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We must finish mission

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Polls show the majority of Canadians no longer support the Afghanistan mission.

How pathetic.

The collective view is that Canada should either be involved in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts or we should bring our troops home. Is this the same nation that purports to care about its fellow man?

When the Taliban took control of Kabul an unknown number of women were hanged to death at the soccer stadium. Women who did not conform to the strict beliefs of the Taliban were beaten on the street with clubs. Afghans have risked their lives to vote for a democracy but because fast-food Canadians feel that it is taking too long and Canadians are being killed, we need to leave.

It's a good thing the same mentality didn't exist at the time of the Normandy invasion.

Wake up people. How can anyone conduct humanitarian activities or reconstruction while dodging rocket-propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices? Security must be the first priority.

John Page

Guelph

Canada won't interfere with Khadr trial

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Canada will not interfere with the U.S. trial of Omar Khadr at Guantanamo Bay, despite increased calls for action.

"Mr. Khadr faces serious charges. Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing," Neil Hrab, spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, said yesterday.

A military appeals court ruled on Monday that Khadr's trial should resume, overturning a lower court decision that dismissed the charges against the Toronto-born detainee.

"We're surprised Canada's not taking a leading role for one of its citizens," said Human Rights Watch's Canadian director Jasmine Herlt last night.

"It's a travesty of justice to have this kid who has been there for five years with no end in sight."

Khadr's case has received little political attention since his capture in Afghanistan in July 2002, largely due to the unpopularity in Canada of his family, whose members have admitted links al-Qaida's top leaders.

But last week Liberal Leader Stephane Dion urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to demand Khadr's trial be held in a civilian court on U.S. soil, not at a military tribunal in Guantanamo Bay. Failing that, the prime minister should demand that Khadr be sent home to face justice in Canada, Dion said.

The Pentagon has tried for years to bring Toronto-born Khadr to trial on charges that include murder in the death of Delta Forces soldier Sgt. First Class Christopher Speer. U.S. Special Forces soldiers detained Khadr following a firefight where Speer received mortal wounds from a grenade. Khadr was 15, and has spent most of his detention in solitary confinement. He turned 21 last week.

Military judge, Col. Peter E. Brownback threw out the charges against Khadr in June after deciding that under the Congress-endorsed rules of the military commission, only "alien unlawful enemy combatants," could be tried. Khadr, and the other 340 detainees still held in Guantanamo, had been declared "enemy combatants" but had not specifically found to be unlawful.

The appeals court ruled that Brownback had jurisdiction to decide himself whether Khadr was "unlawful."

Khadr's lawyers are still deciding whether to appeal Monday's ruling.

60 Taliban killed, coalition reports

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Taliban militants and the U.S.-led coalition fought a daylong battle in southern Afghanistan's poppy-growing belt yesterday, killing more than 60 Taliban fighters and one coalition soldier, military officials said.

Dozens of insurgents attacked a joint coalition-Afghan patrol near the town of Musa Qala in Helmand province with machine-guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, the coalition said in a statement. Taliban reinforcements flowed in from Musa Qala all day, it said.

The coalition troops returned fire and called in artillery fire and attacks by fighter-bombers, leaving more than 60 of the Taliban fighters dead, the coalition said. One coalition soldier was killed and four were wounded.

The statement said there were no immediate reports of civilian deaths or injuries.

"The end is near for the Taliban that believe Musa Qala is safe from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan forces," said Maj. Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesperson. "This combined operation is just one more step to securing the Musa Qala area of the Helmand Province."

Taliban militants overran Musa Qala last February, four months after British troops left the town following a contentious peace agreement that handed over security responsibilities to Afghan elders. The town has been in the Taliban's control ever since.

Situated in northern Helmand province, Musa Qala and the area around it have seen the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan this year. It is the main area for growing illicit opium poppies, a crop that allows Afghanistan to produce more than 90 per cent of the world's heroin.

More than 4,400 people, mostly militants, have died in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an Associated Press count based on figures from Afghan and western officials.

The head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, Karen Tandy, said counternarcotics forces will soon work alongside counter-insurgency troops to try to arrest Afghan drug lords.

"The alliance between these high value drug traffickers and the insurgents clearly has grown," Tandy said during a visit to Afghanistan.

She said troops would not "pull plants or spray plants," but would support interdiction efforts.

NDP claim military wrote Afghan president's speech

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Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was written by the Canadian military as part of an "elaborately staged political stunt," the NDP is charging.

The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers yesterday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

Dawn Black, the NDP defence critic, said the documents indicate military advisers were asked to prepare an initial draft of Karzai's speech, delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said.

"I find it incredible that any foreign head of state would be handed their remarks by the host country's military."

"I never thought that the Canadian military would go this far. This raises serious concerns about the independence of the Afghan president and origin of his recent comments to Canadian media in Kabul," she added later.

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan as saying: "Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai's) address to Parliament 22 Sep."

And Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

Afghan ambassador Omar Samad bristled at the allegation.

"I can say something simple and say it's laughable and I could say something a bit more serious and say it verges on being insulting."

Canadian diplomats may have been asked for input as part of the normal planning process prior to a state visit, Samad acknowledged.

"I have no knowledge of that, but it is customary. Diplomatically, governments talk to each other at all levels."

But the ambassador said he and several other Afghan advisers, including the president's chief of staff, prepared their own versions of the remarks and the final speech went through several drafts, which Karzai edited himself.

In the speech, Karzai thanked the families of soldiers killed in combat and painted an optimistic, but not rosy picture of his country's future.

He also took direct aim at NDP Leader Jack Layton's opposition to the war, saying that those who believe the mission was weighted too heavily toward combat and not enough toward reconstruction were wrong.

The documents released by the NDP suggest the Canadian military's strategic advisory team — a 15-member group that has been helping create and train a new Afghan civil service in Kabul — was the organization that provided the draft of the speech.

Calls to military officials went unanswered yesterday, but a spokesperson for Defence Minister Peter MacKay dismissed the claims as political sniping.

Black said she will seek an investigation by the Commons defence committee into the military's communications campaign.

Another minority gov't likely: PM; In speech to foreign policy group, Stephen Harper also touts contributions on Afghanistan, climate change

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There will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a U.S. foreign policy group yesterday while touting his government's global contributions on Afghanistan, climate change and reaching out to Latin America.

"The possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," said Harper, who appeared relaxed and frank during questions that followed an extensive speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

That wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader, said Harper in what seems to be a preview of a strategy of downplaying any abrupt changes from the Conservatives if there's a snap election this fall.

Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for Oct. 16.

"If I can make my case to the Canadian people, I can pursue an aggressive or well-defined foreign policy," he said.

"This is one area where you do what is right in the long term interests of your country, your allies and the world," said Harper. "Canada will support a government that conducts foreign policy in that manner. Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different as it would be under a majority government."

Bionic limbs for the future; University of New Brunswick researchers join drive to create better, affordable prosthetics for amputees

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As she grew up, Adele Fifield was keenly aware that her artificial leg was more than a few steps behind the bionic marvels portrayed in popular science fiction shows.

The old hydraulic version she used in earlier years worked fine at a slow, steady stroll, but got balky if she changed her speed.

"The knee had pistons or cylinders, like the pistons in a car," says Fifield, 41, head of the National Amputee Centre for The War Amps in Ottawa.

"They would compress and help swing the leg forward. But . . . anytime I would change my speed, I would have to wait for the leg to catch up to me."

Fifield lost most of her left leg when she was 13 years old to the same kind of bone cancer that claimed the life of Canadian hero, Terry Fox.

She has spent the past 28 years as an advocate for Canada's amputees and she has experienced first-hand the technological revolution that is making the loss of a limb, or limbs, much less difficult for an individual to bear.

Fifield was one of the first amputees in Canada to be fitted with a so-called C-leg, referring to the computerized microprocessor in the knee which makes the leg much more responsive and natural.

"The microprocessor has a sensor down into the shin and at the knee and 50 times a second it is sending messages back to the hydraulic unit to open and close the valves instantly to reflect whether I'm speeding up or slowing down," Fifield says.

"It's a significant change. You don't have to think about how you're walking. "

Welcome to the brave new world of cybernetics.

The technology of artificial limbs has come a long way from the peg leg and the hook and, thanks to the cruel reality of modern warfare, there's growing impetus for even more advancements.

In the United States and Canada, government interest in developing better prosthetic limbs has grown as a result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Improvements in body armour and in battlefield medical practices have helped lower the number of casualties from those conflicts, but the side effect has been a significant increase in the number of amputees.

Prosthetic advancements range from complex, thought-controlled devices to the simple, yet elegant design that has allowed sprinter Oscar Pistorius of South Africa to become famous as the fastest man on no legs.

The carbon-fibre blades that Pistorius uses to run on have forced Olympic officials to consider his qualification for the games, and they worry the technology of his prosthetics may give him an unfair advantage over sprinters using their natural legs.

"It's a very exciting time," says Fifield, adding that The War Amps has about 18,000 Canadians registered for its services.

"In my job here, I speak to hundreds of amputees every year. It is very encouraging to be able to say to the parents of a child born without a limb . . . 'the sky is the limit.'"

Fuelling that optimism are scientists like Kevin Englehart and Peter Kyberd at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, home to one of North America's most advanced prosthetic research facilities.

UNB's Institute of Biomedical Engineering has been awarded contracts on two major initiatives sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the U.S. military's research and development wing.

One of the areas of research Englehart is involved in is developing ways to extract information not only from a person's remaining muscles, but also from the nerves and the brain itself.

The science is being applied to thought-controlled prosthetic arms in which nerves are surgically relocated from a missing limb to muscles that are seldom used by an amputee, such as those in the chest.

When an amputee wishes to close the prosthetic hand, signals from the brain travel down the nerves but, instead of reaching a dead end at the missing limb, are re-routed to the chest muscles, causing them to contract.

Electrodes sense this activity, and send a signal to a tiny computer embedded in the artificial limb. The prosthetic hand then closes, allowing the individual to hold a glass or tie a shoe. Thinking "lift" will contract another part of the muscle, allowing the person to raise the prosthetic arm.

Englehart says he knew his research was valuable when one of the people being tested with the arm praised the ease of movement it offered.

"He said, 'I don't have to learn how to use this. This thing learns how to use me,'" Englehart says.

"It validated the 15 years of research we've been doing."

Kyberd, whose research is focused on creating a more dexterous prosthetic hand, says the main hurdle to significant advances in artificial limbs is funding.

He says it is difficult to imagine that any of the latest high-tech designs will be rendered cheap enough for the average Canadian amputee to afford.

Bionic limbs for the future; University of New Brunswick researchers join drive to create better, affordable pro

Fifield's C-leg, for instance, costs in excess of \$50,000 and funding for such products is not always available from insurance companies or public health care programs.

"That's what we're interested in -- developing prosthetic devices that will be affordable for Canadians," Kyberd says.

Harper predicts another minority government

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There will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a U.S. foreign policy group Tuesday while touting his government's global contributions on Afghanistan, climate change and reaching out to Latin America.

"The possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," said Harper, who appeared relaxed and frank during questions that followed an extensive speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

That wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader, said Harper in what seems to be a preview of a strategy of downplaying any abrupt changes from the Conservatives if there's a snap election this fall.

Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for Oct. 16.

"If I can make my case to the Canadian people, I can pursue an aggressive or well-defined foreign policy," he said.

"This is one area where you do what is right in the long term interests of your country, your allies and the world," said Harper.

"Canada will support a government that conducts foreign policy in that manner. Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different as it would be under a majority government."

However, Afghanistan is a big challenge amid enormous pressure at home to get out, admitted Harper, who wants to continue the mission past the current deadline of February 2009 despite rising casualties.

In Ottawa, the Liberals said Harper was intentionally lowering expectations of a Conservative majority to avoid frightening voters.

"He's very calculating," Liberal MP Scott Brison told CTV. "He knows that it's a nightmare scenario for most Canadians."

Harper's detailed speech included some strong swipes at U.S. policy, saying Americans shouldn't be turning their backs on Colombia by blocking a free-trade deal with that country.

"In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America," he said.

"I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?"

He criticized U.S. plans to require passports at the Canada–U.S. border, saying it's neither "well thought out or practical."

Harper cited Canada's leadership role on climate change with a plan to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions 20 per cent by 2020, and 60 to 70 per cent by 2050 from current levels.

"And make no mistake, this system will impose real costs on the Canadian economy," he said.

"The message is that we need to take action. We owe it to future generations. "

Later, Harper touted Canada's "middle ground position" on global warming, between countries like the United States that don't want binding targets and those who want the stringent goals set by the Kyoto accord.

Letters | Anglos have no reason to fear Acadian nation flag flying

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As the descendant of United Empire Loyalists, who more than two centuries ago, settled on recently cleared land in Nova Scotia — land recently cleared of Acadians, that is — I would like to respond to the anti-Francophone attacks in a letter in the Sept. 22 Daily Gleaner.

Woodrow Cleveland's letter claims the raising of an Acadian flag over the New Brunswick Legislature on Acadie Day is tantamount to a coup d'etat. He goes on to draw the tortured and highly offensive analogy to Nazis flying swastikas over legislative buildings.

First, let us clear up some terminology. Cleveland's letter asks, "Is there now an Acadian nation?" Yes, there is indeed an Acadian nation, and there has been for more than 300 years. What he is concerned about is a political state, not a nation.

Second, let us become clear about the true issue. The letter writer professes to be concerned about the simple act of flying a flag other than the Canadian flag.

I believe, however, that his feelings are largely driven by the fact it was not just any flag being flown, but the flag of Acadie. One has a hard time imagining Cleveland feeling as compelled to warn about the danger of flying a flag that celebrated elementary school teachers or the UNB hockey team.

Third, let us also draw from history. Let us remind him — and all our fellow Anglophones — that throughout history, the Acadians had far more to fear from us than we ever had to fear from them.

Many historians believe the British military actually invented ethnic cleansing when they deported the Acadian population from the Maritimes in 1755.

Fourth, let us not fear the Francophones. I was quite surprised at the anxious energy and the great sense of alarm expressed in this letter. What, I find myself wondering, can possibly be the source of all of this anxiety?

Is it perhaps the letter writer fears the Acadian population will rise up and treat our Anglophone population with the same level of exclusion and oppression with which we have treated theirs?

To my fellow Anglophones and fellow descendents of United Empire Loyalists, I would like to say: Relax. We have nothing to worry about. I have many Acadian friends, and I would like to report back to my people that in general the Acadians belong to a very generous, hospitable, loving and friendly culture, and that they have no desire to take away our land or our rights even though we took away theirs in 1755.

Bill Patrick

Fredericton

Grand Lake solution suspect

The story on the meeting about the future of Grand Lake Provincial Park in the Sept. 20 Daily Gleaner made it appear everyone attending agreed with the proposal put forward that evening.

That is not the case. Most supported the proposal that some of the park remain public and the rest be for private use, there was strong disagreement over which areas should be privatized.

The evening ended with consensus that we should form a committee to take a plan to the government.

Some suggested committee members be nominated from the floor so that pro and con views be fairly represented on the committee. This was rejected and we were told if we were interested in serving on this committee we could put our name on a list and the committee would be picked from that list.

I would like to know who is to do the picking.

I was told after the meeting that the reason nominations for the committee were not taken from the floor is because that would put too many opposing people on the committee.

I suspect that by picking committee members from submitted names, the committee will be loaded in favour of pushing the current proposal through unopposed.

Alton D. Morell

Minto, N.B.

History the great educator

Turmoil in Afghanistan, Darfur, Iraq, Lebanon, Middle East and other countries reinforces the significance of studying and understanding history.

How many unintentional errors in judgements and policies have been committed by being unaware of cultural differences?

Alexander the Great, the British Empire and the Soviet Union have all attempted to subdue and make Afghanistan more civilized without much success.

Drug trade, safe havens in Pakistan, suicide bombers and corruption as well as insufficient support from some NATO countries shows a successful resolution of this conflict appears to be many years away.

The American problems in Iraq have been increased by neglecting relationships.

The power struggle and mistrust between the Shiites and Sunnis which have dominated their relationship for more than 1,200 years were ignored. This reality was never given the priority required during and after the invasion.

The United Nations using peacekeeping troops from all nations should intervene more often to prevent genocide and atrocities that take place around the world.

Historical events show that involving individuals who understand and appreciate cultural differences is vital.

History reinforces the importance and power of knowledge.

Harold Phalen

Fredericton

Faith in people restored

There are good people out there.

Living in the College Hill area is challenging now that students are back due to parties and lots of noise. But I have had my faith in human beings renewed.

I had my wallet stolen from my car. There was not much cash in it, but all my ID and my children's ID was in it,

Do you know how hard it is to get that ID back? You can't even get a new bank card without ID.

Of course, I was very upset and thought to my self are there no good people around anymore?

But then, the next week I received a phone call from Fredericton police to tell me someone had found my wallet and turned it in. I was so surprised and happy.

I would just like to thank the person who returned it and let them know they renewed my faith that there are good people around. Thank you.

Lisa Bartlett

Fredericton

ATV not among most dangerous activities, say pediatricians

If the provincial government is so eager to protect our children from using child-sized ATVs even with proper safety training, then I suggest they start looking at banning other dangerous activities as well.

A chart from the Canadian Pediatric Society ranking activities by injury to children shows bicycling, soccer and hockey as the most dangerous activities by far. Riding ATVs does not even make the chart which includes nine activities.

And a new Canadian study says horseback riding is more dangerous than motorcycling, skiing and football. The study showed the hospital injury rate for horseback riding was more than three times that of motorcycling.

Troy Gallagher

Grand Lake ATV Club

A soldier's legacy; \$50,000 donation to support Megeney memorial at NSCC

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PAGE: B2

BYLINE: Mary Ellen Macintyre Truro Bureau

ILLUSTRATION: Dexter Megeney, Cpl. Kevin Megeney's father, comforts the late corporal's niece, Brittany Lawand, after a ceremony announcing an award in his son's memory Tuesday in Stellarton. (Mary Ellen MacIntyre / Truro Bureau); Cpl. Brent Bowden, a longtime friend of Cpl. Kevin Megeney, a young Stellarton soldier who lost his life in March while serving in Afghanistan, reminisces before a photograph of him and Cpl. Megeney on Tuesday. Cpl. Bowden spoke at a ceremony announcing an award in memory of his friend at the Pictou campus of Nova Scotia Community College in Stellarton. (Mary Ellen MacIntyre / Truro Bureau)

WORD COUNT: 324

STELLARTON – Cpl. Kevin Megeney would have fit in with any one of the laughing, boisterous groups of young men strolling the hallways of the community college here Tuesday.

His wide, white smile, strong, good looks and copper hair might have made him stand out a little, but his youth and his seeming enthusiasm for life would have probably made him part of the crowd. Instead, the soldier was being immortalized before a quiet crowd inside the gym Tuesday with the announcement of a \$50,000 award donated in his name anonymously.

"He was my colleague, my buddy and lifelong friend," said Cpl. Brent Bowden, who served in Afghanistan with Cpl. Megeney. The 25-year-old died March 6 in what the military has described as an accidental shooting. The results of the investigation have yet to be released. "Twenty-four/seven we served together in Afghanistan and every minute of every day he was always there," Cpl. Bowden recalled.

As he and others spoke during the ceremony, photographs of Cpl. Megeney were flashed onto the stage's wall.

One showed Cpl. Bowden acting silly as he sat on his friend's knee, both wearing camouflage uniforms.

By all accounts, Cpl. Megeney enjoyed a good laugh and being surrounded by friends and family. In fact, there were very few photos that didn't show his wide, happy smile.

Cpl. Bowden said he hopes community college students who receive the Cpl. Megeney Memorial Award will remember the young soldier's sacrifice.

An annual award of \$2,000 will go to the first-year student who demonstrates a commitment to their community. Financial need will also be a consideration. A photo of Cpl. Megeney in full dress uniform will hang at the Pictou campus of the community college.

Fourteen-year-old Brittany Lawand, Cpl. Megeney's niece, spoke of her family's surprise when told an anonymous donor wanted to create the award in his honour.

Although there is no donor name to acknowledge or a hand to shake in gratitude, Ms. Lawand said the family has been deeply touched by the gesture.

The ceremony took place just hours after word that another Canadian soldier has died in Afghanistan, bringing the death toll to 71.()

60 Taliban fighters killed in day long battle

PUBLICATION: The
Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.26
SECTION: World
PAGE: A10
SOURCE: The Associated
Press
BYLINE: Nasser Karimi
WORD COUNT: 206

KABUL, Afghanistan – Taliban militants and the U.S.–led coalition fought a daylong battle in southern Afghanistan's poppy–growing belt Tuesday, killing more than 60 Taliban fighters and one coalition soldier, military officials said.

Dozens of insurgents attacked a joint coalition–Afghan patrol near the town of Musa Qala in Helmand province with machine–guns, mortars and rocket–propelled grenades, the coalition said in a statement. Taliban reinforcements flowed in from Musa Qala all day, it said.

The coalition troops returned fire and called in artillery fire and attacks by fighter–bombers, leaving more than 60 of the Taliban fighters dead, the coalition said. Canadian soldier, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg of the King's Own Calgary Regiment, was killed. Four other coalition soldiers were wounded.

The statement said there were no immediate reports of civilian deaths or injuries.

"The end is near for the Taliban that believe Musa Qala is safe from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan forces," said Maj. Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesman. "This combined operation is just one more step to securing the Musa Qalah area of the Helmand Province."

Taliban militants overran Musa Qala last February, four months after British troops left the town following a contentious peace agreement that handed over security responsibilities to Afghan elders. The town has been in the Taliban's control ever since.

60 Taliban fighters killed in battle

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Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.26
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PAGE: A8
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Minority likely, Harper says; PM touts Canada's middle ground policy on climate change targets

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald
DATE: 2007.09.26
SECTION: World
PAGE: A4
SOURCE: The Canadian Press
BYLINE: Beth Gorham
ILLUSTRATION: Prime Minister Stephen Harper predicted a minority government and touted Canada's climate change policies during a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City on Tuesday. (TOM HANSON / CP)
WORD COUNT: 698

NEW YORK – There will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a U.S. foreign policy group Tuesday while touting his government's global contributions on Afghanistan, climate change and reaching out to Latin America.

"The possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," said Harper, who appeared relaxed and frank during questions that followed an extensive speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

That wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader, said Harper in what seems to be a preview of a strategy of downplaying any abrupt changes from the Conservatives if there's a snap election this fall. Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for Oct. 16.

"If I can make my case to the Canadian people, I can pursue an aggressive or well-defined foreign policy," he said.

"This is one area where you do what is right in the long term interests of your country, your allies and the world," said Harper. "Canada will support a government that conducts foreign policy in that manner. Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different as it would be under a majority government."

However, Afghanistan is a big challenge amid enormous pressure at home to get out, admitted Harper, who wants to continue the mission past the current deadline of February 2009 despite rising casualties.

In Ottawa, the Liberals said Harper was intentionally lowering expectations of a Conservative majority to avoid frightening voters. "He's very calculating," Liberal MP Scott Brison told CTV. "He knows that it's a nightmare scenario for most Canadians."

Harper's detailed speech included some strong swipes at U.S. policy, saying Americans shouldn't be turning their backs on Colombia by blocking a free-trade deal with that country.

"In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America," he said. "I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?"

He criticized U.S. plans to require passports at the Canada–U.S. border, saying it's neither "well thought out or practical."

Harper cited Canada's leadership role on climate change with a plan to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions 20 per cent by 2020, and 60 to 70 per cent by 2050 from current levels.

"And make no mistake, this system will impose real costs on the Canadian economy," he said. "The message is that we need to take action. We owe it to future generations."

Later, Harper touted Canada's "middle ground position" on global warming, between countries like the United States that don't want binding targets and those who want the stringent goals set by the Kyoto accord.

He denied that Canada's decision this week to join a climate change group known as the AP6 – the Asia–Pacific Partnership formed by six countries including the United States – is an attempt to thwart mandatory reductions.

While emphasizing the benefits of the North American free–trade deal, Harper said there won't be any progress on deepening the pact "in the immediate future" because of the U.S. preoccupation with security following the 2001 terrorist attacks.

He also said he's "deeply concerned" about rising protectionist sentiment as the 2008 U.S. presidential race gears up and candidates talk about reopening the trade deal.

"Anybody who questions the importance of that (relationship) or who works contrary to those interests, I think is not serving the public very well."

Harper chuckled with the well–heeled audience when asked why Canada isn't hated around the world like the United States.

"Um, well. I'm trying to think of how to answer that one," he said to loud laughter.

"The American administration, to be frank, is more widely unpopular than the United States itself. But that's ultimately an issue of American domestic policy."

Canada, he said, has "no history anywhere in the world of conquest or domination. It's probably hard to perceive of Canada" being in that kind of position.

He said it also helps that Canada is somewhat of a model for U.S. values but also more complex, calling the country a "positive and non–threatening force."

What's important, he said, is a good working relationship between the two countries, said Harper, who alluded to tense relations with the U.S. under the previous Liberal government.

"What I don't want to do . . . is to stand on the sidelines bragging about our differences and not really accomplishing anything. We want to take a different tack."

Karzai's speech not his own?; Afghan envoy denies NDP claim Canadian military wrote his remarks to Commons

PUBLICATION: The Chronicle–Herald

DATE: 2007.09.26

SECTION: Canada

PAGE: A3

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

ILLUSTRATION: NDP MP Dawn Black told reporters in Ottawa on Tuesday that she has documents that indicate Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was an elaborately staged political stunt. (FRED CHARTRAND / CP)

WORD COUNT: 540

OTTAWA – Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was written by the Canadian military as part of an "elaborately staged political stunt," the NDP is charging.

The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers Tuesday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

Dawn Black, the NDP defence critic, said the documents indicate military advisers were asked to prepare an initial draft of Karzai's speech, delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said.

"I find it incredible that any foreign head of state would be handed their remarks by the host country's military. It's totally incredible to me. When our prime minister visited the parliament in Australia, I can't imagine the remarks were prepared by the Australian government."

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan as saying: "Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai's) address to Parliament 22 Sep."

And Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

Afghan ambassador Omar Samad bristled at the allegation.

"I can say something simple and say it's laughable and I could say something a bit more serious and say it verges on being insulting." Canadian diplomats may have been asked for input as part of the the normal planning process prior to a state visit, Samad acknowledged. "I have no knowledge of that, but it is customary. Diplomatically, governments talk to each other at all levels."

But the ambassador said he and several other Afghan advisers, including the president's chief of staff, prepared their own versions of the remarks and the final speech went through several drafts, which Karzai edited himself.

"He personally added and took things out and we worked on it for several hours before he delivered it," said Samad.

In the speech, Karzai thanked the families of soldiers killed in combat and painted an optimistic, but not rosy picture of his country's future.

He also took direct aim at NDP Leader Jack Layton's opposition to the war, saying that those who believe the mission was weighted too heavily toward combat and not enough toward reconstruction were wrong.

The documents released by the NDP suggest the Canadian military's strategic advisory team – a 15-member group that has been helping create and train a new Afghan civil service in Kabul – was the organization that provided the draft of the speech. The unit also apparently provided a communications officer who accompanied Karzai's delegation on his trip to Ottawa and New York.

Calls to military officials went unanswered Tuesday, but a spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay dismissed the claims as political sniping.

"The NDP's attempt to undermine President Karzai's integrity shows once again its willingness to say anything as it opposes Canada's commitment to the United Nations and NATO to help Afghanistan," Dan Dugas said in an e-mail note.

"President Karzai's speech to Parliament was an eloquent and heartfelt thank-you to Canada for the sacrifices of its soldiers in helping Afghanistan live in freedom. That a visiting dignitary's office would want facts and figures to deliver a speech to Parliament is neither a precedent, nor a surprise."

Black said she plans to call for an emergency debate on the issue in the House of Commons when Parliament resumes next month.

She also said she will seek an investigation by the Commons defence committee into the military's communications campaign.

Canadian exit won't put Afghanistan in a better position

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.26

SECTION: Opinion

PAGE: A7

COLUMN: Political affairs

BYLINE: Gwyn, Richard

WORD COUNT: 567

The meeting on Afghanistan organized by the United Nations this week of representatives from 18 countries, produced, as UN meetings usually do, fine words but precious little action.

Those taking part, including Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, agreed on a communiqué that condemned "terrorism which hindered the establishment of the rule of law and the provision of basic services to the Afghan people."

There was one reason for paying any attention. This meeting served as a reminder that military intervention in Afghanistan, including Canada's, is sanctioned by the UN.

According to the latest poll by Ipsos-Reid, two in three Canadians polled (68 per cent) want us to pull out when our mission there reaches its agreed deadline of February 2009 but a majority (56 per cent) wants our troops out even earlier.

At a glance, those results seem to make it certain we will be gone from Afghanistan relatively soon.

The stage for this has been set already by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He has declared the decision to stay or go will have to be made by Parliament, rather than just by his government alone.

How MPs actually vote will be influenced by what Canadians say they want done—most especially since an early election is so likely.

Except that none of these feelings showed in recent byelection results in Quebec, the most strongly anti-war region in the country. Although the New Democrats, who favour an immediate withdrawal, did win the Montreal riding of Outremont, the Conservatives, overall, were the big winners.

Also noteworthy is the fact that one principal reason why many Canadians today oppose our involvement in Afghanistan will have vanished by the February departure date.

By then, George W. Bush will no longer be president of the United States. Ever-increasing media attention to the U.S. presidential contest will cause more and more Canadians to realize global power decisions will soon be made by someone else – perhaps by a President Hillary Clinton, but certainly not Bush.

Though it's relatively easy to argue that it's best for us to leave Afghanistan, it's difficult, if not impossible, to argue that our doing so would leave Afghans better off.

"Afghanistan will fall back into anarchy," Afghan President Hamid Karzai told a group of Canadian journalists recently. "Leaving Afghanistan alone now will bring back all the evils that were here" under the

Taliban.

Karzai put his finger on perhaps the most painful aspect of the decision. This is that our exit won't just leave the way open for "anarchy" to return to the area of our military operations in Kandahar; anarchy and old evils will return to all of Afghanistan.

Troops from more than 20 nations are in Afghanistan but fewer than half a dozen of these contingents fight directly against the Taliban – the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the Dutch and the Australians.

If we go, it's virtually certain the Dutch will go. If the Dutch go, the Australians have already said they will go.

In the words of a spokesperson for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, that has "consequences for the whole alliance and for the whole western world."

The solution of course would be a real contribution – a fighting one – by the major NATO nations like Germany, France, Spain and Italy.

A precondition for that solution to be possible would be for Canada to stay. No less so a precondition for Canada to stay would have to be for those nations, at last, to make serious contributions.

It's not about cutting and running. It's about standing back – we've more than contributed our share – and then watching, as the gap we'll leave behind turns into a huge hole into which the entire country eventually tumbles.

To say that's not the Canadian way is obvious. No less obvious, therefore, is that today's polls tell us nothing about what Canadians will decide they want.

Richard Gwyn is a national affairs columnist. Copyright 2007 Torstar Syndication Services.

Afghanistan position is strategic

PUBLICATION: The Guardian (Charlottetown)

DATE: 2007.09.26

SECTION: Editorial

PAGE: A6

COLUMN: Letters to the editor

WORD COUNT: 237

Editor:

As the battle in Guardian letters to the editor rages for and against the Afghanistan fiasco, it hit me that despite the multi-billions of dollars spent on planes, bombs, tanks, electronics and other machines, war breaks down to one person pointing a gun at another and pulling the trigger.

No doubt Afghanistan is strategic. It is the gateway and passage to crude petroleum. Whichever country controls it controls the flow of oil. Say so, don't use other excuses.

Our military suggests China is supplying the Taliban in Afghanistan with weapons, in particular, devices to make improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It is alleged one device with Chinese components killed a Canadian military officer.

If this is true it makes a mockery of the U.S. law against 'Trading with the Enemy'. Trade with and travel to Cuba is banned because it nationalized U.S. business, a much lesser crime than supplying weapons of death and destruction, yet we buy from China and the U.S. imports billions of dollars as well. Perhaps knowing this will unite both sides on the issue.

Further hypocrisy; end the demand to 'support our troops'. Let's support Canadian veterans and their widows from other wars. I stress their widows because these (mostly) women did not have the opportunity to work outside the home back then, and if one is in financial need after the death of a husband and their pension is reduced, one is too many.

Dan MacInnis,

Brampton, Ont.

Minority likely, Harper tells U.S.

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.26

SECTION: International

PAGE: A11

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

DATELINE: New York

ILLUSTRATION: Prime Minister Stephen Harper answers questions following his speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City Tuesday. – Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 247

There will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a U.S. foreign policy group Tuesday while touting his government's global contributions on Afghanistan, climate change and reaching out to Latin America.

"The possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," said Harper, who appeared relaxed and frank during questions that followed an extensive speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

That wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader, said Harper in what seems to be a preview of a strategy of downplaying any abrupt changes from the Conservatives if there's a snap election this fall. Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for Oct. 16.

"If I can make my case to the Canadian people, I can pursue an aggressive or well-defined foreign policy," he said.

"This is one area where you do what is right in the long term interests of your country, your allies and the world," said Harper. "Canada will support a government that conducts foreign policy in that manner. Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different as it would be under a majority government."

However, Afghanistan is a big challenge amid enormous pressure at home to get out, admitted Harper, who wants to continue the mission past the current deadline of February 2009 despite rising casualties.

NDP questions speech; Says Canadian military wrote Afghan president's comments to Parliament

PUBLICATION: The Telegram (St. John's)

DATE: 2007.09.26

SECTION: National

PAGE: A10

SOURCE: The Canadian Press

BYLINE: Murray Brewster

DATELINE: Ottawa

ILLUSTRATION: NDP MP Dawn Black addresses a news conference in Ottawa, Tuesday. Black says she has documents that indicate Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was an elaborately staged political stunt. – Photo by The Canadian Press

WORD COUNT: 532

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The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers Tuesday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

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She also said she will seek an investigation by the Commons defence committee into the military's communications campaign.

Kabul Afghans want NATO to stay; Residents of bustling capital appreciate the international forces that 'come to fight beside us, not against us'

IDNUMBER 200709260039

PUBLICATION: Vancouver Sun

DATE: 2007.09.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A15

ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Shah Marai, Agence France–Presse; Getty Images / U.S. soldiers pass by Afghan policemen as they stand guard at a checkpoint near the partly ruined Darlaman Palace in Kabul on Tuesday. The Afghan capital is flush with aid money and revenue from this year's bumper crop of illegal opium and appears more prosperous and liberal than it was. ;

KEYWORDS: WAR; FOREIGN AID; TERRORISM; AFGHANISTAN

DATELINE: KABUL

BYLINE: Matthew Fisher

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 705

KABUL — For residents of Afghanistan's bustling capital, the prospective departure of Canada's soldiers by February 2009 produces mostly quizzical looks. It seems inconceivable that NATO's International Security Assistance Force would withdraw its troops, leaving these war-weary people to the mercy of the Taliban and al-Qaida.

Even the more benign alternative to a complete withdrawal — training Afghan soldiers and police to look after security while western nations focus on humanitarian and development work — is at best undesirable.

"What is the point of sending your army to Afghanistan if it isn't going to fight?" demands Muhammad Noor Sahak, director of the OMAR war museum and a graduate student in Pushtun literature.

"Given Afghanistan's famous warrior culture, most Afghans like ISAF but they will only continue liking ISAF if they think it is making their lives more secure. And the only way to do that is to fight. If ISAF fails, the Russians, who don't want NATO here, could interfere. So will Iran. Pakistan is already interfering."

"I don't like ISAF. I love them. They are good people," said Balyaly, a 22-year-old carpet salesman, who like many Afghans uses only one name.

"My guess is that at least 80 per cent of our people support them, although it may be more than that. The Taliban is very popular in a few places, but not many."

He seemed genuinely shocked that Canada is considering withdrawing its 2,500 troops from the volatile south of Afghanistan and that the Netherlands is contemplating a similar pullout.

Mukhtar Subur, 19, who like many young Afghans does not have a job, was also adamant that the NATO forces must remain and continue to fight.

Kabul Afghans want NATO to stay; Residents of bustling capital appreciate the international forces that 'come

"Our whole country profits from the gifts of ISAF," Subur says. "If they leave, we all know the Taliban will come back and the Afghan people will have trouble again."

Hamid Fahim, who collects ancient Enfield rifles used by the mujahedeen in their holy war against the Red Army during the 1980s, observes that Afghanistan has been in a state of perpetual war for nearly three decades.

By contrast, the Canadians, who first fought on the front lines in Kandahar in 2002, are relative newcomers. Seventy Canadian soldiers have died here — about the number of Afghans who die fighting on many days.

"They are not like the Russians who tried to take our whole country," Fahim said. "ISAF comes to fight beside us, not against us. It is much better for us if they stay."

His father, Abdul Hadi, who thought he might be 57 years old but looked much older, also complimented ISAF and the Canadians, but said they must do more to bring security to Afghanistan.

"I don't like the Taliban at all. But I remember that, during the Taliban days, if someone was killed the Taliban would kill his killer. I liked that because it meant that we were not afraid."

Flush with aid money and money from this year's bumper crop of illegal opium, Kabul appears far more prosperous and liberal than it was.

Everyday, more and more women shed the all-encompassing burka and show their faces, something that always led to a beating when the Taliban ruled.

But Kabul's confidence has been shaken by recent suicide bombings and a spate of kidnappings of local businessmen. The government and ISAF seem unable to do anything about it.

A persistent complaint about the government of President Hamid Karzai has been that many of its senior ministers are corrupt warlords.

"The Taliban had good and bad points," said Nadir, a 40-year-old pharmacist. "One of the good points was that they were not corrupt."

"It is essential that Canada keep its army here," he said.

Again and again Afghans mentioned that many ISAF countries, such as Germany and Italy, have seemed more concerned with protecting themselves than sending out troops to attack the Taliban. Such behaviour strikes Afghans, with their strong warrior culture, as bizarre.

"If all the money being spent by those ISAF countries that don't fight here was spent on us, we would already have a bigger and better army," says Sahak as he shows a visitor around his museum. "We would also have better schools and more doctors and nurses and engineers."

Items on display in the museum include ingenious makeshift killer devices: appliances such as rice cookers rigged to hold explosives and an amazing variety of jerry-rigged landmines and guns, Scud missiles, U.S. cluster bombs and Soviet attack helicopters.

"We need foreign help with everything but we do not want to lose our culture because without that we die as a people," Sahak said. "This is what ISAF must understand and it isn't always easy. The Taliban is stronger now than it was two years ago. We can only be free with ISAF's help."

Kabul Afghans want NATO to stay; Residents of bustling capital appreciate the international forces that 'com

Nearly 1,000 soldiers honour victim

IDNUMBER 200709260082
PUBLICATION: The Leader-Post (Regina)
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: D9
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Cpl. Nathan Hornburg;
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, Afghanistan
BYLINE: Matthew Fisher
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 590

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- As the skirl from a lone piper playing "Amazing Grace" drifted across the silent tarmac, nearly 1,000 troops of Task Force Afghanistan saluted their fallen comrade Cpl. Nathan Hornburg just before dawn today as the 24-year-old mechanic from Alberta began his last trip home on board a Canadian Forces C-130 Hercules transport.

"As a reservist he could have stayed in Canada as a landscaper. Instead he chose to make a difference in this world," said Maj. Pierre Bergeron, before flag-draped coffin was carried to the aircraft by soldiers from the armoured crew member's reservist unit, the King's Own Calgary Regiment, and from the Edmonton-based Lord Strathcona's Horse.

Hornburg was killed Monday when he was struck by a mortar as he tried to fix a tread on his Leopard tank that had just fallen off in a cluster of villages in Panjwahi District, 47 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

During his brief sermon, Bergeron invoked the words of Edmund Burke, saying: "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Among those mourning Hornburg's death at the dignified ramp ceremony were two Canadian generals and hundreds of Canadian soldiers, including three with war wounds who watched the proceedings from their wheelchairs. Also attending the service, which began as the moon set and before the sun rose, were large numbers of soldiers from Britain, Australia, France, the U.S., and some from France and Denmark.

"To be faithful to those who have died is not to be sad," said Capt. Claude Pigeon, who also presided over the brief ceremony. "As you pass us a last time, Nathan, we remember you and how you tried to make the world a better place."

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, the Canadian commander, expressed his "sincere condolences" to the fallen soldier's family. "There is no way to comfort his family, friends and comrades today except to say that Cpl. Hornburg believed in the mission he was involved in," Laroche said.

Another soldier, a reservist attached to a squadron of the Edmonton-based Lord Strathcona's Horse squadron, was wounded in the same skirmish as Hornburg. Three other infantrymen, based in Quebec, were then wounded by rocket-propelled grenades when they engaged the insurgents who had fired at Hornburg as they tried to carry him away from the fighting. These soldiers were "doing well" and did not have life-threatening injuries, Laroche said.

On Tuesday, another Canadian soldier was seriously wounded in a Taliban ambush. The soldier, whose name was not released, was part of a joint patrol of Canadian army and Afghan police officers. The daylight attack, 42 kilometres west of Kandahar City, involved rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. The soldier, a member of a Police Operational Mentor Liaison, was airlifted to a British military hospital at Camp Bastien in Helmand province for specialist care.

Hornburg was the first Canadian to have died in ground combat in Afghanistan since last October. Much more common are deaths by improvised explosive devices embedded in the road or by suicide bombers. More than half of the 71 Canadian soldiers who have now died in Afghanistan since 2002 have been killed in Panjwairi or the neighbouring district of Zhari.

On Monday, a battle group from Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, often referred to as the Van Doo, and tanks from the Strathcona were conducting a daylong sweep dubbed Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz (Good Soldier) "to increase security in northern Panjwairi" and to establish a police station, Laroche said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 480

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) _ Taliban militants and the U.S.-led coalition fought a daylong battle in southern Afghanistan's poppy-growing belt Tuesday, killing more than 60 Taliban fighters and one coalition soldier, military officials said.

Dozens of insurgents attacked a joint coalition-Afghan patrol near the town of Musa Qala in Helmand province with machine-guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, the coalition said in a statement. Taliban reinforcements flowed in from Musa Qala all day, it said.

The coalition troops returned fire and called in artillery fire and attacks by fighter-bombers, leaving more than 60 of the Taliban fighters dead, the coalition said. One coalition soldier was killed and four were wounded.

The statement said there were no immediate reports of civilian deaths or injuries.

"The end is near for the Taliban that believe Musa Qala is safe from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan forces," said Maj. Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesman. "This combined operation is just one more step to securing the Musa Qalah area of the Helmand Province."

Taliban militants overran Musa Qala last February, four months after British troops left the town following a contentious peace agreement that handed over security responsibilities to Afghan elders. The town has been in the Taliban's control ever since.

Situated in northern Helmand province, Musa Qala and the area around it have seen the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan this year. It is the main area for growing illicit opium poppies, a crop that allows Afghanistan to produce more than 90 per cent of the world's heroin.

More than 4,400 people, mostly militants, have died in insurgency-related violence this year, according to an Associated Press count based on figures from Afghan and western officials.

The head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, Karen Tandy, said counternarcotics forces will soon work alongside counterinsurgency troops to try to arrest Afghan drug lords.

"The alliance between these high value drug traffickers and the insurgents clearly has grown," Tandy said during a visit to Afghanistan.

She said troops would not "pull plants or spray plants," but would support interdiction efforts.

Canadian military officials reported that a Canadian soldier, Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, was killed and four comrades were wounded while on patrol Monday in the Panjwaii district of the southern province of Kandahar.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Monday that his government would announce by April whether it will extend Canada's combat mission. Seventy-one Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have died in Afghanistan

since the Taliban was ousted in late 2002.

Elsewhere, a NATO helicopter overturned while landing to evacuate Afghan policemen wounded by a roadside bomb in the western province of Badghis, but no hostile fire was involved in the accident, NATO said. A second helicopter flew out the crew and two wounded officers, it said.

In the southern province of Kandahar, a suicide bomber blew himself up next to a convoy of a border security commander, killing five police officers, said the district border security commander, Abdul Raziq Khan, who was not hurt. Three policemen and a civilian were wounded.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 656

OTTAWA _ Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was written by the Canadian military as part of an "elaborately staged political stunt," the NDP is charging.

The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers Tuesday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

Dawn Black, the NDP defence critic, said the documents indicate military advisers were asked to prepare an initial draft of Karzai's speech, delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said.

"I find it incredible that any foreign head of state would be handed their remarks by the host country's military. It's totally incredible to me. When our prime minister visited the Parliament in Australia, I can't imagine the remarks were prepared by the Australian government."

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan as saying: "Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai's) address to Parliament 22 Sep."

And Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

Afghan ambassador Omar Samad bristled at the allegation.

"I can say something simple and say it's laughable and I could say something a bit more serious and say it verges on being insulting."

Canadian diplomats may have been asked for input as part of the the normal planning process prior to a state visit, Samad acknowledged.

"I have no knowledge of that, but it is customary. Diplomatically, governments talk to each other at all levels."

But the ambassador said he and several other Afghan advisers, including the president's chief of staff, prepared their own versions of the remarks and the final speech went through several drafts, which Karzai edited himself.

"He personally added and took things out and we worked on it for several hours before he delivered it," said Samad.

In the speech, Karzai thanked the families of soldiers killed in combat and painted an optimistic, but not rosy picture of his country's future.

He also took direct aim at NDP Leader Jack Layton's opposition to the war, saying that those who believe the mission was weighted too heavily toward combat and not enough toward reconstruction were wrong.

The documents released by the NDP suggest the Canadian military's strategic advisory team _ a 15-member group that has been helping create and train a new Afghan civil service in Kabul _ was the organization that provided the draft of the speech. The unit also apparently provided a communications officer who accompanied Karzai's delegation on his trip to Ottawa and New York.

Calls to military officials went unanswered Tuesday, but a spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay dismissed the claims as political sniping.

``The NDP's attempt to undermine President Karzai's integrity shows once again its willingness to say anything as it opposes Canada's commitment to the United Nations and NATO to help Afghanistan," Dan Dugas said in an e-mail note.

``President Karzai's speech to Parliament was an eloquent and heartfelt thank you to Canada for the sacrifices of its soldiers in helping Afghanistan live in freedom. That a visiting dignitary's office would want facts and figures to deliver a speech to Parliament is neither a precedent, nor a surprise."

Black said she plans to call for an emergency debate on the issue in the House of Commons when Parliament resumes next month.

She also said she will seek an investigation by the Commons defence committee into the military's communications campaign.

The revelation about the speech raises questions about Karzai's meeting with Canadian reporters last week and his impassioned plea for combat troops to remain beyond a self-imposed February 2009 deadline

Journalists embedded with the Canadian army in Kandahar were flown by the military to Kabul for a sit-down interview with the president.

A Foreign Affairs official said the group interview was offered by Karzai's office following individual requests from several news organizations. Those requests were passed to the Afghans through Canadian diplomats in Kabul.

``There has been speculation about the resources that the Department of National Defence is pouring into trying to sell this mission to the Canadian people," Black said.

``I never thought that the Canadian military would go this far. This raises serious concerns about the independence of the Afghan president and origin of his recent comments to Canadian media in Kabul."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 579

CALGARY _ Word of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg's death in Afghanistan hit the small King's Own Calgary Regiment hard Tuesday, but the grieving stretched across the country and beyond.

Hornburg was a reserve soldier who grew up in southern Alberta's ranch country in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains.

He was killed Monday when he drove his armoured recovery vehicle forward under fire to help put a track back on a Leopard tank during Operation Honest Soldier in one of the most volatile and dangerous regions in Afghanistan.

Hornburg's commanding officer in Calgary, Lt.-Col. Rick Coates, said the tragic news hit the 86 soldiers in his regiment hard.

``We all know each other very well and it really hits home," he said late Tuesday.

``We were really hoping that this wasn't going to happen but it did. Here it is."

Several of Hornburg's close friends said Tuesday they had been inspired to join the military after he had signed up.

``The military made him stronger _ we were the same size before he was in," said Mike Pederson. ``After he was in he could kick my butt. I admired that."

``Nathan is the kind of guy that when something like this happened he is the only person that I know of who could comfort me."

Pederson said during one of their last conversations, Hornburg said he'd be laughing on the plane back to Canada after his tour was over.

``But now I know he's laughing at us for making all this silly fuss over him because he's somewhere really awesome."

Cpl. Bonnie Critchley said Hornburg was a good buddy within the regiment, who was always there even during the years when people weren't very interested in showing up for the reserves.

``Every Remembrance Day we'd do the parade and we'd sit in the mess and we'd tell stories, and pretend we had war stories to tell," said Critchley. ``And eventually people started getting tours, we had actual war stories to tell and Nathan couldn't wait for his."

Master Cpl. Jamie Good coached Hornburg on the regimental hockey team and said whether it was on the ice or in the field, he was an inspiration.

``He gave us laughs and in the end he represents the very best this unit can offer."

The grieving for Canada's 71st soldier to die in Afghanistan wasn't contained to his regiment. An Internet condolences site sprang up within hours after news of his death became public.

By the end of the day there were nine pages of thoughts and prayers. They came in English and French, from coast to coast and even other countries like the U.S. and Europe.

Some were quintessentially Canadian.

“God bless man. It was great playing hockey with you,” read one entry.

Many others bore sad acknowledgment to the heavy price of Canada's involvement in a violent land half a world away.

“I hoped and prayed this morning that this was not OUR Nathan they were speaking of on the news. The war seems quite distant and impersonal until a friend and schoolmate is so deeply affected by it,” wrote Ashley Hamilton from Vancouver.

“Every time I hear of another soldier being killed over there, a little piece of my heart breaks,” wrote Dave Murphy from Toronto.

Adding a haunting element to Hornburg's death was the prevalence of his own voice Tuesday from interviews he'd done with local media back in August before leaving Canada for the last time.

“I guess I'm just cautious about everything _ got some apprehension,” the 24-year-old armoured crewman told CTV.

“It's almost like a rite of passage in the army, you've been training for it so you want to be able to actually go and apply the skills you've learned,” he said.

“Part of the training is just to have a trained reserve in the country, but you'd like to actually go with your brothers in arms and do your job.”

Hornburg's death also hit hard in Nanton, a small town south of Calgary where his family owns a ranch.

“All of a sudden the Afghan war came to Nanton and we lost one of ours, so it means a whole lot more than just hearing it on the news (about) someone you've never heard or met,” Mayor John Blake told radio station CHQR.

“As soon as it's one of your own, then all of a sudden it takes on a great big picture for you.”

Another Canadian minority likely, Harper tells U.S. foreign policy group

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 677

NEW YORK _ There will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a U.S. foreign policy group Tuesday while touting his government's global contributions on Afghanistan, climate change and reaching out to Latin America.

“The possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high,” said Harper, who appeared relaxed and frank during questions that followed an extensive speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

That wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader, said Harper in what seems to be a preview of a strategy of downplaying any abrupt changes from the Conservatives if there's a snap election this fall.

Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for Oct. 16.

“If I can make my case to the Canadian people, I can pursue an aggressive or well-defined foreign policy,” he said.

“This is one area where you do what is right in the long term interests of your country, your allies and the world,” said Harper.

“Canada will support a government that conducts foreign policy in that manner. Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different as it would be under a majority government.”

However, Afghanistan is a big challenge amid enormous pressure at home to get out, admitted Harper, who wants to continue the mission past the current deadline of February 2009 despite rising casualties.

In Ottawa, the Liberals said Harper was intentionally lowering expectations of a Conservative majority to avoid frightening voters.

“He's very calculating,” Liberal MP Scott Brison told CTV. “He knows that it's a nightmare scenario for most Canadians.”

Harper's detailed speech included some strong swipes at U.S. policy, saying Americans shouldn't be turning their backs on Colombia by blocking a free-trade deal with that country.

“In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America,” he said. “I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?”

He criticized U.S. plans to require passports at the Canada-U.S. border, saying it's neither “well thought out or practical.”

Harper cited Canada's leadership role on climate change with a plan to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions 20 per cent by 2020, and 60 to 70 per cent by 2050 from current levels.

“And make no mistake, this system will impose real costs on the Canadian economy,” he said. “The message is that we need to take action. We owe it to future generations.”

Later, Harper touted Canada's “middle ground position” on global warming, between countries like the United States that don't want binding targets and those who want the stringent goals set by the Kyoto accord.

He denied that Canada's decision this week to join a climate change group known as the AP6 _ the Asia-Pacific Partnership formed by six countries including the United States _ is an attempt to thwart mandatory reductions.

While emphasizing the benefits of the North American free-trade deal, Harper said there won't be any progress on deepening the pact “in the immediate future” because of the U.S. preoccupation with security following the 2001 terrorist attacks.

He also said he's “deeply concerned” about rising protectionist sentiment as the 2008 U.S. presidential race gears up and candidates talk about reopening the trade deal.

“Anybody who questions the importance of that (relationship) or who works contrary to those interests, I think is not serving the public very well.”

Harper chuckled with the well-heeled audience when asked why Canada isn't hated around the world like the United States.

“Um, well. I'm trying to think of how to answer that one,” he said to loud laughter.

“The American administration, to be frank, is more widely unpopular than the United States itself. But that's ultimately an issue of American domestic policy.”

Canada, he said, has “no history anywhere in the world of conquest or domination. It's probably hard to perceive of Canada” being in that kind of position.

He said it also helps that Canada is somewhat of a model for U.S. values but also more complex, calling the country a “positive and non-threatening force.”

What's important, he said, is a good working relationship between the two countries, said Harper, who alluded to tense relations with the U.S. under the previous Liberal government.

“What I don't want to do ... is to stand on the sidelines bragging about our differences and not really accomplishing anything. We want to take a different tact.”

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
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WORD COUNT: 1945

HEADLINES: _ Iran's president takes his case to world leaders gathered at U.N.

- _ Bush challenges U.N. to revisit its roots and advance freedom
- _ Supreme Court agrees to review constitutionality of lethal injection
- _ Supreme Court to scrutinize voter ID laws some say deter poor, minorities from voting
- _ UAW strike at GM plants is likely to be a short one
- _ Study: Quickly treating employee depression helps workers and company's bottom line

DEVELOPING:

- _ TROPICAL WEATHER: Next advisory set for 5 p.m.
- _ CHILDREN's HEALTH: House vote expected between 5 and 7 p.m.

MULTIMEDIA:

Notable Photos:

_UN US BUSH: NYCD103, President Bush speaks to reporters as Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki looks on during their meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session in New York.

_AUTO TALKS: INBED101, General Motors employee and United Auto Workers Local 440 member Bill Winger waves to a passing Ford truck showing support for their cause during the strike at GM Powertrain in Bedford, Indiana.

_MYANMAR: BK112, Members of the National League for Democracy join Buddhist monks in a protest against the military government in Yangon.

_IRAQ RECONCILIATION: BAG113, Tribal leaders arrive under heavy security for a national reconciliation meeting between Sunni and Shiite leaders in southwestern Baghdad.

_MIDEAST LEBANON PRESIDENT: BEI102, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt sits among anti-Syrian lawmakers in front of a picture of slain pro-government lawmaker Antoine Ghanem as they gather in the Parliament in downtown Beirut.

_POLYGAMIST LEADER: JEFFS105, Prosecutors wait for the jury to come into the courtroom during Warren Jeffs' trial Monday.

_BRITAIN THE SAGE: LON804, Window cleaners work atop The Sage music and arts centre in Gateshead,

England.

_IRAN U.S: VAH108, A veiled Iranian woman walks past graffiti art characterizing the U.S. Statue of Liberty, painted on the wall of the former U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

_MET OPERA OPENING: NYDG110, A man watches the simulcast of the opening of the Metropolitan Operas 2007–08 season on New York's Times Square.

_ISRAEL RHINOCEROS: JRL102, A two–day–old male black rhinoceros baby stands next to his mother Tanda at the Ramat Gan Safari near Tel Aviv.

Interactives:

_ INTEGRATION ANNIVERSARY: _national/little_rock_nine folder.

_ IRAQ: _international/iraq_troop_increase folder.

_ CHAVEZ: _international/chavez_road_trip folder.

_ GIULIANI HOUSE PARTY: wdc/early2008 folder; wdc/08issues folder; wdc/2008money folder.

_ TROPICAL WEATHER: hurricanetracker07 folder.

_ CORN PALACE MAKEOVER: _travel/corn_palace folder.

_ NFL SEASON OVERVIEW: sports/nfl07/regular_season folder.

_ PRESIDENTS CUP: _sports/golf2007/prescup_pix; _sports/golf2007/prescup07/prescup_course folder; _sports/golf2007/prescup07/prescup_quiz; _sports/golf2007/prescup07/prescup_history.

ALSO GETTING ATTENTION:

_ GINGRICH–MINORITIES _ Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Monday that top tier Republican presidential candidates are making a mistake by skipping a forum focused on issues of importance to black voters.

_ RABBIT THEFT _ A pet rabbit named Sugar Bunny was stolen from a preschool and fliers protesting circus animal acts were left in its empty cage.

_ TROPICAL WEATHER _ A tropical depression strengthened into Tropical Storm Karen early Tuesday in the open Atlantic Ocean, where it posed no immediate threat to land. AP Photo NY117.

_ PEOPLE–SUTHERLAND–ARRESTED _ Kiefer Sutherland was arrested early Tuesday on misdemeanor drunken driving charges after failing a field sobriety test, police officials said. AP Photos CAMW105–106. AP Video.

_ AMAZON–MUSIC STORE _ Web retailer Amazon.com Inc. launched its much–anticipated digital music store Tuesday with more than 2 million songs, all without copy–protection technology.

_ GIULIANI–HOUSE PARTY _ A spokeswoman for Rudy Giuliani says it is unfortunate that a supporter throwing a party that aims to raise \$9.11 per person for the Republican's presidential campaign is asking for that amount.

_ DENTISTS–WRIGLEY _ The nation's largest dentist group now says gum can be good for you, as long as it's sugar-free.

TOP STORIES:

UN–GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNITED NATIONS _ Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad takes his case to world leaders gathered for the annual U.N. General Assembly as French and German leaders express concern over Tehran's nuclear program. Allowing Iran to arm itself with nuclear weapons would be an "unacceptable risk to stability in the region and in the world," France's Nicolas Sarkozy says. By Edith M. Lederer.

AP Photos NYRD107–108, NYEB111, XUNBM102. AP Video.

BUSH

UNITED NATIONS _ President Bush turns up the pressure on the military dictatorship in Myanmar for its suppression of human rights. His address to the U.N. General Assembly was notable for what was largely absent _ talk of Iraq. By Jennifer Loven.

AP Photos NYRD102–105, XUND102, XUND104. AP Video.

With:

_ UN–CUBA–PROTEST _ Cuba's foreign minister walks out of the U.N. General Assembly in protest of President Bush's speech in which he says the "long rule of a cruel dictator is nearing its end" on the communist island.

SCOTUS–LETHAL INJECTION

WASHINGTON _ The Supreme Court agrees that it will take a hard look at the method of lethal injection most states use to put inmates to death in a case that could further slow the pace of executions. By Mark Sherman.

AP Graphic LETHAL INJECTION. AP Video.

With:

_ LETHAL INJECTION–PLAINTIFF, from LOUISVILLE, Ky. _ Ralph Baze admits he shot a sheriff and deputy 15 years ago in eastern Kentucky, but he doesn't want his death sentence carried out with a three-drug cocktail commonly used in lethal injections. AP Photo KYDP101.

SCOTUS–VOTER ID

WASHINGTON _ The Supreme Court's decision to weigh in on whether voter identification laws unfairly deter the poor and minorities from voting ensures a major ruling on a contentious issue just months before the 2008 elections. By Special Correspondent David Espo.

AUTO TALKS

DETROIT _ Unlike the 1970 United Auto Workers' strike against General Motors Corp., which went on for 69 days and pushed the nation into a recession, this strike is likely to be a short one. Both sides have

something the other desires _ the workers want job security, GM wants to make retiree health care a union burden _ and that's the stuff that agreements are made of. By Auto Writers Dee–Ann Durbin and Tom Krisher.

AP Photos. AP Video.

WORKPLACE DEPRESSION, HFR

CHICAGO _ Investing in depressed employees _ quickly getting them treatment and even offering telephone psychotherapy _ can cut absenteeism while improving workers' health, a study suggests. By Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner.

Eds: Hold for release at 4 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS SESSION & THE MIDDLE EAST:

IRAN–US

TEHRAN, Iran _ Iranians are dismayed at what they consider venomous words from the president of Columbia University, who they say rudely attacked President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during a speech in New York, compared to the restraint shown by their leader. By Nasser Karimi.

AP Photos.

With:

_ US–IRAN, from WASHINGTON _ Congress moves quickly to signal its disapproval of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, calling for tightening sanctions against his government and to designate his army as a terrorist group.

IRAQ–KURDISTAN'S ECONOMY

IRBIL, Iraq _ Billboards in Kurdistan's capital boast that luxury malls and hotels are on the way, but banking and insurance systems barely function. Cranes loom over building sites, but few government inspectors check the quality of construction. This is economic development on the fly. A sign at a trade association office sums up the freewheeling environment: ``Please leave your gun at reception." By Christopher Torchia.

AP Photos BAG501–504. AP Graphic KURDISTAN.

Also:

_ IRAQ, from BAGHDAD _ A suicide car bomber attacks the police headquarters in Basra, killing at least three officers, wounding 20 other people and raising fears about security in the oil–rich southern city now that British forces have withdrawn. AP Photos BAG106–107. AP Graphic BASRA SUICIDE BOMBING.

AROUND THE WORLD:

MYANMAR

YANGON, Myanmar _ Myanmar's military leaders impose a curfew and announce a ban on gatherings of more than five people after 35,000 Buddhist monks and sympathizers defy the junta's warnings and stage another day of anti–government protests. Soldiers in full battle gear are deployed in the country's largest city.

AP Photo XBK101, XBK104–105, XBK107.

With:

_ CHINA–NUDGING THE JUNTA, from BEIJING _ Faced with its upcoming Olympics and growing investments in Myanmar, China is jettisoning its usual hand-off approach in favor of behind-the-scenes diplomacy that analysts say is crucial to staving off a bloody confrontation.

JAPAN–POLITICS

TOKYO _ Yasuo Fukuda sweeps to power as Japan's prime minister, pledging to use experience and negotiating skills to extend Tokyo's contentious mission in support of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. The 71-year-old, who studied backroom politics at the knee of his prime minister father, casts himself as the steady hand Japan needs after the scandal-scarred term of his predecessor. By Joseph Coleman.

AP Photos TOK106, TOK803, XITS110.

RUSSIA–FAMILY TIES

MOSCOW _ Vladimir Putin's government is starting to seem like a family affair, with two pairs of close relatives serving in top posts. The arrangement reflects Putin's reliance on personal bonds as he maneuvers ahead of crucial elections and the end of his term. By Steve Gutterman.

AP Photos MOSB103–106.

AROUND THE NATION:

KATRINA–RED TAPE

NEW ORLEANS _ Two years after Hurricane Katrina, the Alfred Lawless High School in the Lower Ninth Ward is still a jumbled mess of toppled bricks, sagging roofs and missing window panes. But the federal funding to rebuild it is tied up in the forms used to inventory damage to a facility. It's the kind of paperwork critics say is holding up the rebuilding of schools, roads, hospitals, firehouses, and other public projects across this storm-ravaged city. By John Moreno Gonzales.

AP Photos LAWH101–104.

EPISCOPAL BISHOPS–GAYS

NEW ORLEANS _ Episcopal leaders release their response to demands from overseas Anglicans that they bar more gays from becoming bishops. The archbishop of Canterbury spent two days behind closed doors with the bishops pressing them to make concessions for the sake of unity. By Religion Writer Rachel Zoll.

Eds: Developing from session that began at 11 a.m.

AP Photos.

MACON MAYOR

MACON, Ga. _ Jack Ellis was elected Macon's first black mayor amid high hopes he would bring the city together. But he has instead taken one step after another that has angered critics: trips to Africa at taxpayer expense, his conversion to Islam, his reaching out to Venezuela's anti-American president. Now, with just

months to go before he leaves office, some civic leaders can only look back and wonder what might have been. By Greg Bluestein.

AP Photos AX101–102.

BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY:

ECONOMY

NEW YORK _ Crumbling consumer confidence, slumping home sales. They could prove to be a bad combination for retailers, and for the broader economy going into the holiday shopping season, if the labor market contracts further and chokes off spending. By Business Writer Philana Patterson.

AP Photos NYML405, LA202, CODZ314, CODZ321. AP Graphic CONSUMER CONFIDENCE.

GOLDMANN'S

MILWAUKEE _ Mitchell Street was the bustling heart of Milwaukee's blue collar Polish neighborhood when 12-year-old Milt Pivar started working at Goldmann's department store. He worked his way up from stock boy to owning the 111-year-old store. When he closes the doors for the last time Sept. 30, Pivar said he'll have satisfaction in going out on top. But he and his brother-in-law are nearing 80 and though they tried to sell, no one wanted to run the store their way. By M.L. Johnson.

AP Photos WIMG201–204. Multimedia: An audio slideshow on the closing of Goldmann's in Milwaukee is in the _business/goldmann folder.

WASHINGTON:

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

WASHINGTON: Moderate Republicans are pressured to stand with President Bush against expanding federal health care coverage to 10 million uninsured children. Democrats confident of winning the vote _ but not a veto showdown _ say the GOP will pay a political price. By Charles Babington.

Eds: House vote expected between 5 and 7 p.m.

AP Graphic CHILDREN'S HEALTH. AP Video.

MATH–READING SCORES

WASHINGTON _ It's a report card you would definitely bring home to mom and dad. Fourth- and Eighth-graders post major gains in math, new national test results show. Reading scores are up for elementary kids but somewhat flat for the middle schoolers. By Nancy Zuckerbrod.

AP Graphic MATH READING SCORES.

With:

_ READING MATH–GLANCE.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT:

FILM—HUGO CHAVEZ

GUARENAS, Venezuela _ Lights! Camera! Revolution! Unhappy with what he considers Hollywood's monopoly on the silver screen, President Hugo Chavez is bankrolling homegrown films through a state-run studio. Now rolling: biopics about national heroes and villains _ like the former CIA operative who allegedly downed a jetliner and tried to kill Fidel Castro. By Fabiola Sanchez.

AP Photos XCAR101—103.

BOOKS—ANN PATCHETT

NASHVILLE, Tenn. _ In Ann Patchett's books, characters from different worlds intersect and collide: rich Japanese businessmen and poor South American terrorists, a black jazz musician and a white waitress, a gay magician who marries his female assistant. The same sorts of collisions happen again in her new novel, ``Run," her fifth novel and the first since ``Bel Canto," the book-club sensation that sold more than 1 million copies in the United States. By Rose French.

AP Photo TNJR102.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 788

UNITED NATIONS _ President George W. Bush announced new sanctions Tuesday against the military government of Myanmar, accusing it of imposing "a 19-year reign of fear" that denies basic freedoms of speech, assembly and worship.

"Americans are outraged by the situation in Burma," the president said in an address to the UN General Assembly.

The military junta renamed the Asian country Myanmar but the United States does not recognize the change.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a bitter foe of the United States, sat in the chamber and checked his watch during Bush's remarks.

Bush urged other countries to support states that are struggling for democracy.

"The people of Lebanon and Afghanistan and Iraq have asked for our help and every civilized nation has a responsibility to stand with them," Bush said.

"Every civilized nation also has a responsibility to stand up for the people suffering under dictatorship," the president said.

"In Belarus, North Korea, Syria and Iran, brutal regimes deny their people the fundamental rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration" of the United Nations.

While the war in Iraq continues, Bush made scant mention of it.

After his speech, however, he reassured Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki that U.S. support is not wavering.

"We're with ya, prime minister," Bush told him.

Addressing reporters after a roughly hour-long meeting, Bush and al-Maliki did not say whether they had discussed the killing of 11 Iraqi civilians by security guards with Blackwater USA, a private contractor. The incident has strained U.S.-Iraqi ties.

But Al-Maliki did say: "Iraq's security is very important and we talked about the importance of mutual respect between our two sides."

Bush prodded political parties in Iraq to reconcile their differences and pass a series of pivotal laws.

"Some political parties may be trying to block the laws to gain special advantage," Bush said.

In his address to the UN, Bush barely mentioned Iran, a country the United States accuses of terrorism, pursuit of a nuclear weapon and aid for deadly insurgents in Iraq.

Instead, Bush focused his remarks elsewhere, challenging the UN to uphold its pledge to fight for freedom in lands of poverty and terror.

“The nations in this chamber have our differences, yet there are some areas where we can all agree,” Bush said.

“When innocent people are trapped in a life of murder and fear, the declaration is not being upheld. When millions of children starve to death or perish from a mosquito bite, we’re not doing our duty in the world.”

“When whole societies are cut off from the prosperity of the global economy, we’re all worse off.”

“Changing these underlying conditions is what the declaration calls the work of larger freedom and it must be the work of every nation in this assembly,” he said.

“This great institution must work for great purposes: to free people from tyranny and violence, hunger and diseases, illiteracy and ignorance and poverty and despair.”

Bush looked ahead to a Cuba no longer governed by President Fidel Castro, the ailing 81-year-old leader of the communist-run government.

“In Cuba, the long rule of a cruel dictator is nearing its end,” Bush said.

“The Cuban people are ready for their freedom. And as that nation enters a period of transition, the United Nations must insist on free speech, free assembly and, ultimately, free and competitive elections.”

Cuba's foreign minister walked out of the gathering in protest against Bush's speech. The Cuban delegation later said Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque's move was a “sign of profound rejection of the arrogant and mediocre statement” by Bush.

Bush urged the UN to reform its Human Rights Council, created to replace the discredited Human Rights Commission. But Bush criticized the new body for ignoring abuses in places like Iran, “while focusing its criticism excessively on Israel.”

“The American people are disappointed by the failures of the Human Rights Council,” Bush said.

“The United Nations must reform its own Human Rights Council.”

But the president's call for change came with the suggestion of a deal: the United States' support for the highly contentious issue of expanding the Security Council, the UN's most powerful body. Bush suggested Japan is “well-qualified” to be an additional member and said “other nations should be considered as well.”

The council has 10 rotating members elected for two-year terms and five permanent members with veto power — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France. Bush said the United States would listen to all “good ideas.”

Bush singled out Myanmar for particular attention.

“Basic freedoms of speech, assembly and worship are severely restricted,” he said.

“Ethnic minorities are persecuted. Forced child labour, human trafficking and rape are common.”

“The regime is holding more than a thousand political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, whose party

was elected overwhelmingly by the Burmese people in 1990."

"The ruling junta remains unyielding, yet the people's desire for freedom is unmistakable," he said.

Bush said the United States would tighten economic sanctions on the leaders of the government and their financial backers and impose an expanded visa ban on people responsible for human rights violations, as well as their family members.

The policies came as Myanmar's military government issued a threat Monday to the barefoot Buddhist monks who led 100,000 people marching through a major city. It was the strongest protest against the repressive regime in two decades.

About a dozen anti-war protesters were arrested during a peaceful demonstration against Bush's speech. They were among about 400 people opposing the Bush administration's war in Iraq and its incarceration in Guantanamo Bay of more than 300 men on suspicion of terrorism or links to al-Qaida or the Taliban. Many in the crowd wore orange jumpsuits in solidarity with the Guantanamo detainees.

Global National News, Thursday, Sept. 25, 2007

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 323

OSHAWA, Ont. _ General Motors has now closed its two Canadian sedan–assembly lines because a strike against the automaker in the U.S. has dired up the supply of parts. CVD.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ A Canadian soldier has been seriously wounded in an insurgent ambush west of Kandahar; it comes after a Canadian soldier was killed in the Panjwaii district, south of Pashmul, yesterday while fixing a track on a tank. CVD.

NEW YORK _ U.S. President Bush speaks to the United Nations, urging the organization to do more to uphold human rights in the world. CVD.

NEW YORK _ Prime Minister Stephen Harper tells a foreign policy conference that Canada is working to be a world leader in key global challenges such as Afghanistan and climate change. CVD.

OTTAWA _ Canada's privacy commissioner says retailer TJX, which operates such chains as Winners, suffered a major security breach and had collected too much personal information on customers without enough safeguards. CVD.

ST–HYACINTHE, Que. _ A Quebec coroner who investigated two deadly outbreaks of C. difficile at a hospital near Montreal that led to the deaths of 16 people has issued a scathing report, blaming a shortage of hospital staff and very poor hygiene. CVD.

ST. GEORGE, Utah _The leader of a polygamous Mormon splinter group that has an offshoot in Bountiful, B.C., has been convicted on two counts of being an accomplice to rape; Warren Jeffs could get life in prison. CVD.

BELLINGHAM, Wash. _ Canada's strong dollar is sending more Canadian car buyers to the U.S looking for a bargain, but some American car companies are discouraging them. FEATURE.

WASHINGTON _ The number of homes sold in the U.S. has dropped for the sixth straight month, reaching the lowest sales level in five years. CVD.

OSHAWA, Ont. _ With jobs in the manufacturing sector eroding, a new generation of workers is having to look beyond the factory. FEATURE.

LOS ANGELES _ Canadian–born actor Keifer Sutherland is free on bail after being arrested for drunk driving in Los Angeles. CVD.

MONTREAL _ Some of the best golfers in the world are in Montreal for The Presidents Cup, which begins on Thursday. CVD.

The Canadian Press

Canadian soldier wounded in ambush on joint Canadian–Afghan foot patrol

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 133

PASHMUL, Afghanistan (CP) _ A Canadian soldier has been seriously wounded in an insurgent ambush today during a joint patrol with the Afghan National Police.

The soldier, whose name was not released, is part of the new Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team doing on–the–job training for Afghan police.

The joint patrol from the Pashmul police substation in the Zhari district west of Kandahar city was ambushed with small arms fire and rocket–propelled grenades around 11 a.m. local time.

The soldier was evacuated by helicopter, first to Kandahar Airfield and then to a military hospital at Camp Bastion, in Helmand province, where he is receiving specialist care.

Information on the soldier's condition was not immediately available.

Another Canadian soldier was killed in the Panjwaii district, south of Pashmul, on Monday during an operation to sweep out Taliban and set up another police substation for joint Canadian–Afghan patrol.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 115

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan _ One Canadian soldier has been killed and four others wounded in two incidents while on patrol in southern Afghanistan.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche, Canada's military commander in Afghanistan, told a news conference in Kandahar that Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a 24-year-old reservist with the King's Own Calgary regiment, had been killed by a mortar shell while trying to repair a Leopard tank. Another soldier was wounded.

Three other Canadian soldiers were wounded in a subsequent firefight.

All four suffered non-life threatening injuries and are being treated at the Kandahar airfield.

He says next of kin have been notified but that the identities of the wounded soldiers are not being released at this time.

Seventy-one Canadian soldiers have died in Afghanistan since Canada first deployed troops there in 2002.

CBC National News, Tuesday, Sept. 25

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 304

KANDAHAR _ Canadian soldier Cpl. Nathan Hornburg killed as he repairs a tank during a patrol in Afghanistan's volatile south; another Canadian soldier is wounded in a separate incident. CVD.

OTTAWA _ The federal New Democratic Party says it has proof that the Canadian military effectively wrote Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year in what it calls an elaborately staged political stunt; the accusation by NDP defence critic Dawn Black brings a denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa, who calls the idea laughable. CVD.

UNDATED _ Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai addresses the United Nations and thanks certain countries for their involvement in the war. CVD.

NEW YORK _ Prime Minister Stephen Harper tells a New York audience that Canada is making important contributions to key global challenges such as Afghanistan and climate change. CVD.

OTTAWA _ CBC says Arctic sovereignty will be a major part of the next federal election campaign. NOT MATCHING IMMEDIATELY.

UNDATED _ Environment Minister John Baird responds to a CBC News report about cuts within his department, saying priority programs related to the environment would be maintained. NOT MATCHING.

OSHAWA, Ont. _ General Motors' two auto assembly plants in Oshawa are shut down due to lack of parts, as the effects from a United Auto Workers strike in the U.S. spread in Canada; a prolonged shutdown could have harmful effects on Canada's economy. CVD.

VANCOUVER _ Porsche announces plans to lower prices by an average of about eight per cent on its 2008 models to better reflect the loonie's strength; other retailers are following suit to stay competitive with U.S. companies. CVD.

LONDON _ Myanmar's military rulers outlaw assemblies of more than five people and impose curfews in the southeast Asian country's two major cities after Buddhist monks, students and other activists staged another round of anti-government protests. CVD.

UNDATED _ Award-winning Canadian actor Kiefer Sutherland, star of television series 24, is arrested in Los Angeles on drunk driving charges. CVD.

The Canadian Press – Toronto

N.S. students honour soldier who died in Afghanistan last winter

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE EDUCATION

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 315

STELLARTON, N.S. _ Cpl. Kevin Megeney would have fit in with any one of the laughing, boisterous groups of young men strolling the hallways of the Nova Scotia Community College here Tuesday.

His wide, white smile, strong, good looks and copper hair might have made him stand out a little, but his youth and enthusiasm for life would have probably made him part of the crowd.

Instead, the soldier who was killed in Afghanistan earlier this winter was being immortalized before a quiet crowd inside the gym Tuesday with the announcement of a \$50,000 award donated in his name anonymously.

“He was my colleague, my buddy and lifelong friend,” said Cpl. Brent Bowden, who served in Afghanistan with Megeney.

The 25-year-old died March 6 in what the military has described as an accidental shooting. The results of the investigation have yet to be released.

“Twenty-four/seven we served together in Afghanistan and every minute of every day he was always there,” Bowden recalled.

As he and others spoke during the ceremony, photographs of Megeney were flashed on the stage's wall. One showed Bowden acting silly as he sat on his friend's knee, both wearing camouflage uniforms.

By all accounts, Megeney enjoyed a good laugh and being surrounded by friends and family. In fact, there were very few photos that didn't show his wide, happy smile.

Bowden said he hopes community college students who receive the Cpl. Megeney Memorial Award will remember the young soldier's sacrifice. An annual award of \$2,000 will go to the first-year student who demonstrates a commitment to their community. Financial need will also be a consideration.

A photo of Megeney in full dress uniform will hang at the Pictou campus of the community college.

Fourteen-year-old Brittany Lawand, Megeney's niece, spoke of her family's surprise when told an anonymous donor wanted to create the award in his honour.

Although there is no donor name to acknowledge or a hand to shake in gratitude, Lawand said the family has been deeply touched by the gesture.

The ceremony took place just hours after word that another Canadian soldier has died in Afghanistan, bringing the death toll to 71.

(Halifax Chronicle Herald)

Canadian death toll in Afghanistan: 71 soldiers, one diplomat

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE POLITICS
PUBLICATION: cpw
WORD COUNT: 493

Since 2002, 71 Canadian soldiers and one diplomat have been killed in Afghanistan. Here is a list of the deaths:

2007

Sept. 24 _ Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, 24, with the King's Own Calgary regiment, killed by a mortar shell while trying to repair a Leopard tank in southern Afghanistan.

Aug. 29 _ Maj. Raymond Ruckpaul dies from gunshot inside a secure NATO compound in Kabul.

Aug. 22 _ Master Warrant Officer Mario Mercier and Master Cpl. Christian Duchesne killed by roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

Aug. 19 _ Pte. Simon Longtin killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

July 4 _ Cpl. Cole Bartsch, Capt. Matthew Johnathan Dawe, Pte. Lane Watkins, Cpl. Jordan Anderson, Master Cpl. Colin Bason and Capt. Jefferson Francis, killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

June 20 _ Sgt. Christos Karigiannis, Cpl. Stephen Frederick Bouzane and Pte. Joel Vincent Wiebe, killed by a roadside bomb west of Kandahar city.

June 11 _ Trooper Darryl Caswell killed a roadside bomb north of Kandahar.

May 30 _ Master Cpl. Darrell Jason Priede, killed when a U.S. helicopter was reportedly shot down by the Taliban in Helmand province.

May 25 _ Cpl. Matthew McCully killed by an improvised explosive device in Zhari district.

April 18 _ Master Cpl. Anthony Klumpenhower, who served with elite special forces, died after falling from a communications tower while on duty conducting surveillance in Kandahar city.

April 11 _ Master Cpl. Allan Stewart and Trooper Patrick James Pentland, killed when their Coyote vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

April 8 _ Sgt. Donald Lucas, Cpl. Aaron E. Williams, Pte. Kevin V. Kennedy, Pte. David R. Greenslade, Cpl. Christopher P. Stannix and Cpl. Brent Poland killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

March 6 _ Cpl. Kevin Megeney killed in accidental shooting at NATO base in Kandahar.

2006

Nov. 27 _ Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Girouard and Cpl. Albert Storm killed by suicide car bomber.

Oct. 14 _ Sgt. Darcy Tedford and Pte. Blake Williamson killed in ambush.

Oct. 7 _ Trooper Mark Andrew Wilson killed by roadside bomb.

Oct. 3 _ Sgt. Craig Gillam and Cpl. Robert Mitchell killed in series of mortar, rocket attacks.

Sept. 29 _ Pte. Josh Klukie killed by explosion in Panjwaii while on foot patrol.

Sept. 18 _ Pte. David Byers, Cpl. Shane Keating, Cpl. Keith Morley and Cpl. Glen Arnold killed in suicide bicycle bomb attack while on foot patrol in Panjwaii.

Sept. 4 _ Pte. Mark Graham killed when two NATO planes accidentally strafed Canadian troops in Panjwaii district.

Sept. 3 _ Sgt. Shane Stachnik, Warrant Officer Frank Robert Mellish, Pte. William Cushley and Warrant Officer Richard Francis Nolan killed in fighting in Panjwaii district.

Aug. 22 _ Cpl. David Braun killed in suicide attack.

Aug. 11 _ Cpl. Andrew Eykelenboom killed in suicide attack.

Aug. 9 _ Master Cpl. Jeffrey Walsh killed by apparent accidental discharge of rifle.

Aug. 5 _ Master Cpl. Raymond Arndt killed when his G-Wagon patrol vehicle collided with truck.

Aug. 3 _ Cpl. Christopher Reid killed by roadside bomb. Sgt. Vaughan Ingram, Cpl. Bryce Keller and Pte. Kevin Dallaire killed in rocket-propelled grenade attack.

July 22 _ Cpl. Francisco Gomez and Cpl. Jason Warren killed when car packed with explosives rammed their armoured vehicle.

July 9 _ Cpl. Anthony Boneca killed in firefight.

May 17 _ Capt. Nichola Goddard killed in Taliban ambush. She was first Canadian woman to be killed in action while serving in combat role.

April 22 _ Cpl. Matthew Dinning, Bombardier Myles Mansell, Lt. William Turner and Cpl. Randy Payne killed when their G-Wagon destroyed by roadside bomb.

March 29 _ Pte. Robert Costall killed in firefight with Taliban.

March 2 _ Cpl. Paul Davis and Master Cpl. Timothy Wilson killed when their armoured vehicle ran off road.

Jan. 15 _ Glyn Berry, British-born Canadian diplomat, killed in suicide bombing.

2005

Nov. 24 _ Pte. Braun Woodfield killed when his armoured vehicle rolled over.

2004

Jan. 27 _ Cpl. Jamie Murphy killed in suicide bombing while on patrol.

2003

Oct. 2 _ Sgt. Robert Short and Cpl. Robbie Beerenfenger killed in roadside bombing.

2002

April 17 _ Sgt. Marc Leger, Cpl. Ainsworth Dyer, Pte. Richard Green and Pte. Nathan Smith killed when U.S. F-16 fighter mistakenly bombed Canadians.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT FILM INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: cpw

WORD COUNT: 149

BOURNEMOUTH, England _ Foreign Secretary David Miliband will meet Angelina Jolie in New York this week to discuss global diplomacy, British officials said Tuesday.

Miliband, the youthful British foreign policy chief, is seeking to soften the tone of global relations after Britain became involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“He will meet Angelina Jolie in New York for talks,” a Miliband spokeswoman said while speaking on condition of anonymity in line with ministry policy.

Further details on the planned content of the discussion weren't immediately available.

The 32-year-old actress, who is a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, will also appear on a revamped Foreign Office website.

Miliband, who was Britain's first blogging cabinet minister in his last role as environment chief, will launch a new blog Wednesday. He is encouraging key aides to follow his lead.

“The day when we communicated mainly by telegram are over,” Miliband told the Evening Standard newspaper. “Communication has to be for the masses now, not just elites.”

INDEX:Defence, International, Justice

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 139

WASHINGTON -- A U-S military appeals court has sided with the Pentagon, overruling a judge who threw out terrorism charges against Canadian Guantanamo Bay detainee Omar Khadr.

The U-S Court of Military Commission Review has ruled a military court is the proper venue for deciding whether Khadr is an unlawful enemy combatant and trying him on terrorism charges.

The ruling reverses a military judge's June 4 ruling that the tribunal system created by Congress did not have authority to try detainees, unless they were first determined to be unlawful enemy combatants.

Defence lawyers contend the unlawful designation is a critical element of guilt or innocence in what is a fundamentally flawed military tribunal system.

They question the legitimacy of the court, saying officials didn't follow proper procedures when they set it up.

Khadr was captured when he was 15 and faces life in prison.

He is charged with tossing a grenade that killed one U-S soldier and injured another in Afghanistan in 2002.

The Associated Press and The Canadian Press

TA

INDEX:Defence, International, Social

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 139

OTTAWA _ An international think-tank says Canada is wasting an opportunity to help Afghan President Hamid Karzai break the Taliban by not supporting his call for talks with the insurgents.

The European-based agency Senlis Council says the appeal to less dogmatic Taliban has a good chance of succeeding if NATO throws its full support behind it.

Vancouver lawyer Norine MacDonald who's the council president, says that separating hard-core Islamic fundamentalists from moderates would weaken the insurgency.

She says that it's time for Canada to take the diplomatic lead and step out from the shadow of U-S foreign policy.

MacDonald made the comments yesterday at the beginning of a day-long conference meant to explore policies that could lead to peace.

She also called for Canadian troops to stay in the war-torn country past the February 2009 deadline.

In Afghanistan, NATO has been using economic development projects to pry committed Taliban fighters away from poor, unemployed farmers.

The strategy has met with limited success.

(The Canadian Press)

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US–Harper–Update (comments on minority government)

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 98

NEW YORK -- Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a New York audience today there will likely be another minority government after Canada's next election.

Harper says the possibility of a minority government in any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high.

But he says that wouldn't mean Canada's place in the world will be any less robust if he's returned as minority leader.

He commented during questions following his speech to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

Harper faces a confidence vote after a new throne speech set for October 16th.

The prime minister says Afghanistan is a big challenge amid enormous pressure at home to get out.

Harper wants to continue the mission past the current deadline of February 2009 despite rising casualties.

(The Canadian Press)

PTH

UN-Bush

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 99

UNITED NATIONS — President Bush has announced new U-S sanctions against the military dictatorship in Myanmar.

Addressing the U-N General Assembly in New York, Bush accused the junta of imposing "a 19-year reign of fear" that denies basic freedoms of speech, assembly and worship.

His move came hours after the military rulers in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, threatened to use force against pro-democracy protesters.

Bush says Americans are outraged by the situation. But he did not spell out the sanctions.

Bush also urged other countries to support the struggle for democracy in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon.

He says the people of those countries have asked for help, and every civilized country has a responsibility to stand with them. (The Associated Press)

abl

Canada plays global role in Afghanistan, climate change: Harper

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 123

NEW YORK – Prime Minister Stephen Harper is telling a New York audience that Canada is making important contributions in key global challenges such as Afghanistan and climate change.

Harper is speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations today, after addressing a UN panel yesterday.

He says Canada didn't hesitate to join the U.S.-led anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan, noting that that Canada has just lost its 71st soldier in that country.

The prime minister says Canada is taking a leadership role on climate change, even though critics are upset that Canada has joined what they call an `anti-Kyoto' group opposed to mandatory cuts of greenhouse gas emissions.

While praising the benefits of hemispheric co-operation, Harper has complained that the requirement of passports at the Canada-U.S. border is an ill-conceived plan.

(The Canadian Press)

UN–Bush–Update (Police arrest antiwar protesters)

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 124

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His move came hours after the military rulers in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, threatened to use force against pro–democracy protesters.

Bush says Americans are outraged by the situation. But he did not spell out the sanctions.

Bush urged other countries to support the struggle for democracy in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon.

Outside the U–N, police arrested about a dozen antiwar protesters during a peaceful demonstration.

They were among hundreds of people opposing Bush's war in Iraq, and the incarceration in Guantanamo Bay of more than three hundred men on suspicion of terrorism or links to al–Qaida or the Taliban.

Many in the crowd wore orange jumpsuits in solidarity with the Guantanamo detainees.

(The Associated Press)

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INDEX:Defence, Education, International

DATE: 2007.09.25

KEYWORDS: DEFENCE EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION: bnw

WORD COUNT: 107

PICTOU, N.S. _ A ceremony today at the Pictou campus of the Nova Scotia Community College will officially launch an award in memory of a Nova Scotia reservist killed in Afghanistan.

First-year students at the college will be eligible for the Kevin Megeney Memorial Award -- a two-thousand dollar bursary.

It's to be awarded every year for students who demonstrate a commitment to community involvement.

The award was made possible by a donation of 50-thousand dollars by an anonymous donor.

Twenty-five-year-old Megeney, of Stellarton was shot in the chest in his tent at the Kandahar airfield on March 6th.

His mother, Karen Megeney, says it's heart-warming that someone thought enough of her son to donate so much money in his memory.

She says her son was always helping people, and the award will continue that process.

(New Glasgow News-Halifax Chronicle Herald)

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HFX OUT HQQ

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 337

The Pentagon says they'll proceed expeditiously to get military commission cases to trial at Guantanamo Bay, following a decision by a military appeals court Monday.

The ruling quashes one made in June, when a judge ruled he lacked authority to determine whether Canadian Omar Khadr is a terrorist.

Khadr has been detained at Guantanamo since 2002 on charges he murdered a U-S soldier in Afghanistan.

If it goes ahead, his trial would be the first full legal airing of the Guantanamo detainees. (20)

(Arctic Sovereignty)

The Northwest Passage is about to go high-tech.

According to a report from the C-B-C, the federal government is preparing to put surveillance equipment to use in the area by next summer so that the military can track who is trying to get through those waters.

According to the report, fibre-optic cables will be connected to underwater listening devices placed well out into the passage.

Canada, the U-S, Russia, Denmark and Norway all have competing claims in the vast Arctic region. (20)

(Que-Byelxn)(audio: 236)

It was no contest for Parti Quebecois Leader Pauline Marois.

She strolled to victory in a byelection Monday, giving her a seat in the Quebec legislature.

Marois had 59.2 per cent of the popular vote in Charlevoix -- her nearest competitor came in with 37 per cent.

Marois, who replaced Andre Boisclair as P-Q leader in June, has promised to rebuild the party that dropped to third place in this year's general election. (20)

(Flaherty-Speech)

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says the absence of a common securities regulator in Canada is holding the country back.

In a speech Monday night in Montreal, Flaherty said a regulator would lead to more investments and jobs while at the same time, protecting investors.

Canada currently has 13 securities regulators, which Flaherty says it "out of step" with global competitors.

He says he's going to create of an expert panel to recommend how to move forward on the issue. (20)

(Foreign Workers)

Under a new pilot project, employers in B-C and Alberta will have an easier time hiring temporary foreign workers.

Federal Human Resources Minister Monte Solberg says it should help ease some of the pressures businesses facing labour shortages are facing.

The project keys in on 12 specific jobs, including construction, tourism and hospitality. (20)

(NS-Gully-Finds)

Researchers in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia have made a find so bizarre, even they aren't quite sure what it is.

Earlier this month, the researchers from the Bedford Institute of Oceanography found a pinkish-orange blob in the two kilometre deep Sable Gully -- which is located 200 kilometres off the coast of Nova Scotia.

The mysterious, giggly life-form is one of many creatures the team has flagged as possible new discoveries in Canada and worldwide. (20)

(NewsWatch by Leanne Davis)

INDEX:International, Defence

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 133

PASHMUL, Afghanistan (CP) – A Canadian soldier has been seriously wounded in an insurgent ambush today during a joint patrol with the Afghan National Police.

The soldier, whose name was not released, is part of the new Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team doing on-the-job training for Afghan police.

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INDEX:Advisories

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: ADVISORIES
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 446

(University–Threat)

Security has been beefed up at the University of Winnipeg and officials may cancel classes tomorrow if students and staff don't feel safe.

The measures come after a student discovered a threatening message on a washroom wall last week, which CTV Winnipeg has reported was "I'm going to shoot this place up on September 26th."

The university has asked students to let their professors know if they will not be coming to campus tomorrow, and wants staff to let their supervisors know if they will stay home.

Public access to the university also may be restricted. (Wpg F–P)

(Mba–Native–Blockade)

Conservation Minister Stan Struthers says barricades must come down before the province will negotiate with a First Nation that objects to a controversial cottage development.

The Hollow Water First Nation has been blocking roads leading to the development since September 14th to prevent development of land about 200 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg.

Struthers says he is willing to talk to Hollow Water Chief Ian Bushie if the blockade is ended.

Tension mounted over the weekend after a man used a huge piece of logging equipment to bypass one of the blockades. (The Canadian Press)

(Mba–Legis)

A backlog of work will greet members of the Manitoba legislature when they resume sitting today.

Because of the spring election, the government has yet to pass more than a dozen bills that have been sitting on the table, including one that will create a new statutory holiday in February.

As well, detailed budget estimates for each department are up for debate.

Opposition Conservative Leader Hugh McFadyen says he's anxious to get into question period and grill the government on issues such as health care and crime. (The Canadian Press)

(CRIME–Mba–Games–Theft)

The financial chairman of the 2006 Manitoba Games has been charged with stealing 35–thousand dollars from the organization putting on the event.

Forty-three-year-old Scott Skipper was charged after games organizers reported that an audit had uncovered a number of accounting irregularities.

Skipper is scheduled to appear in court in Beausejour on October 2nd.

Jeff Hnatiuk, C-E-O of Sports Manitoba, says the missing money was surplus after the games were finished and was earmarked to benefit the host community. (Wpg Sun)

(Mba-Soldiers-Honoured)

Two Manitoba-based soldiers are among a group of Canadians honoured by Governor General Michaëlle Jean for military bravery.

Brandon resident Major Michael Wright was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal for his six-month tour in Afghanistan with the 126 Shilo-based soldiers of Alpha Company.

In a citation, the Governor General's office says Wright's "professionalism and devotion to duty has significantly contributed to the success of the mission and has left a lasting legacy in Kandahar province."

Also recognized yesterday was Winnipeg-based Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Keiver, who received a Meritorious Service Medal for maintaining high air safety standards in Khartoum, Sudan in late 2005 and early 2006. (Wpg F-P)

(Mba-Crops)

This week's crop report from Manitoba Agriculture paints a wide and varied picture.

Warm temperatures for much of the week helped the harvest throughout the central region.

Potatoes are still being harvested, while hay has generally wrapped up.

Very little crop was taken off in the east because of 20 millimetres of rain.

Winter wheat and fall rye seeding resumed in southern areas of the southwest, and the grain hemp harvest is beginning in the northwest.

It was a wet week in the Interlake with the harvest of confectionery sunflowers getting underway. (CJOB-s)

(Manitoba Update by Irv Thomas)

INDEX:Defence, International, Politics

DATE: 2007.09.25
KEYWORDS: DEFENCE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
PUBLICATION: bnw
WORD COUNT: 118

OTTAWA -- The Conservative government says it has until April to announce whether it will extend Canada's combat mission in southern Afghanistan.

Opposition parties are demanding an announcement in next month's throne speech but Defence Minister Peter MacKay says Canada has until a NATO summit next year in Bucharest, Romania.

That statement drew a scornful response from the opposition and warnings that government foot-dragging could help provoke an election.

The pressure on Canada to decide -- coupled with the prospect of an election campaign -- suggests Afghanistan is about to become the focus of an even more heated debate.

The governing Conservatives are the only party that favours an extension of the current mission.

The Liberals and Bloc Quebecois want an end to the mission once Canada's international commitment ends in February 2009.

New Democrats want Canadian troops withdrawn even sooner.

(The Canadian Press)

bjk

Harper takes shot at Bush administration; Focus on nationalism hurts economic ties: PM

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BYLINE: Allan Woods
SOURCE: Toronto Star
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Canada's relationship with the United States is stalled thanks to an "unhealthy" trend in the U.S. toward nationalism and away from deeper economic ties, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a prestigious foreign policy think-tank here yesterday.

He said he was "deeply concerned" that the political discourse in the U.S. had been infected by "populism, protectionism and nationalism in an unhealthy sense."

His candid comments came in an analysis of the Canada-U.S. relationship, one that Harper said is "the closest ... probably of any two countries in history."

The Prime Minister delivered a speech and took questions for more than an hour from the members of the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-partisan organization and resource for foreign affairs discussion.

In his speech, Harper emphasized the "shared values" of Canada and the U.S., and seemed taken by surprise when an audience member asked why, despite these common traits, Canada was not hated internationally, as is the U.S.

"It's certainly hated in some circles," Harper said.

"I suspect in the circles where the United States as a nation is genuinely hated, I suspect Canada is equally hated as are all countries that stand for these values. The American administration is, to be frank, more widely unpopular than the United States itself, but that's an issue for American domestic politics."

Unlike the U.S., Harper said, "Canada has no history anywhere in the world of conquest or domination. It's probably hard to perceive of Canada being in that type of a position."

In contrast, Canada is seen in the world as a "positive and non-threatening force," he said. "What my government is trying to do is to use those values to promote positive change in concert with our allies."

The shot at the administration of U.S. President George Bush was surprising from a prime minister seen as the most pro-American since Brian Mulroney.

But Liberal foreign affairs critic Ujjal Dosanjh said Harper was "simply acknowledging the truth." In light of

the Prime Minister's comments, Dosanjh said he was puzzled that the government has set a foreign policy that is so closely aligned with the U.S. "I'm sorry to use the same old expression; he remains an echo of the U.S. whether it's on Afghanistan, whether it's on Kyoto, " Dosanjh said in a telephone interview from Vancouver.

The fight between the Democrat-controlled U.S. Congress and the Bush administration means ties between the two nations could be further frustrated if a Democrat becomes president in 2008, he said.

"Mr. Bush is a lame-duck president ... and we have not been able to push our agenda for some time, whether it's on softwood lumber or any other policies. In a sense, Mr. Harper is whistling in the wind when he's talking to Washington," Dosanjh said.

Harper has been cast as a pro-American hawk on security and foreign policy matters, but he said he was concerned that Bush's Republican administration was "preoccupied" with security and that economic ties with Canada and other countries, particularly in Latin America, were suffering.

Harper said the U.S. focus on "national sovereignty and national borders" have limited the prospect of deeper trade ties. On issues like the U.S. law requiring passports to be presented at the border with Canada – one that MPs say puts the country's economy in jeopardy – Harper said he would continue to put up a fight to ensure "that we don't go backwards."

"Any talk of deepening NAFTA or strengthening trade relationships on this continent is not gonna happen in the immediate future," the Prime Minister said.

He used Colombia as an example, noting that the U.S. Congress recently blocked a free trade agreement proposed by Bush because of concerns over the country's human rights record. Harper travelled this summer to Colombia to meet President Alvaro Uribe and formally launch free trade talks.

"Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them a chance at partnership and trade with North America," Harper said. "I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?"

Ottawa unlikely to seek release of Omar Khadr

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Canada will not interfere with the U.S. military trial of Omar Khadr at Guantanamo Bay, despite increased calls for action.

"Mr. Khadr faces serious charges. Any questions regarding whether Canada plans to ask for the release of Omar Khadr from Guantanamo are premature and speculative as the legal process and appeals process are still ongoing," Neil Hrab, spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, said yesterday.

A military appeals court ruled on Monday that Khadr's trial at the U.S. naval detention centre in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, should resume, overturning a lower court decision that dismissed the charges against the Toronto-born detainee.

"We're surprised Canada's not taking a leading role for one of its citizens, " Human Rights Watch's Canadian director Jasmine Herlt said last night.

"It's a travesty of justice to have this kid who has been there for five years with no end in sight."

Khadr, who turned 21 last week, is accused of throwing a grenade during a firefight in Afghanistan in 2002 that killed a U.S. special forces medic. He was 15, and has spent most of his detention in solitary confinement.

The case has received little political attention since his capture in July 2002, largely due to the unpopularity in Canada of his family, whose members have admitted links Al Qaeda's top leaders.

But last week Liberal Leader Stephane Dion urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to demand Khadr's trial be held in a U.S. civilian court. Failing that, Harper should demand Khadr be sent home to face justice in Canada, Dion said.

The Pentagon has tried for years to bring Khadr to trial on charges that include murder.

Military judge Col. Peter Brownback threw out the charges against Khadr in June after deciding that under the Congress-endorsed rules of the military commission, only "alien unlawful enemy combatants," could be tried. Khadr, and the other 340 detainees still held in Guantanamo, had been declared "enemy combatants" but had not specifically found to be unlawful.

The appeals court ruled Brownback had jurisdiction to decide himself if Khadr was "unlawful."

Khadr's lawyers were deciding whether to appeal Monday's ruling. Unless they appeal Khadr is expected to be back before a military commission Oct. 11.

Afghan officials slam NDP over Karzai allegations

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BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 220

OTTAWA — The Afghanistan government says the federal NDP is being "ludicrous and insulting" in suggesting that Canadian military officials wrote President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year.

The Afghan Embassy in Ottawa levelled the harshly worded rebuttal after the New Democrats released documents obtained through Access to Information that said the Defence Department provided "messages" and "themes" adopted by Karzai in his address to Parliament.

An internal military report says that members of the Canadian Forces strategic advisory team accompanied Karzai and his delegation to New York before his arrival in Ottawa last September for a historic address to a joint session of the House of Commons and the Senate.

NDP defence critic Dawn Black said the report is an example of how the Conservative government is trying to manipulate public opinion in the face of sagging public support for the country's military involvement in Afghanistan.

"President Karzai's address to Parliament was an elaborately staged political stunt by this government to sell Canadians on the combat mission in Kandahar," said Black, who called Karzai a "front man" for the Conservative government.

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

Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, Omar Samad, lashed out at the NDP, and said top Afghan officials, including Karzai himself, crafted drafts of the speech.

Samad said officials from both countries shared information over several weeks as Karzai's trip was being planned.

Harper tells U.S. to make nice in its backyard; Preaches message of co-operation with neighbouring countries

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DATELINE: NEW YORK
BYLINE: Meagan Fitzpatrick
SOURCE: CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 413

NEW YORK -- Prime Minister Stephen Harper had some stern words of advice for the United States yesterday during a speech in which he said Canada's neighbour needs to be more open and co-operative with other countries in the Americas.

Speaking to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, the prime minister said the United States cannot act alone when trying to meet global challenges, and that success depends on middle powers like Canada doing their part.

"Success demands governments who are willing to assume responsibilities -- seek practical, doable solutions to problems and who have a voice and influence in global affairs because they lead, not by lecturing, but by example," said Harper.

The prime minister touched on the mission in Afghanistan and climate change during his speech, but he said he wanted the main focus of his talk to be on "our own neighbourhood, the Americas."

Harper said Canada is re-engaging in the region and working to advance security, prosperity and democracy. He said that while travelling the region this summer, he saw contrasts among nations that were "stark and worrisome."

"While many nations are pursuing market reform and democratic development, others are falling back to economic nationalism and protectionism, to political populism and authoritarianism," he said.

The prime minister said countries should not face a choice between "unfettered capitalism on the one hand, or old socialist models on the other," and said that Canada's model of democracy and economic openness should serve as an example for others.

The prime minister said Canada is pursuing a free trade partnership with Colombia and that the United States should follow suit.

"In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America," he said.

"I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?"

Harper said the United States is concerned about nationalism and protectionism in the Americas, and the governments that promote those ideologies, but he warned that those ideologies can do "more real damage" in the United States itself. And, if the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve," Harper said.

Harper expressed his displeasure with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and said that Canada and the U.S. must be capable of managing the border "in a way that does not turn it into a barrier to commerce and to our shared prosperity."

THE AFGHAN MISSION Though deadly, Taliban prove 'weaker than last year' One Canadian slain in renewed fighting, but locals say insurgents are losing ground

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SECTION: International News
EDITION: Metro
DATELINE: KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN
WORDS: 924
WORD COUNT: 885

GRAEME SMITH KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN Two days of fighting have bloodied Canadian troops west of Kandahar city, but after the intense battles several local officials and villagers say they now believe the Taliban lack the strength they enjoyed in their heartland last year.

Canadian and Afghan forces endured ambushes as they expanded their zone of influence into the Panjwai valley with an offensive that kicked off Monday, leaving one soldier dead and five injured. Their objective was a familiar swath of farmland, taken and retaken by Canadian troops since they arrived, but they appeared to encounter lighter resistance than during previous fights for the same terrain.

Taliban fighters are reportedly lamenting how quickly they lost control of a key road that runs along the Arghandab River, through a cluster of villages known as Zangabad, about 40 kilometres southwest of Kandahar. Residents expressed surprise when they saw a bulldozer rumbling through yesterday, as the Canadians built a police outpost in a village held by insurgents less than 48 hours earlier.

A prominent local Taliban commander also says he plans to flee the area. Hafiz Mohammed Ayub, reputedly the leader of insurgents in Panjwai and Zhari districts, told a friend in Kandahar yesterday he was injured in recent fighting and will visit Pakistan for treatment.

It was a swift end to the Taliban's grip on that part of Panjwai, which residents say lasted most of the summer. A longer, bloodier fight was required last September, during Operation Medusa, when troops pushed away hundreds of insurgents from nearby Pashmul.

While rising violence has been reported elsewhere in Afghanistan this year, a sustained defeat of the insurgents in the districts west of Kandahar would ease the pressure on a major urban centre and serve as a symbolic victory in the villages where the Taliban movement was born in 1992.

"The Taliban are much weaker than last year," said Habibullah Jan, a member of parliament and former militia leader. "They can't stay and fight if they're confronted." The latest confrontation in Panjwai started with the launch of Operation Sadiq Sarbaaz, or "Honest Soldier." Canadian armoured vehicles and Afghan army trucks rolled out of Masum Ghar, a hilltop base overlooking the valley, about 5 a.m. on Monday morning and drove into Taliban territory about two hours later.

THE AFGHAN MISSION Though deadly, Taliban prove 'weaker than last year' One Canadian slain in renewed

"One of the reasons for this operation was the installation of a new police checkpoint, but at the same time to reduce the menace of the insurgents," said Brigadier-General Guy Laroche, commander of the Canadian contingent.

The Canadians fought scattered battles through the day, military officials said, saying they faced small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. The Taliban claimed they used an 82-millimetre recoilless rifle against the Canadians as well, but this could not be confirmed.

Around 4:30 p.m., a mortar shell exploded near Corporal Nathan Hornburg, 24, a reservist who works as an armoured vehicle driver with the King's Own Calgary Regiment, as he tried to repair a broken tread on a Leopard tank. He died, and another soldier was injured.

A subsequent firefight left another three Canadians with injuries.

"It's the biggest fight we have seen here for the last six months," said Aminullah Akhund, reached by mobile phone. Mr. Akhund is a minor Taliban field commander, who leads perhaps 15 men in Panjwai district.

At the end of the day, the Taliban's makeshift checkpoints along the main road had been cleared away. The Canadians held a strategic patch of ground known locally at the Dr. Nemat clinic, an abandoned medical facility in a mud building surrounded by empty land near the Arghandab, with good views of the nearby villages.

The Canadians started settling into their position, building earthen fortifications and warning local villagers to get away from the area to avoid being caught in the crossfire in case the Taliban attacked.

Fighting did erupt again, but locals say the Taliban were hit with air strikes and soon retreated west toward the nearby village of Talokan.

The insurgents claimed they would regroup in small units and launch guerrilla attacks against the Canadians.

One such attack happened yesterday around 11 a.m., as a police mentoring group was ambushed by gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades in Zhari district. A Canadian soldier was seriously injured and has been airlifted to a British base in Helmand province for specialist care.

Still, some local observers don't see the Taliban mustering the same kind of force they have managed in the past.

"The Taliban don't have any foxholes this year," said Ustad Abdul Halim, a former anti-Soviet militia commander. "They are taking cover in streams and vineyards. Every hour they move their positions because they are afraid of aircraft." At least eight Taliban have been seriously injured by the recent fighting, Mr. Halim said, but he declined to estimate the number of insurgents killed.

Brigadier-General Marquis Hainse, deputy commander of NATO forces southern Afghanistan, also described Zhari and Panjwai districts as vastly improved.

"Our point of reference should be, where were we at this time last year?" Brig.-Gen. Hainse said in an interview on Saturday.

"Well, at this time last year, Zhari-Panjwai, you will agree with me, there was not a lot of freedom of movement there. There was Operation Medusa, a concentration of enemies." He continued: "Let's talk about where we are this year. Still some insurgents, no doubt in my mind. There are insurgents, but people are back in Zhari-Panjwai and we can go wherever we decide to go."

THE AFGHAN MISSION Though deadly, Taliban prove 'weaker than last year' One Canadian slain in renewed

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: strife; defence; war deaths

PERSONAL NAME: Nathan Hornburg

ORGANIZATION NAME: Taliban; Armed Forces

DEFENCE PRICE TAG Canada's military is broke . . . again At DND, there's always a 'sustainability gap.' But more cash is not necessarily the answer

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BYLINE: EUGENE LANG

SECTION: Comment

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 843

WORD COUNT: 853

EUGENE LANG Chief of staff to Liberal defence ministers John McCallum and Bill Graham A lot of ink has been spilled recently on some high-profile military spending announcements, particularly with regard to new aircraft and investments in Arctic sovereignty. But there is a problem: The Department of National Defence cannot afford this.

Notwithstanding a recent \$18-billion infusion into DND (over a five-year period), plus at least half a billion dollars a year coursing through DND's veins to support the Canadian Forces' mission in Afghanistan, the department is broke.

How can this be? The Canadian Forces came in for deep budget cuts in the 1990s in the effort to wrestle the federal deficit to the ground. This period has acquired mythical status in military circles – General Rick Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff, recently called it "the decade of darkness." By the late 1990s, after the financial solvency of the federal government had been restored, a gradual refinancing of the military began. Yet, in the final year of the Chretien government, DND claimed it lacked the resources to pay its bills from one year to the next.

This phenomenon was labelled "the sustainability gap." And it was calculated at \$936-million a year in fiscal 2002-03. In Budget 2003, the government provided the funds to close the gap.

But, by mid-2004, shortly after the Martin government took office, defence officials said the funding shortfall still prevailed – that an additional \$900-million was required annually to make the military whole. The "sustainability gap" re-emerged.

Then a new defence policy, written by Gen. Hillier for the Martin government, was published. It called for an expanded and well-equipped military, with innovative command structures, that would perform new overseas roles in failed and failing states such as Afghanistan.

And it came with a stiff price tag.

In Budget 2005, the Martin government provided the financially strapped DND with a \$12.8-billion increase over five years – the largest boost in defence funding in a generation – to pay both the old and new bills.

The ink was barely dry on that budget when DND told its minister that this funding was inadequate. At least another billion dollars a year was allegedly needed to pay for the new defence policy. A second "sustainability gap" thus suddenly appeared.

Then the Harper government rode to office on its "Canada First" defence plan, along with a commitment to spend another \$5-billion on the military over five years. Canada First required further expansion of the Canadian Forces, as well as capital acquisitions over and above the Hillier plan. Unfortunately, the cost of Canada First is much more than \$5-billion – it's more like three times that number. Enter a third "sustainability gap." The Hillier plan and Canada First have not been rationalized.

Canada has two defence policies today, each with its own objectives, force structures and procurement requirements. The former is based on a new role for Canada in international peace and security operations, with the Canadian Forces acting as the principle instrument of foreign policy. The latter is concentrated on domestic and continental security.

Core elements of the Hillier plan, such as new commands and equipment vital for overseas operations (notably heavy lift helicopters and tactical transport aircraft) are in train. At the same time, the Canada First plan is being executed through new investments tailored to domestic security, such as Arctic patrol vessels. Neither plan is fully funded. As a consequence, the cumulative "sustainability gap" could now be in the range of \$3-billion a year.

Some evidence of this has started to emerge in the public domain.

Earlier this year, the navy suggested it would have to reduce patrols because of inadequate operational funding. The air force recently hinted the same thing. There evidently isn't enough money to gas up the old equipment, let alone run the new stuff coming on line.

Claims of inadequate military funding are often legitimate. Governments have had a tendency to expect more from DND than is realistic, given the resources provided. But financial shortfalls in the department are also the product of abysmal internal priority setting and weak financial management. Years ago, a very wise and long-serving senior defence official told me that no matter how much money any government put into DND, there would always be a "sustainability gap." That insight is probably true of every defence department in the industrial world, the Pentagon being the most notorious example.

Part of the explanation for persistent funding gaps in defence departments relates to Augustine's Law. Norman Augustine, a former undersecretary of the U.S. Army and a highly regarded defence engineer, conducted a study of Pentagon defence procurement in the 1980s and concluded that there was never more than a 10-per-cent chance that a defence program would meet its budget, nor more than a 15-per-cent chance that it would meet its schedule. Augustine's Law also applies in Canada.

Canadians are going to start hearing more and more about the cash-strapped Defence Department. More money is not necessarily the answer.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: defence; government finance; political

ORGANIZATION NAME: Department of National Defence; Armed Forces

DEFENCE PRICE TAG Canada's military is broke . . . again At DND, there's always a 'sustainability gap.' B

First past the Afghan post

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PAGE: A20

BYLINE: DOUGLAS FRAME

SECTION: Letter to the Edit

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Exeter, Ont.

WORDS: 173

WORD COUNT: 189

Douglas Frame Exeter, Ont.

Re Canada Must Stay The Course (editorial – Sept. 22): It is a curious fact that America, Great Britain and Canada, the only major Western democracies that have not yet embraced proportional representation, are also the only nations sending their troops to kill and be killed in Afghanistan and/or Iraq, in spite of the opposition of a majority of their citizens.

But it may not be a coincidence. A primary weakness with the first–past–the–post system is that decisions, once taken by a ruling majority party, are seldom reversed or even reviewed until the next general election rolls around, years later. Hence it is not surprising that all three nations continue to pursue a war policy that most of their citizens disagree with.

Under proportional representation, that popular disagreement would have been better represented in the existing government, and the decision to go to war could have been modified at its time of origin, or easily reversed when popular support declined, which is what is happening in most European democracies today.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM:foreign policy; strife; political; voting; government

CANADA'S PROBLEM Why the Khadr case is an affront to the rule of law

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BYLINE: ERNA PARIS

SECTION: Comment

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 632

WORD COUNT: 637

ERNA PARIS The rule of law is at stake in the case of Omar Khadr, the sole Canadian detainee in the hellhole of Guantanamo Bay prison. This summer, a military commission judge dismissed the case against him, but earlier this week a U.S. military review court reversed this judgment: Mr. Khadr can now be tried by a secret military commission as an "unlawful enemy combatant." There are several important precedents at issue, some of which affect Canada.

First, U.S. President George Bush has never camouflaged the nature of the military commissions he first announced on Nov. 13, 2001, just after the attacks on the World Trade Center. "It is not practicable to apply the principles of law and the rules of evidence generally recognized in the trial of criminal cases in the United States district courts," he said. The commissions, in other words, would not incorporate the rules of due process that characterize settled democracies.

In the months after 9/11, just about everything the President said and did passed muster: There were few dissenters because to object publicly was to open oneself to being labelled a traitor.

But as Congress and the U.S. courts regained courage, the prospect of military commissions became the subject of major lawsuits and rancorous debate. So much so that, six years after they were announced by the President, the Khadr trial will be only the second such hearing.

The second precedent concerns the label "unlawful enemy combatant," a fabricated designation contrived to circumvent the Geneva Convention on the rights of prisoners of war and their treatment by their captors.

There is no such category in international law, nor has there ever been. As the New York civil libertarian Michael Ratner once put it, they may as well call them "tables." However, should the Khadr trial go forward, and should he be convicted, the tag will have been successfully enshrined in a court of law, albeit a secret military one.

The third precedent is Omar Khadr himself. He was 15 years old in 2002, at the time of his alleged crimes in Afghanistan – one of only three children ever held in Guantanamo. His age at the time of his alleged offence has become an international cause celebre in conjunction with the disturbing issue of child soldiers in Africa.

The question is whether these juveniles were mature enough at the time of their presumed criminal acts to make a mature deliberate choice. The former chief prosecutor for Sierra Leone thinks not.

Omar Khadr does not inspire cuddly feelings in Canada. His family flouts the values we cleave to; they have gone on television to declare themselves al-Qaeda supporters. But their popularity is not the point. Mr. Khadr's Canadian citizenship, and the rule of law, is the point. Mr. Khadr faces trial by a kangaroo court. The Bush administration has said that even if he is not convicted he will not be released and may be held until the end of the "war on terror." Australia also had a national in Guantanamo. David Hicks was to be the first person to undergo a military commission trial. But Australians were so outraged by the lack of democratic legal processes that high-level relations with the U.S. were directly threatened.

A deal was struck the day his trial opened last June and he was sent home.

By refusing to insist that Omar Khadr be returned to Canada and tried here, the Harper government makes Canadians complicit with the Bush administration's contempt for established law. The Khadr case is being noticed. Our international reputation as a law-abiding nation that protects its citizens is at risk.

Her next book, *The Sun Climbs Slow: Justice in the Age of Imperial America*, will be published in February.

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Guantanamo Bay; United States; Canada

SUBJECT TERM: prisoners of war; terrorism; suspects; Canadians; children; human rights; justice

PERSONAL NAME: Omar Khadr

THE AFGHAN MISSION: TIMELINES Canada should cease combat as NATO test, Liberals say Dion says troops must withdraw in 2009 even if no other country will take over

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DATE: 2007.09.26

PAGE: A18

BYLINE: PAUL WALDIE

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE:

WORDS: 539

WORD COUNT: 485

PAUL WALDIE Liberal Leader Stephane Dion says Canada should end its combat role in Afghanistan in 2009 even if no other NATO country is prepared to step in.

"We need to know if NATO works," he told The Globe and Mail's editorial board yesterday. "Because otherwise other countries will be more and more reluctant to take any responsibility, because they will be afraid to be there forever." Mr. Dion said the Afghan mission is a challenge for NATO because it marks the first time the alliance has ventured beyond its geographic base. He said a strong commitment by Canada to cease combat operations after February, 2009, will be a test of whether NATO is truly a multilateral organization.

If elected prime minister, he would pull Canadian troops out of Kandahar after February, 2009, even if that left the region without a NATO combat force, he said.

Mr. Dion said he would tell the alliance: "We're gone. We'll do something else. We're ready to work with you to see what will be our role, but the combat mission in Kandahar must be, as soon after 2009, [done] by another country or a set of other countries." Defence Minister Peter MacKay said this week that Canada will notify NATO in April whether it will extend its combat mission in Kandahar. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has also said that Parliament must approve any extension beyond 2009.

Canada has 2,500 troops stationed in southern Afghanistan as part of a NATO coalition fighting the Taliban. The area is considered one of the most dangerous parts of the country.

Mr. Dion also said that he is prepared to vote against the Harper government's Throne Speech on Oct. 16 if it fails to include clarification of the Afghanistan mission as well as a reintroduction of clean-air legislation and a plan to combat poverty.

"I cannot stand up for a Throne Speech that I think is against the interests of Canada and against the honour of Canada," he said.

Mr. Dion also defended his recent call for Canada to demand a civilian trial for terrorism suspect Omar Khadr, a Canadian who is being held in the U.S. detention centre in Guantanamo Bay.

"It's a matter of rights," Mr. Dion said. He said Canada is alone among most Western nations in not asking that its detainees be repatriated.

"What we are asking for is not to bring him [to] a Canadian court.

but to bring him [to] a legitimate U.S. court." This week a U.S. military appeal court overturned a lower court decision and ruled that a military court is the proper venue to hear Mr. Khadr's case.

When asked how he would grade his performance since winning the Liberal leadership race last year, Mr. Dion, a former university professor, gave himself an A.

He added that it was really for others to rate him, but the fact that Mr. Harper's Conservatives have not pulled away in the polls is a sign that his leadership is working.

"I would argue it's because Canadians have more confidence in our convictions and sincerity," he said, "especially they are more comfortable in my sincerity than Mr. Harper's."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: political; foreign policy; defence; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Stephane Dion

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; Liberal Party

FEDERAL POLITICS: THRONE SPEECH LOOMS Vote would return minority, PM predicts But critics say Harper's comments show he may be warm to the prospect of a fall election

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PAGE: A4 (ILLUS)

BYLINE: CAMPBELL CLARK

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 605

WORD COUNT: 569

CAMPBELL CLARK With a report from Bill Curry in New York OTTAWA Prime Minister Stephen Harper predicted yesterday that a fall election would likely return another minority, as his Conservative government prepares to face Parliament for a confidence vote in three weeks.

Opposition parties have listed a series of demands for Mr. Harper to meet when his government delivers a Throne Speech on Oct. 16, but a strong Tory showing in Quebec by-elections last week has led to speculation that it is Mr. Harper who is most likely to welcome a vote.

Yesterday, some opposition MPs charged that Mr. Harper's move to play down his hopes of winning a majority is in fact a feint to convince wary voters that his Conservatives will not be given a free hand to govern as they would like – and a sign that he may be warm to the prospect of a fall vote.

Mr. Harper made his comments in a question-and-answer session after a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

"With the current political alignment – I'm probably not supposed to say this, my election strategists won't like it – but with the current political alignment, I think the possibility of minority government at any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," Mr. Harper said.

Conservatives said the Prime Minister was only stating the obvious, given the near-tied results of opinion polls.

But some Liberals said they smelled a bluff.

Liberal MP Scott Brison said that Mr. Harper is always calculating in his public comments, and that his remarks yesterday are aimed at allaying fears that the Conservatives would adopt an "ultra-right" agenda if they were given a freer hand.

"He knows that a Harper majority is a nightmare scenario for many Canadians," he said.

Mr. Brison argued that a new book by one of Mr. Harper's confidantes, university professor Tom Flanagan – which argues that, in order to win in a country where voters are not really conservative, the Tories cannot stray too far right – shows the Conservatives are hiding their true colours until they get a majority.

Another Liberal MP, Bryon Wilfert, said Mr. Harper is probably trying to play down expectations for his own party, which would be bitterly disappointed if he did not win a majority.

According to Conservative MPs, Mr. Harper told his caucus at their retreat in August that another minority term would not necessarily be bad for the party, because their numbers would probably be strengthened while other parties would be weakened by a push to change their leaders.

Tory MP Gerald Keddy of Nova Scotia said Mr. Harper was just reflecting the obvious sentiments of voters, who want the Conservative minority to continue governing. He scoffed at the opposition's sabre rattling over the Throne Speech. "It's pen-knife rattling," he said.

The Bloc Quebecois, apparently calculating that supporting the Tories is doing them more harm than good, has set five "non-negotiable" conditions on the Throne Speech that Mr. Harper is unlikely to accept.

NDP Leader Jack Layton has demanded an immediate Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan, which the Tories are also almost certain to reject.

That could leave Liberal Leader Stephane Dion in the unusual position of being an Official Opposition Leader who votes for a government Throne Speech.

Mr. Dion repeated in an interview with The Globe and Mail yesterday that he will not decide until he hears the speech, but that he has not changed his conditions, including an announcement of a Canadian withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2009. If an election comes, he said, "We'll be ready, 100 per cent."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada

SUBJECT TERM: government; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Stephen Harper

ORGANIZATION NAME: Conservative Party of Canada

THE AFGHAN MISSION: POLITICS Military wrote Karzai's speech, NDP says

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072690134

DATE: 2007.09.26

PAGE: A18

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: National News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 499

WORD COUNT: 525

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA The New Democratic Party yesterday accused the Canadian military of writing last year's speech to Parliament by Afghan President Hamid Karzai in what the party's defence critic called an "elaborately staged political stunt." The allegation, based on a military situation report obtained under an access-to-information request, was immediately denied by Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, who said the suggestion that Mr. Karzai's speech was ghostwritten was "not only ludicrous but also verges on being insulting." The reference to the Afghan President's speech was included in a sheaf of "situation reports" sent by Task Force Afghanistan to National Defence headquarters and other government recipients in October, 2006.

The documents, which were heavily censored on national security grounds, include a report on Mr. Karzai's visits to New York and Ottawa the previous month, noting that he was accompanied by a "communications adviser," presumably from the Canadian military.

The report noted that Canada's Strategic Advisory Team, a group of Canadian officials working out of Kandahar, had prepared an "initial draft of [the] President's speech to Parliament 22 SEP. It was noted that key statistics, messages and themes as well as overall structure, were adopted by the President in his remarks to [the] joint session." Dawn Black, the defence critic, said this proved that Mr. Karzai's address to Parliament "was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence." Not so, responded Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, Omar Samad.

"There is no evidence that the speech was written by any person other than Afghans," Mr. Samad said in an interview. He said he personally worked on a draft of the speech with the President's chief of staff.

"To insinuate that this was written by a certain group in Kabul and given to us is beyond comprehension," he said.

Mr. Samad did say, however, that Canadian and Afghan officials both in Kabul and Ottawa had spent several weeks working on the visit to Canada and as is customary in these situations had "shared information about protocol, agenda, discussion items and other relevant bilateral issues." A spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay said the allegation was proof that the NDP will "say anything" to undermine Canada's commitment to help Afghanistan. He said it was not unusual for a visiting dignitary to seek facts and figures before delivering a speech to Parliament.

Ms. Black said the disclosure of National Defence's involvement in the speech preparation raised concerns

about Mr. Karzai's independence, including his recent media interviews in which he warned that Afghanistan would revert to anarchy if Canadian troops pulled out precipitously.

In the speech to Parliament, Mr. Karzai praised Canada's contribution to the NATO–led force in his country. "Canada, in all respects, has been among the leaders of this partnership. Thanks to Canada's contributions, Afghanistan today is profoundly different from the terrified and exhausted country it was five years ago."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Canada; Afghanistan

SUBJECT TERM: visits; political; statements

PERSONAL NAME: Hamid Karzai

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces; New Democratic Party

THE AFGHAN MISSION: VOLATILE SOUTH Norway won't commit to role in danger zone But PM has 'respect' for Canadian mission

PUBLICATION: GLOBE AND MAIL

IDN: 072690102

DATE: 2007.09.26

PAGE: A18

BYLINE: ALAN FREEMAN

SECTION: International News

EDITION: Metro

DATELINE: Ottawa ONT

WORDS: 326

WORD COUNT: 330

ALAN FREEMAN OTTAWA Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said he understands why Canadians feel they have been shouldering an unequal share of NATO casualties in Afghanistan, but he made no commitment to move Norway's 700 troops to the volatile southern part of the country.

"I understand that Canada feels that it had taken a big burden and we have respect for what Canada has done in Afghanistan," Mr. Stoltenberg said in an interview with The Globe and Mail, following a brief visit to the Muskoka region of Ontario yesterday.

However, he added, "Whether or not Norway is going to send troops to southern Afghanistan is something we haven't decided upon." Like other NATO allies, the Norwegian leader encouraged Canada to remain in Afghanistan but would not be pinned down as to whether it should stick with its current combat mission in Kandahar. "Of course, we hope that Canada stays." Norway is one of four NATO countries that Defence Minister Peter MacKay visited last week in an effort to build support for what Canada thinks should be a fairer share of troop strength in the country.

Of the 37 NATO nations and partners in the Afghan force, Norway is one that has avoided the more dangerous parts of the country, where Canada shares much of the burden with Britain, the Netherlands and the United States.

Mr. Stoltenberg noted that his coalition government has greatly expanded its contingent in Afghanistan over the past two years as it pulled its soldiers out of Iraq, where it had been backing the U.S.-led coalition. Norwegian troops, including 150 special forces, are based in the more stable northern and central parts of Afghanistan.

The move to the south is highly divisive politically within Mr.

Stoltenberg's ruling coalition.

The Prime Minister insisted that his country is doing more than its share. "Norway has 4.5 million. Compared to our population, there's hardly any other country sending more troops to Afghanistan."

ADDED SEARCH TERMS:

THE AFGHAN MISSION: VOLATILE SOUTH Norway won't commit to role in danger zone But PM has 'resp

GEOGRAPHIC NAME: Afghanistan; Canada; Norway

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

PERSONAL NAME: Jens Stoltenberg

ORGANIZATION NAME: Armed Forces

THE AFGHAN MISSION: VOLATILE SOUTH Norway won't commit to role in danger zone But PM has 'resp

Afghans attack NDP claim Karzai speech ghostwritten; Canadian military drafted president's remarks to Parliament -- MP

IDNUMBER 200709260018
PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A5
ILLUSTRATION: Photo: Journal Stock / (President Hamid) Karzai;
KEYWORDS: WAR; TERRORISM; FOREIGN AID
DATELINE: OTTAWA
BYLINE: Mike Blanchfield
SOURCE: Ottawa Citizen; CanWest News Service
WORD COUNT: 515

OTTAWA – The Afghanistan government says the federal NDP is being "ludicrous and insulting" for suggesting that Canadian military officials wrote President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year.

The Afghan Embassy in Ottawa levelled the harshly worded rebuttal after the New Democrats released documents obtained through Access to Information that said the Defence Department provided "messages" and "themes" that were adopted by Karzai in his address to Parliament.

An internal military report, provided to the federal party under Access to Information, says members of the Canadian Forces Strategic Advisory team accompanied Karzai and his Afghan delegation to New York before his arrival in Ottawa last September for a historic address to a joint session of the House of Commons and the Senate.

The document states that "at the request of president's office" the Canadian military team "prepared initial draft of president's address to Parliament Sept. 22." The note goes on to say that: "It was noted that key statistics, messages and themes, as well as overall structure, were adopted by the president in his remarks to joint session."

NDP defence critic Dawn Black said the report is an example of how the Conservative government is trying to manipulate public opinion in the face of sagging public support for the country's military involvement in Afghanistan.

"President Karzai's address to Parliament was an elaborately staged political stunt by this government to sell Canadians on the combat mission in Kandahar," said Black, who called Karzai a "frontman" for the Conservative government.

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

Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, Omar Samad, lashed out at the NDP, and said top Afghan officials, including Karzai himself, crafted drafts of the speech. Samad said government officials from both countries shared information over several weeks as Karzai's trip was being planned.

Afghans attack NDP claim Karzai speech ghostwritten; Canadian military drafted president's remarks to Parliament

"As is customary in diplomatic arrangements and co-ordination, they shared information about protocol, agenda, discussion items and other relevant bilateral issues," Samad said in a statement.

"To suggest otherwise is not only ludicrous and insulting, it is also sadly diverting attention away from the real issues we face as two nations."

The spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay said there is nothing nefarious in a host government providing input for a speech by a foreign visitor.

"The NDP's attempt to undermine President Karzai's integrity shows once again its willingness to say anything as it opposes Canada's commitment to the United Nations and NATO to help Afghanistan," said spokesman Dan Dugas.

Karzai's speech before Canadian MPs and senators did not differ significantly in substance from his usual theme of other international speeches.

Black questioned Karzai for failing to repeat controversial subject matter he used a day earlier in a speech in New York, when he criticized the accidental killing of Afghan citizens by NATO bombers. Canada has not deployed fighter jets to Afghanistan and has so far not been implicated in any accidental killing of civilians there.

Black said the memo raises questions about whether the recent press conference in Kabul that Karzai gave to Canadian journalists was also a stage-managed event designed to disseminate "propaganda." Karzai warned that if troops were withdrawn from his country, it would descend into anarchy.

PM chides U.S. go-it-alone foreign policy; Better co-operation needed, Harper tells U.S. think-tank

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PUBLICATION: Edmonton Journal

DATE: 2007.09.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A1 / FRONT

ILLUSTRATION: Colour Photo: Reuter, file / Prime Minister Stephen Harper talks to reporters outside the United Nations on Monday. Harper spoke to the UN climate-change conference in New York on Monday. ;

KEYWORDS: PRIME MINISTERS; POLITICIANS; POLITICAL PARTIES; GOVERNMENT; CANADA

BYLINE: Meagan Fitzpatrick

SOURCE: CanWest News Service

WORD COUNT: 524

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the United States needs to be more open and co-operative with other countries in the hemisphere.

Speaking Tuesday to the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based think-tank, Harper said the U.S. cannot act alone when trying to meet global challenges, and that success depends on middle powers like Canada doing their part.

"Success demands governments who are willing to assume responsibilities, seek practical, doable solutions to problems and who have a voice and influence in global affairs because they lead, not by lecturing, but by example," he said.

Harper's speech touched on the mission in Afghanistan and climate change, but he said he wanted the main focus of his talk to be on "our own neighbourhood, the Americas."

Harper said Canada is re-engaging in the hemisphere and working to advance security, prosperity and democracy. He said that while travelling the region this summer he saw contrasts among nations that were "stark and worrisome."

"While many nations are pursuing market reform and democratic development, others are falling back to economic nationalism and protectionism, to political populism and authoritarianism," he said.

The prime minister said there shouldn't be a choice between only "unfettered capitalism" or "old socialist models," and said Canadian democracy and economic openness should serve as an example.

He said Canada is pursuing a free trade partnership with Colombia, and that the United States should follow suit.

"In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them the chance at partnership and trade with North America," he said. "I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?"

PM chides U.S. go-it-alone foreign policy; Better co-operation needed, Harper tells U.S. think-tank

Harper said the United States is concerned about nationalism and protectionism in the Americas, but warned that those ideologies can do "more real damage" in the U.S. itself.

"And, if the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve."

The prime minister also expressed his displeasure with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, saying that Canada and the U.S. must be capable of managing the border "in a way that does not turn it into a barrier to commerce and to our shared prosperity."

Harper gave several other examples of how Canada is proving itself on the world stage, using the mission in Afghanistan as an example of how "Canada's back" and is asserting itself as an international leader.

The prime minister said Canada didn't hesitate to join the war in Afghanistan, which he called "noble and necessary."

Canada is paying a price, he said, with the lives of Canadian soldiers, and he referred to the latest casualty — the mortar-fire death Monday of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a 24-year-old reservist from Calgary.

Harper said Canada is also proving to be a world leader on the environment. He said he is in favour of a new international protocol that has binding targets for the world's major greenhouse gas emitters, including the United States and China.

Canada's approach to fighting climate change will reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 and by 60 to 70 per cent by 2050, he said.

Harper acknowledged the plan "will impose real costs on the Canadian economy.

"At the same time, by basing early targets on emission intensity, we are balancing effective environmental action with the reality that Canada has a growing population and growing economic output."

Minority rule here to stay

SOURCETAG 0709260697
PUBLICATION: The Winnipeg
Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 12
BYLINE: KATHLEEN
HARRIS
DATELINE: NEW YORK
WORD COUNT: 216

They're short-lived and marked with partisan bickering, but Prime Minister Stephen Harper predicts minority parliaments are Canada's new political reality.

Harper noted voters have now elected two successive minority governments since the once-split conservative parties united. He thinks that trend will continue.

"I think with the current political alignment, I think the possibility of a minority government at any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," he said.

Harper has been working to build support in Quebec, where Conservatives see a potential key to a majority. The PM's remarks come as Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe threatens to try and topple the government if it fails to make commitments on the Afghanistan mission and environment in next month's Throne Speech.

CREATED HAVOC

While a minority parliament does not have a direct impact on foreign policy, Harper said it has created havoc with the mission in Afghanistan.

"We have a big challenge with the deployment in Afghanistan. We've had a lot of casualties and, unfortunately, those who committed us originally to the engagement now see political points in being against it," he said.

Harper said military missions will be approved by Parliament, but said foreign policy must be based on the best interests of the country, allies and the world -- not on the whims of squabbling political parties.

"Under a minority government, this government's foreign policy will not be any different than it would be under a majority government," he said. **KEYWORDS=NATIONAL**

Minority rule here to stay

SOURCETAG 0709260397
PUBLICATION: The Toronto Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 10
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NEW YORK
WORD COUNT: 216

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Karzai speech a 'stunt': NDP

SOURCETAG 0709260567
PUBLICATION: The Ottawa Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 6
ILLUSTRATION: photo of HAMID KARZAI Staged?
BYLINE: CP
WORD COUNT: 195

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was written by the Canadian military as part of an "elaborately staged political stunt," the NDP is charging.

The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers yesterday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador.

Dawn Black, the NDP defence critic, said the documents indicate military advisers were asked to prepare an initial draft of Karzai's speech, delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said.

"I find it incredible that any foreign head of state would be handed their remarks by the host country's military. It's totally incredible to me."

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan as saying: "Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai's) address to Parliament 22 Sep."

And Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

Afghan ambassador Omar Samad bristled at the allegation. "I can say something simple and say it's laughable and I could say something a bit more serious and say it verges on being insulting."

In the speech, Karzai thanked the families of soldiers killed in combat and painted an optimistic, but not rosy picture of his country's future.

He also took direct aim at NDP Leader Jack Layton's opposition to the war. **KEYWORDS=WORLD**

Sixty one killed in day-long battle

SOURCETAG 0709260283
PUBLICATION: The London Free Press
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: A3
BYLINE: JASON STRAZIUSO, AP
DATELINE: KABUL
WORD COUNT: 228

Taliban militants and the U.S.-led coalition fought a day-long battle in southern Afghanistan's poppy-growing belt yesterday, killing more than 60 Taliban fighters and one coalition soldier, military officials said.

Dozens of insurgents attacked a joint coalition-Afghan patrol near the town of Musa Qala in Helmand province with machine-guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, the coalition said in a statement. Taliban reinforcements flowed in from Musa Qala all day, it said.

The coalition troops returned fire and called in artillery fire and attacks by fighter-bombers, leaving more than 60 of the Taliban fighters dead, the coalition said. One coalition soldier was killed and four were wounded.

The statement said there were no immediate reports of civilian deaths or injuries.

"The end is near for the Taliban that believe Musa Qala is safe from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan forces," said Maj. Chris Belcher, a coalition spokesperson. "This combined operation is just one more step to securing the Musa Qalah area of the Helmand Province."

Taliban militants overran Musa Qala last February, four months after British troops left the town following a contentious peace agreement that handed over security responsibilities to Afghan elders. The town has been in the Taliban's control ever since.

Situated in northern Helmand province, Musa Qala and the area around it have seen the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan this year. It is the main area for growing illicit opium poppies, a crop that allows Afghanistan to produce more than 90 per cent of the world's heroin. KEYWORDS=WORLD

Military linked to Afghan leader's speech Hamid Karzai's speech was written by the Canadian military, the NDP charges.

SOURCETAG: 0709260280

PUBLICATION: The London Free Press

DATE: 2007.09.26

EDITION: Final

SECTION: News

PAGE: A3

ILLUSTRATION: photo by Fred Chartrand, CP POLITICAL STUNT ALLEGED: NDP MP Dawn Black says in Ottawa she has documents that indicate Afghan President Hamid Karzai's speech to Parliament last year was an elaborately staged political stunt. The NDP defence critic's claims ruffled diplomatic feathers and prompted strong denials.

BYLINE: MURRAY BREWSTER, CP

DATELINE: OTTAWA

WORD COUNT: 255

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The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers yesterday and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

Dawn Black, the NDP defence critic, said the documents indicate military advisers were asked to prepare an initial draft of Karzai's speech, delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

"What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence," Black said.

"I find it incredible that any foreign head of state would be handed their remarks by the host country's military . . . When our prime minister visited the Parliament in Australia, I can't imagine the remarks were prepared by the Australian government."

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan as saying: "Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai's) address to Parliament 22 Sep."

And Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

Afghan ambassador Omar Samad bristled at the allegation. "I can say something simple and say it's laughable and I could say something a bit more serious and say it verges on being insulting."

Canadian diplomats may have been asked for input as part of the the normal planning process prior to a state visit, Samad acknowledged.

But the ambassador said he and several other Afghan advisers, including the president's chief of staff, prepared their own versions of the remarks and the final speech went through several drafts, which Karzai

Military linked to Afghan leader's speech Hamid Karzai's speech was written by the Canadian military, the N

edited himself.

"He personally added and took things out and we worked on it for several hours before he delivered it," said Samad. KEYWORDS=NATIONAL

Karzai kerfuffle a matter of notes?

SOURCETAG 0709260798
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 25
BYLINE: RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA
WORD COUNT: 150

Canadian military writing a speech for Afghan president Hamid Karzai is a sign of neo-colonialism, says a University of Alberta expert on global politics and foreign policy.

But Andy Knight says he believes what was provided to Karzai by the Canadian military were "talking notes" and not a fully written speech.

The controversy ignited after NDP defence critic Dawn Black obtained a report from Task Force Afghanistan saying the military prepared the initial draft of Karzai's address to Parliament on Sept. 22, 2006.

Gen. David Fraser reported in the documents that: "key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure (of the speech), were adopted by the president in his remarks."

The claim, based on heavily censored access-to-information documents, ruffled diplomatic feathers and prompted a strong denial from the Afghan ambassador in Ottawa.

It's not uncommon that leaders ask for backgrounders or talking notes, Knight said.

However, if it's proven that indeed the military wrote the final speech, it will taint Canada's "snowy white" reputation and be called a colonial country, Knight said. KEYWORDS=CANADA

Minority rule here to stay

SOURCETAG 0709260787
PUBLICATION: The Edmonton Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 14
BYLINE: KATHLEEN HARRIS, NEW YORK
WORD COUNT: 216

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"I think with the current political alignment, I think the possibility of a minority government at any election, including one in the near future, would loom very high," he said.

Harper has been working to build support in Quebec, where Conservatives see a potential key to a majority. The PM's remarks come as Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe threatens to try and topple the government if it fails to make commitments on the Afghanistan mission and environment in next month's Throne Speech.

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NDP says Canadians wrote Afghan president's speech

SOURCETAG 0709260903
PUBLICATION: The Calgary Sun
DATE: 2007.09.26
EDITION: Final
SECTION: News
PAGE: 23
BYLINE: CP
DATELINE: OTTAWA
WORD COUNT: 152

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