politics in 1979. One of the youngest ministers named by former Prime Minister John Turner, Lapierre served only a few days before his leader launched the ill–fated 1984 election. An anti–Trudeau Grit, he aligned himself early with 1990 leadership aspirant Paul Martin and bolted the party to create the Bloc Quebecois when Jean Chretien won.

Martin's ultimate ascendance to the top job in 2003 lured Lapierre back into politics. He left a lucrative media sector career to become Martin's Quebec lieutenant, forcing out popular Outremont MP Martin Cauchon in the process. He hoped to ride the Martin wave to a majority in a relatively safe seat. But the riding fight, like Martin's own battle, was tough, and he ultimately scraped through. Promising to remain in Parliament

whatever the outcome, Lapierre resigned less than two months after the Dion win.

Lapierre opposed Dion, as someone who was out of step with Quebec's nationalist aspirations. He was especially dismissive of Dion's Clarity Act, calling it "useless." Lapierre preferred the Ignatieff proposal for Quebec nationhood. It was that very resolution that plagued the Ignatieff campaign and paved the way for a surprise Dion victory. During the leadership campaign, a group of worried Quebec MPs under Lapierre's leadership threatened to resign en masse in the face of a Dion win, on the grounds he did not understand their province. In the end, some resigned, and others were defeated. Most Ignatieff Quebec backers never rallied to Dion.

Just like Martin, Ignatieff runs the risk of exacerbating Liberal troubles by claiming loyalty while privately getting others to do his dirty work. Such internecine warfare would also be deadly to his own leadership ambitions, consigning the Grits to opposition status in the foreseeable future.

### STAUNCH THE BLEEDING

With a byelection bump for the New Democrats, Dion needs to move quickly before a trend line develops. He must first staunch the bleeding by gathering all good Liberals under one tent. Second, he needs bold moves on liberal policy initiatives. If he cannot out-green the left, he can certainly draw a line in the sand on Afghanistan. Dion foreign policy pronouncements this week were exactly the right approach.

During the rebuilding phase, Ignatieff needs to call off his dogs. Supporters should be told in no uncertain terms they need to get behind their current leader — now.

If they don't, and more voices of criticism and dissent follow, Liberals will be digging their own graves. With the NDP surging on the left and the Tories steady on the right, the last thing the Liberals need is a frontal assault on their own.

# Bloc ultimatum Other parties scoff at Duceppe demands

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**SOURCETAG:** 0709230439  
**PUBLICATION:** The Ottawa Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 11  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GILLES DUCEPPE Five conditions  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**WORD COUNT:** 286

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Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken yesterday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

During a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., yesterday, Duceppe listed five "non-negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions. A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

## STICK TO HIS GUNS

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections — they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless."

But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters.

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January 2006.

Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

"I guess he's trying to build up his street cred a little bit in Quebec," Mulcair said.

If he wants to avoid an election, Mulcair said Duceppe will either have to back down or hope the Liberals, who are reeling from a similarly dismal showing in the byelections, will bail him out.

"If he paints himself into that corner ... he's going to have to walk into some paint or he's going to hope that the Liberals under Mr. (Stephane) Dion are going to be feeling so weak that they won't have any stomach for a fight." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL



# Sliver of hope seen for peace

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230206  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A12  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo by AP AFGHAN FRIED FISH TIME : An Afghan street vendor fries fish with spicy seasonings at a market in Herat city, southwest of Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday.  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**WORD COUNT:** 164

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Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the fighting in Afghanistan is growing more intense, but so is talk of peace.

President Hamid Karzai has signalled increased interest in negotiating with the Taliban, and the United Nations and NATO say a growing number of militants want out of the conflict.

With Taliban leaders demanding a pullout of foreign forces, and the U.S. rejecting all-inclusive negotiations, high-level talks to end the war remain a distant prospect. Still, there appears to be a sliver of hope for peace talks.

One analyst suggested talks with the Taliban could be a way to separate the militia from al-Qaida, like the U.S. has done in western Iraq where an alliance with Sunni militants has splintered their relationship with al-Qaida.

"The climate for talks is more conducive than it ever has been," said Daan Everts, NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan. "We're going to look into this more systematically."

Karzai reiterated his willingness to engage the Taliban diplomatically.

A Taliban official originally signalled the hardline militia might consider that.

But the group's leadership has since said the U.S. military and NATO must first leave the country and that a harsh brand of Islamic law must prevail in Afghanistan. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Bloc ready for fight

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230198  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A10  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of GILLES DUCEPPE Election ploy.  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** OTTAWA  
**WORD COUNT:** 141

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Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken yesterday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

In a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., Duceppe listed five "non-negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn Bloc support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

# Harper to face music at UN

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230196  
**PUBLICATION:** The London Free Press  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A9  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of STEPHEN HARPER PM to take part in a high-level panel on climate change before addressing Council on Foreign Relations.  
**BYLINE:** KATHLEEN HARRIS, SUN MEDIA  
**DATELINE:** NEW YORK  
**WORD COUNT:** 247

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Global warming and the war in Afghanistan will top Prime Minister Stephen Harper's agenda this week as he meets with the planet's most powerful people.

The city that never sleeps will transform into a traffic gridlock nightmare as Harper and other prime ministers, presidents and monarchs from around the world descend on Manhattan to open a new session of the United Nations. Seized by bloodshed, strife and impending climate change disaster, it has been declared an "unprecedented, exceptionally intense" time for member nations.

Tomorrow, Harper takes part in a high-level panel on climate change, followed the next day by a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, a prestigious think-tank of America's elite. He is not slated to give a full address to the General Assembly due to a scheduling conflict, according to the PMO.

Prof. Fen Hampson, director of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, noted Harper is an economist, not a foreign policy wonk, by trade and believes the PM is not a "big fan" of the problem-plagued UN.

In his first 19 months in office, Harper has dramatically switched gears on Canada's foreign policy to what Hampson calls the "triple-A" agenda: Afghanistan, the Americas and the Arctic.

"This government is not a great champion of what was, under the previous government, a human security policy that was centred very much on the United Nations," he said.

Former Liberal governments under Jean Chretien and Paul Martin were big on international trade missions to push Canadian exports, but relations with the U.S. soured under the Liberal administrations.

KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# Pilot in deadly friendly fire incident loses lawsuit

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230774  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 24  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of MAJ. HARRY SCHMIDT Judge refuses claim  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** SPRINGFIELD, Ill.  
**WORD COUNT:** 208

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A federal judge has ruled against a U.S. pilot who sued the U.S. air force for allegedly ruining his reputation in a friendly fire bombing in Afghanistan that killed four Canadian soldiers.

Maj. Harry Schmidt filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Springfield in April 2006 claiming the military violated the federal Privacy Act by disclosing parts of his military record without his permission.

The suit said military officials should not have released to the public a scathing letter of reprimand.

Schmidt's lawyer, Charles Gittins, has said the disclosure also violated a settlement agreement that prevented Schmidt from being court-martialled for the bombing.

On April 18, 2002, Schmidt and another pilot were flying F-16s when they spotted muzzle flashes near Kandahar airport.

The Canadians were firing weapons on a training range but Schmidt mistook them for Taliban forces and dropped a 225-kilogram laser-guided bomb, killing Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, Sgt. Marc Leger, Pte. Richard Green and Pte. Nathan Smith.

The four were the first Canadians to die in combat since the Korean War.

Eight others were injured.

U.S. District Judge Jeanne Scott ruled in favour of the air force on Thursday, writing that "the competing public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs Schmidt's privacy interest."

"The release of Schmidt's reprimand gave the public, in the United States, and around the world, insight into the way in which the United States government was holding its pilot accountable.

"Thus considering all of the circumstances, the disclosures at issue were clearly warranted," Scott said.

Schmidt has said his superiors never told him the Canadians would be conducting live-fire exercises that night.

The second pilot received a letter of reprimand and was allowed to retire.

He is not a party to the lawsuit. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Prisoners lost in Afghan system?

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230759  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** TORONTO  
**WORD COUNT:** 130

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Canada still can't account for at least 50 prisoners it captured and turned over to Afghan authorities, the Globe and Mail reports.

The newspaper says Canadian sources are offering a benign explanation for the prisoners' disappearance, blaming the Afghans' shoddy record-keeping.

Prisoners often buy their freedom from Afghanistan's corrupt jails, which may also explain the lack of records. The Canadians say they have not received any indication the missing detainees ran into trouble inside Afghan jails.

After stories of torture surfaced earlier this year, Ottawa asked for a full accounting of the approximately 200 people transferred by Canadian forces into Afghan custody before May 3.

Detainees transferred after May 3 have been monitored under a deal struck in reaction to uproar over the issue.

Months later, however, a quarter of those 200 detainees remain missing, neither listed as released nor still in custody.

Canada's own diplomatic reporting has already warned of complaints that captives are sometimes killed inside Afghan prisons. **KEYWORDS=CANADA**

# Canuck convoy hit by roadside bomb Journalist recalls chaos minute by minute

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230758  
**PUBLICATION:** The Edmonton Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 11  
**BYLINE:** DENE MOORE, CP  
**DATELINE:** MA'SUM GHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 359

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One Canadian soldier was seriously injured and three others slightly hurt by a roadside bomb explosion early yesterday.

A supply convoy was headed to Canadian forward operating bases in Kandahar province from the international base at Kandahar Air Field when the blast occurred at 12:30 a.m. local time.

Two wounded soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were taken to the forward operating base at Ma'sum Ghar, seven kilometres away.

They were later evacuated by helicopter to the hospital at Kandahar.

Two other Canadian soldiers were treated at the operating base and released. Military officials said the injuries were not life-threatening.

## FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

Moore, who was travelling with the convoy at the time of the attack, recalls in detail last night's roadside bombing in Afghanistan.

Just prior the attack, most of the mix of soldiers, civilians, interpreters and journalists were half-asleep in the back of the convoy's Bison.

12:31 a.m. – A loud boom vibrates the Bison. "We've got contact," yells a voice from the back of the rig. An RG-31 has been hit. One person was thrown through the hatch. Three others, at least, are unconscious inside.

The door of the Bison swings down and Lt. Lindsay Nadeau, Capt. Alastair McMurachy, British Lt.-Col. Charlie Herbert, along with another unnamed Canadian soldier, jump out into the pitch black night to help secure the area.

12:47 a.m. – There is one "priority 2" injury – meaning it's serious but not life-threatening.

12:49 a.m.– A second boom hits in front of the Bison. The soldiers climb back in. "They found an RPG not far away. Awfully close," says one voice in the dark. "It was about five metres away."

12:57 a.m.– It comes over the radio that there are possible enemy in the area.

1:12 a.m. – The Bison moves down the highway to create a safety cordon while the injured are treated.

1:20 a.m. – The Bison moves again, about 150 metres down the road. "Close the ramp," barks McMurachy as he and the three others head out once again into the dark.

1:23 a.m. – It comes over the radio that it will take 30 to 40 minutes for a medivac helicopter to reach us.

1:35 a.m.– The radio says it will be 60 minutes for a medivac. The conditions of the injured change constantly as they're assessed and reassessed.

1:37 a.m. – "Everybody inside. Let's go," yells a voice. The hatch of the Bison slams shut with a bang.

2:08 a.m. – We'll be heading to Ma'sum Ghar for medivac.

2:29 am. – We arrive at the base just as the first of the helicopters heads in to retrieve the injured.

2:50 a.m. – The helicopters are gone, loaded with two Canadian soldiers and an Aghan interpreter injured in the blast. Two other Canadian soldiers are treated for minor wounds in Ma'sum Ghar.

## IED ATTACKS

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the weapon of choice for Taliban insurgents as they increasingly turn to guerrilla tactics.

A conservative estimate is that one vehicle a week is hit with a roadside bomb.

More often, the bombs are discovered and defused by Canadian troops.

Most of the time there are no serious injuries, but 38 of the 70 Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2001 have been killed by roadside bombs, along with thousands of Afghans. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Afghan peace talk intensifies

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230627  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 7  
**BYLINE:** FISNIK ABRASHI AND JASON STRAZIUSO, AP  
**DATELINE:** KABUL  
**WORD COUNT:** 192

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Six years after the fall of the Taliban, the fighting in Afghanistan is growing more intense — but so is talk of peace.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has signalled increased interest in negotiating with the Taliban, and the UN and NATO say a growing number of militants want out of the conflict.

With Taliban leaders demanding a pullout of foreign forces, and the U.S. rejecting all-inclusive negotiations, high-level talks to end the war remain a distant prospect. Still, there appears to be a sliver of hope for talks.

One analyst suggested talks with the Taliban could be a way to separate the militia from al-Qaida, like the U.S. has done in western Iraq where a new alliance with Sunni militants has splintered their relationship with al-Qaida.

"The climate for talks is more conducive than it ever has been," Daan Everts, NATO's ambassador to Afghanistan, said this week.

"We're going to look into this more systematically, although of course this is essentially an intra-Afghan issue."

Karzai reiterated his long-held willingness to engage the Taliban diplomatically. A Taliban spokesman originally signalled the hardline militia might consider that.

But the group's leadership has since said the U.S. military and NATO must first leave the country and that a harsh brand of Islamic law must prevail in Afghanistan — conditions the West won't accept.

The American military urges fighters to lay down their weapons and seek reconciliation.

But the U.S. Embassy says Washington will not negotiate with terrorists. KEYWORDS=WORLD



# Roadside bomb injures four Canuck soldiers

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230625  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 7  
**BYLINE:** CP  
**DATELINE:** MA'SUM GHAR, Afghanistan  
**WORD COUNT:** 110

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One Canadian soldier was seriously injured and three others slightly hurt by a roadside bomb explosion early yesterday.

A supply convoy was headed to Canadian forward operating bases in Kandahar province from the international base at Kandahar Air Field when the blast occurred. It happened at 12:30 a.m. local time.

Two wounded soldiers and an Afghan interpreter were taken to the forward operating base at Ma'sum Ghar, seven km away, and later evacuated by helicopter to the hospital at Kandahar. Two other Canadian soldiers were treated at the operating base and released.

Military officials said none of the injuries were life-threatening.

Improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, have become the weapon of choice for Taliban insurgents as they increasingly turn to guerrilla tactics.

A conservative estimate is one vehicle a week is hit with a roadside bomb.

More often, the bombs are discovered and defused by Canadian troops. KEYWORDS=WORLD

# Judge rules against pilot in friendly fire bombing

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**SOURCETAG** 0709230624  
**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** 6  
**ILLUSTRATION:** photo of HARRY SCHMIDT Killed soldiers  
**BYLINE:** AP  
**DATELINE:** SPRINGFIELD, Ill.  
**WORD COUNT:** 138

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A federal judge has ruled against a U.S. pilot who sued the air force for allegedly ruining his reputation in a friendly fire bombing in Afghanistan that killed four Canadian soldiers.

Maj. Harry Schmidt filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Springfield last year claiming the military violated the Privacy Act by disclosing parts of his military record without his permission.

The suit said military officials should not have released to the public a scathing letter of reprimand.

Schmidt's lawyer, Charles Gittins, has said the disclosure also violated a settlement agreement that prevented Schmidt from being court-martialled for the 2002 bombing.

U.S. District Judge Jeanne Scott ruled in favour of the Air Force on Thursday, writing that "the competing public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs Schmidt's privacy interest."

On April 17, 2002, Schmidt mistook Canadian soldiers firing weapons on a training range for Taliban forces and dropped a 225-kg, laser-guided bomb.

The pilot has said his superiors never told him the Canadians would be conducting live-fire exercises that night. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

# Bloc plays chicken with PM Duceppe says five conditions must be met before his party will give throne speech thumbs up

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**SOURCETAG:** 0709230621

**PUBLICATION:** The Calgary Sun

**DATE:** 2007.09.23

**EDITION:** Final

**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** 5

**ILLUSTRATION:** 1. photo of GILLES DUCEPPE Five conditions 2. photo of STEPHEN HARPER Gains in Quebec

**BYLINE:** JOAN BRYDEN, CP

**DATELINE:** OTTAWA

**WORD COUNT:** 329

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Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken yesterday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances the country will be plunged into a fall election.

During a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., Duceppe listed five "non-negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions.

A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections — they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless."

But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters following his speech.

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January, 2006.

The Bloc was defeated by the Tories in its one-time bastion of Roberval and barely hung on Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot.

Its share of the vote in the former Liberal fortress of Outremont collapsed, enabling the NDP to claim victory.

Since then Bloc MPs have complained the party has lost relevance with voters because it's seen as doing little other than propping up the Tories.

Montreal Liberal MP Denis Coderre said Duceppe appears to be panicking over the Bloc's "crisis of relevance."

Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

If he wants to avoid an election, Mulcair said Duceppe will either have to back down or hope the Liberals, who are reeling from a similarly dismal showing in the byelections, will bail him out.

"If he paints himself into that corner ... he's going to have to walk into some paint or he's going to hope that the Liberals under Mr. (Stephane) Dion are going to be feeling so weak that they won't have any stomach for a fight." KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

# NATO counting on Canada to stay; General says alliance is assuming Afghan mission will be extended; four Canadians wounded

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**IDNUMBER** 200709230010  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 500

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KANDAHAR -- Canada's top general in Afghanistan says NATO is making plans based on the assumption that Canada and the Netherlands will extend their combat missions here past their 2008-09 deadlines.

"We do not plan for a reduction of battalions. It is as simple as that," said Brig.-Gen. Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan's war-torn south.

"We have to remind ourselves why we are here in the first place. After 30 years of war, [Afghanistan] was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists -- and all nations know that terrorists do not stop at their borders."

Hainse, who arrived in Kandahar four months ago, was replying to a question about political debates now heating up in the Netherlands and Canada over whether to continue with neighbouring combat missions set to expire in 2008 and 2009.

Four Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were wounded early yesterday when their armoured vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb as they were travelling to west of Kandahar City.

Two of the Canadians, who were part of a routine supply convoy, were taken by a U.S. army helicopter to the main Canadian base at Kandahar Airfield, where they were listed in stable condition with non-life-threatening injuries.

Hainse, who spent his career with the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, acknowledged the issue of future Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is particularly contentious in his home province.

"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers, but not necessarily the cause," he said. "This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more. The people of Quebec are rational. They will understand."

NATO's European commander, Gen. Bantz Craddock of the U.S., asked NATO countries last week to contribute two additional combat battalions to Afghanistan's south, where the Royal 22nd Regiment -- the Van Doos -- have responsibility for the province of Kandahar.

"Kandahar could easily take another battalion," Hainse said.

NATO counting on Canada to stay; General says alliance is assuming Afghan mission will be extended; four

"Frankly, so could Helmand, Zabul and even Uruzgan. We could reinforce all of them with one battalion each."

Additional soldiers could also be sent to the two southern provinces where NATO's International Security Assistance Force does not have any presence, he said.

If NATO got the additional ground forces it has long asked for, "we would do the same things we are doing now, but we could it faster," he said.

"We realize progress, loud and clear. The insurgents don't have the initiative and can't concentrate forces because when they have done so they have lost big time. We have diminished some of their leadership and their re-supply capability. We go where we want to go."

One reason the future of the mission is so hotly debated at home, he said, was "a perception that there was more fighting that a year ago," but "we have double the number of troops now so there has inevitably been more combat in some places. We also have a lot more freedom of movement.

"The trend is that there is a lot more activity in Helmand than any other place," said Hainse.

"On the other hand, there are more [British] troops there. The Dutch have had it pretty tough in Uruzgan but nothing that they cannot cope with. Kandahar has been steady. There have been lulls and peaks and we are now back to a more normal level of activity."

# Bloc leader sets demands for continued support of Harper

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**IDNUMBER** 200709230005  
**PUBLICATION:** Times Colonist (Victoria)  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A3  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Gilles Duceppe says support of his Bloc Québécois for Prime Minister Stephen Harper is conditional. ;  
**DATELINE:** RIMOUSKI, Que.  
**BYLINE:** Andy Riga  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 323

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RIMOUSKI, Que. -- Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe yesterday laid out five "non-negotiable" conditions for his party's support of next month's throne speech -- demands that could lead to a fall federal election.

Hoping to revive his party's fortunes, Duceppe used a meeting of Bloc faithful in Rimouski to harden the tone and raise the stakes in the buildup to the Oct. 16 throne speech.

That speech, in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper will set out his goals for the next parliamentary session, will be followed by a vote of confidence in which Harper's minority government could be defeated, sparking a November election.

Duceppe said the Bloc will not prop up the Conservatives unless Harper fulfils all Bloc demands, a wish list that includes pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan in 2009 and implementing Kyoto greenhouse-gas emission targets.

"For Conservatives, who have got by until now with half-truths and half-fulfilled promises, the throne speech will be a real test," Duceppe told supporters.

"That's when Quebecers will see whether the Conservatives' openness [to Quebec demands] is real or just a facade. And if by standing up for Quebec [the Bloc forces] a federal election, so be it."

Duceppe also demanded that Ottawa "eliminate federal power to spend" money in provincial jurisdictions, announce concrete measures to help Quebec's ailing forestry industry and continue supply management in the agricultural sector.

On Afghanistan, Harper has said he's in no rush to put the question of Canada's military involvement before Parliament. Harper has also said Canada won't honour the Kyoto climate-change agreement.

Duceppe's tough stand comes less than a week after his party's disappointing results in three Quebec byelections.

The party lost one riding to the Conservatives and saw support drop significantly in two others. Support for the Conservatives rose in two byelections.

The Conservative government needs the backing of at least one other party to get the speech through Parliament.

New Democrat Leader Jack Layton, who wants an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, has said he will wait until he hears the speech before deciding how to vote.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion has said he wants a commitment in the speech that Canada will formally notify NATO of the February 2009 deadline for Canada's Afghan pullout.



# NATO assumes Canada will extend mission; Commander says our forces should stay in Afghanistan

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**IDNUMBER** 200709230028  
**PUBLICATION:** Calgary Herald  
**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
**EDITION:** Final  
**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A5  
**KEYWORDS:** ORGANIZATIONS; FOREIGN RELATIONS; DEFENCE; WAR;  
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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
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Canada's top general in Afghanistan says NATO is making plans based on the assumption that Canada and the Netherlands will extend their combat missions here past their 2008–09 deadlines.

"We do not plan for a reduction of battalions. It is as simple as that," said Brig.-Gen. Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan's wartorn south. "We have to remind ourselves why we are here in the first place. After 30 years of war, (Afghanistan) was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists."

Hainse, who arrived in Kandahar four months ago, was replying to a question about political debates now heating up in the Netherlands and Canada over whether to continue with missions set to expire in 2008 and 2009.

Four Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were wounded early Saturday when their armoured vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar City.

Two of the Canadians were taken by a U.S. Army helicopter to the main Canadian base at Kandahar Airfield, where they were listed in stable condition.

Hainse, who spent his career with the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, acknowledged the issue of future Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is particularly contentious in his home province.

"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers, but not necessarily the cause," he said. "This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more."

NATO's European commander, Gen. Bantz Craddock of the U.S., asked NATO countries last week to contribute two additional combat battalions to Afghan's south, where the Royal 22nd Regiment has responsibility for the province of Kandahar.

"Kandahar could easily take another battalion," Hainse said. "Frankly, so could Helmand, Zabul and even Uruzgan."

Additional soldiers could also be sent to the two southern provinces where NATO's International Security Assistance Force does not have any presence, he said.

If NATO got the additional ground forces it has long asked for "we would do the same things we are doing now, but we could it faster," he said.

"We realize progress, loud and clear. The insurgents don't have the initiative and can't concentrate forces because when they have done so they have lost big time."

One reason the future of the mission is so hotly debated at home, he said, was "a perception that there was more fighting that a year ago," but "we have double the number of troops now so there has inevitably been more combat in some places. We also have a lot more freedom of movement."

# Bloc issues ultimatum ahead of throne speech; Duceppe threatens to topple Tories if demands not met

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**DATE:** 2007.09.23  
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**SECTION:** News  
**PAGE:** A4  
**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Gilles Duceppe;  
**KEYWORDS:** POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA  
**DATELINE:** RIMOUSKI, QUe.  
**BYLINE:** Andy Riga, With files from Jan Ravensbergen  
**SOURCE:** CanWest News Service  
**WORD COUNT:** 320

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Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe Saturday laid out five "non-negotiable" conditions for his party's support of next month's throne speech -- demands that could lead to a fall federal election.

Hoping to revive his party's fortunes, Duceppe used a meeting of Bloc faithful in Rimouski to harden the tone and raise the stakes in the buildup to the Oct. 16 throne speech.

That speech, in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper will set out his goals for the next parliamentary session, will be followed by a vote of confidence in which Harper's minority government could be defeated, sparking a November election.

Duceppe said the Bloc will not prop up the Conservatives unless Harper fulfils all Bloc demands, a wish list that includes pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan in 2009, and implementing Kyoto greenhouse-gas emission targets.

"For Conservatives, who have got by until now with half-truths and half-fulfilled promises, the throne speech will be a real test," Duceppe told supporters.

"That's when Quebecers will see whether the Conservatives' openness (to Quebec demands) is real or just a facade. And if by standing up for Quebec (the Bloc forces) a federal election, so be it."

Duceppe also demanded that Ottawa "eliminate federal power to spend" money in provincial jurisdictions, announce concrete measures to help Quebec's ailing forestry industry and continue supply management in the agricultural sector.

Some of the demands will be difficult for Harper to accede to.

On Afghanistan, Harper has said he's in no rush to put the question of Canada's military involvement before Parliament. Harper has also said Canada won't honour the Kyoto climate-change agreement.

Duceppe's tough stand comes less than a week after his party's disappointing results in three Quebec by-elections.

The party lost one riding to the Conservatives and saw support drop significantly in two others. Support for the Conservatives rose in two by-elections.

The Conservative government needs the backing of at least one other party to get the speech through Parliament.

New Democrat Leader Jack Layton, who wants an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, has said he will wait until he hears the speech before deciding how to vote.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion has said he wants a commitment in the speech that Canada will formally notify NATO of the February 2009 deadline for Canada's Afghan pullout.

# NATO assumes mission will be extended

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**SECTION:** News  
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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** Matthew Fisher  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
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KANDAHAR – Canada's top general in Afghanistan says NATO is making plans based on the assumption that Canada and the Netherlands will extend their combat missions here past their 2008–09 deadlines.

"We do not plan for a reduction of battalions. It is as simple as that," said Brig.–Gen. Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces in the war–torn south. "We have to remind ourselves why we are here in the first place. After 30 years of war (Afghanistan) was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists and all nations know that terrorists do not stop at their borders."

Brig.–Gen. Hainse, who spent his career with Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, acknowledged the issue of future Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is particularly contentious in his home province.

"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers but not necessarily the cause," he said. "This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more. The people of Quebec are rational. They will understand."

# Should we negotiate with the Taliban?; International affairs specialist Peter Jones answers four key questions about a negotiated peace and what it would mean for the prospects of a Canadian troop withdrawal

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**SECTION:** News

**PAGE:** A4

**ILLUSTRATION:** Photo: Mian Khursheed, Reuters / Any serious negotiation would likely be a three-way affair among the government of Afghanistan, the Taliban (one of its fighters is shown above) and the international community, says professor Peter Jones. The latter group would include such players as NATO, the U.S., Russia, China, the UN, Iran and Pakistan. ;

**BYLINE:** Peter Jones

**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen

**WORD COUNT:** 1608

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Today, Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier will attend a closed-door meeting at the United Nations on the future of Afghanistan. If recent developments are any guide, high on the agenda will be the increasingly discussed possibility of negotiating with the Taliban. An important sub-text will be whether Canada and other nations will withdraw from southern Afghanistan when their missions come up for renewal.

While the ultimate end of the conflict may be a negotiated agreement leading to a power-sharing arrangement, it is unlikely to happen quickly. Certainly, it will not happen fast enough to provide any diplomatic "cover" for a withdrawal of Canadian troops in February of 2009 as some might hope. Indeed, history suggests that withdrawing troops according to an arbitrary deadline may hurt, rather than assist, any process of bringing the Taliban to the table.

As Canada and its allies begin to think about negotiations, they need to answer the following questions:

1 What do we mean by "peace" in Afghanistan anyway?

Afghanistan has been a partially governed and often violent country for hundreds of years. Its central governments have rarely been strong enough to fully rein in regional warlords, who have often used criminal or mercenary enterprises to support themselves.

The West should therefore have modest ambitions when it comes to "peace" in Afghanistan. Important as it is to work for a country where human rights are in full flower, a strong and beneficent central government provides services and all girls are educated, this is not likely in the foreseeable future.

From a purely western point of view, an acceptable peace in Afghanistan may well be a situation where the country is not used as a base for trans-national terrorist groups (as it was for al-Qaeda), and where the drug

trade is under some semblance of control.

Of course, a more ambitious agenda would include human rights and economic and social development. These are not trivial matters, and there is a strong case to be made that the long-term stability of Afghanistan is dependent on them. But these are matters that are likely to come after "peace" (or, more accurately, some degree of stability) is achieved.

## 2 Who would take part in negotiations? How would they work?

Any serious negotiation would likely be a three-way affair among the government of Afghanistan, the Taliban and the international community. The latter is potentially vast and includes NATO, the U.S., Russia, China, the UN, Iran and Pakistan, to name a few. It is unlikely all of these would actually be "at the table." Rather, one can imagine a complex diplomatic process. Most of it would take place behind the scenes.

Even before the players get to an official negotiating table, there is likely to be a long process of quiet, informal talks where the players feel each other out to see if the territory of a compromise is there. Sometimes this phase takes place in an official way, with delegations representing their governments or factions quietly meeting. Sometimes the initial stages of such a process take place through a phenomenon known as "Track Two diplomacy." Players who do not recognize each other meet, usually quietly, in a non-official way to explore whether serious talks are possible.

A trusted third party brings the sides together and acts as "host." The host must be able to gain and sustain the trust of all of the players and have the necessary capability and resources to manage a complex and lengthy process. Some countries, for example, Norway and Sweden, have proven themselves adept at producing people and institutes capable of fulfilling this role in places like the Middle East and Africa.

But such processes can take a long time to bring conflicting parties to the point where they can launch official talks. Often, they are measured in years. Sometimes parties initially enter Track Two dialogues not so much with the intention of making peace, as that of trying to gauge the other side's willingness and ability to fight on.

This leads to one of the key determinants of when a conflict may end: whether the fighting parties are sufficiently exhausted to stop fighting. Most conflicts end either when one side wins, or when both gradually come to the realization that they cannot win and cannot sustain the effort.

In the latter case, it is rarely clear, either to the outside world or the conflicting parties, when such a ripe moment is occurring. Instead, even as some on each side begin to consider whether a negotiated settlement is possible and might be a better option, each side continues to test the other for weakness in order to determine whether it might still be worth fighting on to victory.

## 3 Can we negotiate with the Taliban? What are they likely to want?

One of the first objectives of any process, Track Two or otherwise, is to find out if the Taliban are prepared and able to take part.

Recently, the Taliban advanced a set of conditions for peace. These included the removal of all foreign forces and the creation of a state based on a very strict interpretation of Islamic law. While many of these conditions were unacceptable to the Afghan government and the West, the fact that they were put forward at all is interesting. But we do not know whether they were put forward as the first step in a long process of trading concessions towards a compromise, or as a "take it or leave it" proposition. The Taliban themselves may not know; they may have been testing the waters to see how the Afghan government and the international community react.

Indeed, other questions are raised by this list of conditions: Are the Taliban a sufficiently unified group to be able to make strategic decisions and compromises over time, or are they, as many are coming to appreciate, more a group of factions that may lack the discipline to negotiate over time and stick to decisions? Does the fact that there are differences between factions of the Taliban mean that getting a meaningful agreement will be impossible, or does it permit us an opening for talks with more moderate factions, even if the hardliners may never agree to compromises?

None of the answers to these questions are clear, and they are unlikely to be for some time. But only some form of talks — official or not — will reveal the answers.

4 What does this mean for Canada's hope to withdraw from its combat role in 2009?

What the experience of other such peace processes — such as the Israeli–Palestinian and the Northern Ireland processes — teaches is that there will likely be a period at the beginning where there is both quiet talking and fighting at the same time. This may sound like a ridiculous contradiction, but the resolution of such conflicts rarely follows a linear path of logic.

In the first tentative phase of exploring whether a negotiation is possible each side is still testing the other to see if it is worth continuing to fight or not. "Can we still achieve our objectives by fighting? Is this apparent willingness of some on the other side to talk a sign of weakness? Is it a deception to lull us into dropping our guard?"

Under these conditions, a weakening of the overall ability to militarily resist the Taliban will not aid the process of making peace; it will likely hinder it. Whether Canada should remain in a combat role after its present commitment ends is one question. But if Canadian and other troops leave the southern part of Afghanistan and are not replaced, and if the overall ability of the coalition to resist the Taliban is thereby diminished, then the Taliban may take it as a signal that it is worthwhile to keep fighting rather than seriously negotiate.

The choice that faces Canada may come down to whether serious negotiations with some important elements of the Taliban are possible or not. If there is some glimmer of hope that the Taliban, or even some of its factions, may be considering a negotiated alternative, then withdrawal from the combat role may be the worst tactic at this time. If Canada is convinced that no negotiation is possible, then abandoning Afghanistan to its fate may be a sensible option — although there are no guarantees that it will not again be used as a base for terrorist attacks against the West, thereby requiring us to go back later at even higher cost than today.

But between these two extremes may be a third option, which would be to accept that the February 2009 deadline is an arbitrary one that is relevant to Canadian politics but not to the situation in Afghanistan. Instead of focusing almost entirely on political issues in Canada, the leaders of all our parties might do well to ask why we are in Afghanistan in the first place and what interests there would be served by a debate that frames the issues around a requirement that we decide today whether we either totally withdraw from or stay in the combat role over a year from now. The training of the Afghan National Army continues and we simply do not know where negotiations with the Taliban, or elements of the Taliban, may be in early 2009.

Perhaps a wiser course would be for Canada and NATO to hold out the prospect of phased withdrawal of combat forces as the situation improves. That may provide an incentive to the Taliban, or its moderate elements.

Peter Jones is associate professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa.



# Bloc's demands threaten to topple Tories; Duceppe wants exit from Afghanistan in 2009 and implementation of Kyoto emissions goals

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**DATELINE:** RIMOUSKI  
**BYLINE:** Andy Riga  
**SOURCE:** The Ottawa Citizen  
**WORD COUNT:** 333

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RIMOUSKI – Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe yesterday laid out five "non-negotiable" conditions for his party's support of next month's throne speech — demands that could lead to a fall federal election.

Hoping to revive his party's fortunes, Mr. Duceppe used a meeting of Bloc faithful here to harden the tone and raise the stakes leading up to the Oct. 16 throne speech.

That speech, in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper will set out his goals for the next parliamentary session, will be followed by a vote of confidence in which Mr. Harper's minority government could be defeated, sparking a November election.

Mr. Duceppe said the Bloc will not prop up the Conservatives unless Mr. Harper fulfills all Bloc demands, a wish list that includes pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan in 2009, and implementing Kyoto greenhouse-gas emission targets.

"For Conservatives, who have got by until now with half-truths and half-fulfilled promises, the throne speech will be a real test," Mr. Duceppe told supporters.

"That's when Quebecers will see whether the Conservatives' openness (to Quebec demands) is real or just a facade. And if by standing up for Quebec (the Bloc forces) a federal election, so be it."

Mr. Duceppe also demanded that the federal government "eliminate federal power to spend" money in provincial jurisdictions, announce concrete measures to help Quebec's ailing forestry industry and continue supply management in the agricultural sector.

Some of the demands will be difficult for Mr. Harper to accede to.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Harper has said he's in no rush to put the question of Canada's military involvement before Parliament. Mr. Harper has also said Canada won't honour the Kyoto climate-change agreement.

Mr. Duceppe's tough stand comes less than a week after his party's disappointing results in three Quebec byelections.

The party lost one riding to the Conservatives and saw support drop significantly in two others. Support for the Conservatives rose in two byelections.

The Conservative government needs the backing of at least one other party to get the speech through Parliament.

New Democrat leader Jack Layton, who wants an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, has said he will wait until he hears the speech before deciding how to vote.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion has said he wants a commitment in the speech that Canada will formally notify NATO of the February 2009 deadline for Canada's Afghan pullout.

# Duceppe's demands may topple Tories Bloc leader's 'non-negotiable' throne speech items could trigger election

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**SECTION:** Canada Wire

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CP Wire Joan Bryden OTTAWA — Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe set off a game of parliamentary chicken on Saturday, laying down five "non-negotiable" conditions for supporting the minority Conservative government's throne speech next month.

But Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Tories gave no sign of bowing to the Bloc's ultimatum while Liberals and New Democrats continued to stand by their own conditions for supporting the speech.

Unless one of the parties blinks, Duceppe's ploy increases the chances that the country will be plunged into a fall election.

During a campaign-like speech in Rimouski, Que., on Saturday, Duceppe listed five "non-negotiable" conditions the Conservative government must meet to earn his party's support.

He called for the elimination of the federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions, the Tory government to respect the Kyoto Protocol and the continuation of supply management in the agricultural sector.

He also wants promises of help for Quebec's forest industry and a clear commitment that Canadian soldiers will pull out of Afghanistan when the current mission ends in February 2009.

There's little chance Harper will even pretend to try to meet those conditions. A spokesman for the prime minister urged Duceppe to reconsider whether he wants to force an election.

"Quebecers were clear in the byelections — they do not want an election now," said Dimitri Soudas.

"The Bloc should listen and not be reckless." But Duceppe insisted he'll stick to his guns and live with the consequences.

"If it means an election, it means an election," he told reporters following his speech.

It was last Monday's three Quebec byelections that prompted the belligerent new tone from Duceppe, whose party has helped Harper's Tories survive three confidence votes since January 2006.

The Bloc was defeated by the Tories in its one-time bastion of Roberval and it barely hung onto Saint Hyacinthe-Bagot. Its share of the vote in the former Liberal fortress of Outremont collapsed, enabling the NDP to claim victory.

Since then, Bloc MPs have complained that the party has lost relevance with voters because it's seen as doing little other than propping up the Tories.

Montreal Liberal MP Denis Coderre said Duceppe appears to be panicking over the Bloc's "crisis of relevance." Thomas Mulcair, the NDP victor in Outremont, scoffed at Duceppe's "chest-thumping," and doubted whether he's serious about forcing an election, given the Bloc's dismal prospects.

"I guess he's trying to build up his street cred a little bit in Quebec," Mulcair said in an interview.

-- The Canadian Press

# Bloc turns up pressure on Conservatives; tough talk after by-election losses. Conditions for supporting Tories 'non-negotiable,' Duceppe tells faithful

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**BYLINE:** ANDY RIGA  
**SOURCE:** The Gazette  
**WORD COUNT:** 395

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Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe yesterday laid out five "non-negotiable" conditions for his party's support of next month's Throne Speech – defiant demands that could lead to a fall federal election.

Hoping to revive his party's fortunes, Duceppe used a meeting of Bloc faithful in Rimouski to harden the tone and raise the stakes in the lead-up to the Oct. 16 Speech from the Throne.

That speech, in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper will set out his goals for the next parliamentary session, will be followed by a vote of confidence in which Harper's minority government could be defeated, sparking a November election.

Duceppe said the Bloc will not prop up the Conservatives unless Harper fulfills all Bloc demands, a wish list that includes pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan in 2009 and implementing Kyoto Protocol greenhouse-gas emission targets.

"For Conservatives, who have got by until now with half-truths and half-fulfilled promises, the Throne Speech will be a real test," Duceppe told supporters.

"That's when Quebecers will see whether the Conservatives' openness (to Quebec demands) is real or just a façade. And if by standing up for Quebec (the Bloc forces) a federal election, so be it."

Duceppe also demanded that Ottawa:

"Eliminate federal power to spend" money in provincial jurisdictions.

Announce concrete measures to help Quebec's ailing forestry industry.

Continue supply management in the agricultural sector.

Some of the demands will be difficult for Harper to accede to.

On Afghanistan, Harper has said that he is in no rush to put the question of Canada's military involvement before Parliament. On Kyoto, Harper has said Canada won't honour the global climate-change agreement.

Duceppe's tough stand came less than a week after his party's disappointing results in three Quebec by-elections.

The party lost one riding to the Conservatives and saw support drop significantly in two others. Tory support rose in two of the Quebec by-elections.

The Conservative government needs the backing of at least one other party to get the speech through Parliament.

New Democrat leader Jack Layton, who wants an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, has said he will wait until he hears the speech before deciding how to vote.

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion has said he wants a commitment in the speech that Canada will formally notify NATO of the February 2009 deadline for Canada's Afghan pullout.

The Conservatives did not respond to Duceppe's demands yesterday, but Environment Minister John Baird took time to take jabs at the Bloc leader.

"It's also been a great week for Canada" and a bad one for Duceppe, Baird told reporters.

"The separatist vote went down, collapsed in one riding (in the by-elections ) and went down significantly" in the other two.

"So it's been a good week for the unity of the country."

In his speech, Duceppe criticized the Conservative track record on the environment.

"Mr. Duceppe and the Bloc Québécois have been in Parliament since 1990," Baird retorted, "and virtually nothing has happened to reduce greenhouse gases in Canada over that time."

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JAN RAVENSBERGEN

OF THE GAZETTE

CONTRIBUTED to this report

# Canadian forces to stay beyond '09, general says

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**DATELINE:** KANDAHAR  
**BYLINE:** MATTHEW FISHER  
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Canada's top general in Afghanistan says NATO is making plans based on the assumption that Canada and the Netherlands will extend their combat missions here past their 2008–09 deadlines.

"We do not plan for a reduction of battalions. It is as simple as that," said Brig.-Gen. Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan's war-torn south.

"We have to remind ourselves why we are here in the first place.

"After 30 years of war, (Afghanistan) was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists – and all nations know that terrorists do not stop at their borders."

Hainse, who arrived in Kandahar four months ago, was replying to a question about

political debates now heating up in the Netherlands and Canada over whether to continue with their neighbouring combat missions.

The Dutch are set to withdraw in 2008 and Canada in February 2009.

Hainse, who spent his career with the Quebec-based Royal 22nd Regiment, acknowledged the issue of future Canadian military involvement in Afghanistan is particularly contentious in his home province.

"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers, but not necessarily the cause," he said.

"This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more. The people of Quebec are rational. They will understand."

Yesterday, four Canadian soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were wounded when their armoured vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb as they were travelling west of Kandahar City.

Two of the Canadians, who were part of a routine supply convoy, were taken by a U.S. army helicopter to the main Canadian base at Kandahar Airfield, where they were listed in stable condition with non-life-threatening injuries.

NATO's European commander, General Bantz Craddock of the U.S., asked NATO countries last week to contribute two additional combat battalions to Afghan's south, where the Royal 22nd Regiment has responsibility for the province of Kandahar.

"Kandahar could easily take another battalion," Hainse said.

"Frankly, so could Helmand, Zabul and even Uruzgan. We could reinforce all of them with one battalion each."

Additional soldiers could also be sent to the two southern provinces where NATO's International Security Assistance Force does not have any presence, he said.

If NATO got the additional ground forces it has long asked for, "we would do the same things we are doing now, but we could it faster," he said.

"We realize progress, loud and clear. The insurgents don't have the initiative and can't concentrate forces because when they have done so they have lost big time. We have diminished some of their leadership and their resupply capability. We go where we want to go."

One reason the future of the mission is so hotly debated at home, he said, was "a perception that there was more fighting than a year ago," but "we have double the number of troops now so there has inevitably been more combat in some places. We also have a lot more freedom of movement.

"The trend is that there is a lot more activity in Helmand than any other place. On the other hand, there are more (British) troops there. The Dutch have had it pretty tough in Uruzgan but nothing that they cannot cope with. Kandahar has been steady. There have been lulls and peaks and we are now back to a more normal level of activity."



# NATO counts on Canadian extension

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CNS Matthew Fisher KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Canada's top general in Afghanistan said NATO is making plans based on the assumption that Canada and the Netherlands will extend their combat missions here past their 2008-09 deadlines.

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After 30 years of war (Afghanistan) was a failed state and a clear breeding ground for terrorists and all nations know that terrorists do not stop at their borders." The general, who arrived in Kandahar four months ago, was replying to a question about political debates now heating up in the Netherlands and Canada over whether to continue with neighbouring combat missions set to expire in 2008 and 2009.

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"In my experience, the people of Quebec are 120 per cent behind their soldiers but not necessarily the cause," he said. "This is the disconnect, but we're making progress. They're understanding the mission more. The people of Quebec are rational. They will understand." -- CanWest News Service